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Acknowledgments

This proceedings book contains a collection of selected posters submitted to the EurofamNet Training School on How do we generate evidence in family/parenting support in 2022. The mission of this Training school is to contribute with high quality training of the future generations of European researchers in the field of family support from an evidence-based and pluralistic approach.

This training school has become an event for senior and young researchers to present their research, as well as exchange information and deepen their research problems, and develop sustainable cooperation.

There are 18 research posters submitted by early career researchers and 6 Lectures distributed in three days and thematic sessions: Evaluation Outcomes (by Patty Leijten and Andy Lloyds), Implementation Research (by Metin Özdemir and María José Rodrigo) and ICT in Family Support (by Jure Trilar and Ana Catarina Canario). Readers can find comparative and case studies, theoretical and empirical explorations, quantitative and qualitative methods, descriptive and analytical approaches, and interesting conclusion worldwide.

The organizers would like to thank you maximally to all parties involved. Best regards,

Committee

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An individual participant data meta-analysis on the differential effects of parenting interventions on child disruptive behavior symptom profiles

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Background

Disruptive behavior in children and adolescents compromise child development and family well-being. Parenting interventions that aim to reduce children's disruptive behavior by improving parenting practices, document positive outcomes for child mental health and family well-being, yet about a quarter to a third of the families fail to show improvement. In conceptualizing disruptive behavior, categorical and dimensional approaches are commonly used, and thus; prior studies have mostly examined intervention effects on outcomes such as overall scores of disruptive behavior or singular variables for total severity scores on Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), and Conduct disorder (CD). However, this approach does not accurately reflect the complexity of disruptive behavior and gives little attention to the combinations and relative contributions of individual symptoms. Alternatively, disruptive behavior can be viewed as an interacting network of symptoms, which are organized differently in individuals and follow different developmental pathways. Identifying how children differ in their symptomatology structure and how these networks of symptoms affect, and are affected by, parenting interventions, can improve our understanding of who benefits more or less from parenting intervention and the individual patterns of change in disruptive behavior symptoms.

Objectives

Research on the differential effects of parenting interventions on child disruptive behavior has been unsystematic and likely to be subject to limited statistical power, selective outcome reporting, and publication bias. The solution to this is drawing Individual Participant Data (IPD) across studies to establish a big dataset of worldwide randomized controlled trials on parenting interventions for child disruptive behavior. This will enable us to construct networks of disruptive behavior symptoms, conduct highly powered analyses, and minimize the chance of selective reporting. In an IPD meta-analysis, we plan to apply network analysis to examine the disruptive behavior symptom structure and explore associations between individual symptoms of ADHD, ODD, and CD in children. Subsequently, we aim to investigate how individual disruptive behavior symptoms or constellations of symptoms moderate the benefits of parenting intervention for children's overall levels of disruptive behavior. Also, to identify subgroup of children, who fall into the same category (profile) with regard to how their symptoms are organized and benefit more or less from a parenting intervention. Finally, we plan to investigate post-intervention changes in individual disruptive behavior symptoms and if the intervention can change the network structure among symptoms.

Method

We have conducted a systematic literature search on July 2022 and identified 17,451 relevant studies via Medline, Embase, PsycINFO, Web of Science, and ERIC. After deduplication we screened the titles and abstracts of 9,162 studies against our eligibility criteria. Inclusion criteria involved: (1) RCTs of parent-mediated interventions, (2) targeting children screened on disruptive behavior or diagnosed with ADHD, ODD, or CD, (3) below 18 years old. Exclusion criteria included: (1) Laboratory studies, (2) trials with samples where parenting and child mental health problems may be strongly influenced by the unique nature of the population, (3) studies that allowed participants to start pharmacological treatment or change their medication during the intervention period. Once the first round of screening, the full text of the selected articles will be screened against the eligibility criteria. Private investigators of the eligible studies will be contacted to request for their participation in our project by providing us with the raw IPD. All available data will be checked and harmonized to be prepared for the analyses.

Results

First, the results from exploring the symptom structure of disruptive behavior will allow us to delineate the role of individual symptoms and could serve as a first step in understanding the complex link between ADHD, ODD, and CD at the symptom level. Second, identifying subgroups of children with differential treatment effects can help advance the tailoring of interventions to individual family's needs. Last but not least, information about how parenting interventions predict changes in children's network of disruptive behavior symptoms could suggest if there is a need for targeted interventions at particular symptoms, and which symptoms should be prioritized.

Understanding birth and foster families experience through visits: a context for family development programme

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Background

Literature recognises the importance of visits while children and young people are in foster care as they influence their well-being and development. Visits help children to maintain their emotional bonds and attachment relationships with their birth family, and contributing to the development of their identity, completing their personal and family history. Literature also underlines the need to intervene with foster and biological families to ensure that these are quality contacts and provide a safe space for foster children. This is particularly important in long-term placements, as there are few intervention programmes in place where effectiveness has been evaluated.

Objectives

The aim of the present study is to present the first results of the evaluation of the pilot application of the psychoeducational programme Visits: a context for family development (Bernedo et al., 2020), the first programme designed in Spain to improve the quality of visits that take place during family foster care. This programme target birth and non-kinship foster families involved in a foster care process with visits and whose children are between 5 to 12 years old.

Method

At the beginning of the implementation, participants were 5 birth families (4 mothers and 1 couple), 5 foster families (8 foster carers) of 7 children in long placements (3 girls, 4 boys and 2 pair of siblings). However, 3 birth families (3 mothers); 5 foster families (2 women and 2 couples) of 5 children in long placements (3girls, 4 boys and 1 pair of siblings) completed the programme. The instruments used were: (a) data collection sheet to collect sociodemographic information about non-kinship foster children, their birth and foster families, as well as about contacts; (b) the session evaluation sheet, which includes six questions about technical and pedagogy aspects, and satisfaction with the session. Four are open questions, and two Likert answers (range from 1=not satisfied to 6=very satisfied). Quantitative data was analysed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 25 statistical package and frequency and descriptive analyses were performed. For qualitative data, content analysis of the open questions of the data collection sheet was carried out.

Results

This study presents the results regarding satisfaction and learnings achieved by birth and foster families. With respect to the former, both families present a high satisfaction with the technical and pedagogical aspects of the sessions, above all with the facilitator's relationship. However, some foster carers are less satisfied with the duration of some sessions. With regard to comprehension and learnings achieved, answers of birth families point out, among other things, to: a) importance of collaboration between all those involve in visits; b) skills for planning better visits; c) communication and educational skills; and d) importance of the role of foster families in children's wellbeing. For their part, foster families' answers indicate among other aspects: a) importance of working on children's life history; b) emotional competences; and c) communication and problem solving skills.

Conclusions

In general, both families are satisfied with their participation through the programme. One possible explanation for the less satisfaction of some foster and birth families with the duration of sessions could be that the time of these is considered insufficient to go deeper into certain contents. Furthermore, the answers of birth and foster families demonstrate that they have learned contents worked on sessions. In this way, taking into account the limit number of families, findings point out that families participation through the programme has promote the acquisition of emotional, educational and communicative skills of those birth mothers and fathers, as well as of foster carers. Among the learnings of the birth families, it should be highlighted the importance of collaboration and the role of the foster family, and the planning of visits. Among foster carers, it should be underlined the capacity of the intervention to go beyond learning competences, favouring reflection on the placement and the future of the foster child. Despite the fact that further research is need, the programme Visits: a context for family development seems to be a useful tool for child welfare professional working on visits and contacts during placements.

Keywords

Psychoeducational programme, family support, contact visits, family foster care.

Parenting intervention in the context of child protective services: the perspective of the child

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Background

Child maltreatment is increasingly recognised as a worldwide concern, given the long-life damages caused in child's mental health. Child maltreatment risk is enhanced by multiple adversities which are often observed in families engaged with Child Protective Services (CPS), and can represent potential harm and failure to provide children's basic needs for security, protection, and support. Several reasons are considered in the referral to CPS, including abandon, neglect, physical, psychological or sexual abuse, exposure to domestic violence, and child maltreatment.

Considering the detrimental effects of maltreatment on children's development, Family Support policies aim to reduce child maltreatment risks and enhance protective factors in adverse context. Many advances have been achieved in the field of Child Protection in terms of child participation and standards for Family Support practices based on evidence-based parenting intervention, carried out with the purpose of improving parental skills and parent-child relationships. Taking the children's perspective into account within the CPS is acknowledged as a children's fundamental right. Child participation is related to positive outcomes and to Family Support success. However, participation practices are not yet fully developed.

The current study addresses children's episodic memory, episodic foresight (future thinking) and the narratives about their interactions with parents, about parental practices and about the protective measures applied by the CPS, in three studies. The child's point of view is privileged in the analysis of adverse family circumstances, protective measures, and the perceived results of parenting intervention.

Objectives

The purpose of the first study is to explore the effects of the circumstances of referral to CPS that place families at-risk for breakdown on children´s narrative abilities and episodic memory related to familiar routine and specific personal events, considering the parental practices described from children's perspective. Episodic memory and narrative abilities were analysed according to procedure already used in previous studies and an adapted version of the Episodic Thinking Interview. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) were performed to compare children´s memory and narrative performances according to the circumstances of referral to CPS. The models (one per outcome variable) included each dependent variable, the

categories of referral to the CPS as the between factor subject. A Bonferroni posthoc test was used in each analysis to compare mean differences across groups.

The second study goal is to investigate possible effects of cumulative risks encompassing multiple maltreatment risks and adversities that trigger report to CPS, on the development of episodic foresight in middle childhood, exploring the cognitive mechanisms involved in future thinking. Episodic foresight and executive functions such as working memory, inhibitory control and flexibility were observed and compared in two moments, according to General Linear Mixed Models used to describe patterns of change over time, during parental intervention held by the CPS. Risk factors were analysed in terms of possible moderator effects observed according to Cumulative Risk Model, including low income, previous referrals to CPS, family breakdown, and family reunification, parent's low cognitive skills and low educational level.

Finally, the purpose of the third study is to emphasize children´s perspective about the adverse family circumstances, the protective measures applied during the parenting intervention and the perceived results in terms of parental practices. In this descriptive comprehensive study, semi-structured interviews and Thematic Analysis will be conducted, within a qualitative approach to analyse children's narrative with the focus on three dimensions: children's knowledge and information concerning the referral and the protective measures applied; changes perceived over time (in the family, in the parent's practices and competencies, and in the children themselves); and concerns, fears and hopes expressed by the children regarding the CPS involvement.

Method

Eighty-two children aged between 6 and 12 years (65.9% boys, M = 9.7 years SD = 1.7), whose families were followed by the CPS in the North of Portugal take part in the study. All the families are followed by CPS and referred to Family Support. The current study is part of a wider research project to evaluate the effectiveness of an evidence-based parenting intervention delivered in community-based settings to vulnerable families, at-risk for family breakdown.

Results

In Study 1, the detrimental effect of maltreatment on children´s Episodic Memory performance has been ascertained. Children referred to CPS due to disruptive behaviour presented higher episodic memory performance, compared to those exposed to domestic violence, neglect, and abuse. The lack of regularity observed in neglectful and abusive contexts provides an inconsistent temporal frame and may bring detrimental effects on narrative abilities and episodic memory skills.

In Study 2, a moderate negative correlation was observed between cumulative risk and episodic foresight. CPS involved- children exhibited significantly lower episodic foresight abilities, compared with a normative equivalent sample previously analysed.

Conclusions

Taking the child´s perspective into account entails the development of Family Support practices that are flexible and sensible to the importance of children´s narrative abilities to make sense of their own personal experiences and to become recognized as active agents in family contexts. This is the first time that episodic memory and episodic foresight have been used to explore developmental characteristics of children engaged with CPS, regarding their possibilities to integrate past and future experiences they had in adverse circumstances. This study offers some important insights into child participation and possible contributions for engaging with vulnerable children and listening to their voices, which is of utmost relevance within the framework of parenting intervention and Family Support.

Key words

Child participation, child protection, parenting intervention, episodic memory, episodic foresight.

Families at psychosocial risk. Analysis of the relation between parental competences and conduct problems in children and adolescents

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Background

In accordance with the principles of family preservation, focused on improving family functioning, interventions with families at psychosocial risk are largely aimed at strengthening and acquiring the necessary parental competencies so that children can see their developmental needs met in their original family contexts. To this effect, it is important to start knowing the real situation in these families. In this sense, it is essential to start from studies that allow us to know what the levels of parental competencies of families are like. Within this framework, the objectives of this work are to study the parental competencies in parents of families at psychosocial risk in Spain, and to analyse their relationship with the behavioural problems of their children.

Method

The sample was composed by 224 parental figures (87.5% women), users from Welfare Services in Spain, participating in family support interventions. Three instruments were used in this study: (1) a family sociodemographic survey that collects information such as relationship, age, sex, educational level, professional status and family structure; (2) the Interview for Assessment of Parental Competencies (ECP - 12), which measures 12 parental competencies by expert judgement through 53 indicators on a Likert scale from 1 to 5; (3) and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), in which only the behavioural problems dimension was used, consisting of 5 items on a Likert scale from 0 to 2 and completed by caregivers.

Results

Nearly half of the children had behavioural problems. Numerous families did not reach the values of parental competencies recommended by the ECP - 12 Technical Manual (Hidalgo et al., 2020). The competencies with higher needs for support were emotional self-regulation, social support, and the one related to stimulation and structuring of family life. In addition, the competence linked to the shared time in family and the capacity to offer warmth and to establish a healthy communication were significant and inversely related to the conduct problems of their children, with medium effect size. The higher the levels of these two competencies in parents, the lower the values of behavioural difficulties in their children. The skills and attitudes that parents had in raising their children could go a long way towards explaining the behavioural problems their children had developed. The parental competence

based on establishing a relationship based on affection and communication with their children was the skill that explained the most variance.

Conclusions

It is important to highlight the need of paying attention to the behaviour of children from families at psychosocial risk, in order to detect, prevent and intervene in possible behavioural problems. These families are in need of support in their parenting skills for positive parenting, particularly in the ones involved in developing emotional self-regulation, in establishing and maintaining a social support network and in using strategies to promote the children through stimulation and structuring of family life. Furthermore, in order to prevent and/or reduce the conduct problems in these families, it is convenient to foster the parental competencies, especially, the ability to establish relationships based on affection, communication, emotional warmth and interest in their child, together with shared family time, as these two are aspects associated with lower levels of behavioural problems, the former being a factor that may explain behavioural difficulties in children and adolescents

Key words

Families at psychosocial risk, parental competencies, conduct problems, family preservation.

Supporting parents of young children with disabilities in Croatia: The „Growing up together Plus" program evaluation

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Introduction

In the last decade, the provision of parenting support programs is gradually increasing in Croatia. Although the importance of providing empirical evidence for their effectiveness is strongly emphasized (Asmussen, 2011; Wessels et al., 2013), it is still not reflected in the number of published evaluation studies. „Growing Up Together Plus" (GUTPlus) is a version of universal parenting support program „Growing Up Together" for parents of preschool children (Pećnik & Starc, 2010) adapted to more closely fit the needs of parents with a young child with disabilities (CWD). The program consists of a set of weekly, two-hour long, structured workshops (supported by the manual, PowerPoint presentations, short films and written materials for parents), designed for groups of 8-12 parents and facilitated by two trained professionals. The aim of this study is to contribute to the evaluation of GUTPlus program by: 1) determining the extent and direction of changes in parenting experience and ways of interaction with their CWD after GUTPlus attendance, and 2) testing weather the changes in the measured outcomes have been moderated by child's disability type.

Method

A pre-post interventional study design has been implemented. The data from 360 parents (84% mothers) who participated in the program in the period from 2014. to 2022. have been used. Pre-test is being conducted before starting the program and post-test immediately after completing last session. Several instruments were used: The Parenting Morale Index (PMI; Trute and Hiebert-Murphy, 2005, in Trute, et al., 2009) assessed parents' emotions; Sources and Intensity of Parenting Stress/ a sense of parental incompetence subscale (Profaca & Arambašić, 2004); Family Needs Survey (Bailey & Simeonson, 1988) identified topics of greater needs and wanted support (information on dealing with CWD, support in dealing with social environment, personal support); Parental Interaction with the Child (Pećnik & Starc, 2010) measured the frequency of developmentally desirable (positive interactions) and violent (negative interactions) parental behaviours in interaction with their young child during the seven days preceding data collection. According to the type of child's disability, parents were divided in five groups: Motor, hearing or visual impairment (11%), Intellectual disabilities (13.7%), Autism spectrum disorder (40%), Speech and language disorder (21.6%), and Multiple disabilities (13.7%).

Results

A set of Mixed Design ANOVAs (repeated measures with a Child's disability type as a between-subject factor) were performed. The main effect of intervention was significant for most measured variables, suggesting that after participating in „GUTPlus" program parents of CWD significantly increased in their parenting moral, decreased in stress out of sense of incompetence, reduced the incidence of negative interactions with their child and reduced their needs for support in dealing with their CWD and social environment. None of the interactions between intervention and child's disability type was statistically significant, suggesting that the intervention might have been equally effective in all groups of parents with children of different types of disabilities. However, the main effect of child's disability type was consistently significant in all analyses (except from negative interactions) suggesting that means on dependent variables differed for groups of parents with different child disability types. Post hoc analyses (Bonferonni tests) revealed that compared to most groups of parents, parents of children with ASD had lower parenting moral, more stress related to sense of incompetence and expressed more needed support in dealing with their child, social environment as well as personal support (both pre and post intervention).

Conclusion

The results are in favour of the effectiveness of the program for all groups of parents (according to child's disability types). In future analyses, the analysed data should be complemented with the analysis of collected qualitative data (exp. gains for parents themselves and their CWD). A design with the control group should be implemented, as well as a follow-up measurement to test the durability of the effects. Additionally, possible other moderator effects could be tested (e.g. the presence of spouse on workshops). Adding more measurement points could assist learning which segments of the program contributed most to the improvement, as well as asking parents themselves to identify most helpful contents of the workshops. Parents of children with ASD might be especially at risk, thus possibly require additional support.

Keywords

Growing Up Together Plus program, parenting support program, parents of children with disabilities, program evaluation, program effectiveness, evidence-based practice.

Examining the effects of the Home-Start family support program: an experience sampling method

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Background

Home visiting programs are broadly used to support families and to prevent family dysfunctioning. Research on the evaluation of home visiting programs, such as Home-Start, has shown some promising effects for caregivers and children (Dekovic et al., 2010; Asscher et al., 2007). Effects are, however, limited in magnitude and utility of home visiting has not yet been clearly demonstrated (Overbeek et al., 2017). One explanation for the modest effects might be that most effectiveness studies try to find overall effects, whereas not all families are likely to benefit from one program or one approach. Identifying effective components of home visiting programs may support practitioners in providing tailored - and thereby hopefully more effective - care aimed at enhancing positive parenting behavior. In this research project, we aim to identify effective components in the Home-Start program using a mixed method approach. Home-Start is a voluntary organization in which volunteers offer regular support, friendship and practical help to young families in their own homes helping to prevent family crisis or breakdown. In one of the partial studies of this research project, an experience sampling method will be used.

Method

Experience Sampling Method

The aim of this partial study is to include 20 Home-Start families from a larger case-control study (N = 264) in an experience sampling study. The experience sampling method (ESM) is also referred to as the ‘daily diary method’. Using ESM, caregivers are assessed prospectively in their normal daily life with questions about their actual mental state and parenting behavior, thus reducing retrospective biases (Myin-Gerneys & Kuppens, 2022). The participants fill out short questionnaires using the SEMA3 app (Koval et al., 2013) on their phone. In total, 1680 data points will be obtained.

Questionnaire Design and Analyses

Items

ESM items are intended to capture dynamic phenomena that are expected to evolve and change over time on a relatively small timescale (i.e., across hours or days, rather than months or years). In this study, a total of 19 items capturing 6 constructs will be measured (i.e., ‘positive affect’, ‘negative affect’, ‘social support’, ‘parent-child relationship’, ‘parent self-efficacy’, and ‘parenting behavior’). A meaningful ESM item should capture state-like features

that assess something that is specific to the present moment and hence shows sufficient within-person variability. For example, one of the questions related to ‘parent self efficacy’ is: “In the last two hours, I felt confident as a parent”.

Analyses

Network analyses (Borsboom & Cramer, 2013) and Dynamic Structural Equations Modeling (DSEM; Asapourov et al., 2018) will be peformed to model interactions between items, and to examine the within- and between-person differences in the effects of the Home-Start program on study outcome variables (i.e., parenting behavior).

Expected Results

This micro-ESM study allows assessing the immediate or long-term effects of Home-Start, how the effects of the program change over time, when the program is more efficacious, and what (within-person) specific variables moderate the program’s effects. For example, network analyses allows us to gain insight into change over time in – the strength of – negative and positive associations between intervention targets, mood, and parenting behavior.

Keywords

Home-start, family support, ESM, network analysis.

Evaluation of a mindfulness-based program for parents of children with mental health disorders

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Background

Parents of children and adolescents with mental health disorders face additional demands that are often related with higher levels of stress and anxiety (Bögels et al., 2010; Meppeling et al., 2016). However, interventions in mental health units are often focused on the individual with mental disorders not targeting stress reduction in parents as an objective. Mindfulness-based interventions, and particularly Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) has been found to reduce stress and promote well-being in different populations (Grossman et al., 2004; Minor et al., 2006). However, the circumstances of parents of individuals with mental health disorders make this program difficult to be fully implemented. This project emerged as a result of a detected need from practitioners in a specialized mental health unit, who adapted the MBSR to meet the needs of these parents, creating the program “Cuidar al cuidador”, (Jiménez-Andrés, n.d.). Additionally, the importance of evidence-based practices in public services justify the need for a systematic and structured evaluation of this program.

Method

The evaluation design consisted of an intervention – control group with four and two different measurement moments respectively. The intervention group consisted of mothers and fathers of children and adolescents with mental health disorders benefitting from specialized mental health services. In this group, parents signed a consent form and filled a sociodemographic profile designed by the research team, along with a battery of questionnaires at pretest. Then, at the middle point of the intervention they answered a set of short-ended questions about whether their expectations were being met, their satisfaction with the program and the group, their difficulties or struggles, as well as their experience with specific practices that had been implemented during the first half of the program. The evaluation of the intervention group included also a postest and a six-month follow-up assessment. At postest participants filled the same battery of questionnaires along with a satisfaction with the intervention questionnaire. We also used focus groups at postest to assess their perceived impact of the program, their satisfaction, specific aspects of the program considered to be particularly relevant and possible improvements in the program. Finally, we evaluated the implementation of the program through a field diary filled by the practitioner in charge of the group after each session. These field diaries incorporated information about the session, such as group climate, general satisfaction with the session, practices that were implemented and observations about deviations from the original program and which practices worked best and worst in each session. This instrument also included

information about the participants, including attendance, level of participation and completion of at-home tasks. Regarding the comparison group, consisting of mothers and fathers from a comparable mental health unit for children and adolescents, who had not participated in the intervention, we used a battery of questionnaires in an initial evaluation and after 10 weeks, along with a sociodemographic profile.

Participants accessed the program voluntarily in strict order of application. They heard about the program either by flyers posted in the reception area of the mental health unit or by referral by their children's mental health practitioner, who mentioned the program in case they perceived the need for this type of interventions in parents. Concerning the comparison group, we expect to recruit 40 families for the initial evaluation. We used a non-symmetrical stratified sampling matching strategy based on three different criteria. The first criterion was the mental health disorder of the chid or adolescent, divided in three groups based on a theoretical criterion. As such, we used the prevalence rates of externalizing, internalizing and other disorders obtained in previous research conducted in that unit. The second criterion was the age of the child, divided in two broad categories: children with ages ranging between 0 -12 years old and adolescents with ages between 13-18 years old. We used as a reference sociodemographic data from the intervention group. Finally, the last criterion was the parents' gender (fathers or mothers), using again as a reference the percentages from the intervention group. The recruitment of participants for the comparison group is not randomized. Practitioners, after the parent has agreed to participate and signed the consent form, refer these parents to the research group, providing us with a contact information. Then, an experienced researcher will contact the parent by phone and set a date to fill out a questionnaire via zoom or a phone call. Participants in the comparison group who complete the final evaluation will receive a reward in terms of school material valued in 30 euros that will be sent to their preferred address. Data analysis will include repeated measures ANOVA and content analysis.

Results

Preliminary results are promising, indicating positive effects of the intervention in improving parents' perception of well-being, with a significant reduction in depressive, anxious, somatic and social dysfunction symptomatology. Results also indicated a positive perceived impact at a personal and parental level, with parents expressing feelings of reduced stress.

Next steps

Next steps in this project include data collection from the comparison group and analysis comparing the intervention and control group. Concerning the implementation data, we will analyse the data collected through the field diaries, identifying possible moderators of the intervention, we are particularly interested in the frequency of completion of home tasks assigned at the end of each session, as they are essential in this program. Finally, we will try to incorporate suggested improvements, such as the inclusion of some additional measures such as parental self-regulation or family quality of life.

Keywords

Mindfulness, parenting, mental health disorders, evidence-based, program evaluation.

Evaluating the implementation and sustainability of an evidence-based parenting program in real-world settings

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Background

The implementation of Evidence-Based Parenting Programs (EBPP) in real-world settings is fundamental to making effective programs widely available and consequently improving the lives of children and their families. The quality of implementation is considered the most critical threat to program effectiveness, even when programs are evidence-based[1]. However, remains a knowledge gap on how EBPP are implemented in real-world settings, especially with parents engaged with child protective services[2]. A fundamental challenge is ensuring flexible implementation, yet without compromising fidelity to the program's core components[3]. Effective implementation is limited by numerous factors, including the extent to which the program can be adapted to fit the family and setting needs, as well as practitioners perceived self-efficacy in implementing the program and their expectations about the program outcomes[4]. Nowadays, sustainability is recognized as one of the most significant translational research challenges[5]. Failure to sustain EBPP means that the intended benefits are short-lived and that real losses are incurred on research investment, time, and resources. Therefore, implementation and postimplementation studies of EBPP are needed, to further our understanding of the relationships between fidelity, flexibility, and sustainability.

Objectives

The current project aims to evaluate the implementation and sustainability of the Standard Triple P (STP) program in real-world settings. To achieve this goal, five interjoined studies are being developed. Through a scoping review, Study 1 aims to establish a comprehensive understanding of how EBPP have been implemented under real-world conditions, mapping the available evidence, and identifying knowledge gaps. Study 2 aims to examine how practitioners balanced fidelity and flexibility when implementing the STP. Study 3 aims to analyze the effect of practitioners' perceived self-efficacy and their expectations about STP effectiveness on implementation fidelity, and to what extent these factors affect the relation between implementation fidelity and the primary intervention outcomes. Study 4 aims to examine the extent to which receiving STP influenced the family's trajectory in the Child Welfare System and analyze whether this effect varied depending on the implementation characteristics. Study 5 aims to identify the factors that facilitate success and/or create barriers to the sustained use of STP in real-world settings.

Method

This Ph.D. project draws on and extends data collected from the ongoing research project REUNIRmais[6], a quasi-experimental trial on the effectiveness of the STP. Participants are 16 accredited STP practitioners and 75 parents engaged with Child Protective Services (CPS). Data collection involves multiple sources. In Study 1, the scoping review follows the methodological framework described in the Joanna Briggs Institute's Manual for Evidence Synthesis. In Study 2, we will collect data through STP fidelity checklists, observation of the Peer Assisted Supervision and Support sessions, and Focus Groups with practitioners. In Study 3 practitioners will fill out two checklists about their perception of self-efficacy and STP effectiveness during program delivery, and parents will fill out questionnaires about changes in their parenting practices and children's behavior. In Study 4, we will analyze the families' referral processes to characterize each family's trajectory over time in their contact with CPS. In Study 5, we will conduct an individual semi-structured interview with each practitioner, 6 and 18 months after the end of the effectiveness trial. Data will be analyzed through a mixed method approach.

Results and Conclusions

Given the detrimental impact of adversity in vulnerable families and the need to address parenting practices to prevent it, identifying the implementation of effective programs is critical. This project sheds light on the implementation in real-world settings of an EBPP with families that are engaged with CPS, informing about implementation fidelity and flexibility. We will also provide an understanding of what are the facilitators and barriers to the sustained use of an EBPP in real-world settings, which we expect will contribute not only to achieving positive outcomes but also cost savings. Outcomes will ultimately serve to strengthen the evidence-based practice in CPS and best assist the families and children who need effective services the most.

Keywords

Evidence-based parenting programs, implementation, sustainability, real-world settings, child protective services.

Influence of the “Creciendo Juntos” programme on the self-concept and social realization of adolescents

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Background

The Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach implies a positive view of the adolescent. This development means the existence of competencies of adolescents and their developmental environments. In this sense, schools are a privileged context for the promotion of this approach as they offer students the opportunity to test their strengths, to connect with adults who act as positive role models and to develop in safe environments. This also has a positive impact on students' continuity in school. However, not all schools are promoters of positive development. To this end, it is necessary to promote educational practices that guarantee these aspects. In this way, the programme "Creciendo Juntos: Programa de Orientación Educativa para la Promoción del Desarrollo Personal en la Adolescencia" is a tool for teaching teams to promote PYD.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are to present the programme and evaluate its effectiveness in promoting students' self-concept and social realization. "Creciendo Juntos” is an evidence-based programme structured in five modules of 22 sessions to be implemented during the academic year. It is based on an experiential methodology adapted to intervention with adolescents, which helps teachers of Obligatory Secondary Education to become reference figures for their students and to promote all their personal competences. The main novelty of this programme is the collaborative work of the teaching team, as it offers the possibility of implementing it in mentoring and in other subjects, as its contents consider the curricular objectives and competences of this stage.

Method

The programme was implemented by 96 teachers in 19 public schools in the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands. A sample of 990 participants in Obligatory Secondary Education was used for the evaluation. ((age)=12.96, 11-17; 47.5% girls, 52.5% boys). In terms of academic profile, 47% claim to have an average academic level, and 38% have repeated one academic year or more. Also, 37.5% had an intermediate level of conflict, and the most of them had a good relationship with their teachers (54.9%) and their classmates (48.1%). In addition, we used the Self-Concept and Social Realization Questionnaire in Spanish AURE. That has been validated with optimal fit indices (RMSEA=.026; 90% .019-

.033; CFI=.991; TLI = .985 y SRMR= .026). The reliability of the scale was also satisfactory overall (α=.93) and in the four dimensions of the scale: self-concept satisfaction and self-esteem (α=.80); social and empathy self-concept (α=.75); operability and self-demand to tasks (α=.85); and interest and enjoyment in the implementation of projects (α=.64). Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVAS) was made. Then gains and Analyses of variance (ANOVAS) were calculated.

Results and Conclusions

The results indicate that, after the end of the intervention, the control group shows losses in most of the factors that make up self-concept and social realization, while the intervention group increases their averages or maintains them except in operability and self-demand to tasks. However, in the individual factor analyses, no significant differences were observed between the intervention and control groups at baseline and at the end of the intervention. In terms of the gains of the participating students, greater gains were found in boys, 13-year-old students, in students who have not repeated a year, in students with poor relations with teachers and classmates, and in students with a medium level of conflict. The findings suggest, firstly, that the students with the greatest gains in self-concept and social realization are those with a profile at risk of early school leaving. Other studies have found that this profile is characterised by being male, 13 years old and with poor relationships with teachers and classmates. Secondly, that it is necessary to evaluate the implementation variables that may be influencing the student's gains, to update the implementation procedure to find the most beneficial format for all participants. Despite this, we can affirm that Positive Youth Development programmes implemented in schools, based on evidence and using experiential methodology, such as "Creciendo Juntos", have promising results in promoting the students' self-concept and social realization, both of which are fundamental for their full development.

Keywords

Self-concept, social realization, positive youth development, evidence-based programmes, obligatory secondary education.

Dual impact of migration process on the harmonious growth and development of children

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Background

In the Republic of Moldova, the process of migration is very active. In special, we can observe that a relevant numbers of families are monoparentals, due to the fact the women have chosen to emigrate, to improve the life conditions for other members of family. As a result of this process, we can observe a dual impact. The first one is positive, where women import good practices for the economical, educational and humanitarian development into the country. Motivation and financial freedom have allowed many women to become free entrepreneurs and open their own businesses in their home countries. I believe that this category of women serve as a very strong examples for all members of society, as they become ambassadors of good practice, importing ideas and economical culture from the developed countries of the European Union, into the developing countries of Eastern Europe, as Republic of Moldova is. In this context, the Republic of Moldova can serve as a good example of women who emigrated by force due to dramatic economic conditions, but returned to their homeland and started successful businesses. The second one is negative and it is linked with the conditions for the harmonious growth and development of children. Children whose parents have emigrated abroad face multiple specific challenges in terms of participation in education, including dropping out of school and absenteeism.

The school is the main factor of education and training of the personality of the child and the future adult. This institution is responsible for its realization and preparation so that it can adapt to the changing conditions of the socio-cultural environment. Among the purposes of education is the formation of civilized behavior and moral qualities such as: honesty, fairness, sincerity, respect for parents, colleagues and work, for the purpose of free, harmonious development and the formation of the moral profile of the student's personality.

Other risks associated with schooling include impaired academic performance and lack of motivation. The number of these children is increasing; thus, in 2014 the number of “authorized” emigrants was 104 thousand people, increasing to 114 thousand at the end of 2018. Although the reunification of families among migrants seems to be a growing trend, it is estimated that about 100,000 children and young people are left without parental supervision. The gender of the parent who emigrated significantly influences the extent to which the child will adapt and, respectively, will participate in the educational process. The family and the educational institutions are determinants for children education. According to recent data, more than a third of teenagers have at least one parent working abroad and about 10% of teenagers have both parents working abroad. However, the role of the family

in educating and supporting children in a safe transition to adulthood remains very important. In this context, the state's attention to the family as a key factor in the education of children must be one of the priority perspectives of social policies. The educational system must provide all children with the same opportunities for learning and development regardless of their family and socio-economic background.

Objectives

1. To deepen the study in assessing the negative and positive impact of emigration.

2. To identify the forms of state intervention in reducing migration.

3. To analyse the role of the education system in preparing children for the challenges of life.

Methodology

The working methodology in the research project includes the study of the topic from the point of view of evolution, the current context and the development perspectives of the problem. Comparative and systemic analysis is frequently used. The questionnaire and interview method are also addressed.

Results

1. New paradigms in the study of the emigration process.

2. Evaluating the decisive role of the school in preparing children for life.

3. Promoting good practices and success stories as a result of the emigration process.

Keywords

Migration, women, school dropout, incomes, life conditions.

The integration of transmedia education as support tool for fostering and family reunification processes

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Background

Transmedia storytelling is a new way to tell stories through multiple media, in which the audience takes an active role in its expansion. Transmedia storytelling has two basic characteristics, which are media convergence and the audience active role (Jenkins, 2006; Scolari, 2013). Media convergence is the flow of the story or discourse throughout different media. The active role of the audience refers to the collaboration of the public in the expansion of the story with their own productions. The application as pedagogical methodology is called Transmedia Education (TE). TE is the proactive educational process based on the consumption and production of media content using different languages, platforms, and media (Fleming, 2013; Raybourn, 2014; Scolari et al., 2019).

Such new approach is especially relevant in the field of child protection. A field with huge amounts of information must be communicated between people with very heterogeneous characteristics such as socio-educational professionals, families, and children. Each of these groups requires a type of communication appropriate to its particularities, but with the same goal. In addition, transmedia narratives allow the actors the possibility of contributing with their experience and creativity, which is treasures huge potentiality to enhance family participation and could help in the blending of family support programs.

Objectives

The specific aim this project is to improve family reunification processes and enhancing family participation in such processes. The aim is materialized with the analysis, design and elaboration of a transmedia education model focused on the participation of all the agents involved, and the transmedia resources and materials that integrate this model. According to this approach, the research has four objectives:

Objective 1: exploring the scientific background on the use of transmedia education in the framework of the child protection system and non-formal education.

Objective 2: delimiting the elements necessary to integrate transmedia education and the resources that can be suitable in the processes of foster care and family reunification

Objective 3: Designing a transmedia educative model that would contribute to the improvement of fostering and family reunification processes.

Objective 4: Blueprinting and elaborating transmedia educational objects that would articulate the model.

Method

According to the objectives of the research, the thesis has been structured in 4 stages with different research methods:

Stage 1) Previous analysis of the field: in this primary stage a systematic literature review was carried out using the proposals of García-Peñalvo and Levac et al. (2022; 2010) as a methodological basis and the guidelines from PRISMA statement by Page et al (2021). Finally, 29 studies were analyzed.

Stage 2) Entry into the scenario and data collection: In this second stage a rubric has been elaborated following the base lines of Montoya & Vásquez (2018) matrix and adding recommendations from Marrapodi (2016) and Askwith (2009). To investigate if some more sections were suitable a qualitative research trough focus groups an interviews was carried out with children, adolescents and parents.

From here we advance to the creative part of the project, the construction of a proposal to add the TE as support tool in family support. It is structured in two separate stages: Stage 3) Design of TEP in family reunification model; and Stage 4) Design and development of resources and strategies.

Results

A small number of TE precedents have been found in non-formal education in general and in child protection in particular. Yet, some strategies and particularities of TE were found to have great potentiality in a non-formal education context, such as positive parenting programs.

The seven level to contemplate when designing a TEP are: 1) Level of intentions; 2) Level of indications for the facilitator; 3) Level of participants' needs; 4) Narrative / ludic / performative level; 5) Level of integrations; 6) Level of technological/physical resources and supports; and 7) Level of sharing. This levels in addition to the usual educative design elements are to be considered when proposing an TEP in non-formal education settings.

In addition, the main expected results of this research are both: 1) the transmedia communicative and socio-educational action model, to be applied in the field of child protection and more specifically in the processes of foster care and family reunification. With the intention that this model can improve communication, social re-education and present in an attractive way the globality of the information that must be transmitted to the different agents that participate in a process of this nature. An also 2) Developing a series of transmedia products in accordance with the model designed above, to establish a practical application of this model that acts as an example while illustrating the model designed.

Conclusions

The few precedents of TE in child protection suggests that, in practice, the use of TE is not sufficiently widespread among professionals (educators, social workers...), even though, as noted by Fernández-Rodrigo et al. (2019), non-formal professionals claim to take advantage of the use of multimedia technologies.

Moreover, Vaquero et al. (2014) showed the use of technologies can become a resilience factor in families and children in vulnerable situations and family participation has demonstrate to help in the successful outcome of reunification processes (Balsells, 2019). Transmedia education can help unify this variables in the same way that allows to comunicate with each participant agent with an appropriate language to its particularities and also let the contribute with its own productions which could eventually be a resilience item.

Technoference in the family context

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Background

The use of digital technology, especially smartphones, in everyday life can disrupt the dynamics of interpersonal relationships. At the beginning of research on this topic, this process was described as "absent presence" which means the physical presence and mental absence of an individual due to the use of digital technology devices (Gergen, 2002). More recent literature introduces the term technoference, technology interference, which means interruptions in interpersonal interactions or shared time due to the use of digital devices (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016). Such interruptions can occur during a conversation, a meal, or a game, or are simply the result of a perceived "intrusion" that an individual experiences when the person they are interacting with shifts their focus to the smartphone (McDaniel & Radesky 2018). This study aimed to examine the relationships between technoference, conflict over smartphone use between parents and adolescents, and adolescent internalizing, externalizing, and attention problems.

Method

Our sample consisted of 283 adolescents (59,4% girls) aged 10 to 15 (median 12) and 280 parents (80,7% mothers). This research is part of Study 2, Wave 2 in the research project “Digital technology in the family: patterns of behaviour and effects on child development”. Based on our qualitative study (Study 1, S1) we constructed new measures for adolescents which are the Frequency of Checking Smartphones in the Family Context and Parent-Adolescent Conflict Over Adolescent’s Smartphone Use. Both scales showed good psychometric characteristics. We also used Brief Problem Monitor - ASEBA BPM-Y (Achenbach et al., 2011) for measuring internalizing, externalizing problems, and attention problems in adolescents. For the purposes of this research, only adolescents’ answers were used. The study results show that technoference in the family context is a significant predictor of internalizing problems in adolescents in the first block. In the second block, variables of technoference remained significant, while conflicts over the use did not prove to be predictive. Overall, 13% of the variance of internalizing problems could be explained by this set of predictors. Checking smartphones in situations when parents are engaged in other activities in the first and second blocks and conflicts over the time of smartphone use in the second block are significant predictors for externalizing and attention problems in adolescents. Overall, 15% of the variance in externalizing problems and 19% of the variance in attention problems among adolescents could be explained with this set of predictors.

Results

The findings are consistent with previous research results according to which family distraction with technology negatively impacts child and adolescent development (e.g., McDaniel, 2019; McDaniel and Coyne, 2016; McDaniel and Radesky 2018; Brdovčak et al., 2020; Merkaš et al., 2021). Frequently checking smartphones during interactions with family members contributes to internalizing problems in adolescents. Checking smartphones in situations when parents are engaged in other activities and conflicts over the time of smartphone use contributes to externalizing and attention problems in adolescents. McDaniel and Radesky (2018) explain this trend in findings by suggesting that parental attention shifts from the child's needs to the smartphone, making parents less sensitive to children's needs. Children react to their parents' inaccessibility, and their reactions are often reflected in problematic behaviours and experiences. The results point to important risk factors, such as smartphone use during family interactions, that should be considered in understanding adolescent problems. Thus, this study provides important directions for further research to examine the mechanisms underlying the relationship between technoference and problems in adolescents.

AdoPt - Adoptive families' strengths, difficulties and service needs: a portuguese follow-up study

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Background

Contemporary families are not only increasingly diverse but also more complex. This principle also applies to adoptive families. The basic principle is that adoption responds to the child's need and right to a family for life. But if in the past adoption involved almost exclusively healthy babies born out of wedlock, in recent years this has changed. In 2020, 99% of adoption placements in Portugal involved children who were institutionalized after experiencing abuse and neglect in their birth family, with an average age of 4,5. In these circumstances, adoption is more challenging. More complex families need a more complex approach, as well as more complex social and professional services. After some time in their new families, most adoptees are well adjusted, although attachment, adjustment, and behavioral difficulties are not infrequent, particularly in placements beyond the infancy years and after institutional care. Recently, researchers are paying increased attention to the risk of postadoption instability. While many adoptive families successfully deal with their challenges, others (around 25-30% of adoptive families; Smith, 2014) struggle with serious postadoption difficulties. A smaller group of adoptees faces a relationship breakdown and permanently leave the adoptive family (Palacios et al., 2019). This happened in 1 of 15 preadoption placements in Portugal (Barbosa-Ducharne & Marinho, 2019). Research has consistently shown that although most of these critical tensions manifest overly in early adolescence, difficulties tend to start shortly after placement, escalating thereafter. The Portuguese child welfare system lacks a systematic channel to monitor families after adoption. Furthermore, when Portuguese adoptive families experience difficulties, there is a lack of effective postadoption services and support networks. Very often, problems are unseen or underestimated, difficulties escalate thereafter, the adopters resorting, if anything, to non-specialized services. Well-informed and well-trained postadoption services are urgently needed in Portugal. The intervention within these postadoption services should be trauma-informed and evidence-based.

Objectives

AdoPt is a Portuguese project on postadoption (Principal investigator: Maria Barbosa-Ducharne and Co-Principal investigator: Joana Soares) funded by the National Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT). The main aims of this project are 1) to identify risk and protective factors of postadoption instability and permanence in variables related to adoptees (e.g., socio-emotional development, trauma-related difficulties, attachment disorders, the experience of adoption), adopters (e.g., motivations to adoption, expectations, stress, self-efficacy, adoption communication), and parent-child relationships (e.g., cohesion, adoption communication), and formal and informal sources of support; and 2) to develop, validate and sustain an online survey system to monitor postadoption pathways and needs. This study intends to answer the following research questions: 1) How do the emotional bonds that

sustain family relationships in adoption emerge and unfold?; 2) How do problems emerge and develop?; 3) How do things change as the adoptee reaches adolescence or approaches independence?; 4) How do adoption professionals respond to the adoptive families' needs?; 5) What are the main sources of satisfaction and stress for these families?; 6) Where do they go for advice and support?.

Method

To achieve these goals a longitudinal study with 270 Portuguese adoptive families is proposed. Families will be longitudinally assessed at three different time points, respectively in 2022 (T1 – data are being collected), 2023 (T2), and 2024 (T3). The only sample selection criterion is the age of adoptees – 0 to 18 years old. In T1, T2 and T3 data will be collected online, using adopters as informants. In T2, to validate the online system, in addition to their participation in the online procedure, a representative subsample of 90 families will also be studied in face-to-face interviews during in-home visits. The online system was originally created on a Microsoft Dynamics 365 Platform (https://www.myadopt.pt/), so as to be user-friendly and simultaneously assure data security and families' confidentiality and privacy. Data analysis and disclosure of findings will be an ongoing process throughout the project. In-between data collection time points, global results will be shared with the families, making dynamic use of the online platform. Moreover, information on positive practices and psychoeducational resources will be provided in response to the identified needs. When families show signs of intense instability and escalate into crisis, they will be referred to specialized adoption services, competent therapists, and evidence-based interventions.

Expected results

With ground-breaking innovations, the AdoPt study will respond to the need for sound research-based information, which is currently lacking in Portugal, but also to the need for solid foundations for the design of adoption policies and the advance of much-needed postadoption services in Portugal. While the development of a well-informed online follow-up and monitoring system of families is instrumental to these goals, it will also become a significant practice contribution of the research project, to be later incorporated by adoption services in their daily work for better follow-up and service to children and families. It is also expected that this project will provide scientific evidence on family dynamics, postadoption pathways, and services and support networks. Identifying risk and protective factors that contribute to adoption permanence/instability will allow for a better understanding of the processes underlying adoption success/breakdown.

Conclusion

This project is a clear example of sound research at the service of community development, with research and practice closely intertwined. The validation of the project's online system will assure its future sustainability and will be an important resource for monitoring and supporting adoptive families in Portugal.

Care and protection of children born in family and social contexts marked by mafia culture

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Background

In the last ten years Italian Juvenile Justice has paid more attention to the participation of children in the cultural transmission of the mafia phenomenon. Consequently foster and alternative care measures have been adopted. In particular, Calabria is the Italian region where the cultural transmission of the mafia phenomenon has captured special attention. In this territory, the mafia is known as "'Ndrangheta" and has its roots on family bonds. The court's decision on the Calabria's situation of criminal organization was to recognize the role of the family as guilty of perpetuating the anti-social values of the mafia culture to the children, and secondly in their exposition of dangers behaviours. Both these negative attitudes are identified to have a tangible effect on the child's mental and physical development. Finally parental negligence was shown during the judicial inquiry itself to be detrimental to the child's development. That's why the juvenile justice system has adopted a phenomenological approach to intervention, to offer alternative pedagogical, cultural, and social opportunities that are different from those provided by the mafia world.

The application of this approach has led to the signature of a governmental protocol for a systematic intervention to guarantee the rights of children born in family and social contexts marked by the presence of the mafia culture. To make it possible, a project called "Liberi di Scegliere" (Free to Choose) was created to require institutions to collaborate with the private social sector and other child care services of the public system to implement these measures.

Objectives

The purpose of the research is to document, through the methodology of the case study (Stake, 2006), the life stories of the children and young people involved in the Liberi di Scegliere project in order to identify the emerging practices that have characterized the accompaniment and adherence to the values of legality and democracy of those who and the related governance mechanisms. The overall objective is indeed to develop a body of knowledge that contributes to increasing the safety of children and improving the quality of their development. The aim is to develop knowledge and tools to accompany and guide the paths of children who experience the vulnerabilities related to the mafia phenomenon first-hand, in an educational and participative sense.

The research questions are as follows:

What protection of children's rights is possible today in mafia family contexts?

What insights can be gained from a qualitative analysis of the processes and outcomes of some of the projects for the removal of children from their families of origin implemented within the Liberi di Scegliere project?

What are the biggest challenges with regard to parental involvement and parenting support in this context?

Method

This study starts from the ecological paradigm based on resilience and a participatory dimension that involves families, the institutions, the social network, and those who support the parents in children's education. Through the explicitation interview (Vermersch, 1997) the research aims to collect from the life stories the emerging practices that have been adopted to take care of the children's right and improve their connection with the values of legality and democracy. Furthermore, from the voice of the children and subjects involved, research would explore the governance-related mechanisms.

Result and Conclusions

The partnership of the Centre for Juvenile Justice in Catanzaro and the Association Libera, Nomi e Numeri Contro le Mafie enabled seven case studies to be carried out. A total of 67 subjects were involved in this research: parents, children, formal service, informal service, etc. The research samples were selected considering the willingness of the families to participate or for the relevance of the case according to social services. Among the subjects involved, some have completed their experience within the project, but are still close to the Libera network or social services. The age of the subjects identified as children varies between 14 and 25 years.

From our pilot case study questioned the need for attention that has been lacking for families living in vulnerable conditions due to mafia-type criminal organisations. The documentation of this story allows us to identify some emerging practices, but also the need for a governance and intervention structure involving both parents to offer them a system of care and protection in which they can explore perspectives that do not depend on mafia culture.

The documentation of the practices adopted will help to fill a gap in the literature on the subject and, at the same time, may help to develop a method of accompanying families and children in vulnerable conditions due to a social context marked by mafia culture.

The overall objective is indeed to develop a body of knowledge that contributes to increasing the safety of children and improving the quality of their development, also with a view to formulating an adaptation of the P.I.P.P.I. programme, an intervention aimed at families facing vulnerable situations where it may be difficult to provide children with adequate conditions for their growth. The aim is to develop knowledge and tools to accompany and

guide the paths of children who experience the vulnerabilities related to the mafia phenomenon first-hand, in an educational and participative sense.

Keywords

Children, mafia, foster care, rights, family education.

Impact on parenting competences of the “Vivir la adolescencia en familia” programme adapted to the educational context

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Background

The promotion of parental competences from the educational context is relevant because of the importance of the relationship between family and school in the development process of children and adolescents and in the promotion of their continuity in school. The low academic achievement of pupils and their maladjustment with the school may put the pupil at risk of early school leaving. For this reason, it is necessary to take preventive measures such as working with families to improve their parenting skills at school. In this way, group parental education programs from the Positive Parenting focus, with an experiential methodology, are a resource to achieve this. The historical evolution of the data on early school leaving in Europe and, specifically, in the Canary Islands (Spain), makes it a phenomenon of social preoccupation. For this reason, the group parental education program "Vivir la adolescencia en familia", originally for families at psychosocial risk, was adapted to the educational context. It is an evidence-based program, based on group intervention with experiential methodology and its contents are structured in five modules of four sessions per week.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are to present the adaptation of the program “Vivir la adolescencia en familia” to the educational context and to evaluate its efficacy in promoting the parenting competences of mothers with children at risk of dropping out of school early. This adaptation aims to improve parental competences and school continuity for pupils and is developed by teachers in Obligatory Secondary Education schools. The beneficiaries’ groups are families with children at risk of dropping out of school early. The contents of the last two modules are provided as a novelty, replacing the original ones. They include school continuity and the educational participation of families. Their evaluation is also adapted to measure parenting competencies, parental supervision, social and family climate, family conflict resolution strategies, adolescent competencies, and satisfaction with program implementation.

Method

To evaluate the results, this study included a sample of 568 mothers with an average age of 42.68 years (18-64 years). Most of them have between one and three children (90.4%), live in urban areas (75.1%), have a heteroparental family typology (65.7%), have a primary school or School Graduate level of education (55.4%) and are unemployed or receiving benefits

(57.3%). To measure Parental Competencies, the Mothers' Perceptions of Parental Competencies Scale was used, and its validation has adequate fit rates (RMSEA=.057; 90% .051-.064; CFI=.957; TLI = .927 y SRMR= .030). In the same way, the results showed adequate reliability on the overall scale (α=.93) and in the five dimensions it explores: Personal Development and Resilience Competence (α=.85), Formal Support Finding Competence (α=.81), Competence for Educational Collaboration and Promotion of Sports Activities (α=.74), Informal Support Finding Competence (α=.70) and Community Participation and Integration Competence (α=.64). Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVAS) was made. Then gains and Analyses of variance (ANOVAS) were calculated.

Results

From the analyses it was found that there are no statistically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group. However, after the intervention, mothers are found to increase their Personal Development and Resilience Competence and their Community Participation and Integration Competence. Also, according to some socio-demographic variables, it is observed that mothers with between one and three children, those living in urban areas and those who are not members of the Association of Mothers and Fathers of Pupils obtain higher gains. With these promising results, it is concluded that group parenting programs are a resource to promote mothers' parenting competences. They also indicate that, in order to maximize the effectiveness of the program, it is necessary to take into account some personal characteristics of the mothers when setting up the groups.

Keywords

Positive parenting, parenting competences, evidence-based programs, group parenting programs, educational context, early school leaving.

Breaking the obesity cascade at the childhood: Long-term effects and underlying mechanisms of change of Group Lifestyle Triple P

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Background

Childhood overweight and obesity are highly prevalent conditions in developed countries, and Portugal is not an exception. Overweight and obesity in children are associated with poor well-being and increased risk for physical and psychological health problems at short- and long-term. Multiple factors contribute to children's weight gain, with parents playing an important role during childhood. For children under the age of 12, family-based interventions combining behavioral strategies with feeding and physical activity components are effective in the management of childhood overweight and obesity. The Group Lifestyle Triple P (GLTP) is a parent-focused cognitive-behavioral intervention, based on the Social Learning Theory. As a level 5 (indicated) intervention of the Triple P system, the GLTP targets parents of overweight or obese children aged 5 to 10, with the purpose of decreasing child's weight and weight-related problem behavior, by increasing parents' self-efficacy in managing the child's behavior, and by decreasing the use of ineffective parenting practices. The GLTP includes 14 sessions covering positive parenting, nutrition, and physical activity to promote a healthy family lifestyle. Parents learn, practice, and are encouraged to apply with their children and family multiple strategies regarding the three topics. The LifeStyle project (PTDC/SAU-NUT/30715/2017) studies the efficacy of GLTP among Portuguese Parents of overweight and obese children through an RCT with three assessment time points (pre-, post-intervention, and 6-months follow-up). Prior research stressed the effects of feeding and physical activity parenting practices on children's weight status, mediated by children's food intake and physical activity, however, such findings are not consistent across studies. In addition, longitudinal studies, using objective physical activity measures (accelerometry) and focusing on body composition (fat and lean mass) are needed to further explore the bidirectional associations and impact of parenting interventions on children's health and wellbeing beyond weight.

Objectives

To evaluate the long-term effects of GLTP in children's weight related outcomes and in families' lifestyle related behaviors and practices; To investigate the underlying mechanisms of changes of GLTP.

Method

Five studies will be developed. Study 1, following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, systematically reviews the association between specific feeding and physical activity parenting practices, and children's anthropometric indices and body composition, in order to determine the associations between these variables and their impact in childhood overweight and obesity. The databases EBSCO, MEDLINE, PubMed, Scopus, Cochrane Library, and Web of Science, will be systematically searched. Studies 2 to 5 use secondary data from the 120 participants enrolled in the LifeStyle research project, as well as data collected in two additional follow-up assessments, 12- and 18-months after the GLTP intervention. Outcome measures include children's anthropometric indices and body composition, physical activity, and food intake, feeding and physical activity parenting practices, and parents' perception of change. Study 2 addresses the outcome measures over time across allocation conditions. Individual growth curve models will be performed to evaluate the long-term effects of GLTP on children's body composition, physical activity, food intake, and feeding and physical activity parenting practices, , using growth curve analysis, and comparing effects across allocation conditions. Studies 3 and 4 respectively evaluate the (in)direct effects of children's physical activity, food intake, and parenting practices on children's body composition over time, across allocation conditions. To assess the direct and indirect effects physical activity and food intake and parenting practices related to physical activity and feeding on children's body composition over time, mediation analysis will be performed using structural equation modeling addressing the effects of children's BMI z at assessment time point 1 on children's BMI z at assessment time point 5, and using the slopes of children's, physical activity, food intake, and feeding and physical activity parenting practices across the five assessment time points as mediators. Study 5 evaluates the parents' perceptions about changes in their family's lifestyle 18-months post-intervention. Focus groups will be conducted including a subgroup of participants who received the intervention. Some questions considered relevant and complementary to the quantitative approach of the study will be explored. Parents' perceptions about changes in family's lifestyle following GLTP intervention will be evaluated through thematic analysis.

Results

This study will provide knowledge on the longer-term effects of GLTP on several children outcomes (related to weight status, food intake, and sedentary and physical activity) and parental outcomes (parenting practices related to feeding and physical activity), as well as on the processes through which the effects take place.

Conclusions

Findings will contribute to clarify the evidence on the link between specific feeding and physical activity parenting practices, and children's weight related outcomes, and inform on the mechanisms contributing to GLTP longer-term effects.

Keywords

Physical activity parenting practices, feeding parenting practices, Group Lifestyle Triple P, mechanisms of change, long-term efficacy.