

TITLE: The Effect of a One-minute Clinic Intervention and Handbook on How Parents Discipline at Home

ROLE TYPE: Abstract

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Background: Some unhealthy discipline strategies (e.g. yelling, threatening, physical punishment, humiliation) can be adverse childhood experiences and associated with child abuse. Efforts are needed to educate parents about healthy discipline in primary care. Lengthy parenting programs are effective in educating parents about healthy discipline, but studies of brief interventions designed for primary care implementation have had mixed results.

Objective: To determine if a one-minute clinic intervention and handbook can help parents discipline their child at home.

Design/Methods: Parents of 2-10 year old children presenting for a well visit in a clinic serving low-income families were enrolled in a randomized controlled trial in which the intervention was a parenting handbook. The handbook educates parents about healthy discipline with a focus on reviewing 20 options to respond to challenging behavior. The research assistant spent approximately one minute introducing the handbook to parents using a standardized approach. Of 174 parents enrolled in the intervention group, 113 (65%) of parents completed a follow up survey 2-4 months later. Parents were asked if they read the handbook, whether the handbook helped them discipline their child, and, if "Yes", what they were doing differently to discipline their child because of the handbook. Parents were asked if they shared the handbook with others.

Results: 94% (106/113) of parents who completed the follow up survey read at least part of the handbook. 68% (75/113) reported that the handbook helped them discipline their children. Almost half (46%) provided examples of specific changes they made because of the handbook: "Stop spanking", "Less yelling and spanking, more redirecting", "More talking instead of yelling", "Redirecting the child's behavior into a positive", and "Using more communication and explanation". One parent reported that the handbook led her to find a provider to treat her depression. 46% of parents reported that they shared the handbook with other caregivers, friends, relatives, and children (e.g. one mother reported that her husband read the book to their 6 year old daughter).

Conclusion(s): One-minute of office staff time and a handbook can affect parents' discipline practices at home. Many parents shared with the handbook with others, indicating that the effect of this brief intervention may extend to others beyond the parent who received the handbook in clinic. The findings have implications for improving primary care services and child abuse prevention.

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Presenting Author: Seth Scholer