

## Reducing problem behavior during care-giving in families of preschool-aged children with developmental disabilities.

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### 1.1 Aim

A unique feature of the present research is that it is the first study in child disability field which compares a standard behavioral parent training intervention (Stepping Stones Triple P-Standard/SSTP-S) to an enhanced adjunctive intervention (Stepping Stones Triple P-Enhanced/SSTP-E) and a waitlist (WL) control group. The present study expands on previous research as there has only been one previous randomized control trial comparing the efficacy of SSTP-S to a waitlist control group (Roberts et al., 2006).

### 2.1 Hypotheses

The hypotheses for the current study were that parents from the Enhanced condition (SSTP-E) compared to parents from the Standard condition (SSTP-S) would show:

1. At immediately post-intervention, greater reductions on observed and parent reported measures of child problem behavior (overall and related with care-giving). SSTP-E > SSTP-S > WL;
2. At post-intervention, greater reductions in observed parental negativity. SSTP-E > SSTP-S > WL. In addition, parent-reported measures of parenting skills and competence would show better outcomes in both intervention conditions as compared with the WL control;
3. Similar pattern of results in relation to parental distress and adjustment; and
4. On all observed and parent-reported measures, changes at post-intervention would be maintained at 1-year follow-up. Better maintenance for SSTP-E as compared with SSTP-S.

### 3.1 Results

The results of the study generally supported the primary hypotheses:

1. SSTP-S and SSTP-E are associated with positive changes in child behavior,
2. Interventions results show more adaptive parenting skills and increased parental competence.

However, contrary to predictions:

3. Intervention doesn't result in reduced parental distress and improved adjustment,
4. Only partial support for the hypotheses suggesting that SSTP-E would be superior to the SSTP-S on outcome measures.

### 4.1 Findings

**Both the SSTP-S and SSTP-E are effective interventions to reducing negative child behavior, and these changes in behavior are maintained over time.** Furthermore, the findings show that following intervention, parents are able to facilitate their child's behavior across numerous care-giving tasks. It is assumed that by reducing child problem behavior, parent's burden of care is reduced.

### 5.1 Summary and Implications

While we did not find that the enhanced adjunctive intervention was superior to the standard intervention, it has resulted in the development of a new intervention for clinical use with parents requiring support in relation to coping with their care-giving roles. Similar outcomes were achieved in fewer sessions with SSTP-S, suggesting that it is more cost effective than SSTP-E. The enhanced intervention appears to be a useful adjunct that should be reserved for either non-responders to the standard intervention or for families with additional risk factors that are not changed by the standard intervention.