



Reaching low-income families through a population-based parenting program: a feasibility study

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Content

- Why is it important to reach families in poverty?
- What did we do?
- What did we find?

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Why is it important to reach families in poverty?

- The prevalence rates of emotional and behavioural problems up to 38% if children are living in poverty ([Feil et al., 2005](#)).
- Poverty has got an impact on children, as it is related to a variety of stressors and risk factors that influence the development of children
 - (e.g. parental unemployment, distressed neighbourhoods, poor nutrition, emotional unresponsiveness to children, family stress and less stimulation of the child) ([Eamon, 2000](#); [Webster-Stratton & Herman, 2010](#); [Yoshikawa, Aber, & Beardslee, 2012](#)).

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- Poverty has also been associated with parental depression and partner conflicts ([Eamon & Venkataraman, 2003](#)).
- Indirect parental stressors that can make it difficult for parents to provide their children with warm and caring relationships that provide children with positive attention, stimulating environments, monitoring and involvement with school ([Webster-Stratton & Herman, 2010](#)), which can lead to increased dysfunctional parenting behaviors such as inconsistent discipline ([Dodge, Petit, & Bates, 1994](#)), child abuse ([Webster-Stratton & Herman, 2010](#)), poor supervision and neglect ([M. R. Sanders & Bor, 2008](#)).

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Elevated risk

- Research has shown that low-income families are at risk for not keeping their appointment in child mental health services, especially when they have low parental discipline efficacy ([McKay, Pennington, Lynn, & McCadam, 2001](#)).

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Protective factors

- One of the protective factors in the development of emotional and behavioural problems in children is the presence of positive parenting skills such as a responsive relationship that is stimulating the child's cognitive development and enables the child to have a secure bond with the parent ([Chronis et al., 2007](#); [Hosman, van Doesum, & van Santfoort, 2009](#); [McKee et al., 2007](#)).
- This protective factor has also been found in families that live in poverty ([Kiernan & Mensah, 2011](#)).

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Method

- Part of a large research project investigating a population rollout of the 5 levels of the Triple P program in a Belgian province
- Parents were recruited through trained practitioners from community agencies and through a provincial communication strategy
- None of these communication resources were especially designed for parents living in poverty but were aiming to reach all parents of children below 12 years living in the province.

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Participants

- NET monthly income below €867
- Rates of the EU-Survey of Income and Living Conditions of 2009 that puts the cut-off for a single adult's monthly income in Flanders at €1.013 (CSO, 2010).
- The minimum budget a single (wo)man in Belgium needs to survive is €976, for a couple this is €1.296 and for each additional child there needs to be taken into account a surplus of €259-564/child (Storms & Van den Bosch, 2009).

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(n=50)	%	M (SD)
Mean age of parent		38.24 (7.62)
Mean age of child		6.43 (3.98)
Relationship to the child		
Biological father	13.04	
Biological mother	78.26	
Stepfather	2.17	
Stepmother	2.17	
Other	4.34	
Gender child		
Boy	58.0	
Girl	42.0	


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Civil status		
Married		16.7
Cohabiting		18.8
Divorced		16.7
Separated		8.3
Never married/cohabiting		2.1
Measure Juvenile Court		
Yes		23.9
No		76.1
Source of income		
Paid job		25.0
Subsistence		18.8
Unemployment benefits		25.0
Sickness/disability benefits		29.2
Pension		2.1

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Child Outcome (SDQ)

	Pre M (SD)	Post M (SD)	t	p	Cohen's d
Emotion	4.25 (2.63)	3.37 (2.54)	1.58	.121	0.23
Conduct	4.06 (2.05)	3.38 (2.01)	2.86	.006	0.41
Total	17.71 (6.65)	16.75 (5.81)	1.52	.135	0.22
Impact	2.13 (2.36)	1.79 (2.22)	1.51	.139	0.22

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Parental Outcome (DASS)

	Pre M (SD)	Post M (SD)	t	p	Cohen's d
Depression	16.48 (12.41)	15.54 (12.78)	0.81	.423	0.12
Anxiety	12.75 (10.22)	12.75 (10.27)	0.00	1.000	0
Stress	18.15 (10.76)	17.31 (11.75)	0.99	.326	0.14
Total	46.29 (30.46)	45.75 (32.36)	0.24	.813	0.03

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Parental Outcome (PS)

	Pre M (SD)	Post M (SD)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
Laxness	38.32 (11.31)	34.51 (11.19)	3.66	.001	0.52
Overreactivity	33.91 (9.39)	31.98 (9.03)	1.86	.070	0.27
Verbosity	29.23 (4.76)	26.70 (6.25)	2.73	.009	0.39
Total	110.60 (18.13)	101.32 (22.36)	4.09	.000	0.58

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Conclusions

- We are able to reach the parents in poverty with minimal efforts, but we can still improve (e.g. sensitive media strategies)
- Initial results show effects on conduct problems and parenting skills, we need to look at them at follow-up

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Thanks for your attention!

- Further information:
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