

## Three Effective Parenting Program Models that Support Family Well-being: A Guide for Practitioners

*By Fanwen Kong, M.A., Boston College*

### Executive Summary

Becoming a parent can be an exciting and joyful, but also stressful and challenging time. During the challenges of parenting, social and practical support can help parents and children live better lives. However, not all parents have appropriate support and knowledge, which can lead to intentional or unintentional child maltreatment. Impoverished or marginalized families might face additional pressures or challenges, which could hinder their ability to engage in promotive parenting practices. For the federal fiscal year 2021, states reported 588,229 victims of child abuse and neglect, resulting in 1,820 child deaths in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Child maltreatment is associated with stress that can harm the development of the nervous and immune systems and disrupt early brain development. As a result, children who are abused or neglected are at higher risk for health problems such as alcoholism, depression, and certain chronic diseases.<sup>2</sup> However, there are a host of intervention and prevention programs available which, when facilitated by trained practitioners, have been shown to support promotive parent and child interactions and reduce or prevent these negative practices and outcomes. Given the overwhelming need for effective parent and child support programs and myriad options, finding effective intervention and prevention programs can be a difficult process for practitioners. This brief highlights three highly rated, evidence-based parenting programs practitioners may want to consider in order to provide clients with effective parenting support.

### Evidence-Based Parenting Programs

Information on evidence-based parenting programs was reviewed through [Blueprints](#)<sup>3</sup> and [The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse \(CEBC\)](#)<sup>4</sup> databases, which provide information on a broad range of child, youth, and family well-being programs. Three parenting programs stood out for their strong evidence of promoting positive parenting and/or reducing harsh and unhealthy parenting.

#### Generation PMTO

Parent Management Training - Oregon Model (rebranded as Generation PMTO) is a group of theory-based parent training interventions that can be implemented in a variety of family contexts. These programs aim to teach effective family management skills in order to reduce antisocial and problematic behavior in children.

#### Delivery Information

Target Population: children/youth ages 2-18 at risk for or presenting with behavior problems and their parents or caregivers

Intervention Settings: outpatient clinics, community-based agencies, organizations, school settings (including day care, day treatment programs, etc.), homeless shelters

#### Program Effectiveness

Seventeen rigorous studies have found that

Generation PMTO programs:

- Reduce coercive parenting, maternal depression, and child's internalizing and externalizing behavior
- Decrease the prevalence and frequency of juvenile arrests
- Increase positive parenting, effective parenting practices, parents' use of effective discipline, and adaptive functioning
- Improve children's social competence, socio-emotional functioning, and deviant behavior (aggression and likelihood of using tobacco)
- Are associated with an increase in maternal socioeconomic status

#### Incredible Years – Parent

The Incredible Years Parent program is a group-based parenting program that strengthens parent competencies to promote young children's social, emotional, and academic skills, with the goal of preventing, reducing, and treating behavioral and emotional problems in children.

#### Delivery Information

Target Population: parents, teachers, and children ages 2-12

Intervention Settings: birth family homes, community daily living settings, foster/kinship care settings, hospital/medical centers, outpatient clinics, community-based agencies, organizations, providers, school settings (including day care, day treatment

programs, etc.), correctional facilities, mental health/treatment centers

### **Program Effectiveness**

Rigorous evaluations have found that Incredible Year-Parent programs:

- Reduce parental depression, parent stress and negative parenting such as the use of criticism, negative commands, and harsh discipline
- Reduce children's conduct problems at school and at home with mothers and fathers
- Reduce children's aggression, internalizing and depressed mood symptoms
- Increase positive parenting such as coaching, praise, and limit-setting
- Increase children's positive affect and compliance to parental commands and parental self-confidence

### **Parent-Child Interaction Therapy**

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy is designed for children ages 2-12 years and their parents or caregivers. The program focuses on decreasing children's externalizing behaviors problems, increasing positive parent behaviors, and improving the quality of the parent-child relationship by teaching parents traditional play therapy skills to improve parent-child interactions and problem-solving skills to manage new problem behaviors.

### **Delivery Information**

Target Population: Children ages 2 – 12 years old with behavior and parent-child relationship problems and their parents or caregivers

Intervention Settings: outpatient clinics, community-based agencies, organizations

### **Program Effectiveness**

Eight studies, including international studies, have found that Parent-Child Interaction Therapy programs:

- Reduce the incidence of recidivism among parents referred to child welfare for child abuse
- Reduce behavior problems among preschool children with oppositional defiant disorder
- Decrease child-related parenting stress and child externalizing problems
- Improve parent-child interactions and parenting practices such as monitoring and supervision, involvement, discipline, sense of competence, and control in child rearing
- Improve significant behavior problems such as hyperactivity, aggression, and disruptive behavior of children ages 4-6 with diagnosed ADHD, and positive parental practices

### **Choosing the Right Program for Practice**

Practitioners can use databases such as [Blueprints](#)<sup>3</sup> and [The CEBC](#)<sup>4</sup> to identify evidence-based programs that fit the needs of their clientele. These databases provide extensive resources for practitioners in order to identify programs which might work best for their community and context.

Programs	Sessions	Format	Session Duration	Frequency	Duration	Prerequisite	Training Type/Location
<b>Generation PMTO</b>	6-14 parent groups; 25 individual sessions	group sessions; individual/family sessions; mid-week check-ins	60-minute individual/family sessions	1x/ week	2-4 months	Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctorate level degrees	video conferencing, written materials, in person, individual and group
<b>Incredible Years</b>	9-16	group-based parenting program	2 hours	1x/ week	3-5 months	Master's level (or equivalent) clinicians	Seattle, WA, or on-site
<b>Parent-Child Interaction Therapy</b>	13	family sessions	60-90 minutes	1x/ week	3 months	Master's level equivalent and mental health licensure	on-site and off-site

References:

- (1) Report, Child Maltreatment 2021, Children's Bureau. (2023). *Child Maltreatment 2021*. Available from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/report/child-maltreatment-2021>
- (2) Newsroom, Fact sheets, Detail, Child maltreatment, World Health Organization. (2022). *Child Maltreatment*. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/child-maltreatment>
- (3) Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development. Available from <https://www.blueprintsprograms.org/program-search/?localPageSize=5000&programType%5B%5D=919&keywords=>
- (4) The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare. Available from <https://www.cebc4cw.org/>