

# Training Jamaican preschool teachers in effective instructional support techniques to increase teacher effectiveness and children's early learning and language skills

<b>Submission date</b> 09/05/2019	<b>Recruitment status</b> No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b> 10/05/2019	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 14/04/2021	<b>Condition category</b> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

Early childhood is a critical period for cognitive, social, emotional and physical development and optimal development provides the foundation for future physical and mental health, academic achievement and economic attainment. Characteristics of high-quality early childhood caregiving environments are that they are safe, secure, nurturing, and provide cognitive stimulation. We have previously implemented and evaluated the IRIE Classroom Toolbox, a violence prevention, teacher-training programme, in Jamaican preschools. The IRIE Classroom Toolbox trains teachers in classroom behaviour management and how to promote young children's social-emotional competence. In this study, we will implement and evaluate an additional module for the Toolbox focussing on promoting children's school readiness and language skills. The enhanced IRIE Classroom Toolbox produced through this study will be a teacher-training programme to:

- 1) prevent violence against children by teachers
- 2) prevent the early development of antisocial behaviour
- 3) promote children's social, emotional cognitive and language skills in early childhood classrooms.

The intervention will be suitable for use with undertrained teachers, working in poorly resourced settings in LMIC.

### Who can participate?

The study is conducted in preschools in Kingston and St Andrew, Jamaica that have previously participated in a teacher-training violence prevention programme. Preschools cater to children aged 3 - 6 years. All teachers and children in the selected schools can participate in the study.

### What does the study involve?

Preschools are randomly assigned to one of two groups. Preschool teachers from preschools in group 1 (intervention group) are invited to participate in a training programme in which they are introduced to techniques to promote young children's early learning and language skills through

interactive book reading and through regular teaching and learning activities. The training programme involves attendance at two full-day workshops and participation in six 1-hour in-class support sessions, once a month for six months. Teachers from the preschools in group 2 (comparison group) will not participate in the training.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Preschool teachers will be trained in strategies to promote young children's early learning and oral language skills. It is anticipated that this will lead to increases in teachers' use of effective strategies to promote child development throughout the school day, thus leading to improvements in children's school readiness and language skills. Risks to participants are minimal.

Where is the study run from?

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

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

September 2018 to August 2019

Who is funding the study?

1. The Medical Research Council, UK
2. The Wellcome Trust
3. UK Aid
4. National Institute for Health Research, UK.

Who is the main contact:

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## Contact information

### Type(s)

Scientific

### Contact name

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## Additional identifiers

EudraCT/CTIS number

Nil known

**IRAS number**

**ClinicalTrials.gov number**

Nil known

**Secondary identifying numbers**

MR/R018421/1

## Study information

### Scientific Title

Development and evaluation of an integrated early childhood development and violence prevention teacher-training intervention in Jamaican preschools

### Study objectives

Training preschool teachers in instructional support strategies will lead to benefits in teachers' skills in using these strategies in the classroom. The strategies that will be taught include asking open-ended questions to promote children's critical thinking skills, giving appropriate feedback to support children's learning and using language facilitation techniques.

### Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

### Ethics approval(s)

1. Approved 20/07/2018, University of the West Indies ethics committee (Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of the West Indies, Mona, Kingston, Jamaica; +1(876) 927-1660-9; ethics.committee@uwimona.edu.jm), ref: ECP 139, 17/18
2. Approved 08/08/2018, School of Psychology ethics committee, Bangor University (School of Psychology, Brigantia Building, Bangor University, Bangor, Gwynedd, Wales, UK LL57 2AS; 01248 382211; psychology@bangor.ac.uk), ref 2018-26363

### Study design

Two-arm single-blind cluster-randomised controlled trial with parallel assignment

### Primary study design

Interventional

### Secondary study design

Cluster randomised trial

### Study setting(s)

School

### Study type(s)

Prevention

### Participant information sheet

Not available in web format, please use contact details to request a participant information sheet

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

Teaching practices, child language development, child school readiness skills

## **Interventions**

The intervention will be delivered with community preschools that have participated in an effectiveness trial of a universal violence prevention programme. Twenty community preschools that have been trained in the IRIE Classroom Toolbox will be randomised to participate in the intervention (10 schools, 30 teachers) or to a no-treatment control arm (10 schools, 30 teachers). Preschool teachers in intervention schools will be trained in key instructional strategies that are relevant across the curriculum and which have been shown to predict gains in school achievement over time. These include:

- i) how to improve children's critical thinking skills
- ii) how to provide feedback to expand child learning and understanding
- iii) how to facilitate children's language development

Teachers will be trained to use the techniques during interactive storybook reading sessions and this provides a structured format for teachers to learn and practice the instructional support strategies. Teachers will then be guided in how to generalise their use of the strategies across the school day.

The intervention will be delivered through two full-day training workshops and six sessions of in-class support (1 hour session, once a month for 6 months) delivered by a member of the research team. Each school will receive a set of fifteen storybooks with an accompanying story guide and picture vocabulary cards of keywords in the story.

Control condition: Teachers in the control schools will not receive the training workshops or the in-class support sessions. Each control school will receive the same set of fifteen storybooks as the intervention schools.

Teachers' practices in using three key strategies will be measured across one school day through independent observations in the classroom. Teachers will be asked to read one storybook and to continue with their regular teaching and learning activities for the rest of the day.

Child school readiness and language skills will be measured through direct testing.

## **Intervention Type**

Behavioural

## **Primary outcome measure**

Teachers' practices in using three key strategies will be measured across one school day through independent observations in the classroom. Event sampling will be used to measure teachers' use of 1) open-ended questions, 2) parallel talk and 3) contingent responding. These observations will be conducted at baseline (Sept/Oct 2018) and post-test (May/June 2019).

## **Secondary outcome measures**

All measures will be conducted at baseline (Sept/Oct 2018) and post-test (May/June 2019)

1. Child school readiness by direct testing

2. Child language skills by direct testing

We are also monitoring whether the additional training changes the effect of the initial training in the IRIE Classroom Toolbox by measuring:

1. Teacher reports of child behaviour difficulties

2. Teacher reports of their own well-being (depressive symptoms, burn-out and self-efficacy)

3. Independent observations of teachers' use of violence against children

**Overall study start date**

01/09/2018

**Completion date**

31/08/2019

## Eligibility

**Key inclusion criteria**

All community preschools situated in a specified geographical region of Kingston and St. Andrew and that participated in our previous trial of the IRIE Classroom Toolbox will be eligible for participation in the trial. All teachers and classrooms within those schools will be included.

For children selected to be included in the evaluation, children are eligible for inclusion if they:

1. Have no obvious disability
2. Are aged 3-6 years

**Participant type(s)**

Other

**Age group**

Mixed

**Sex**

Both

**Target number of participants**

20 community preschools will participate in the study. Preschools have an average of 3 classrooms (range 2-5 classrooms), with classes for children aged 3, 4 and 5 years. All classrooms and all teachers within the 20 schools will participate in the trial giving approx. 60 teachers /classrooms in total. A random sample of 5 children from each class (15 children/school) will also be evaluated giving a sample size of 300 children.

**Key exclusion criteria**

Does not meet inclusion criteria.

**Date of first enrolment**

03/09/2018

**Date of final enrolment**

31/10/2018

## Locations

**Countries of recruitment**

Jamaica

**Study participating centre**

**Caribbean Institute for Health Research**  
Caribbean Institute for Health Research  
University of the West Indies Mona  
Kingston  
Jamaica  
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## Sponsor information

### Organisation

University of the West Indies

### Sponsor details

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### Sponsor type

University/education

### Website

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### ROR

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

## Funder(s)

### Funder type

Research council

### Funder Name

Medical Research Council

### Alternative Name(s)

Medical Research Council (United Kingdom), UK Medical Research Council, MRC

### Funding Body Type

Government organisation

### Funding Body Subtype

National government

**Location**

United Kingdom

**Funder Name**

The Wellcome Trust

**Funder Name**

UK Aid

**Funder Name**

National Institute for Health Research

**Alternative Name(s)**

National Institute for Health Research, NIHR Research, NIHRresearch, NIHR - National Institute for Health Research, NIHR (The National Institute for Health and Care Research), NIHR

**Funding Body Type**

Government organisation

**Funding Body Subtype**

National government

**Location**

United Kingdom

## Results and Publications

**Publication and dissemination plan**

Planned publication in a peer-reviewed journal. The results of the study will be disseminated within Jamaica at national conferences and to the Early Childhood Commission, preschool teachers and all schools participating in the study. Training and intervention materials will be made available globally through a Creative Commons License and uploaded on our website: [www.iritoolbox.com](http://www.iritoolbox.com).

**Intention to publish date**

31/12/2020

**Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan**

The current data sharing plans for this study are unknown and will be 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="#">Basic results</a>		13/04/2021	14/04/2021	No	No