

Evidence-Based Interventions for Preschoolers with Behavior Problems

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Outline

- ▶ What do behavior problems look like in preschoolers?
- ▶ Why is it important to intervene early?
- ▶ Evidence-based assessment of behavior problems in preschoolers
- ▶ Evidence-based interventions for behavior problems in preschoolers
- ▶ Current research efforts in promoting successful transitions to kindergarten for children with behavior problems



Case Example

- ▶ Student (age 4) was demonstrating severe non-compliance and non-participation during teacher directed activities, but no behaviors during child directed activities. Student had particular difficulty transitioning into the morning circle time (9:00-9:30am). Specifically, he refused to go to the rug when directed to do so. Instead, the teacher reported that he would push toys off of the bookshelf, turn over chairs, yell, and run around the room while the teacher's aid "chased" him.
- ▶ At the time of referral for behavioral concerns, the student's teachers had requested an immediate change in class placement.
- ▶ During clinician initial observation: Instead of going to the circle, the clinician noted that he never went to the circle. The student went under table and yelled the classroom teachers name repeatedly - he called out, "I'm not coming to circle.....I'm under the table....." (repeatedly for about 10 minutes) then he went and sat in the cubby, pulled his blanket out of the cubby, pulled out one of his art projects and sat in his cubby for the rest of circle time.

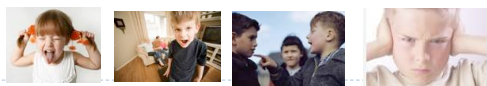
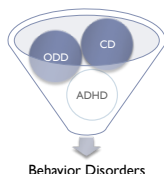


What are problem behaviors in the preschool years?

- ▶ Difficulty following directions
- ▶ Remaining in assigned seat or area
- ▶ Difficulty staying on task or following through on assigned tasks
- ▶ "On the go" or "Driven by a motor"
- ▶ Often loses temper
- ▶ Request or task refusal
- ▶ Deliberately annoys others
- ▶ Aggression towards adults, peers, or animals
- ▶ Destruction of property
- ▶ Deceitfulness or theft
- ▶ Serious rule violations
- ▶ **Occurs across settings**
- ▶ **Impairment**

Behaviors Disorders of Childhood

- ▶ Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)
- ▶ Conduct Disorder (CD)
- ▶ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)



What do these disorders look like in the preschool years?

- ▶ **Developmentally informed nosology** (Wakschlag, Tolan, & Leventhal, 2010)
- ▶ **75% of 2-year-olds exhibit tantrums and physical aggression**
- ▶ **Evidence for validity of preschool DBDs** (for reviews see Chacko, Wakschlag, Hill, Danis, & Epsy, 2009)
 - ▶ Preschoolers meeting DBD symptom criteria exhibit impairment at home and school (Keenen et al, 2007)
 - ▶ Prevalence rates and correlates of DBDs in preschoolers are roughly similar to those in older children (Egger & Angold, 2006)
 - ▶ DBD symptoms are associated with developmental based assessments
 - ▶ DBD symptoms demonstrate moderate stability (Moreland & Dumas, 2008)
 - ▶ Preschool DBDs are responsive to empirically validated interventions for disruptive behavior (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2007).

Why is intervention necessary?

- ▶ Without intervention, behavior problems in the preschool years have been found to predict:
 - ▶ Later problem behaviors in elementary school (Angold & Egger, 2007; Campbell, 2002)
 - ▶ Academic deficits and underachievement (Masseti et al., 2008)
 - ▶ Placement in special education (Redden et al., 2003)
- ▶ Lasting cost-benefit effect of early intervention (Heckman, 2000)
 - ▶ For every \$1 spent on high quality early childhood interventions at ages 4 to 5, program returns equal \$8.70

First Step to Success	Early Out-of-Control Behavior	Chronic Antisocial, Criminal Behavior	Adult Antisocial, Criminal Behavior
\$3,000 per individual per year	\$12,924 per individual per year	\$50,000 per individual per year	\$29,184 per individual per year

▶ Federal Agenda on Early Intervention and Prevention (1995)

Prevalence



ODD: 8.3% ADHD: 8.8%

▶ Lavigne, LeBailly, Hopkins, Gouze, & Binns (2009)

Risk Factors Associated with the Development of Behavior Problems in Preschool-Age Children (Campbell, 2002)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Child Characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Biological/risk vulnerability ▶ Temperamental "difficultness" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ High Reactivity ▶ High Negative Affect ▶ Limited ability to regulate arousal and negative affect ▶ Insecure Attachment ▶ Uneven or delayed cognitive development ▶ Deficits in social skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Parenting Behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Insensitivity/unresponsiveness ▶ Unavailability ▶ Lack of warmth and engagement ▶ Limited social and/or cognitive stimulation ▶ Harsh, inflexible control strategies ▶ Strict physical punishment ▶ Overly lax control strategies ▶ Inappropriate developmental expectations |
|---|--|

Risk Factors Associated with the Development of Behavior Problems in Preschool-Age Children (Campbell, 2002)

Family Composition and Interaction

- Single-parent family
- Marital discord
- Parental psychological disorder
- Parental disagreements over childrearing

Family Environment/Social Context

- Low educational level
- Unemployment or underemployment
- Limited financial/material resources
- Low social support
- Inadequate institutional support
- Inadequate child care facilities
- Family stress
- Neighborhood disadvantage

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Assessment

- Parent & Teacher rating scales
- Clinical Interview
- Observational Measures
- Early identification measures
 - Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA; LeBuffe & Naglieri, 1999)
- **Focus on Impairment:**
 - Problems in daily life functioning that result from *symptoms*-rather than the symptoms themselves
- **Impairment in key domains of functioning**
 - Peer relationships,
 - Family relationships
 - Classroom functioning
- **Functional Analysis of Behavior**

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What interventions work?

- Four broad categories of psychosocial interventions:
 - Family-based interventions
 - Skills-training approaches
 - Community-based programs
 - School-based interventions
- **Common Across Programs—Multicomponent!**
 - Parent intervention
 - Child intervention
 - School intervention

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Evidence-Based Preschool Interventions

Family-Based Interventions—Parent Training

- › Intervention is conducted primarily with the parents
- › Emphasis on prosocial goals rather than preoccupation with behavior problems
- › Content of programs typically includes:
 - › Instruction in social learning principles underlying parenting techniques
 - › Training in defining, monitoring, and tracking child behavior
 - › Positive reinforcement procedures
 - › Extinction and mild punishment procedures
 - › Training in clear instructions or commands
 - › Problem-solving
- › Group-based sessions weekly, therapist contact faded
- › Examples: COPE, PCIT, Helping The Noncompliant Child, Triple P, The Incredible Years, OSLC



Family-Based Interventions

Parent Intervention

- › Positive Attending
- › Special Playtime
- › Praise
- › Reward Systems
- › Limit-setting
 - › House Rules
 - › Appropriate Commands
 - › When-Then
- › Planned Ignoring
- › Consequences for negative behaviors
 - › Point or Token Loss
 - › Time Out & Loss of Privileges
- › Planning Ahead for Behaviors Outside the Home
- › Problem-Solving
- › School-Home Communication
- › Skills to managing parent stress



More Carrot—Less Stick

- › Don't expect instant changes—Improvement (learning) is often gradual



School Intervention

- ▶ Behavioral approach
- ▶ Focus on classroom behavior, academic performance, and peer relationships
- ▶ Teacher implemented
- ▶ Consultant works with teacher-initial weekly sessions, then contact faded
- ▶ Continued support and contact
- ▶ Program for maintenance and relapse prevention
- ▶ Reestablish contact for major developmental transitions
- ▶ Don't expect instant changes—Improvement (learning) is often gradual

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School-Based Interventions

- ▶ Classroom Behavioral Management Strategies
 - ▶ Classroom Rules
 - ▶ Praise & Positive Attending
 - ▶ Appropriate Commands
 - ▶ Planned Ignoring
 - ▶ Contingency Management
 - ▶ Transitions
 - ▶ Rewards for Positive Behavior
 - ▶ Fun Friday
 - ▶ Special privileges
 - ▶ Group Contingency Programs
 - ▶ Good Behavior Game (Barrish, Saunders, & Wolf, 1969)
 - ▶ Instructional modifications
 - ▶ Daily Report Card



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Daily Report Card

- ▶ Integral part of all our school interventions with ADHD children
- ▶ Serves as a means of identifying, monitoring, and changing the child's classroom problems
- ▶ Doubles as an avenue of regular communication between parents and the teacher
- ▶ Costs little, takes little teacher time, and is highly motivating to the children if parents have selected the right rewards for home back-up
- ▶ Effectiveness documented in numerous students
- ▶ Form available for download on our website

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Daily Report Card

Behavior	Morning Meeting	Small Learning Groups	Choice Time	Whole Group Reading	Mid-day meeting	Gross Motor
3 or fewer reminders to stay in area	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	No	No	No	No	No	No
3 or fewer reminders to follow directions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	No	No	No	No	No	No

Lunch: Uses materials and possessions appropriately YES NO

Percentage of Yeses Earned: _____

Parent provided reward: _____



School-Based Interventions

► First Step To Success (Walker et al., 2001)

- Based on The Contingencies for Learning Academic and Social Skills (CLASS) program
- Universal screening procedure, classroom intervention, and home intervention in place
- GREEN/RED card used as a visual cue that provides the child immediate, consistent feedback on behavior
- System of point earning with reward in place for meeting behavioral goals
- Daily Note Home rewarded by parents
- When child earns a specific number of points, a fun activity for the class is provided
- Consultant implemented for first 5 days, then teacher implemented for days 6-30
- Gradually phase out card and point system as child becomes more successful at meeting goals



School Interventions

► School-wide intervention approaches

- Positive Behavior Support (PBS; Sugai & Horner, 1999; Sugai, Horner, & Gresham, 2002)
 - Four linked systems:
 - Overarching discipline system with clearly defined expectations for staff and students and procedures for increasing positive behavior and preventing negative behavior
 - Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible
 - Classroom Level
 - Nonclassroom settings
 - Individualized student support systems
- Requires support from a majority of the school staff to be effective



Preventive Interventions

- ▶ Recognition that intensive home- and school-based interventions help overcome negative developmental history, poor family/ community environment, and deviant peer associations
- ▶ Main assumptions:
 - ▶ problems treated more easily/effectively in younger than older children
 - ▶ counteracting risk factors/strengthening protective factors at young age limits/prevents escalation of problem behaviors
 - ▶ reduces costs to educational, criminal justice, health, and mental health systems
- ▶ Incredible Years (Webster-Stratton & Herman, 2010; Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Stoolmiller, 2008; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2007)
- ▶ Fast Track (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 1992, 2000)



Skills-Training Intervention


- ▶ Child Intervention
 - ▶ Skills training
 - ▶ Typically involve modeling, role playing, coaching and practice, feedback, and positive reinforcement
 - ▶ Strengthening children's social skills and appropriate play skills (i.e., turn taking, waiting, asking, sharing, helping, and complimenting)
 - ▶ Promoting children's use of self-control strategies
 - ▶ Increasing emotional awareness
 - ▶ Reducing defiance, aggressive behavior, and related conduct problems
 - ▶ Increasing self-esteem and self-confidence
 - ▶ Incredible Years Dinosaur Program (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003)
 - ▶ Children meet weekly for 2 hours in group of 6 children for 22 weeks
- ▶ Don't expect instant changes—Improvement (learning) is often gradual
- ▶ Better outcomes when combined with parent intervention



Intensive Summer Interventions

- ▶ Children's Summer Treatment Program (STP; Pelham, Greiner, & Gnagy, 2004; Pelham et al., 2005; National Registry of Evidence-based Programs & Practices, 2008)
 - ▶ Social skills
 - ▶ Academic training
 - ▶ Recreational setting
 - ▶ Points, DRC, Field Trips/Fun Friday
- ▶ For children and adolescents, ages 5 to 15
- ▶ 360 hours of day treatment in 8 weeks = 7 years of weekly therapy
- ▶ Named as model service program in 1993 by APA





Promoting Successful Transitions to Kindergarten for Preschool Children with Behavior Problems

Department of Health and Human Services-Administration for Children and Families Research Grant
 In partnership with Miami-Dade County CAA Head Starts
 PI: William E. Pelham, Jr., Ph.D.
 Student Investigator: Katie Hart, M.A.

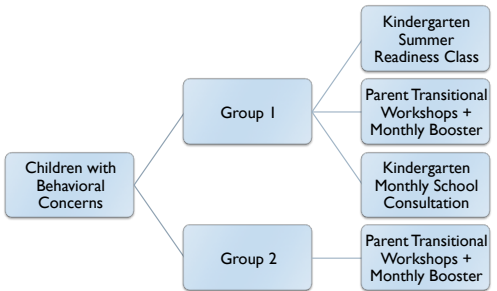
An Important Transition

- ▶ **Changing Environment**
 - ▶ New Expectations
 - ▶ New Relationships
 - ▶ New Competencies
- ▶ For children with behavior problems, the transition to kindergarten may be particularly challenging






Research Design

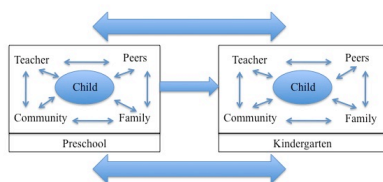


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graph LR
    A[Children with Behavioral Concerns] --> B[Group 1]
    A --> C[Group 2]
    B --> D[Kindergarten Summer Readiness Class]
    B --> E[Parent Transitional Workshops + Monthly Booster]
    C --> F[Kindergarten Monthly School Consultation]
    C --> G[Parent Transitional Workshops + Monthly Booster]
    
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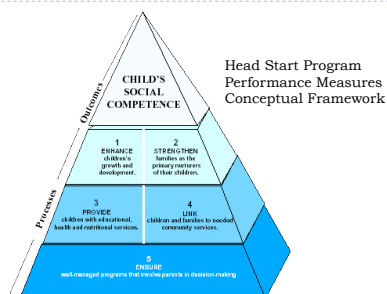
Models of The Transition to Kindergarten

- Developmental models of the transition to kindergarten highlight the multifaceted nature of the transition



Pianta & Kraft-Sayre (2003)

Our Study



Kindergarten Summer Readiness Class

- Children attend a full day 4-week camp before the start of the kindergarten year
- Modeled after our evidence-based Summer Treatment Program Academic Learning Center (Fabiano et al., 2007; Pelham et al., 1993; Pelham & Hoza, 1996)
- Goal: Create a literacy and numeracy rich, in combination with behavioral intervention, environment that will help the child be more prepared for the kindergarten year.
- 160 hours of intervention
- Recreation-based aftercare

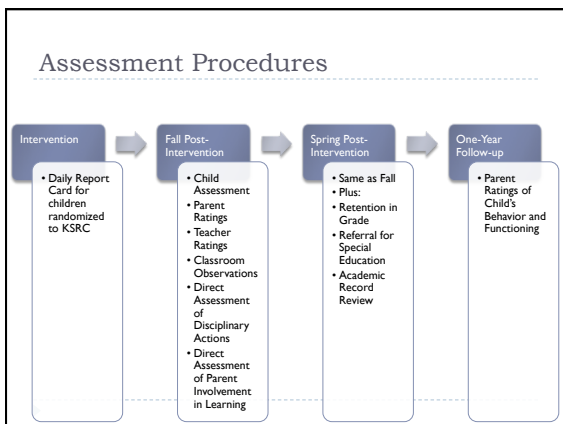


Time	Activity
8:15-8:30	Student Arrival
8:30-9:00	Morning Meeting
9:00-9:30	Small Learning Groups
9:30-10:00	Choice Time
10:30-11:00	Large Group: Circle Time
11:00-11:55	Gross Motor Activities
11:55-12:05	Hand washing
12:05-12:30	Lunch
12:30-12:40	Bathrooms
12:40-1:00	Mid Day Meeting
1:00-1:30	Independent Work
1:30-2:00	Large Group: Story Time
2:00-2:20	Large Group: Learning Game
2:20-2:35	Snack
2:35-2:45	End of Day Meeting
2:45-3:00	Choice Time
3:00-3:15	Dismissals or Transition to Recreational Aftercare
3:15-5:00	Recreational Aftercare

Parent Transitional Workshops

- ▶ Parents in both groups invited to attend weekly Parent Transitional Workshops
 - ▶ Home-School Communication
 - ▶ Working with the Schools
 - ▶ Planning Ahead
 - ▶ Problem-Solving Challenging Behaviors
 - ▶ Promoting Positive Behavior
 - ▶ Strengthening Relationships
 - ▶ Home Literacy Building Activities
 - ▶ Information on Special Education Services
 - ▶ Parent Empowerment
- ▶ Modeled after The Community Parent Education Program (COPE; Cunningham, Bremner, & Secord, 1998)
- ▶ Workshops continue weekly in September and occur monthly October through June
- ▶ Parents in the KSRC group will have extended consultant services into the kindergarten year

Assessment Procedures



Conclusions

- ▶ Without intervention, problem behaviors in the preschool years can predict poor outcomes
- ▶ Evidence-based treatments for behavior problems are multicomponent across settings but common in approach
- ▶ Interventions need to be adapted and modified for these major transitions





Thank you!
Please visit our new website:
<http://ccf.fiu.edu>

Institute for Child and Family Health & The Children's Trust
Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families
FIU & The Center for Children and Families
Our Collaborators and Grant Consultants: Gregory Fabiano & Greta Massetti
Miami-Dade County CAA Head Start Programs

Evidence-Based Preschool Interventions

- ▶ **Parent Training (COPE, Incredible Years, Triple P)**
 - ▶ Behavioral approach
 - ▶ Focus on behavior and family relationships
 - ▶ Parent implemented
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 - ▶ Continued support as long as necessary
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Evidence-Based Preschool Interventions

► Behavioral Parent Training

- Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (citations)
- MORE!!

► Interventions targeting social-emotional competence

- Incredible Years (Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Hammond, 2004)
- Project Star (Kaminski & Stormshak, 2007)
- Promoting Alternative Thinking Skills (Preschool PATHS; Domitrovich, Cortes, & Greenberg, 2007)
- Early Risers' "Skills for Success" Program (August, Bloomquist, Realmuto, & Hektner, 2007; August, Realmuto, Winters, & Hektner, 2001)
- First Step to Success (Walker et al., 1998)

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