Improving Children’s Outcomes

Donna Molloy
Director of Dissemination, EIF

@theEIFoundation
eif.org.uk
What Works Centres – a culture of empirical evidence
The evidence for early intervention

The right intervention, at the right time, can significantly improve the life chances of many of these children & families

- The scientific basis for early intervention is well established, gaps in children’s wellbeing and development open up early with significant consequences for future and intergenerational outcomes.

- There are a range of programmes and interventions shown to improve outcomes for children

- But, not all early intervention is effective. Too much of what is currently delivered makes no measurable difference

- Much of the work of EIF focusses on assessing the effectiveness of EI interventions to make the evidence transparent and accessible
### Filter programmes

#### Evidence rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Evidence has limited quality and potential for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Evidence is moderate and potentially useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Evidence is strong and robust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No effect</td>
<td>Evidence has not been evaluated or is inconclusive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Age groups

- Antenatal
- Perinatal
- Infants
- Toddlers
- Preschool
- Primary school
- Preadolescents
- Adolescents

#### Cost rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Low cost and low impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Moderate cost and moderate impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>High cost and high impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Very high cost and very high impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Provision

- Show only programmes that have been implemented in the UK

---

**Improving Children’s Outcomes**
Example Programme

Example Programme is a targeted-selective programme for children between the ages of 8 and 12. It is designed to prevent antisocial behaviour and to reduce abuse in children from low-income families.

- **Evidence rating:** 3+
- **Cost rating:** 1
- **Child outcomes:**
  - Preventing substance abuse
  - Preventing crime, violence, and antisocial behaviour
- **UK provision:** Yes
- **Setting:**
  - Primary school
  - Secondary school
  - Community centre
- **Age group:** Preadolescents
- **Delivery model:** Group
- **Classification:** Targeted selective

**What does it do?**

**Where does it all happen?**

**Is it in the UK already?**

**Who is it for?**

**Universal or targeted?**

**How strong is the evidence?**

**What does it cost?**

**What can it achieve?**
EIF reviews include clear messages about where the evidence is strongest and which interventions have been shown to improve child outcomes

• Supporting delivery of the Troubled Families programme – 24 interventions with good evidence of improving parent and child outcomes in vulnerable populations

• Improving effectiveness in child protection - good evidence to support interventions aimed at [eg] improving attachment security in maltreated children, reducing physical abuse, reducing emotional abuse, for older maltreated children with trauma symptoms etc

• Work on tackling parental conflict concludes there are a small number of interventions shown to deliver child outcomes

• EIF work on Social and Emotional Learning, shows there are programmes in schools which deliver a range of outcomes for children
Reducing Parental conflict
The scientific evidence that reducing parental conflict matters for children’s outcomes is strong, but our knowledge of what to do is still at an early stage

- Some programmes that have been found to be effective outside the UK.
- Programmes generally focus on adult outcomes, effects of couple programmes on child outcomes not explored
- Need to test new interventions
- Building the evidence base as to what works for whom and in what circumstances
Supporting children’s Social and Emotional skills

Why do they matter?

What Works?
Making the case for evidence based SEL programmes in primary and secondary schools

• Gaps in social and emotional skills open up early
• Clear opportunities for early intervention to improve social and emotional skills before children start school & during school years
• There are programmes with good evidence of impact on a range of outcomes
• Emerging research about key factors in the wider school environment
The gap between evidence and local delivery

• Whilst some interventions with strong evidence are available in local areas, these are very small in scale compared with the vast majority of practice.

• Whilst evidence is not the only consideration in deciding what to deliver, on balance - families and children who receive interventions shown through robust methods to improve outcomes, are more likely to benefit and to a greater degree, than those who receive other services.

• Sustained effort is needed to:
  • Clearly communicate the evidence
  • Fill gaps in evidence
  • Support analytical capacity to apply the evidence locally and to evaluate the impact of local approaches.