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Evaluating an online parenting programme based on 'The Little Parent Handbook'.

Submission date	Recruitment status	[_] Prospectively registered
30/03/2016	No longer recruiting	[X] Protocol
Registration date	**Overall study status**	[_] Statistical analysis plan
05/05/2016	Completed	[X] Results
Last Edited	**Condition category**	[_] Individual participant data
28/08/2018	Other	

Plain English summary of protocol
Background and study aims
“The Little Parent Handbook” is a booklet that explains some important parenting skills to support a positive parent/child relationship. It describes, for example, how a parent can build a strong relationship with their child, how to encourage good behaviour and how to manage problem behaviour. This study is testing an online parenting programme, created using the “LifeGuide” software and based on “The Little Parent Handbook”. It covers core behavioural principles with a strong focus on positive parenting. The aim is to investigate whether this programme will result in increases in positive parenting strategies and increase parenting skills, how competent parents feel about their parenting skills and their general health and well-being.

Who can participate?
Parents that have a child aged between 3-8 years.

What does the study involve?
Participants are randomly allocated to one of two groups. Those in group 1 are placed in the intervention group. Those in group 2 are placed in the wait-list control group. Parents in the intervention group are given access to the online parenting programme immediately for a period of ten weeks. During this time, they are asked to complete one chapter a week and are encouraged to practice the skills outline in the programme at home with their child and keep a record. The online programme features include information, images, audio button, video examples of positive parenting, downloadable summary sheets and an end of chapter multiple-choice quiz. Parents are asked to watch videos of positive parenting and then answer questions based on what they have just watched. Parents are also asked to report online how much time they have spent playing with their child during the past week. The programme provides parents with automated feedback depending on the number they reported. All participants (including those in the wait-list control group) are visited at home at the start of the study and again three months later and asked to fill in questionnaires and have their interactions with their children observed. Those participants in the intervention group have an additional visit six months after the start of the study. Participahts in the wait-list control group are given access to the programme once they have had their three month visit.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
Parents are given the opportunity to learn new parenting skills that may help them to strengthen their relationship with their child and encourage positive behaviours.

Where is the study run from?
Centre for Evidence Based Early Intervention, Bangor University (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
July 2014 to July 2017

Who is funding the study?
Bangor University (UK)

Who is the main contact?
1. Miss Dawn Owen (public)
2. Professor Judy Hutchings (scientific)

Contact information

Type(s)
Public

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Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title
An effectiveness study of an online parenting programme based on 'The Little Parent Handbook': a pilot randomised controlled trial.

Study objectives
1. The online parenting programme will bring about significant increases in positive parenting strategies as shown in the behavioural observation of parent-child interaction
2. The online programme will significantly increase positive changes for parents, including parenting skills, parental sense of competence and parental general health as shown in the self-report measures

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
1. School of Psychology, Bangor University Ethics Committee, 30/11/2015, ref: 2016-15578
2. Wales Research Ethics Committee, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, 24/01/2016, ref: 15/WA/0463
3. Research & Development Review Panel, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, 25/01/2016, ref: 15/WA/0463

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Pilot randomised controlled trial

Study type(s)
Prevention

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

Interventions
The intervention is a ten-week online parenting programme for parents of children aged 3-8 who would like to learn more about positive parenting strategies. The study is not targeting a specific population i.e. children displaying behavioural problems within the clinical range, instead this is a universal intervention.

Parents will be randomised to either the intervention group or to a 3-month wait-list control group. Parents in the intervention group will start the programme immediately, and control parents will start the programme three months later.

The online parenting programme is based on ‘The Little Parent Handbook’ and covers core behavioural principles with a strong focus on positive parenting. The programme was created using the 'LifeGuide' software. The programme lasts for the duration of ten weeks and parents are asked to complete one chapter each week. Parents are also encouraged to practice the skills outline in the programme at home with their child and keep a record. This aims to generalise the

skills learned in the programme and also provide parents with the opportunity for practising the parenting skills. Chapter content are as follows:

1. The importance of spending time with your child
2. Praising your child's positive behaviour
3. Rewarding your child's positive behaviour
4. How to get better at giving instructions (part 1)
5. How to get better at giving instructions (part 2)
6. Revision
7. Ignoring problem behaviour
8. Teaching your child new behaviours
9. How to develop your child's language skills
10. Revision

Parents must complete one chapter before moving on to the next one, however they can revise previous chapters as many times as they wish. There will be a minimum of five days gap between each session; this is to ensure that parents have sufficient time to complete the online programme and practice the skills at home. However, parents do not have to complete the chapter in one siting, they can log in and out as they wish. Parents will also have the option to be sent text messages letting them know when the next chapter becomes available and also prompting them to log in and complete the next one (if they have not been active for three days since the next chapter became available).

The online programme features include information, images, audio button, video examples of positive parenting, downloadable summary sheets and an end of chapter multiple-choice quiz. Parents are asked to watch videos of positive parenting and then answer questions based on what they have just watched. This aims to develop parental observational skills. Parents are also required to report online how much time they have spent playing with their child during the past week. The programme provides parents with automated feedback depending on the number they reported. Online praise messages are also delivered to parents during the programme in order to attempt to target treatment engagement and keep parents engaged. The main focus is encouraging parents to spend more time playing with their child in order to strengthen their relationship and reduce conflict.

Health visitors and school nurses will be asked to approach parents of children aged between 3-8 years, from their own caseloads, who would like to learn more about positive parenting. The health visitor/school nurse will be required to discuss the online programme and go through the detailed information sheet with interested parents. If parents would like to participate they are then asked to complete a parent note of interest form. With the parents' permission, the health visitor/school nurse will then send the form to the researchers who will then contact the parents to discuss the study further and arrange a convenient time for a home visit.

Recruitment posters will also be distributed to local primary schools and nurseries in order to recruit a large sample. Head teachers and nursery managers will be contacted to ask permission for a researcher to go in and discuss the project further. Posters will then be sent home with children aged 3-8 years to give to parents. Interested parents may then contact the chief investigator by e-mail or telephone to request a detailed information sheet. Once all consent and baseline measures have been collected, parents will randomised on a 2:1 ratio to either intervention or wait-list control. Randomisation will be stratified according to child gender and age (3-5 years and 6-8 years).

All data will be collected in the parents' home. Home visits will take approximately one hour to complete (thirty minutes for questionnaires and thirty minutes for behavioural observation). Each parent will complete the measures (questionnaires and behavioural observation) at baseline and three months later. After baseline measures have been collected for all parents, those randomised to the intervention group will begin the programme immediately. The control parents will wait three-months and will begin the programme once all measures have been completed after the second home visit (after three months). A researcher will visit the intervention group only six months after the start of the intervention to collect follow-up data and analyse any potential maintenance effects. Researchers will be blind to parent group allocation for the first two home visits, however researchers will know at the six-month follow up stage that all parents are from the intervention group.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Quality of parent-child interaction, assessed by direct observation of parent-child interaction using the DPICS coding system.

Parents will be coded for thirty minutes in their own homes. The coding system includes two sections, positive parenting and negative parenting. The researcher will tally each time a parent engages in either positive or negative parenting behaviour. The observations will be coded by two researchers for 20% of the observations in order to reach inter-rater reliability of 80%.

Assessed at baseline and at 3 months. Further assessment at 6 months for participants in intervention group.

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Family characteristics (SES status, single-parent status etc), collected via a demographic questionnaire
2. Frequency of child behaviour problems, assessed using the Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory
3. Satisfaction and efficacy, assessed via Parenting Sense of Competence Scale
4. Parental mental well-being, assessed via the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-30)
5. Parenting practice, assessed using the Arnold O'Leary Parenting Scale

Timepoints:
Baseline: Demographic questionnaire and all parent report measures for intervention and control parents
3 month follow-up: All parent report measures (no demographic) for intervention and control parents
6 month follow-up: All parent report measures (no demographic) for intervention parents only

Completion date
01/07/2017

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. Parent with a child aged 3-8 years
2. Parent has access to the internet
3. Parent has good understanding of English

Participant type(s)
Healthy volunteer

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
1. Parent does not have a child aged 3-8 years
2. Parent does not have access to the internet
3. Parent does not have a good level of understanding in English

Date of first enrolment
01/03/2016

Date of final enrolment
01/12/2016

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

Wales

Study participating centre
Centre for Evidence Based Early Intervention, Bangor University
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Sponsor information

Organisation
Bangor University

ROR
https://ror.org/006jb1a24

Funder(s)

Funder type
University/education

Funder Name
Bangor University

Alternative Name(s)

Funding Body Type
Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype
Universities (academic only)

Location
United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

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?
Protocol article	protocol	26/04/2017		Yes	No
Basic results		28/08/2018	28/08/2018	No	No
HRA research summary			28/06/2023	No	No