

# Child Care & Early Education RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

*A partnership of the National Center for Children in Poverty, the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research and the Child Care Bureau, and the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation*

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## Parenting Education A Key Topic Resource List

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*Research Connections* conducted a comprehensive search of its collection for resources focused on parenting education as it relates to child care and early education. This Key Topic Resource List includes an overview of what the parenting education literature addresses, as well as a listing of selected resources on the topic.

Based on the search results, resources are grouped into the following categories:

- Overviews and recommendations for parent education programs
- Even Start/ family literacy
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- Healthy Steps
- Effects of parent education programs on parents and children

From the many results, *Research Connections* selected a limited number of resources of various types- including reports and papers, fact sheets and briefs, summaries, and reviews. Selection criteria included policy relevance and relatively recent publication. The full results came from basic searches on the exact phrases "parenting education" and "parent involvement."

Within each category, resources are organized according to publisher type and publication date. *Research Connection's* one-sentence description is included for each resource on the following list. For complete citations, which include abstracts and full text for some resources, click on the titles.

For more information on programs that support families, see *Research Connections'* Key Topic Resource List on Family Support.

## Overview:

The goal of **parenting education** is to strengthen parents' and other caregivers' knowledge about how their actions affect child development and give them skills to help their child's health development and school readiness. Parent education includes a broad range of initiatives to help support parents in their role as the prime educators of their children, from home visiting services, to parenting classes, to family literacy promotion classes, to brochures and books in pediatric offices. Examples of federally funded parenting education programs include Even Start, Early Head Start, Head Start (i.e. Best families), and Healthy Steps.

Parenting education programs vary greatly in terms of their focus, delivery methods, and program intensity. Variation may also occur from site to site, making it difficult to evaluate the effects of programs and draw conclusions about what type of program is most beneficial for families. Parenting education programs also struggle to keep families engaged in services. Low family participation rates also compound the difficulty in evaluating these programs.

Given the wide variety of parenting programs and the evaluation challenges, the literature on parenting education tends to be descriptive. Some of the evaluation research on parenting education programs however, has included research questions such as:

- Does program participation affect parents' child rearing style, parent-child communication, and parent and teacher ratings of children's behavior?
- Does a child participating in an early childhood program receive additive benefits from also being in a family that participates in parenting education services?
- Does the Early Head Start program have significant impacts on parent and child outcomes at age 3, when the program concluded? Does adherence to the Head Start Program Performance Standards matter? Are impacts more likely to be found, or likely to be greater in magnitude, in Early Head Start programs that offer both center- and home-based services (a mixed approach), or in programs that offer only, or primarily, home- or center-based services?
- To what extent does the Healthy Steps program affect parents' knowledge, beliefs and practices regarding their understanding of early child development and parenting? To what degree did the Healthy Steps program affect parents' utilization of health care services, adoption of health and safety promotion practices, and satisfaction with pediatric care for their young children? To what degree does the Healthy Steps program affect children's health and development?

*Journals*

- McMurtrie, Claire; Roberts, Paula; Rosenberg, Keneth; & Graham, Elizabeth. (1998). [Child care and parenting education within drug treatment programs for pregnant and parenting women](#) *Women's Health Issues*, 8(4), 246-253  
*Discusses incorporation of child care and parent education into drug treatment programs.*

*Universities and Research Organizations*

- Zepeda, Marlene; Varela, Frances; & Morales, Alex. (2004). [Promoting positive parenting through parenting education](#). (Building State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Series No. 13). University of California, Los Angeles, National Center for Infant and Early Childhood Health Policy  
*One of a series of reports regarding the planning and implementation of parenting education programs as part of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) State Early Childhood Comprehensive Services (SECCS) Initiative.*
- Hepburn, Kathy Seitzinger. (2004). [Families as primary partners in their child's development & school readiness](#). Baltimore: Annie E. Casey Foundation  
*A guide to help parents become more involved with their children's preschool education, focusing on parents as educators and leaders and on collaboration between parents, teachers, and schools*
- Berlin, Lisa; O'Neal, Colleen; & Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne. (2003). [Early childhood intervention research initiatives](#). In J. Brooks-Gunn, A.S. Fuligini, & L.J. Berlin (Eds.). *Early Child Development in the 21st Century: Profiles of Current Research Initiatives* (pp. 65-89). New York: Teachers College Press  
*An evaluation of two early childhood interventions, the Comprehensive Child Development Program (CCDP) and the Early Head Start (EHS) Research and Evaluation Project*
- Fraser, Jeffery. (2002). [Parenting education: Programs that provide knowledge and skill development for parents of children birth to five years](#). In C. J. Groark, K. E. Mehaffie, R. B. McCall, M. T. Greenberg, & Universities Children's Policy Collaborative (Eds.), *From Science to policy: Research on issues, programs and policies in early care and education*. Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Governor's Task Force on Early Childhood Education. P. 34-42  
*A review of family-based services for parents of young children and the evaluation research on these programs.*
- Gilman, Elizabeth; & Collins, Ann. (2000). [Better strategies for babies: Strengthening the caregivers and families of infants and toddlers](#) (Children and Welfare Reform Issue Brief No. 7). New York: Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty  
*An overview of state and local efforts to support caregivers and families of young children.*

### *Other*

- **Parents as Teachers National Center. (2007). [The Parents as Teachers program: Its impact on school readiness and later school achievement: A research summary.](#) St. Louis, MO: Parents as Teachers National Center.**  
*A summary of findings from a 2006 investigation into the impact of the Parents as Teachers program, and other prekindergarten services, on 7,710 Missouri children's school readiness and third grade achievement*

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### **Even Start/Family Literacy**

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#### *Government*

- **United States. Department of Education. Planning and Evaluation Service. (2003). [Third national Even Start evaluation: Program impacts and implications for improvement](#) (Doc No. 2005-05). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service**  
*A report on the findings of the third national evaluation of the federal Even Start family literacy program.*
- **United States. Department of Education. Office of the Under Secretary. (2003). [State administration of the Even Start Family Literacy Program: Structure, process and practices.](#) (Doc No. 2003-14). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Undersecretary**  
*A descriptive report covering the major areas of Even Start Family Literacy Program administration at the state level and the factors that facilitate or impede program improvement*
- **Wasik, Barbara H.; Herrmann, Suzannah; Berry, Randi S.; Dobbins, Dionne R.; Schimizzi, Anita M.; Smith, Tara K.; & Herman, Phillip. (2002). [Family literacy: An annotated bibliography.](#) Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education**  
*A bibliography summarizing writings and research on family literacy and on topics directly related to family literacy programs*
- **RMC Research Corporation. (2001). [Guide to quality: Even Start Family Literacy Program: Implementation and continuous improvement: Vol. I, revised.](#) Springfield: Illinois State Board of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education**  
*A guide to new research and best practices in the family literacy field.*

#### *Journals*

- **Justice, Laura M. (2000). [Enhancing children's print and word awareness through home-based parent intervention.](#) American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 9(3), 257-269**  
*An examination of the efficacy of a home-based shared reading program for enhancing parents' use of verbal and nonverbal references to print and for stimulating children's early literacy skills.*

### *Universities & Research Organizations*

- National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. (2004). [Third national Even Start evaluation: Follow-up findings from the experimental design study](#). (NCEE 2005-3002). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance  
*A report on the findings of a follow-up, randomized evaluation of Even Start.*
- Potts, Meta. (2004). [Integration components in family literacy services](#). In *The handbook of family literacy* (pp. 349-372). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates  
*A discussion of "component integration," a delivery system that combines multiple intervention strategies without duplicating services, in order to promote quality adult and early childhood education.*
- Powell, Douglas R.; Okagaki, Lynn; & Bojczyk, Kathryn E. (2004). [Evaluating parent participation and outcomes in family literacy programs: Cultural diversity considerations](#). In *The handbook of family literacy* (pp. 551-566). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates  
*A chapter suggesting that cultural background may influence parents' attitudes toward participation in family literacy programs.*
- Powell, Douglas R. (2004). [Parenting education in family literacy programs](#). In *The handbook of family literacy* (pp. 157-176). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates  
*A discussion of the role and effectiveness of parenting education in family literacy interventions.*
- Wasik, Barbara H. (2004). [Family literacy: History, concepts, services](#). In *Handbook of family literacy* (pp. 3-23). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates  
*An exploration of some of the historical and contemporary factors that have influenced the development of family literacy programs, while providing profiles of family literacy programs throughout the United States.*

### *Other*

- Britto, Pia Rebello; Fuligni, Allison Sidle; & Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne. (2006). [Reading ahead: Effective interventions for young children's early literacy development](#). In D. K. Dickinson & S. B. Neuman (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy research* (Vol. 2, pp. 311-332). New York: Guilford Press  
*An exploration of influences on the literacy development of young children from low socioeconomic status families, and the effectiveness of early intervention programs*
- Wasik, Barbara H.; & Dobbins, Dionne R. (2001). [Intergenerational family literacy: Concepts, research, and practice](#), In S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy research* (Vol. 1, pp. 444-458). New York: Guilford Press  
*An examination of how family literacy has been defined, how these definitions have influenced the formation of family literacy programs, and recommendations for further program development and research in family literacy.*

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## Parent Education in Head Start & Early Head Start

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### *Government*

- **United States. Administration for Children and Families. Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. (2005). [Head Start Impact Study: First year findings](#)**  
Washington, DC: U.S. Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation  
*A study investigating how Head Start programs affect the development, learning skills, and school readiness of low-income three- and four-year-old children*
- **United States. Administration for Children and Families. Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. (2005). [Research to practice: Supporting language and cognitive development in Early Head Start](#)**. Washington, DC: U.S., Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation  
*An overview of critical early language and literacy experiences of participants in the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project, including highlights from the Project's findings*
- **United States. Administration on Children, Youth, and Families. Commissioner's Office of Research and Evaluation. (2002). [A descriptive study of Head Start families: FACES technical report I](#)**. Washington, DC: U.S. Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Commissioner's Office of Research and Evaluation  
*A description of the characteristics and experiences of Head Start families and staff, based on data from the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES)*
- **United States. Administration for Children and Families, 2002 [Making a difference in the lives of infants and toddlers and their families: The impacts of Early Head Start: Vol. I. Final technical report](#)**. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
*A report of the findings from the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation project, a large-scale, random-assignment evaluation of the impact of Early Head Start programs on the development of infants and toddlers, and the parenting and family development of low-income families across the US*

### *Journals*

- **Duch, Helena. (2005). [Redefining parent involvement in Head Start: A two-generation approach](#)**. *Early Child Development and Care*, 175(1), 23-35  
*An article suggesting Head Start programs adopt a two-generation approach in order to increase parents' involvement*
- **Love, John; Kisker, Ellen Eliason; Ross, Christine; Raikes, Helen; Constantine, Jill; Boller, Kimberley; Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne; Chazan-Cohen, Rachel; Tarullo, Louisa B.; Brady-Smith, Christy; Fuligni, Allison Sidle; Schochet, Peter; Paulsell, Diane; & Vogel, Cheri. (2005). [The effectiveness of Early Head Start for 3-year-old children and their parents: Lessons for policy and programs](#)**. *Developmental Psychology*, 41(6), 885-901  
*A summary of the evaluated impacts of Early Head Start on children and their parents near the end of their participation in the program when children were 3 years old.*

## ***Universities & Research Organizations***

- Sang-Blodgett, Janet. (2005). [An evaluation of Best Families, a parenting education intervention program for Head Start families: The effects on child-rearing style, affirming communication, and children's behavior](#). Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park  
*An evaluation of the effects of Best Families, a four-week, parenting intervention program for Head Start parents, on their parenting style, parent-child communication, and parent- and teacher-reported children's behavior*

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### **Healthy Steps**

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#### ***Journals***

- McLearn, Kathryn Taaffe; Strobino, Donna M.; Hughart, Nancy; Minkovitz, Cynthia Schaffer; Scharfstein, Daniel; Guyer, Bernard; & Marks, Elisabeth. (2004). [Developmental services in primary care for low-income children: Clinicians' perceptions of the Healthy Steps for Young Children program](#) *Journal of Urban Health*, 81(2), 206-221  
*An evaluation of the Healthy Steps for Young Children Program (HS), which compared the perceptions of clinicians serving low income children and families with perceptions of clinicians serving higher income patients*
- Zuckerman, Barry; Parker, Stephen J.; Kaplan-Sanoff, Margot; Augustyn, Marilyn; & Barth, Michael C. (2004). [Healthy Steps: A case study of innovation in pediatric practice](#) *Pediatrics*, 114(3), 820-826  
*A comparative study evaluating the effectiveness of Healthy Steps, a child care program designed to enhance and expand traditional pediatric care*
- Guyer, Bernard; Hughart, Nancy; & Strobino, Donna M. (2000). [Assessing the impact of pediatric-based developmental services on infants, families, and clinicians: challenges to evaluating the Healthy Steps program](#) *Pediatrics*, 105(3), 33-42  
*A summary of the Healthy Steps program and evaluation findings.*

## ***Universities & Research Organizations***

- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. (2003). [Healthy Steps: The first three years](#) Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health, Women's and Children's Health Policy Center  
*An evaluation of the Healthy Steps for Young Children program, a pediatric primary care intervention, based on cohort of children from birth to age 3 at 15 evaluation sites located throughout the United States, including a cost/benefit analysis of the Program and assessment of its sustainability*
- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. (n.d.) [Healthy Steps National Evaluation](#) The Women's and Children's Health Policy Center of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health  
*A longitudinal evaluation of Healthy Steps for Young Children, an initiative to increase collaboration between parents and health care professionals*

### Other

- McCabe, Lisa A.; & Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne. (2003) [Pre- and perinatal home visitation interventions](#) In *Early Child Development in the 21st Century: Profiles of Current Research Initiatives* (pp. 145-162). New York: Teachers College Press. *An evaluation of three home visitation programs that focus on pre- and perinatal care, the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), the Healthy Families America (HFA) program, and the Healthy Steps (HS) for Young Children program*

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### Effects of Parent Education Programs on Parents & Children

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#### Journals

- St. Pierre, Robert. (2005). [Effects of a family literacy program on low-literate children and their parents: Findings from an evaluation of the Even Start family literacy program](#). *Developmental Psychology*, 41(6), 953-970  
*A randomized experimental study testing the effectiveness of Even Start family literacy programs.*
- Caughy, Margaret O'Brien. (2004). [The effects of the Healthy Steps for Young Children Program: Results from observations of parenting and child development](#) *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 19(4), 611-630  
*An examination of the effects of the Healthy Steps for Young Children Program (HS) on parent-child interaction and children's socioemotional development*
- Reid, M. Jamila; Webster-Stratton, Carolyn; & Baydar, Nazli. (2004). [Halting the development of conduct problems in Head Start children: The effects of parent training](#) *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 33(2), 279-291  
*An examination of the impact of parents' participation in the Incredible Years Parent Training Program on children's behavioral outcomes*
- Reid, M. Jamila; Webster-Stratton, Carolyn; & Beauchaine, Theodore. (2001). [Parent training in Head Start: A comparison of program response among African American, Asian American, Caucasian, and Hispanic mothers](#) *Prevention Science*, 2(4), 209-227  
*A comparison of child and parent outcomes across race enrolled in the Incredible Years Parenting Program across.*
- Webster-Stratton, Carolyn; Reid, M. Jamila; & Hammond, Mary A. (2001). [Preventing conduct problems, promoting social competence: A parent and teacher training partnership in Head Start](#) *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 30(3), 283-302  
*A report on the effectiveness of the training program Incredible Years on parents and teachers of Head Start children.*

### *Other*

- Landry, Susan H.; Smith, Karen E. (2006). [The influence of parenting on emerging literacy skills](#) In D. K. Dickinson & S. B. Neuman (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy research (Vol. 2, pp. 135-148)*. New York: Guilford Press  
*A review of research into the influence of parenting behaviors, as moderated by personal and social characteristics, on young children's early literacy development, and the effectiveness of parent intervention programs*

To suggest additions to this Key Topic Resource List, please email us at [contact@researchconnections.org](mailto:contact@researchconnections.org).

To view and sort the full search results from which these resources were selected, you may use the [Recreate Complete Search](#) function.

This selected Key Topic Resource List was developed by staff of Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*. Special thanks to Patti Banghart.