

# A Social Cognitive Theory-Based Program to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect Cases Among Adults

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## Program and Theoretical Approach

### Overview

- Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) will be used to guide The Incredible Years program to prevent child abuse and neglect
- This program will address the three constructs that commonly appear in literature, which are knowledge, self-efficacy, and environmental impediments

## Program Description

- 1 hour long weekly sessions over the course of 6 weeks
- 2 sessions will be provided at different times throughout the week
- Educational presentations, group discussions, and homework assignments
- Construct list of active coping strategies
- Complete logs documenting positive parenting practices used
- Complete pre-test and post-test questionnaire

## Theoretical Model

- Knowledge (parents will learn positive parenting practices)
- Self-efficacy (parents will increase their confidence in maintaining these behaviors by identifying active coping strategies)
- Barriers and opportunities (reducing environmental stressors by connecting parents to assistance programs)

## Details of the Plan

### Participants:

- The Illinois DCFS will construct and provide a list of parents, who have had a case report of child abuse and neglect filed, to program leaders and then cross-referenced with the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) to identify which parents receive SNAP benefits
- Parents will receive a referral from the Illinois DCFS to enroll in the program

### Procedures and Measures

- **Intervention-** The Incredible Years program
- **SCT-** inform target population of child abuse and neglect statistics on a national and state level, videos demonstrating appropriate child disciplinary measures, teach coping mechanisms, and group discussions of individual experience with external stressors
- **SCT constructs-** why is reading, showing affection, and giving rewards to your child important for child development, how can active coping strategies influence self-efficacy in practicing these behaviors, and what assistance do you need to reduce your overall stress
- **Intervention assessment/evaluation-** pre/post questionnaires and a score of 80% is considered passing. 2 data analysts will evaluate the prevalence of child abuse and neglect cases among program participants on a yearly basis

## Background/Significance of Problem

- About 1 in 7 children have suffered from child abuse and neglect in the U.S. last year (CDC, 2022)
- Children who live in poverty or have a low socioeconomic status are at higher risk (CDC, 2022)
- The financial burden of child abuse and neglect costed the U.S. \$592 billion in 2018 (CDC, 2022)
- Illinois is one of the top states with the most reports (HHS, 2022)
- The Incredible Years program will be implemented at the South Chicago Community Center

## Target Population and Ecologic Context

- The target population is adult parents who are enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), have a past report of child abuse documented by the Illinois DCFS, live in South Chicago, and are between the ages of 25 and 35 years old
- Most adults within this age range have not obtained a college degree (CMAP, 2022)
- Most households earn less than \$25,000 per year (CMAP, 2022)
- Total of 6,500 family households (CMAP, 2022)



(CDC, 2022)

## What is needed?

- More evidence-based research evaluating the effectiveness of child abuse and neglect prevention programs
- Reduction in the prevalence of child abuse and neglect cases among target population

## Objectives

- **HO:** The Incredible Years program will reduce the prevalence of child abuse and neglect cases among program participants by 30% after 5 years of program implementation as participants learn to reduce environmental stressors
- **BO:** 80% of participants will utilize positive parenting practices by recording the specific practice into a daily log after 1 year of program implementation, which will ensure that parents are knowledgeable of how to apply these practices
- **EO:** 90% of participants will be knowledgeable of positive parenting practices, which will be measured by completing the post-questionnaire with a score of 80% after the last session of the program
- **EO:** 90% of participants will be knowledgeable of active coping strategies by constructing a list during the 3rd session of the program, which can boost their self-confidence in maintaining positive parenting practices

## Conclusions

### Strengths and weaknesses:

- This program may be successful at preventing child abuse and neglect (Temcheff et al., 2018)
- Reasonable time length of program
- Program doesn't address lack of attendance or participation
- No supervision of parent and child interactions at home

### Policy and Program Implications:

- Initiating an Illinois DCFS policy that requires target population to enroll in the program
- Extend the target population to parents who are at high risk of committing child abuse

## Recommendations

- Use SCT as a foundation for child abuse and prevention programs
- Modify program details if some methods are ineffective
- Extend this specific program to be used in various neighborhoods throughout Illinois