

# REACH UP: a pilot early childhood parenting programme for children aged 12 - 30 months in a rural district in Zimbabwe

<b>Submission date</b> 30/07/2020	<b>Recruitment status</b> No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b> 14/10/2020	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 05/11/2024	<b>Condition category</b> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims:

Children who grow up in a stimulating, nurturing and safe environment have long-term benefits and often shown through improved self-esteem, social interaction and school performance. Sanyati, a rural district of Mashonaland West Province has high levels of poverty and about 80% of the population is engaged in subsistence farming. Only 35% of children in the 3 - 5 year age group attend preschool and there are no programmes providing early childhood development services for children in the 0 - 3 age group. Reach Up is an early childhood parenting intervention which is based on the Jamaica home-visiting intervention. The Reach Up parenting intervention has shown benefits to child and parent outcomes with an evidence base of over 30 years. The aim of this study is to find out the impact of the parenting intervention on children's language and psychomotor development and the caregiver's knowledge of child development and child-rearing practices.

### Who can participate?

Mother-child pairs are eligible to participate if the child is 12 - 30 months of age and attends the ECD centre health check services in their neighbourhood. Children with congenital abnormalities or other known disabilities that could affect development are excluded from the sample.

### What does the study involve?

The Reach Up parenting intervention provides a structured curriculum in which trained home visitors support parents by helping them to provide a stimulating environment for their children and facilitate interaction and learning. The curriculum includes activities such as search for hidden objects and imitation of sounds and gestures for younger children and concepts of shape, size, position and color for older children. Activities to help language development, fine and gross motor skills and problem-solving are included. In order to keep the intervention low cost, toys are made from materials commonly available in the homes such as plastics bottles and cardboard boxes. Verbal interaction between mother and child, the use of positive feedback and frequent praise to promote the child's feeling of self-worth are emphasized.

The home visitors are the two paraprofessional ECD assistants attached to each centre. They already have basic training and experience in ECD and are trained in using the Reach Up protocol

with adaptations for rural Zimbabwe. For some children, the paraprofessional ECD teacher visits their home twice per month and once a month the mother-child pair meets at an early childhood development centre with other mothers, until the child is 30 - 48 months. The ECD paraprofessional shows the mother ways to help their child develop well. She shows them play activities and lets the mother practice doing them with their child. Toys are left in the home and exchanged at the next visit. For some children the ECD worker does not visit their home but the mother-child pair continues to receive usual care from the quarterly health checks at the ECD centre. Questions are asked to find out about their housing, education, how they have been feeling recently, what they know about how children develop and activities they do with their child. The researchers also obtain information about the child's weight and length. These measurements are done at the beginning and end of the programme. They also measure the child's development at the end when the child was between 36 - 54 months by giving him/her some activities to see how their language and problem-solving ability is developing.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

There are minimal risks to the mother and child from participating. The risks and discomforts for participation are no more than would occur in everyday life. The only benefit is having an assessment of how the child is developing. The researchers cannot and do not guarantee or promise that the participants will receive any other benefits and/or compensation from this study.

Where is the study run from?

The study is implemented by a non-governmental organization, the JF Kapnek Trust-Zimbabwe and its personnel, in the rural district of Sanyati. The Great Zimbabwe University conducts the evaluation of the study.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

July 2015 to November 2018

Who is funding the study?

The Open Society Foundations, Open Society Institute Budapest Foundation

Who is the main contact?

Dr Christine Powell  
capowell24@gmail.com

## Contact information

### Type(s)

Scientific

### Contact name

Dr Christine Powell

### Contact details

Caribbean Institute for Health Research

The University of the West Indies

Mona

Kingston

Jamaica

-

+876 (0)9272471  
capowell24@gmail.com

**Type(s)**

Public

**Contact name**

Dr Joanne Smith

**ORCID ID**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9578-8520>

**Contact details**

Caribbean Institute for Health Research  
The University of the West Indies  
Mona  
Kingston  
Jamaica

-

+876 (0)927-2471  
joanne.smith02@uwimona.edu.jm

**Type(s)**

Public

**Contact name**

Prof Rose Mugweni

**Contact details**

School of Education and Culture  
Great Zimbabwe University  
PO Box 1235  
Masvingo  
Zimbabwe

-

+263 (0)39 263408  
ro.mugweni@gmail.com

## **Additional identifiers**

**Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)**

Nil known

**ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT)**

Nil known

**Protocol serial number**

ZIM001

## **Study information**

**Scientific Title**

REACH UP: pilot of a cluster randomized controlled trial of an early childhood parenting programme for children 12 - 30 months in a rural district in Zimbabwe

**Study objectives**

Training parents and caregivers in early childhood stimulation will lead to improvements in the children's developmental levels and parents' knowledge of child care and development and the amount of stimulation they provide to their children

**Ethics approval required**

Old ethics approval format

**Ethics approval(s)**

Approved 20/04/2016, Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe (Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe, Josiah Tongogara/ Mazoe Street, PO Box CY 573, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe; +263 (0)4 791792/791193; mrcz@mrcz.org.zw), ref: MRCZ/A/2034

**Study design**

Multicentre cluster randomized trial

**Primary study design**

Interventional

**Study type(s)**

Prevention

**Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Child development

**Interventions**

A two-stage sampling procedure is used. Firstly each of the 51 ECD centers which had been established under the J.F. Kapnek ECD programme in the Southern Sanyati region are assigned a unique identifier number. Using a table of random numbers 24 centres are randomly selected for the study. 12 centres are assigned to the intervention and 12 centers to the control group. The randomization of the ECD schools is conducted by a statistician at the host department in Jamaica.

In the second stage caregivers with a child aged 12 – 30 months, residing in the catchment area served by the selected ECD centres are identified through a house to house survey of the area and invited to participate. Those caregivers consenting to participate are enrolled until the required number of participants had been attained. At each of the 24 ECD centres, 16 mother-child pairs are enrolled.

The intervention is implemented over two years from July 2016 to June 2018. Each home visitor is responsible for eight children and their caregivers. Two home visits per month are conducted in the children's homes and one group session is conducted monthly at the ECD centre. The home visits utilize age and developmentally appropriate activities from the REACH UP curriculum. Toys are left in the home and exchanged at subsequent visits. The monthly group session includes discussions on topics of interest to the caregivers such as child development, child abuse and nutrition. Each group session lasts approximately 1 - 1.5 h. The mother-child

pairs enrolled in the control group receive the usual care provided by the JF Kapnek Trust team when they attend the ECD centres.

The follow-up takes place between 08/10/2018 and 03/11/2018. Trained interviewers hired by the researchers from the Great Zimbabwe University conduct the data collection at the ECD centres.

### **Intervention Type**

Behavioural

### **Primary outcome(s)**

1. Children's development measured using the Griffiths Mental Development Scales Extended Revised (GMDS-ER) at the end of the intervention period
2. Mothers' knowledge of child development measured using a parenting attitudes questionnaire at baseline and at the end of the intervention
3. Stimulation provided in the home measured using the Infant and Toddler Home Observation for Measurement of Environment (HOME) scales at baseline. The Early Childhood Observation for the Measurement of Environment (HOME) scales was used at the end of the intervention period

### **Key secondary outcome(s)**

Maternal depressive symptoms measured using the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CESD) at baseline and at the end of the intervention

### **Completion date**

03/11/2018

## **Eligibility**

### **Key inclusion criteria**

Caregivers with a child aged 12 – 30 months, residing in the catchment area served by the selected ECD centres

### **Participant type(s)**

Healthy volunteer

### **Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

### **Age group**

Mixed

### **Sex**

All

### **Total final enrolment**

387

### **Key exclusion criteria**

Children with congenital abnormalities or other known disabilities that could affect development

**Date of first enrolment**

08/06/2016

**Date of final enrolment**

24/06/2016

## **Locations**

**Countries of recruitment**

Zimbabwe

**Study participating centre****Alabama Primary School**

PO Box 1074

Kadoma, Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre****Barclay Chase Primary School**

PO Box 527

Kadoma, Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre****Blackmorevale Primary School**

PO Box 4

Chakari, Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre****Boterekwa Primary School**

PO Box 720

Kadoma, Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**

**Chakari Primary School**

PO Box 96

Chakari, Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**

**Chengwe Primary School**

PO Box 26

Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**

**Chiguvare Primary School**

Sunrise Street

Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**

**Cotton Research Primary School**

PO Box 765

Kadoma, Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**

**Handley Cross Primary School**

PO Box 65

Chakari, Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**

**Javachava Primary School**

PO Box 64

Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**  
**Jompani Primary School**  
PO Box 614  
Kadoma, Sanyati  
Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**  
**Machipisa Primary School**  
PO Box 960  
Kadoma, Sanyati  
Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**  
**Mahamba Primary School**  
PO Box 21  
Chakari, Sanyati  
Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**  
**Mamvurachena Primary School**  
PO Box 652  
Kadoma, Sanyati  
Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**  
**Martin Spur Primary School**  
PO Box 240  
Kadoma, Sanyati  
Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**  
**Milverton Primary School**  
PO Box 264  
Kadoma, Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**

**Montana Primary School**

PO Box 1171

Kadoma, Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**

**Musambanyama Primary School**

PO Box 2059

Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**

**Patchway Primary School**

PO Box 133

Kadoma, Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**

**Renje Primary School**

PO Box 2064

Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**

**Rondor Primary School**

PO Box 15

Chakari, Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre**

**Savanna Primary School**

PO Box 65

Chakari, Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre****St. Charles Primary School**

PO Box 2027

Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

**Study participating centre****Tomdrayer Primary School**

PO Box 737

Kadoma, Sanyati

Zimbabwe

-

## Sponsor information

**Organisation**

University of the West Indies

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/03fkc8c64>

## Funder(s)

**Funder type**

Charity

**Funder Name**

Open Society Foundations

**Alternative Name(s)**

Open Society Institute, OSF

**Funding Body Type**

Private sector organisation

### Funding Body Subtype

Trusts, charities, foundations (both public and private)

### Location

United States of America

### Funder Name

Open Society Institute Budapest Foundation

## Results and Publications

### Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The data-sharing plans for the current study are unknown and will be made available at a later date.

### IPD sharing plan summary

Data sharing statement to be made available at a later date

### Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Results article</a>		26/10/2023	05/11/2024	Yes	No