

Program decreases stress among parents in low-income diverse populations

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Low-income parents reported lower perceived parenting stress and better overall outcomes when parents participated in Parenting Journey, a community-delivered curriculum designed to increase resilience and support nurturing family relationships.

While previous studies have identified the [positive impact](#) that parenting programs have on outcomes in both children and families, in 2016 the National Academy of Sciences highlighted the need for further research on these programs in diverse populations.

The collaborative investigation was carried out in partnership with the Institute for Community Health, ABCD Head Start, the Parenting Journey, Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) and Boston Medical Center (BMC). Participants in this study were predominantly female, identified as Black or Latino, reported an annual household income of less than \$20,000 per year and had significantly higher perceived stress at baseline. Parents in the [intervention group](#) received 12, two-hour, weekly group sessions run by two trained

facilitators.

During the sessions, caregivers were provided strategies to help them increase [self-care](#), raise awareness of what influences their parenting styles, as well as identify their strengths to better support themselves, their children and their families. Researchers found that parents participating in this program reported decreased parenting stress, greater insight into how their upbringing affects their current parenting behaviors and increased ability to access social networks when compared with parents that were not enrolled in this program.

According to the researchers, there is a need for effective, accessible, strength-based parenting supports for low income and diverse populations. "Parenting Journey has specifically been developed for delivery in the community in settings such as Head Start that primarily serve low-income families. In addition, the session content has been designed to engage parents and to develop trust among group participants," said corresponding author Caroline J Kistin, MD, MSc, assistant professor of pediatrics at BUSM and a pediatrician at BMC.

The researchers believe that community-delivered parenting curriculums like Parenting Journey may be one promising way in which family wellness and child development can be supported in low-income diverse populations. However, they note the need for further research examining the "long-term effects on parental mental health and child socioemotional development."

More information: Caroline J Kistin et al. Impact of a community-delivered parenting curriculum on perceived parenting stress and parent-reported outcomes in a low-income diverse population. *Families, Systems, & Health*. (2020) Advance online publication. doi.org/10.1037/fsh0000460

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