

Institution: University of Hertfordshire
Unit of Assessment: Panel A3B: Allied Health Professions and Nursing
Title of case study: Evaluating Community-Based Parenting Programmes: TOPSE
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>From 2004, researchers at the university's Centre for Research in Primary and Community Care developed the 'Tool to Measure Parenting Self-Efficacy' (TOPSE). This allowed community-based parenting support practitioners to evaluate and demonstrate, for the first time, the effectiveness of their services and providing, for example, quantifiable data to their funders. Parents too could rate the help they received, as well as their own efficacy as parents, and they subsequently reported increased confidence in their parenting ability and improved parent-child relationships. By 2008 the tool had spread nationally and internationally, and has since been used by more than 300 practitioners and researchers worldwide.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The UK's Department of Health regards early intervention in parenting as a high-priority strategy: it views such intervention as the key approach to ensuring that parents are supported, and children provided with positive parenting that will improve their life chances.</p> <p>Our research in this field originated in 2004 when health visitors in Hertfordshire approached the university's Centre for Research in Primary and Community Care (CRIPACC) to request help in developing a method of measuring the effect of the support they were offering to parents in their area. Until that point there was a lack of UK-based effectiveness evaluations covering the range of parenting programmes that were developed and delivered by various organisations. The result of our research was the 'Tool to Measure Parenting Self-Efficacy' (TOPSE) (see section 3, Ref. 6). The key investigators associated with this research project were Sally Kendall, Professor of Nursing, Director of CRIPACC and lead investigator (in post since 2001, 1fte) and Linda Bloomfield, research fellow, CRIPACC (in post since 2001 0.8fte, currently 0.4fte). The Hertfordshire health visiting practitioners were active participants in the research and co-authors of the first publication.</p> <p>TOPSE consists of forty-eight self-efficacy statements that address six domains of parenting. Parents indicate how much they agree with each statement by responding to a Likert scale. The TOPSE booklet is completed by parents on the first session of a parenting programme, and again on the final session to determine any change in self-efficacy scores. Scores are collected and tabulated by programme facilitators. We found that self-efficacy is of particular relevance to group-based parenting programmes. Parenting self-efficacy – a person's perception of their competency in the parenting role – is encouraged by providing opportunities for parents to develop their skills through learning and achieving positive behaviours, experiencing other parents' successes, and receiving encouragement from programme facilitators and other parents.</p> <p>Evaluations using TOPSE demonstrated an increase in parenting self-efficacy after attending a parenting programme. Parents felt more confident with all aspects of their role, and their positive expectations and sense of the effect this would have on their children lasted four months after the programme came to an end (section 3, Refs 2 and 4). A 2012 study (section 3, Ref. 1) demonstrated a correlation between parenting self-efficacy and parenting stress. Higher parenting stress was related to lower TOPSE scores, while increased TOPSE scores correlated with lower parenting stress.</p> <p>Further research included an adaptation of TOPSE for parents with learning disabilities (section 3, Ref. 3). This simplified tool has been used by practitioners working with parents who have learning disabilities, and those with low literacy skills, and is an effective evaluation tool in this context.</p>

As a direct result of our work, the British Council's PM12 programme, a five-year strategy to strengthen the UK's position in international education, awarded us funding in 2008 to collaborate with academics and public health nurses in Japan, both to compare the effects of parenting support and to explore cultural difference in relation to parenting, using the TOPSE tool as an evaluation measure. Jane Appleton (Reader at Oxford Brookes University) and Jane Petrie (Health Visitor and Parenting Co-ordinator, currently Child Protection Awareness and Promotion Officer for Parenting at NSPCC) were also on the research team.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Peer-reviewed Papers

1. **Kendall, S, Bloomfield, L**, Appleton, J and Kitaoka, K (2013). Efficacy of a group-based parenting program on stress and self-efficacy among Japanese mothers: A quasi-experimental study. *Nursing and Health Sciences*. doi: 10.1111/nhs.12054 (Early view, online ahead of print).
– REF2 Output
2. **Bloomfield L and Kendall S** (2012). 'Parenting self-efficacy, parenting stress and child behaviour before and after a parenting programme', *Primary Health Care Research and Development* 13(4): 364–72. doi: 10.1017/S1463423612000060
– REF2 Output
3. **Bloomfield L and Kendall S** (2010). 'Audit as evidence: The effectiveness of "123 Magic" programmes', *Community Practitioner* 83(1): 26–9.
4. **Bloomfield L, Kendall S**, and Fortuna S (2010). 'Supporting parents: development of a tool to measure self-efficacy of parents with learning disabilities', *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* 38(4): 303–309. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-3156.2009.00607.x
– REF2 Output
5. **Bloomfield L and Kendall S** (2007). 'Testing a parenting programme evaluation tool as a pre- and post-course measure of parenting self-efficacy', *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 60(5): 487–93. doi: 10.1111/j.1365–2648.2007.04420.x
6. **Kendall S and Bloomfield L** (2005). 'TOPSE: Developing and validating A Tool to Measure Parenting Self-Efficacy', *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 51(2): 174–81. doi: 10.1111/j.1365–2648.2005.03479.x

Selected Research Awards

2004–2006. **Funder: HertNet** (Hertfordshire Primary Care Research Network Consortium). **Amount: £20,000**. Small award to S Kendall and L Bloomfield, which supported the development of the TOPSE tool in Hertfordshire.

2008–2010. **Funder: British Council PMI2 award. Amount: £34,000**. For S Kendall, L Bloomfield, J Appleton and K Kitaoka to undertake a comparative study of parenting evaluation in England and Japan.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The Tool to Measure Parenting Self-Efficacy has been used by local government, health care and voluntary organisations to inform strategy and parenting practice. TOPSE filled a gap, initially locally, then nationally and internationally, by providing evidence that parenting support could make a difference. Practitioners inform us that parents report improvements in their confidence and parenting abilities.

TOPSE can be downloaded from a website (www.topse.org.uk). Between its launch in October 2010

and June 2013, we received 545 website enquiries: fifty percent were from parenting programme leads, co-ordinators and practitioners at UK-based organisations, including county councils, schools, children's centres and voluntary organisations; the remainder include researchers and overseas practitioners. International enquiries have led to the tool's translation into eight languages (Welsh, Japanese, Hebrew, Greek, Rumanian, Danish, Swedish and Dutch) for use abroad.

National

TOPSE is used across Wales, in four English county councils (Durham, Buckingham, Newport, Hertfordshire) and by four voluntary organisations, including Barnardo's. Hertfordshire's parenting programme providers (including Families in Focus, running sessions for 500 parents annually, and Supporting Links) use it to evaluate all county-wide programmes. In Hertsmere, TOPSE is used in ten children's centres to evaluate six programmes each term, amounting to 180 parents annually, and Children's Centres use TOPSE to demonstrate to their funders the value of parenting support.

As awareness of our research spreads, we have received numerous requests to use TOPSE as part of national programme evaluations. Evidence suggests that a substantial number of organisations have translated this into their evaluation policies.

For example, IPSOS MORI conducted a longitudinal evaluation of Flying Start for the Welsh government (2011), using TOPSE as an outcome measure. As part of a baseline survey, TOPSE was completed by 1,694 parents of children aged 0–2 years. TOPSE and TOPSE for parents with learning disabilities are also used by Welsh co-ordinators to evaluate Incredible Years and Family Links Nurturing programmes. The number of programmes in Wales using TOPSE is growing: in Pontypool, ten groups of six to twelve parents each term, and in Newport twenty-three groups of ten parents each, have used TOPSE to evaluate programme outcomes.

In Leeds the tool has previously been used to evaluate twenty-five programmes (250 parents); and in Buckinghamshire 63 parenting groups (512 parents) have completed TOPSE evaluations, providing evidence that Incredible Years had a greater impact on parent–child relationships than other programmes. County Durham, which has used TOPSE since 2009, found in 2012 that 95% of parents reported an improvement in self-efficacy. The county wrote the tool into its Quality Standards and Good Practice Guidance, and uses it to identify which aspects of child and family support to address.

Practitioner feedback consistently reports increased self-efficacy scores after parenting programmes, in turn providing evidence that parents benefit from the programmes, and assisting funding decisions. The following selected comments indicate how TOPSE allows facilitators to determine whether their programmes benefit parents:

'TOPSE shows how parents have changed during the time of the programme, we have found the largest shift to a higher score is play and enjoyment, discipline and boundaries and learning and knowledge.' (Newport City Council)

'95% of parents who completed TOPSE at evidence based Parenting Programmes . . . felt more confident to address and deal with the issues they face as parents.' (County Durham)

'Unlike many other evaluation tools, it has been found that the results from TOPSE's self-reporting measures are good indicators of actual parental behaviour.' ('Evaluation of Flying Start', report commissioned by the Welsh government).

International

Organisations, practitioners and researchers in Australia, Canada, USA, Denmark, Sweden, Israel, Japan, Greece, the Netherlands, Romania, Hungary and Germany have implemented TOPSE as part of their strategies to demonstrate improvements in parenting. In Stockholm, the tool was used to evaluate a universal parenting programme involving 1,000 parents of children aged 3–13, with

plans for further evaluation in a deprived area. In Israel TOPSE was adapted for use with parents of children with ADHD, and in the Netherlands the Department of Rehabilitation used TOPSE in a 264-parent study.

Our collaborative study with Kanazawa Medical University, Japan led the mayor of Uchinada to fund his region's parenting programmes for a further year, allowing local families to benefit beyond our research period. Japan is concerned about child abuse in the context of parenting stress and isolation, and the Sasakawa Foundation viewed the project as being of civic and public health value; accordingly, it provided funding to Professor Kendall for dissemination into policy and practice in Tokyo. The Foundation's support for this phase, completed in February 2012, facilitated discussions with public health nurses in Tokyo and Uchinada that confirmed our qualitative research: Japanese parents were less likely to openly discuss parenting stress than English parents, but support lowered their parenting stress scores and increased their confidence.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Reports

The following selected reports describe disparate parenting programmes that used TOPSE as the sole or an integral evaluation tool.

[text removed for publication]

Welsh Government Social Research (2011). 'Evaluation of Flying Start: Findings from the Baseline Survey of Families – Mapping Needs and Measuring Early Influence among Families with Babies aged 7 to 20 Months. Main Report.' Social research number 28/2011. (The third quote in section 4 above is on p.141.) Report available online:

<<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/111214EvalFlyStart-7-20monthsmainen.pdf>>

Institutional Corroboration

Contact details are provided separately for individuals based at the following organisations who are able to corroborate aspects of the impact detailed in this case study:

1. Childhood Support Services, Hertfordshire County Council
2. Children and Adult Services, Durham County Council
3. Kanazawa Medical University, Japan
4. Family Resilience Team, Buckinghamshire County Council
5. Family Links (UK national charity)

Other

The confidential database containing details of TOPSE website registrants and their enquiries can be made available if required.