



EVIDENCE FOR INVESTING IN FAMILIES OF YOUNG CHILDREN

THE PROBLEM

Racial and ethnic minority children living in disadvantaged, urban neighborhoods bear a disproportionate burden of costly public health problems. Disparities in health and development are evident early in childhood and increase over time, resulting in unacceptably high rates of high school dropout, obesity and delinquency.

At least half of the Black-White achievement gap is present at Kindergarten entry.

THE SCIENCE

Advances in neuroscience, developmental psychology and prevention science provide compelling evidence that the foundation for healthy development is established in early childhood. Interactions between biological processes and home and early care environments impact learning, behavior and health across the lifespan.

The stress of urban poverty constrains parenting resources and jeopardizes the successful development of social, emotional and behavioral regulation skills. Collectively, these skills impact executive functioning (such as working memory, the ability to shift attention or resist distraction) and are now recognized as core components of “readiness” for school and a necessary foundation for lifelong well-being and productivity.

Rigorous randomized controlled trials (RCTs) demonstrate that strengthening parenting and early education and childcare environments can ameliorate the potentially devastating impact of stress on learning, behavior and health, especially for children who are at highest risk for long-term problems.

Science calls for investing in families early in children’s lives.

PARENTCORPS

ParentCorps is a family-centered, school-based preventive intervention designed to foster healthy development and school success among young children (ages 3–6) living in disadvantaged neighborhoods. ParentCorps is implemented as a universal intervention (for all children) in early childhood education or childcare settings (“school”) as a 14-session weekly series for parents and children and professional development for early childhood educators.

ParentCorps aims to buffer the adverse effects of poverty on child development by engaging and supporting both parents and early childhood teachers. The goal is to promote children’s social, emotional and behavioral regulation skills by strengthening positive behavior support and effective behavior management at home and school and by increasing parent involvement in education. ParentCorps focuses explicitly on family cultural values, beliefs and norms, and recognizes the broad spectrum of strengths and multiple stressors associated with urban disadvantage.

THE EVIDENCE

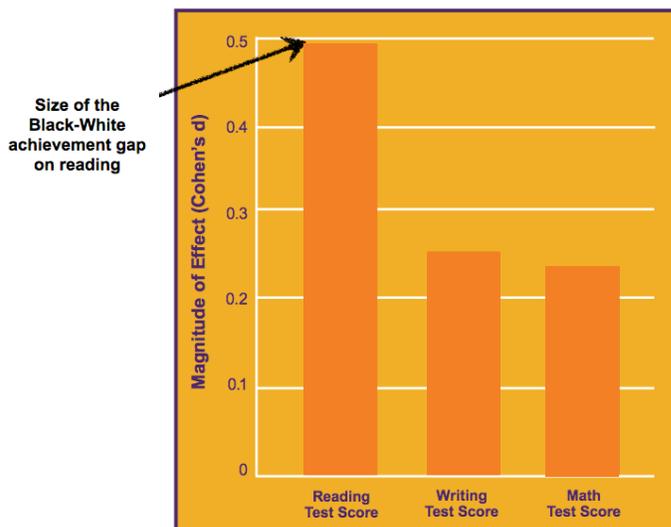
ParentCorps has been rigorously evaluated in 2 RCTs. The evidence below is from an RCT with 1050 black and Latino children.

ParentCorps improves learning. Compared to students in randomly-assigned control schools, those in intervention schools scored significantly and substantially higher on reading, writing and math achievement tests.

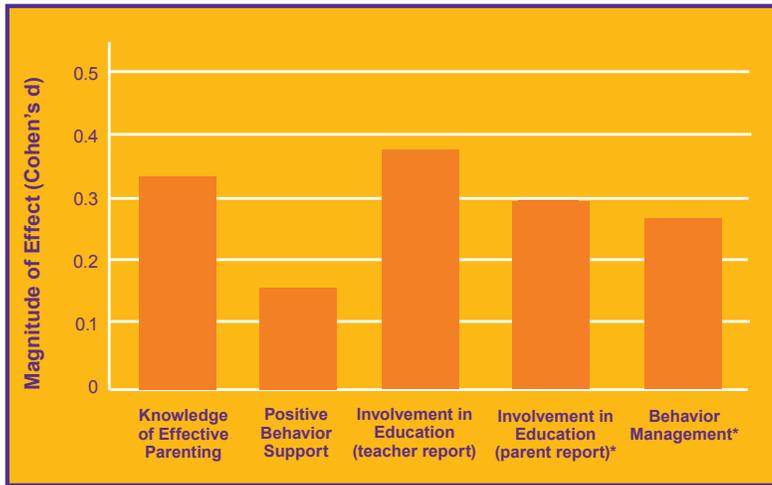
By the 4th year of implementation in a school, the impact on reading achievement in kindergarten was analogous to a 19% increase in percentile rank, moving the average reader (50th percentile) up to above average (69th percentile).

This is comparable to the 0.50 standard deviation achievement gap documented between Black and White kindergarten students, suggesting the potential of ParentCorps to help close the gap.

PARENTCORPS IMPACT ON KINDERGARTEN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT



PARENTCORPS IMPACT ON PARENTING



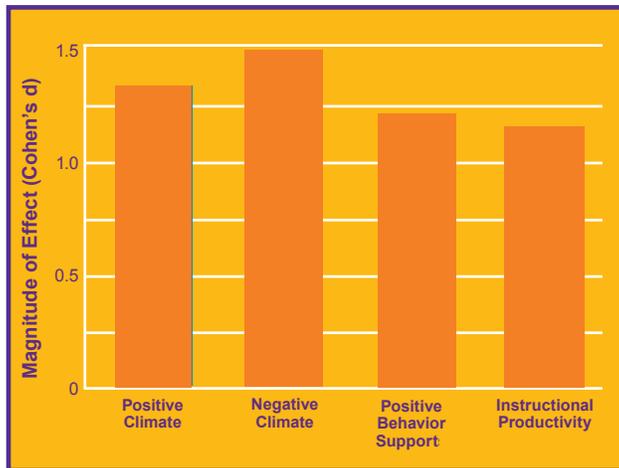
* High-risk children and families

ParentCorps strengthens early family and school environments.

Relative to controls, families of children in intervention schools were more knowledgeable about effective parenting, they provided more support for positive behavior, and they were more involved in education (as rated by teachers). For the highest-risk families, intervention also resulted in increased parent-rated involvement and decreased harsh and inconsistent behavior management.

Relative to control schools, **ParentCorps** classroom environments were rated as higher quality by independent observers. Professional development and consultation resulted in improvements in classroom climate, increased positive behavior support and more productive instruction, providing all students with more opportunities to learn.

PARENTCORPS IMPACT ON CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

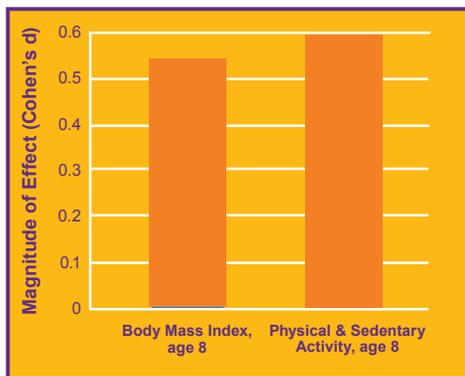


ParentCorps yields broad benefits for the highest risk children.

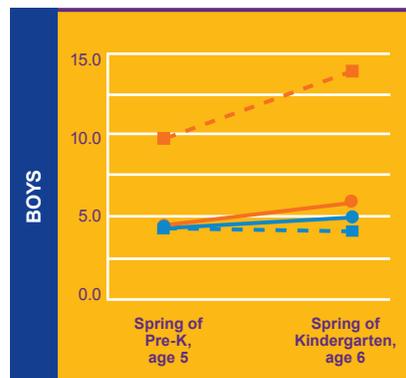
Young children who have difficulties with self-regulation are at high risk for a range of problems, including obesity and serious conduct problems. In this high-risk group, **ParentCorps** resulted in lower rates of sedentary behavior (such as television viewing) in girls, increased physical activity in boys, and substantially lower rates of obesity (BMI > 95th%) in both girls and boys.

ParentCorps altered the negative developmental trajectory for boys with early dysregulation, resulting in lower levels of serious conduct problems, including defiance, aggression, cheating and stealing.

PARENTCORPS IMPACT ON HEALTH AMONG HIGH-RISK CHILDREN



PARENTCORPS IMPACT ON CONDUCT PROBLEMS



- - - HIGH RISK - CONTROL
- - - HIGH RISK - INTERVENTION
- - - LOW RISK - CONTROL
- - - LOW RISK - INTERVENTION

ParentCorps is a copyrighted program developed by LM Brotman, EJ Calzada & S Dawson-McClure

SOURCE PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS BY BROTMAN AND PARENTCORPS TEAM

Promoting effective parenting practices and preventing conduct problems among ethnic minority families from low-income urban communities. *Child Development*, 2011, 82(1), 258-276.

Family intervention in early childhood and long-term obesity prevention among high risk minority youth. *Pediatrics*, 2012 129(3), 621-628.

A cluster (school) randomized trial of ParentCorps: Impact on kindergarten academic achievement. *Pediatrics*, in press.

A randomized controlled trial of ParentCorps: Promoting effective parenting and preventing conduct problems among children living in low-income, urban communities.

A randomized controlled trial of ParentCorps: Promoting positive behavior supports in early childhood classrooms in high-need communities.

ParentCorps Brief developed by Laurie Miller Brotman, Ph.D and Spring Dawson-McClure, Ph.D, updated February 2013

Laurie Miller Brotman, Ph.D.
 Prevention Science
 Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
 NYU Child Study Center
 NYU Langone Medical Center
 One Park Avenue, 7th Floor
 New York, NY 10016
 (646) 754-5192

www.aboutourkids.org
parentcorps@nyumc.org

