



PARENTING FOR LIFELONG HEALTH for YOUNG CHILDREN: FINDINGS FROM A RANDOMIZED TRIAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

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KEY MESSAGES

In a randomized trial in South Africa, PLH for Young Children shows **promise for reducing child conduct problems, increasing positive parenting and reducing harsh discipline.**

This is the first parenting program for parents of 2-9-year-olds that has been **developed and rigorously tested in Africa.**

The '**Parenting for Lifelong Health**' programs have been implemented in 22 countries worldwide.

Manual available
FOR FREE at:

https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/child/PLH-manuals/en/index1.html



POLICY ISSUE

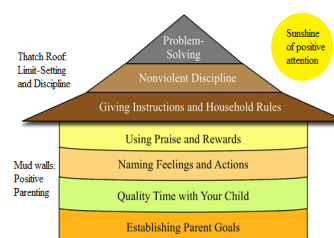
Parenting and violence in childhood both have major lifetime impact. Parenting programs show promise in improving parenting and reducing violence, but most research is from high-income countries. In response to this, the *Parenting for Lifelong Health (PLH)* initiative, a collaboration with WHO, UNICEF, the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, PEPFAR-USAID and Universities, was created. PLH aims to build evidence on non-commercialized, low-cost parenting programs for low-resource settings. PLH for Young Children, known as Sinovuyo Kids in South Africa, is one of these programs and targets parents of 2- to 9-year-olds.

PLH FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

The intervention is an **EVIDENCE-INFORMED PROGRAM** based on **SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY, EXPERT INPUT AND PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK** from a [pilot study](#) in 2013.

INTERVENTION OVERVIEW:

- Pre-program consultations with families
- 12 weekly group sessions for caregivers
- Home visits for caregivers unable to attend sessions
- Content focuses on positive relationship-building and positive discipline
- Sessions delivered by local community members
- Facilitators received comprehensive training and supervision



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METHODS FOR THE RANDOMIZED TRIAL

- **PARTICIPANTS:** 296 caregivers and their children aged 2-9 years in informal settlements in Cape Town, South Africa, 2014 – 2016.
- **OUTCOME DATA COLLECTION:** Caregivers were randomly assigned to receive PLH for Young Children or to services-as-usual. Caregivers were interviewed before the program, immediately after the program and then again one year after the program. Observational assessments were also conducted at these timepoints. These assessments involve observing caregivers and their children playing together for 10 minutes and then coding this interaction.
- **PROCESS DATA COLLECTION:** Data on attendance, program delivery, and program satisfaction were collected.
- **DATA ANALYSIS:** Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics as well as by looking at the difference in rate of change over time between control and intervention groups.

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FINDINGS FROM THE RANDOMIZED TRIAL

- Caregivers attended on average **8.4/12 sessions** and had high levels of program satisfaction. The program content was delivered with fidelity.
- Immediately after the program, caregivers reported **fewer child conduct problems, more positive parenting strategies, fewer problems with positive parenting implementation and less harsh parenting**: less physical and psychological discipline.
- Caregivers were observed to use **more positive parenting** and children to have **more positive behaviors**.
- Caregivers reported **less depression** at immediately after the program.
- At one-year follow-up, caregivers reported using **more nonviolent discipline strategies**; in the observational task, they used **more positive parenting strategies** and **fewer negative strategies**, and children used **more positive behaviors**.
- **NO EFFECTS**: Observed negative child behavior, poor monitoring or supervision, or caregiver social support.
- **NOTE**: All of the changes described above are compared to a control group of parents who did not receive the program.



MORE POSITIVE &
LESS HARSH
PARENTING



MORE POSITIVE
CHILD BEHAVIOR



LESS
DEPRESSION

OTHER STUDIES OF PLH FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Due to the promising findings in South Africa, adapted versions of the PLH for Young Children program are being tested in studies in other countries. These studies include:

The Philippines: A randomized trial in Metro Manila was conducted with 68 families who were part of a government conditional cash transfer program. Compared to controls who received a family development program, the study found positive program effects for reduced child maltreatment and neglect, reduced dysfunctional parenting, reduced child behavior problems, reduced endorsement of corporal punishment, increased positive parenting, and improved parental self-efficacy at one-month follow-up. A one-year follow-up is pending. Find out more [here](#).

Thailand: A randomized trial of an eight-session version is underway in Udon Thani, Thailand. Find out more [here](#).

Moldova, North Macedonia and Romania: The program is also being tested as part of the four-year RISE Study in South-eastern Europe, which aims to test program components in order to optimize it based on effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and scalability. Final results from this study will be ready in 2022. Find out more [here](#).



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