

Research Report: Parenting Self-Efficacy before and after the Family Links 10-week Nurturing Programme for Parents

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Report Summary:

The data analysed here was collected by Cardiff Flying Start project and was provided by 325 parents with children under the age of four who participated on the Family Links 10-week Nurturing Programme for Parents (FLNP) in Cardiff between 2011 and 2015.

Using a reliable measure called the Tool to Measure Parenting Self-Efficacy (TOPSE), the parents were asked about 8 dimensions of parenting to understand their levels of self-efficacy (or self-belief) in their ability to parent. The dimensions include: emotion and affection, play and enjoyment, empathy and understanding, control, discipline and boundary setting, pressures of parenting, self-acceptance, and learning and knowledge.

The findings show that parents **greatly** increased in parenting self-efficacy after attending the Family Links Nurturing Programme with positive and significant changes across **all** 8 dimensions.

The **biggest changes** identified were in the dimension of **discipline and boundaries**, with other large changes observed in the dimensions of empathy and understanding, control, and play and enjoyment.

These findings add to the growing body of evidence that supports the FLNP Theory of Change (available on our website) and that suggests the FLNP is a highly effective parenting intervention. Further research is already underway to better understand how the programme works, and for which *type* of parents and families it is particularly effective.

Family Links is very grateful to the Cardiff Flying Start Project for sharing data which enables increased understanding of how the FLNP impacts on vital aspects of parenting.

Family Links is committed to conducting and commissioning rigorous and innovative evaluations of our work with children, families and teachers. If you would like to find out more, please visit us at www.familylinks.org.uk or get in touch at research@familylinks.org.uk.

PARENTING SELF-EFFICACY BEFORE AND AFTER THE FAMILY LINKS 10 WEEK NURTURING PROGRAMME FOR PARENTS

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Introduction

Parenting is recognised as an important factor for child behavioural and emotional functioning. Parenting programmes have been designed with the aim to target aspects of parenting that enhance child outcomes. The Family Links Nurturing Parenting Programme is based on the four parenting constructs: 1) self-awareness and self-esteem, 2) empathy, 3) appropriate expectations, and 4) positive discipline strategies. Measuring how these aspects of parenting change following intervention is important for assessing the underlying theories and assumptions of the programme. This brief report will present findings from analyses of evaluation and monitoring data from the Nurturing Parenting Programme on a measure of parenting self-efficacy which is closely related to the key components on the programme.

Setting

Data were collected in relation to the Cardiff Flying Start project involving parents with children under the age of 4 who for 10 weeks participated in the Family Links Nurturing Parenting Programme. The programme was delivered to 11 parent groups from September 2011 until January 2015, with a total of 325 parents completing the pre and post questionnaires, which around 70% of all parents who took part in the programme (see Table 1).

Measure

Parenting self-efficacy was measured using the Tool to Measure Parenting Self-Efficacy (TOPSE, Kendall & Bloomfield, 2005), which was developed for measuring changes in parenting in relation to parenting programmes. The TOPSE has 48 statements making up 8 dimensions or sub scales: emotion and affection, play and enjoyment, empathy and understanding, control, discipline and boundaries, pressures, self-acceptance, and learning and knowledge. The total score of the TOPSE is the average of all subscales. Items are rated on a 11-point Likert scale from 0 (completely disagree) to 10 (completely agree), and higher scores signify higher levels of self-efficacy. In previous studies, the TOPSE has been found to be a reliable and valid measure (Bloomfield & Kendall, 2012; Kendall and Bloomfield, 2005).

Data analysis

The TOPSE scales are normally distributed and the parametric dependent samples t-test was used to assess changes in parenting self-efficacy from before to after the intervention, with a 95% confidence interval for statistical significance. Effect size is reported using Cohen's *d* which quantifies the magnitude of change in parent self-efficacy. Values are interpreted as: $d=0.20$ small effect, $d=0.50$ medium effect, $d=0.80$ large effect, and values can be above 1.

Results

As shown in Table 2 and in Figure 1, there were positive changes on all scales of the TOPSE with means scores increasing from pre to post intervention. In terms of the magnitude of these changes, there was a very large and highly statistically significant change on the total TOPSE score ($d=1.23$, $p<.001$). On the individual subscales of the TOPSE, effect sizes ranged between $d=.63$ to $d=1.04$ which are medium to large effects.

Table 1: Sample and response rates

Group	Nurturing Programme	TOPSE data sample size (N)	TOPSE data %	Response rate
2011Sep	n/a	37	11.4	n/a
2012Jan	n/a	36	11.1	n/a
2012May	n/a	31	9.5	n/a
2012Sep	n/a	34	10.5	n/a
2013Jan	n/a	31	9.5	n/a
2013April	42	32	9.8	76%
2013Sep	37	33	10.2	89%
2014Jan	38	21	6.5	55%
2014May	35	20	6.2	57%
2014Sep	38	27	8.3	71%
2015Jan	33	23	7.1	70%
Total		325	100	70% avg.

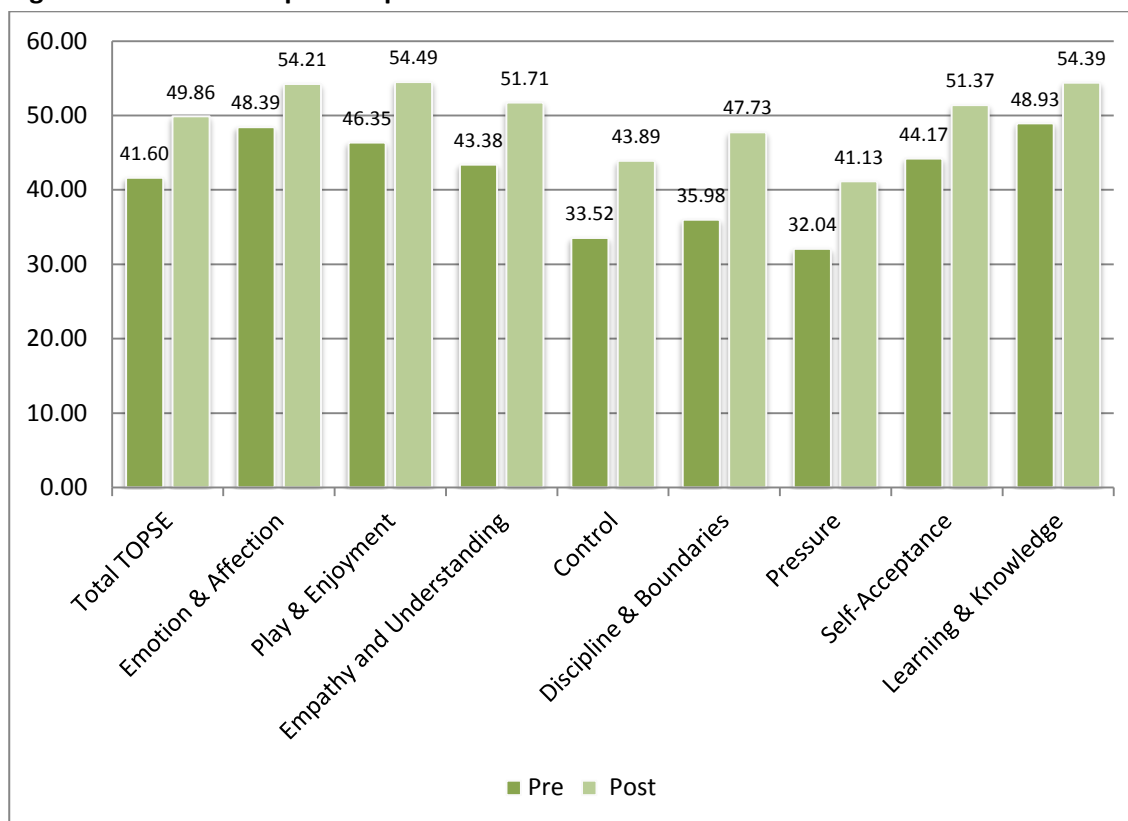
n/a: information was not available

Table 2: TOPSE pre and post scores

<i>TOPSE Scales</i>	<i>Sample size (N)</i>	<i>Pre-test Mean</i>	<i>Post-test Mean</i>	<i>Mean change</i>	<i>Mean change %</i>	<i>Effect size (d)*</i>	<i>Sig (p)</i>
Total TOPSE	325	41.60	49.86	8.27	20%	1.23	<.001
• Emotion & Affection	325	48.39	54.21	5.81	12%	0.67	<.001
• Play & Enjoyment	325	46.35	54.49	8.15	18%	0.89	<.001
• Empathy and Understanding	325	43.38	51.71	8.33	19%	0.97	<.001
• Control	325	33.52	43.89	10.37	31%	0.95	<.001
• Discipline & Boundaries	325	35.98	47.73	11.74	33%	1.04	<.001
• Pressure	325	32.04	41.13	9.08	28%	0.69	<.001
• Self-Acceptance	325	44.17	51.37	7.20	16%	0.78	<.001
• Learning & Knowledge	325	48.93	54.39	5.46	11%	0.63	<.001

*effect size key: $d=.20$ small, $d=.50$ medium, $d=.80$ large

Figure 1: TOPSE scales pre and post scores



Discussion and conclusion

Results of analysis showed that parents greatly increased their parenting self-efficacy after attending the Family Links Nurturing Parenting Programme. This is indicative that this programme has a large positive effect on parents. It is likely that these positive changes in parenting have an effect on children in terms of their behavioural and emotional functioning. Result supports the theoretical underpinning of the programme as the measure of parenting self-efficacy reported in this evaluation is closely related to the programme components of the Nurturing Parenting Programme

It is of course important to interpret findings in light of the methodological limitations of this evaluation. Because of the pre-post design and lack of control groups, we cannot be certain that it is the programme which caused changes, and it would be important to further evaluate the impact on parenting self-efficacy of the Nurturing Parenting Programme using a randomised controlled design. Neither can we be sure that changes in parenting correspond to changes in child outcomes as these were not measured in this evaluation. It would be essential to formally test this mechanism of change in future research and evaluation on this intervention. A further limitation is that information on characteristics of participants (socio- demographics) and programme implementation (e.g. fidelity and dose) was not available. It was therefore not possible to examine how these factors related to outcomes, for example, which parents dropped out of the programme, who it worked for, and to what extent the programme was implemented with fidelity to the programme manual? Nevertheless, despite these limitations, results are very promising for the Family Links Nurturing Parenting programme as changes in parenting were very large indeed.

References

Bloomfield, L., & Kendall, S. (2012). Parenting self-efficacy, parenting stress and child behaviour before and after a parenting programme. *Primary health care research & development*, 13(04), 364-372.

Kendall, S., & Bloomfield, L. (2005). Developing and validating a tool to measure parenting self-efficacy. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 51(2), 174-181.