

RESEARCH BRIEF

CHILD SENSITIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION IN NEPAL



Save the Children

ASSESSMENT OF A PARENTING PILOT INTERVENTION LINKED TO THE CHILD GRANT IN NEPAL

THE CHILD GRANT AND PARENTING

The Child Grant is a Nepal government monthly cash transfer scheme of NPR 400 per child. It is provided to children below five years and aimed at improving nutritional outcomes. The scheme was initially only given to Dalit children and children in Karnali, but later expanded to include all children in districts with low human development indicators. In 2018 Save the Children introduced a parenting programme linked to the government scheme. This was based on the understanding that a cash transfer alone would have limited impact and that improved parenting can substantially augment the benefits of the child grant and further bolster children's development opportunities.



THE PILOT INTERVENTION

The parenting intervention included 14 weekly sessions with groups of parents focusing on how to improve day to day parenting skills (see box); how to make the most out of the cash transfer payment through better family budgeting; and nutrition awareness. 368 parents from Dolakha, Kavre and Mahottari districts participated in the parenting intervention.

The main objective of the intervention was to improve parents' sensitivity towards the child's development needs, which has been proven by research in other geographies to have a positive impact on the child's socio-emotional development (Barlow & Coren, 2018)¹.

THE PILOT STUDY

Baseline and endline questionnaire data (before and after the introduction of the parenting programme) were collected from 93 caregivers from the intervention group. The same questionnaire was administered to a control group of 92 caregivers. The intervention group received the government cash transfer plus the parenting sessions whereas the control group only received the cash.

THE PARENTING INTERVENTION

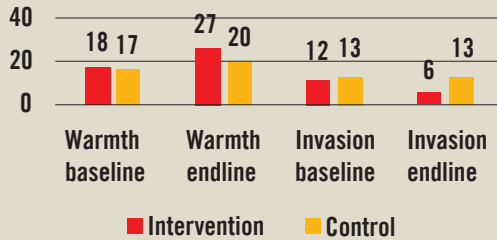
The thrust of the parenting intervention was based on the International Child Development Programme (ICDP). ICDP is a psychosocial preventive early intervention programme that aims to promote a safe, loving, nonviolent, and developing environment for children by supporting the improvement in parenting/caregiver skills.

The programme is implemented with groups of parents and led by trained facilitators; the methods are non-instructive, empowering, building on caregiver's own resources and knowledge. The facilitator's role is to facilitate good group processes, as well as to provide positive feedback, knowledge and support to the participants. Working methods includes group discussions with other caregivers and the ICDP facilitators, homework with their children, and sharing and feedback loops in the groups (www.icdp.info).

¹Barlow, J., & Coren, E. (2018). The effectiveness of parenting programs: A review of Campbell Reviews. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 28(1), 99-102.

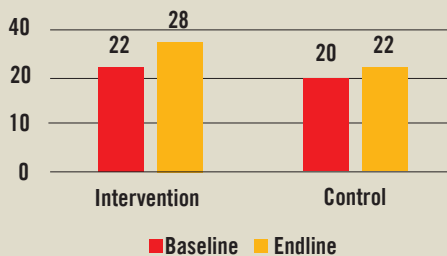
SELECTED FINDINGS

- Significantly **more positive feelings and less negative feelings towards the child** in the intervention group:



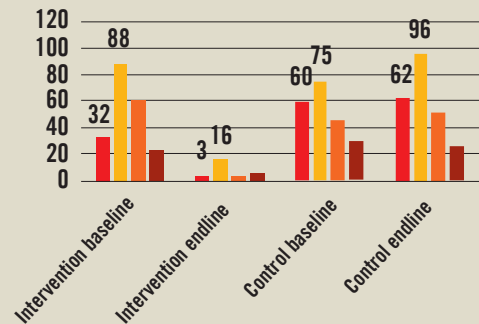
*Scored from 0 to 28; a higher score on warmth=more positive feelings; a lower score on invasion=less negative feelings

- Significantly **more parental activities** with the child in the intervention group:



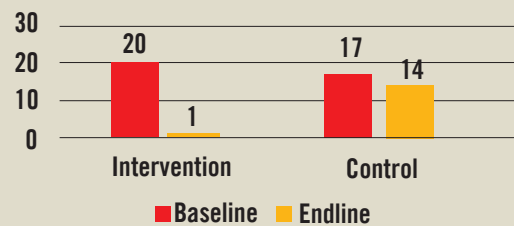
*Scored from 0 to 28; a higher score=more activities

- Significant **reduction in violence/neglect/incapability** to take care of the child by the mothers in the intervention group, e.g.:



- Hit child with hard object
- Shouting or yelling
- Not able to provide the food needed
- Not able to take care of the child due to drinking/substance abuse

- Decrease in maternal mental health problems** above the clinical cut-off (%):



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results from this pilot study suggests that adding a parenting intervention to a cash transfer benefits the upbringing conditions for children to a larger extent than cash transfers only.

Caregivers report more warmth and less violence and abuse after the parenting sessions, which is linked to decreased risk for childhood socio-emotional and behavioral problems (Yap & Jorm, 2015²). In addition, mothers report less mental health problems after the intervention. This is important as this may have a positive impact on the mental health of their children (Leijdesdorff et al., 2017³).

If the improved parenting skills are sustained, this in turn is likely to result in substantial development gains for children.

Future studies should include a larger sample, a matched control group, and a longer follow up period.

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²Yap, M. B. H., & Jorm, A. F. (2015). Parental factors associated with childhood anxiety, depression, and internalizing problems: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 175, 424-440.

³Leijdesdorff S, van Doesum K, Pomac A, Klaassen R, van Amelsvoort T. Prevalence of psychopathology in children of parents with mental illness and/or addiction: an up to date narrative review. *Curr Opin Psychiatry* (2017) 30:312-7