Title registration for a systematic review:
Effectiveness of parent-engagement programs to reduce truancy and juvenile delinquency: a systematic review
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Submitted to the Coordinating Group of:

- Crime and Justice
- Education
- Disability
- International Development
- Nutrition
- Social Welfare
- Other:

Plans to co-register:

- No
- Yes
- Cochrane
- Other
- Maybe

Date Submitted: 14 January 2016
Date Revision Submitted: 19 March 2018
Approval Date:
Publication Date: 27 April 2018
TITLE OF THE REVIEW

Effectiveness of parent-engagement programs to reduce truancy and juvenile delinquency: a systematic review

BACKGROUND

Studies have found that there are short- and long-term outcomes associated with truancy. Truancy is not unique to the United States but is a major concern in other countries, including England, Scotland, Liberia, South Australia, and Nigeria (Coughlan, 2009; Royal, 2015; UNICEF, 2016). The definition of truancy varies from state to state. However, the consensus is that if a student is absent without an excuse from a parent/guardian or if the student leaves school or a class without permission, a student is considered truant. There are different levels of truancy that depend on the number of unexcused absences. For example, a habitually truant student is someone who has a specific number of consecutive unexcused absences, whereas a chronic truant has already been disciplined for habitual truancy, but he/she continues to accumulate unexcused absences despite a court or school mandate (Seeley, 2006).

Truancy is a risk factor for other delinquent behaviors including substance abuse (Henry & Thornberry, 2010; Shute & Cooper, 2015), gang activity, and future incarceration (Baker, Sigmon, & Nugent, 2001; Vaughn, Maynard, Salas-Wright, Perron, & Abdon, 2013; Monahan, VanDerhei, Bechtold, & Cauffman, 2014). Studies have found that truant youths are not a homogenous group, and differ on key demographics, individual, family, school, community, and contextual risk factors. Key demographic factors include race, age, and socioeconomic status. Individual risk behaviors encompass substance abuse, delinquency, and other anti-social behaviors (Best, Manning, Gossop, Gross, & Strang, 2006; Henry, 2010). School factors include school culture, curriculum, poor teaching, negative school environment, poor relationship with teachers, dissatisfaction with school, school disciplinary practices, and bullying (Malcolm, Wilson, Davidson, & Kirk, 2003). Community and contextual factors include delinquent peer involvement, employment opportunities, neighborhood characteristics, levels of social support, and community norms and community violence (Henry & Huzinga, 2007; Lyon & Cotler, 2007; MacDonald & Marsh, 2004). Family-related contributors include poverty, family conflict, parental education, and parental attitude towards education and their involvement in their child’s school (Malcolm et al., 2003; Romero & Lee, 2008). Truancy has a widespread impact on not only the student and the family but the community and broader society as well. School dropout rates increase the likelihood of criminal activity and add to the pipeline to prison. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 75% of state prison inmates and 59% of federal inmates are high-school dropouts (Harlow, 2003). Without at least a high-school degree, school dropouts are left out of the country’s employment landscape.

In the last four decades, there has been increased attention paid to the role of the family in a child’s academic and emotional development. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), parent engagement in schools is defined as “parents and school staff working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents.” The importance of family is mirrored in state and federal educational policies. For example, the U.S. “No Child Left Behind” Act (2001) laid the foundation for schools and school districts to recognize the significance of parental involvement in their child’s education (U.S. Department of Education, n. d.). Also, many school districts have developed partnerships to support and provide effective research-based practices to provide parents with the knowledge and skills to help their children successfully engage in school,
improve parent-child communication, improve student self-efficacy about education, and reduce the risk for delinquent behaviors. For example, the Georgia Department of Education has adopted national PTA standards for family-school partnerships. Although there are many parent-engagement programs, the empirical evidence is mixed. A meta-analytical study conducted by Jeynes (2005) found that the achievements of children with highly involved parents were higher than children with less involved parents.

The meta-analysis by Jeynes (2005) was also supported by Kaminski, Valle, Filene, and Boyle (2008), who conducted a meta-analysis of 77 published evaluations of parent-training programs involving children 0–7 years of age. The authors concluded that parent-training programs were effective in changing parenting behavior. On the other hand, Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez, and Kayzar (2002) found, in their evaluation of 41 K–12 parent-involvement programs, little support for their effectiveness in improving academic achievement or changing behavior. However, these reviews do not specifically address truancy. Thus, a systematic review of parent-engagement programs that address truancy will inform educators and researchers about effective programs and best practices. Dissemination of results to policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders will make the findings both accessible and beneficial.

Objectives of the review

The purpose of the proposed systematic review is to evaluate existing parent-engagement programs that focus on reducing juvenile truancy, school dropouts, and associated delinquent behavior. This review will (1) examine variations in the type of parent engagement programs and outcomes across different programs involving students from kindergarten, primary, and secondary education from 2000 to 2017; (2) provide empirical data on best practices; and (3) identify the reasons for the success or failure of these programs. This data will help inform policymakers and stakeholders on effective parent-engagement programs and policies that are cost-effective in reducing truancy. In particular, the review will help explain variations in practices to determine better effects of parent-engagement programs across groups (elementary vs. high school), settings (school-based vs. community), and contexts (voluntary participation vs. court-mandated). Because of the diversity of programs, there is a need for a systematic evaluation of the effects of parent-engagement programs on truancy, dropout, and delinquency across different student populations globally.

OBJECTIVES

1. Which parent-engagement programs for grades Kindergarten (K) through 12th are found to be effective in reducing student truancy, school dropouts, and associated delinquent behavior?
2. What is the variability in effectiveness across groups, settings, and context?
3. What factors (mediating variables) explain the failure or success of parent-engagement programs?

EXISTING REVIEWS

The majority of systematic reviews of parent-engagement programs focused on students’ academic achievement. Fan and Chen (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of the quantitative literature of studies on parental involvement and student’s academic achievement. The results revealed a strong moderating effect between parental involvement and students’ academic achievement. The effect is stronger when academic achievement was measured
regarding school GPA rather than specific subject matter. The study reported a weak relationship between parental home supervision and student academic achievement. However, when parents showed high aspirations/expectations for their children's educational achievement, their students' academic achievement was stronger. The authors have provided some suggestions for improving measurements of parental involvement, measuring different dimensions of parental involvement separately rather than developing a single composite measure.

Mattingly et al.'s (2002) study evaluated 41 studies of K–12 parent-involvement programs to assess the impact of these programs on student learning. In addition, the study examined the type of research designs, data, and analysis used. Although they do not conclude that these programs are ineffective, they found little support for the broad claim that parent-involvement programs are effective in improving student achievement or change parent, teacher, or student behaviors.

Kaminski et al. (2008) reviewed evaluations of 77 published parent-training programs and their effectiveness in improving the behavior of children in grades 0–7. Program characteristics and methods of delivery were evaluated to assess the effect on measures of parenting behavior and child behaviors. Although the results showed increased positive parent-child interactions and communication skills, smaller effects were noted in several areas (teaching parents problem-solving skills, and the promotion of children's cognitive, academic, and social skills).

A series of research findings related to a meta-analysis of parental involvement programs was published by Jeynes (2003, 2005, 2007, 2012). The 2003 publication included a meta-analysis of 21 studies, which focused on the academic achievement of minority children. Although variations existed in the level of impact on certain races, overall, parental involvement had a significant positive impact on children's academic achievement. The 2005 study analyzed 41 studies related to parental involvement and academic achievement of elementary school children in urban areas. The results showed a significant positive relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement, irrespective of race and/or gender. The 2007 study included 52 studies involving urban secondary school students. Again, the study supported the previous meta-analysis. A more recent meta-analysis (published in 2012) was based on 2005 data and consisted of 51 studies involving 1,500 students. The study included pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade students, specifically addressing the effects of different types of parental-engagement programs on student achievement, teacher-parent partnerships, and teacher-parent communication. The results indicate a significant positive relationship between overall parental involvement and students’ academic achievement for both younger and older students, irrespective of the type of parental involvement program.

It is clear that there is growing interest in the systematic review of parent-involvement programs and children's academic achievement (Erion, 2006; Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008; Sénéchal & Young, 2008; Hill & Tyson, 2009, Castro et al., 2015; Higgins & Katsipataki, 2015), but research is limited on the relationship between parent engagement and children's truancy and delinquent behaviors. A few studies focused on the effect of parental involvement on children's behavioral outcomes (e.g., McNeal, 1999; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Hahn et al., 2007), but there was no systematic review of the effect of parental-engagement programs on truancy and other delinquent behaviors. The proposed review will provide a scientifically based rigorous evaluation. The results will inform different audiences—researchers, policymakers, educators, and juvenile justice professionals.
**INTERVENTION**

The criteria for inclusion of studies in this review will include:

1. All randomized control parent engagement studies aimed primarily at reducing or preventing truancy and other delinquent behaviors. Also, quasi-experimental designs will be included. The decision to include quasi-experimental studies stems from the dearth of programs implemented with the rigor of randomized sampling methods. Studies that include both pre- and post-evaluation with a matching control will be included.

2. Studies that have as their primary goal to reduce and/or prevent truancy among juveniles. In addition to truancy, the studies may also address risk factors (poor school performance and general behavioral problems at school and/or at home) that may lead to delinquent behavior (such as substance abuse, encounters with the juvenile justice system.) Studies must have included behavioral outcome measures such as persistent truancy, general behavior problems at school and/or at home, antisocial behavior, delinquency, etc. Studies that focus solely on other outcomes including but not limited to academic achievement, educational attainment, and mental and/or psychological issues will not be included in this review.

3. Studies with single-parent or two-parent families with children in grades K through 12 will be considered. This developmental period is critical in a young person’s life; it is a period when truancy is more likely to occur and contribute to negative consequences for the child. Studies that include diverse populations regarding race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and geography will be included.

4. Studies with pre- and post-assessments for both parents and children on a number of measurable outcomes such as problem-solving, interpersonal communication, attitudes towards education, support for children’s educational engagement, and conflict management. For children, the measures of truancy, school dropout, and delinquent behavior will be included.

5. A minimum study duration of 12 weeks is required. This requirement will allow sufficient dosage for the study protocol and follow-up during the academic year.

6. Studies that provide adequate data for calculating an effect size (e.g., means and standard deviations, t-tests, F-tests, p-values). Authors of studies that do not provide sufficient data will be contacted for additional information to be included in the meta-analysis. If they fail to provide the additional information, then the studies will be excluded.

7. Studies that were carried out between 2000 and 2017.

8. Studies with no geographic restrictions.

9. Studies written in English.

10. Studies that include grades K through 12.

**POPULATION**

The study will include programs that provide interventions for the general student body grades K through 12 as well as programs that are specific to special populations, that is, for students who have been referred to a program by court order due to truancy and/or other behavioral problems. The study will cover programs that have been conducted in the United States and internationally that meet the selection criteria of English-speaking populations.
OUTCOMES

The student outcome measures will include reduction in truancy/school dropouts and associated delinquency disaggregated by gender, urban/rural residency, socioeconomic factors, and racial or ethnic minority status. The parental outcome measures will include problem-solving, interpersonal communication, attitudes towards education, support for children’s educational engagement, and conflict management.

STUDY DESIGNS

The systematic review will identify programs that use (1) randomized experimental designs (R), and (2) quasi-experimental designs with matching experimental and control groups subjects (QEM). First, randomized experiments select their target population (e.g., classes, students, or schools) and randomly assign subjects to treatment and control groups. Randomized experiments, if implemented correctly, are preferred over other types of designs because they create groups “that are probabilistically similar to each other” and have “desirable statistical properties” (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002, p. 13). Therefore, primary importance will be given to studies that use randomized designs.

Second, studies that use quasi-experimental designs do not randomly select their experimental and control groups, but match the participants on key variables at pretest or participants are matched retrospectively (after posttests). Although quasi-experimental designs tend to offer less compelling support for causal inferences, careful selection of subjects on key variables will minimize any issues with nonrandomization. Studies that use comprehensive measures of dependent and independent variables, but use quasi-experimental designs will be reported separately.

Third, studies that only measure academic performance will be excluded from the review because there have been prior systematic reviews conducted on the topic.

REFERENCES


**REVIEW AUTHORS**

**Lead review author:** The lead author is the person who develops and coordinates the review team, discusses and assigns roles for individual members of the review team, liaises with the editorial base and takes responsibility for the on-going updates of the review.

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**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Please give a brief description of content and methodological expertise within the review team. It is recommended to have at least one person on the review team who has content expertise, at least one person who has the methodological expertise, and at least one person who has statistical expertise. It is also recommended to have one person with information retrieval expertise. Please note that this is the recommended optimal review team composition.

- **Content**: The lead reviewer, Dr. Kethineni, has extensive experience in the area of juvenile justice and program evaluation. She has conducted research and coauthored a book, *Comparative Delinquency: India and the United States* (1996), as well as several articles in peer-reviewed journals as well as conference presentations. She also works as a consultant with the juvenile justice/court services agencies; and juvenile justice councils that address issues about truancy.
and delinquency. Dr. Frazier-Kouassi has extensive experience in program management and working with interdisciplinary research teams. She has worked in grant proposal development, writing, and reviews. In her most recent role, she served as the director of training and community engagement. Drs. Kethineni and Frazier-Kouassi will take the lead in organizing the content area as well managing the team.

• Systematic review methods: Drs. Kethineni, Frazier-Kouassi, and Columb all have extensive experience in conducting literature searches and reviews. All three members will share responsibility for developing the methodology of the systematic review.

• Statistical analysis: Dr. Corey Columb has substantial experience with advanced statistical analysis, including ANOVA, regression, structural equation modeling, hierarchical linear modeling, and meta-analysis. He has educated undergraduate students in statistics, tutored graduate level statistics, and conducted statistical analyses in the private sector. Dr. Columb will take the lead in statistical analysis for the systematic review.

• Information retrieval: Ms. Gay is the head of the Reference and Information Services Department at the Prairie View A&M University library. She previously served as academic reference and instruction librarian at the same institution. She has taught, developed, and organized library information literacy classes for the College of Juvenile Justice and Psychology. Ms. Gay will provide leadership in the information retrieval utilizing the databases of the library and other sources.

**FUNDING**

No other funding will be requested.

**POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There is **NO** potential conflict of interest as the authors **HAVE NOT** been involved in the development of relevant interventions, primary research, or prior published reviews on the topic.

**PRELIMINARY TIMEFRAME**

Note, if the protocol or review are not submitted within six months, and 18 months of title registration, respectively, the review area is opened up for other authors.

• Date you plan to submit a draft protocol: 15 August 2018

• Date you plan to submit a draft review: 16 December 2018

**AUTHOR DECLARATION**

**Authors’ responsibilities**

By completing this form, you accept responsibility for preparing, maintaining, and updating the review in accordance with Campbell Collaboration policy. The Coordinating Group will provide as much support as possible to assist with the preparation of the review.
A draft protocol must be submitted to the Coordinating Group within one year of title acceptance. If drafts are not submitted before the agreed deadlines, or if we are unable to contact you for an extended period, the Coordinating Group has the right to de-register the title or transfer the title to alternative authors. The Coordinating Group also has the right to de-register or transfer the title if it does not meet the standards of the Coordinating Group and/or the Campbell Collaboration.

You accept responsibility for maintaining the review in light of new evidence, comments and criticisms, and other developments, and updating the review every five years when substantial new evidence becomes available, or, if requested, transferring responsibility for maintaining the review to others as agreed with the Coordinating Group.

**Publication in the Campbell Library**

The support of the Coordinating Group in preparing your review is conditional upon your agreement to publish the protocol, finished review, and subsequent updates in the Campbell Library. The Campbell Collaboration places no restrictions on publication of the findings of a Campbell systematic review in a more abbreviated form as a journal article either before or after the publication of the monograph version in *Campbell Systematic Reviews*. Some journals, however, have restrictions that preclude publication of findings that have been or will be, reported elsewhere and authors considering publication in such a journal should be aware of the possible conflict with publication of the monograph version in *Campbell Systematic Reviews*. Publication in a journal after publication or in press status in *Campbell Systematic Reviews* should acknowledge the Campbell version and include a citation to it. Note that systematic reviews published in *Campbell Systematic Reviews* and co-registered with the Cochrane Collaboration may have additional requirements or restrictions for co-publication. Review authors accept responsibility for meeting any co-publication requirements.

I understand the commitment required to undertake a Campbell review, and agree to publish in the Campbell Library. Signed on behalf of the authors:

Form completed by: 
Sesha Kethineni

Date: 
19 March 2018