

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

Submission date 09/05/2019	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	☐ Prospectively registered ☐ Protocol
Registration date 10/05/2019	Overall study status Completed	☐ Statistical analysis plan ☒ Results
Last Edited 14/04/2021	Condition category Other	☐ 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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7

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number

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

Primary study design

Interventional

Study design

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

Study type(s)

Prevention

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(s)

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).

Key secondary outcome(s)

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

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

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Mixed

Sex

All

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

7

Sponsor information**Organisation**

University of the West Indies

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, Medical Research Committee and Advisory 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

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?
Basic results		13/04/2021	14/04/2021	No	No