



GEM OF THE MONTH



Highlighting an exemplary intervention study



Promotion of Positive Parenting and Prevention of Socioemotional Disparities

The BELLE Project is a 3 condition randomized control trial to examine the effects of a Video Interaction Project (VIP), Building Blocks (BB), and a control condition on child development. The current paper describes effects on social emotional development (SED) for children ages 14-36 months. 675 mother-child dyads were recruited from a postpartum unit serving low income families; 463 were analyzed. The VIP interventionist recorded 5-7 minute mother-child interactions during play or shared reading, and then reviewed the video with the parent to reinforce responsive interactions and promote parent self-reflection. The BB intervention mailed parenting pamphlets and a book or toy each month to promote positive parenting strategies. Findings suggest that VIP improved SED outcomes in imitation/play and attention, separation distress, hyperactivity, and externalizing problems in comparison to the control group, while the BB intervention demonstrated more limited effects on SED with improved outcomes in imitation/play compared to the control group. Weisleder, A., Cates, C. B., Dreyer, B. P., Johnson, S. B., Huberman, H. S., Seery, A. M., ... & Mendelsohn, A. L. (2016). Promotion of positive parenting and prevention of socioemotional disparities. *Pediatrics*, 137(2). doi: 10.1542/peds.2015-3239.

Advancing Knowledge to Bridge the Word Gap

When interventions enhance SED during infancy, children are more likely to enter school with the social emotional skills they need, setting children up for future successes in life. This study gleans insight into a low cost intervention to promote parent-child interactions in reading and play. While reading is critical to child language outcomes, this article indicates the importance of reading and responsive parent interactions for SED. This study shows that VIP is an excellent intervention to diminish poverty-related gaps in child development.

Meet the BWGRN First Author Adriana Weisleder, New York University

Why did you do this study?

Adriana: There is a need to understand how parent-child interactions support different domains of child development. VIP focuses on enhancing parent-child interactions in cognitively stimulating activities like reading and play, which are known to enhance language and cognitive development. Here, we found that promotion of reading and play also enhances SED.

How is this study informing your next research steps?

Adriana: We are continuing to explore pathways by which VIP enhances SED. We have found that VIP enhances parent-child reading and play at 6 months, which leads to reductions in parenting stress at 36 months, and together these mediate impacts of VIP on child behavior problems at age 3.



Commentary by the Nominator Judy Carta, University of Kansas

This low-cost intervention that is integrated into pediatric well-child visits had previously been shown to improve parents' responsivity and children's language and cognitive outcomes. In this study, the research team demonstrated that the intervention was effective for promoting young children's social-emotional outcomes. This intervention showed greatest impact on families with greatest social-demographic risks. Demonstrating the effectiveness of this intervention in a developmental area known to be problematic for many children from high-poverty backgrounds provides another important tool for practitioners aiming to promote children's school readiness and prevent children's later challenging behaviors.