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?
Overviews and Recommendations for Parent Education Programs

Journals


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.


- 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.

Other

  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.

Even Start/Family Literacy

Government

  A report on the findings of the third national evaluation of the federal Even Start family literacy program.

  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.

  A bibliography summarizing writings and research on family literacy and on topics directly related to family literacy programs.

  A guide to new research and best practices in the family literacy field.

Journals

  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

  A report on the findings of a follow-up, randomized evaluation of Even Start.

  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.

  A chapter suggesting that cultural background may influence parents' attitudes toward participation in family literacy programs.

  A discussion of the role and effectiveness of parenting education in family literacy interventions.

  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

  An exploration of influences on the literacy development of young children from low socioeconomic status families, and the effectiveness of early intervention programs

  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.
**Government**

  A study investigating how Head Start programs affect the development, learning skills, and school readiness of low-income three- and four-year-old children

  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

  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)

  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**

  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

  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

Healthy Steps

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

  A comparative study evaluating the effectiveness of Healthy Steps, a child care program designed to enhance and expand traditional pediatric care

  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


Effects of Parent Education Programs on Parents & Children

Journals


Other


  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.

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.