



The Parent-Child Home Program

Indiana University of Pennsylvania Evaluation Summary

Changes in Behavior of Parent Participants Reduces Risks of Abuse & Neglect

What is the relationship of The Parent-Child Home Program model to “risk and protective factors” that shield against child maltreatment and neglect? The Parent-Child Home Program sites in Armstrong and Indiana Counties were the subject of an independent evaluation by the Center for Educational and Program Evaluation (CEPE) at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. The results of this evaluation indicate that positive parent behaviors increased dramatically on all indicators assessed. The number of verbal interactions between parent and child increased significantly during program participation, as did the instances of praise and/or encouragement observed. Positive behaviors of children increased dramatically on all indicators. Parents were highly satisfied with the Program. The results of this evaluation suggests that The Parent-Child Home Program can contribute to increasing protective factors in the home of disadvantaged families – protective factors associated with the prevention of child maltreatment and neglect.

The evaluation was focused on four primary questions:

- Did parents’/caregivers’ interactions with their children, particularly positive verbal interactions, improve in both quality and quantity as a result of participation in the Program?
- Did the home environments of participants improve, relative to quality practices for parenting, as a result of Program participation?
- Did the number of positive behaviors of children whose parents participated in the Program improve as a result of participation?
- Were parents satisfied with the Program?

Increase in Frequency of Positive Verbal Interaction: Evaluators in the study coded video tape recordings of home sessions for parent-child outcomes. The result of the *video analysis* indicated that the number and frequency of interactions between parent and child increased. **The average number of verbal interactions (both positive verbal and total verbal) increased from 5.9 to 203 and from 6 to 208 at the final evaluation, respectively, for the entire group videotaped (figure 1). The average time between verbal interactions (both positive verbal and total verbal) decreased from approximately fifteen seconds to approximately seven seconds and from thirteen seconds to seven seconds, respectively, for the entire group videotaped.**

Increases in Parents’ Responsiveness and Affection Towards Child: Evaluators also measured results using the *Parent and Child Together* (PACT) instrument. The PACT focuses on the relationships between the parent and child, including the following areas:

- Parent’s responsiveness to the child
- Affection towards the child
- Communication with the child
- Consistency with the child

The evaluators determined that, for all items, there was substantial positive change in both the first and second years of the evaluation. While the majority of the baseline responses on the PACT form were in the *sometimes/most of the time* categories, the majority of post-assessment responses were in the *most of the time/always* categories. This indicates that parents were increasingly displaying more appropriate parenting behaviors upon their completion of Year Two of the Program. Statistical analysis of significance was completed for each of the 20 items on the PACT from the mid-point to the final evaluation. Change in responses from pre-year assessment to the post assessment was significant at a level of at least .05 for 19 of the 20 items.

Examples of items that demonstrated considerable improvement from pre to post assessment include:

- *Parent provides a verbal rationale for obedience* (**Pre** - never/sometimes 72%, **most of the time/always** 28%; **Post** - never/sometimes 15%, **most of the time/always** 85%) (**figure 2**); and
- *Parent encourages child to perform activities that the child can do independently* (**Pre** - never/sometimes 65%, **most of the time/always** 35%; **Post** - never/sometimes 11%, **most of the time/always** 89%) (**figure 3**).

Increase in Child's Positive Behaviors: Positive behaviors of children also increased dramatically on all indicators as evidenced by post-assessment. While the majority of baseline responses on the *CBT* form were in the *sometimes* category, the majority of the post-assessment responses were in the *most of the time/always* categories. This indicates that, upon completion of Year Two of the Program, children were displaying more appropriate behaviors, such as cooperation with adults, attention to tasks, and participation in behaviors and tasks that are age-appropriate. Statistical analysis of significance was completed for each of the 20 behavior traits on the *CBT* and 19 items were all statistically significant at a level of at least .05.

Examples of items that demonstrated considerable improvement from mid-point to post assessment include:

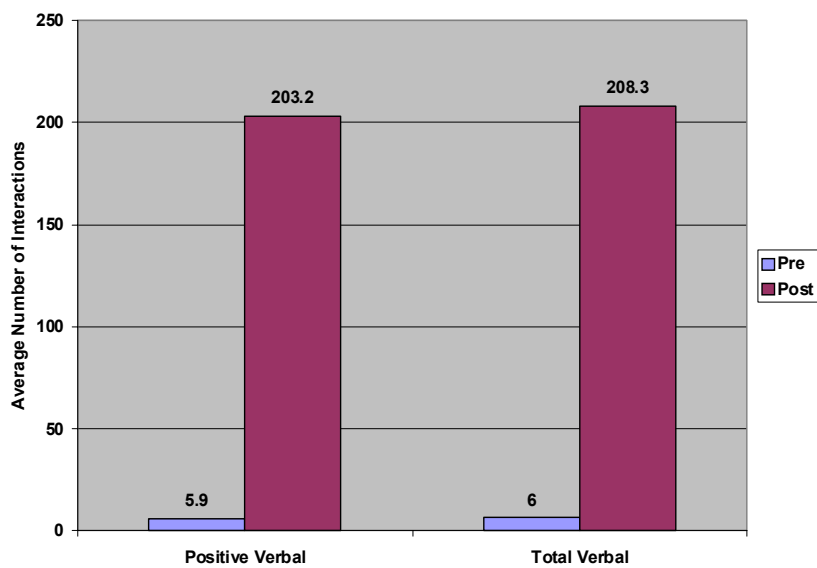
- *Is cooperative with adults* (**Pre** - never/sometimes 65%, **most of the time/always** 36%; **Post** - never/sometimes 17%, **most of the time/always** 83%) (**figure 4**);
- *Tolerates necessary frustration (e.g. awaiting turn at a game)* (**Pre** - never/sometimes 86%, **most of the time/always** 13%; **Post** - never/sometimes 30%, **most of the time/always** 70%);
- *Expresses strong positive or negative feelings appropriately (e.g. expresses anger without a temper tantrum)* (**Pre** - never/sometimes 69%, **most of the time/always** 31%; **Post** - never/sometimes 26%, **most of the time/always** 74%);

Reduction in Number of Children at Risk: The families completed both pre and post assessments of the standardized *Home Screening Questionnaire*. Forty one percent of the children were identified as “at risk” at program start. At the completion of the Program, only twenty percent were found to still be at risk.

Conclusion: The Parent-Child Home Program sites studied are serving populations considered at risk for academic failure. Overall, positive parent behaviors increased dramatically on all indicators. The number of verbal interactions between parent and child increased significantly (.05). The number of instances of praise and/or encouragement observed increased substantially from the pre-test to final evaluation. Positive behaviors of children increased dramatically on all indicators and parents were highly satisfied with the program as indicated by surveys and interviews. The results of this evaluation add to the body of data, from various sites, supporting the beneficial effects of The Parent-Child Home Program on the school readiness and social-emotional development of at-risk children. This data demonstrates that The Parent-Child Home Program is effectively achieving its two primary goals: 1) Increasing the cognitive and emotional development and, thus, the school readiness of at-risk toddlers; and 2) Promoting parent-child verbal interaction and other parenting skills that are embedded in the attachment between parent and child.

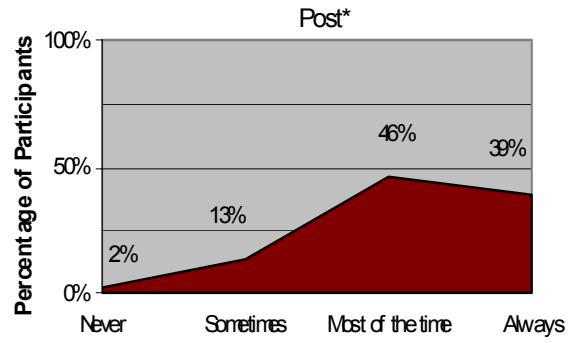
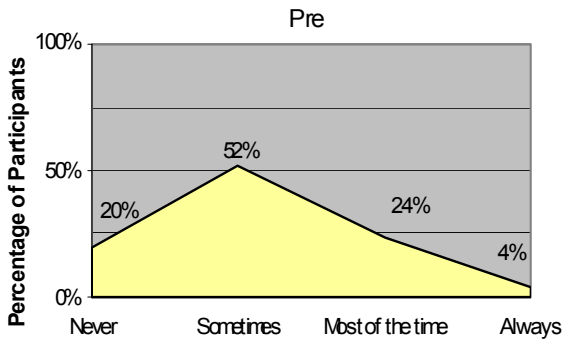
Finally, the results of this evaluation provide promising pathways for research and evaluation. Research has demonstrated that positive parent-child interaction is associated with protective factors in the prevention of child abuse (Peterson, Tremblay, Ewigman & Saldana, 2003). Maltreatment has been shown to have a profound impact on children’s emotional adjustment and cognitive development. Results of a study by Aber and Allen (1987) indicate that during early childhood, maltreatment disrupts a dynamic balance between the motivation to establish safe, secure relationships with adults and the motivation to venture out to explore the world in a competency-promoting fashion. This data highlights the importance of strengthening in the parent-child relationship those “protective factors” associated with the prevention of child maltreatment and neglect prevention. The data collected and analyzed by Indiana University of Pennsylvania indicate that the Program is having an impact on increasing the presence of these protective factors in families.

Figure 1
Average Number of Verbal Interactions Positive Verbal and Total Verbal Pre and Post*



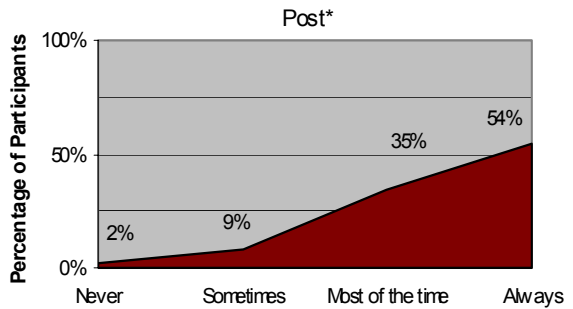
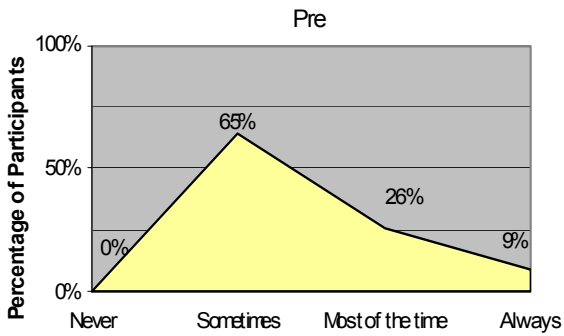
*Statistically significant at the .001 level

Figure 2
Parent provides a verbal rational for obedience



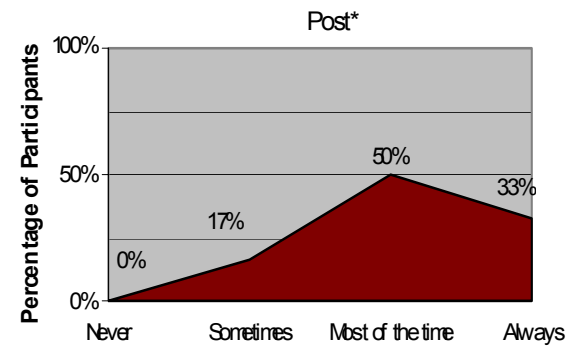
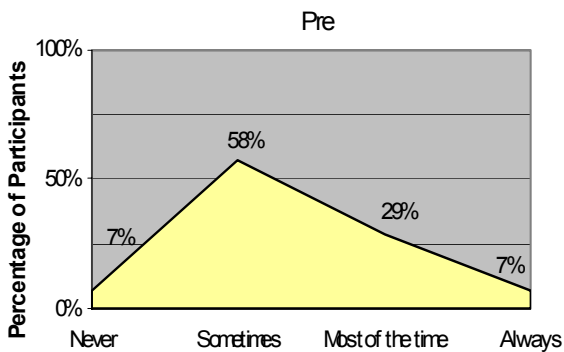
*mean score difference significant at .001

Figure 3
Parent encourages child to perform activities that the child can do independently



*mean score difference significant at .001

Figure 4
Is cooperative with adults



*mean score difference significant at .001