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Subject: Study re effects of children's participation in Early Head Start on child maltreatment
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This study published in

Children and Youth Services Review by Green, et al in 2014 compared 1247 children enrolled from age 0-3 from July 1996 through September 1998 in early Head Start (EHS) in 7 sites (6 states) around the country to a control group of children whose families had similar socio-economic characteristics. Assignment to the EHS group and control group was randomized; and the researchers utilized an 'intent to treat' research design.

Children in EHS were followed until 2009, i.e., from ages 11-14 (average age- 13.4 years) with periodic development testing until age 10. Children enrolled in EHS were found to be 36% less likely to be reported to CPS and 2.71 times less likely to have a second "child welfare encounter" with CPS between the ages of 5-9. Children in EHS had lower rates of substantiated physical abuse and sexual abuse between the ages of 5-9, but somewhat higher rates of reported and substantiated neglect. Interestingly, there was not a significant difference in screened in reports prior to age 5. Parents of EHS children were, on average, less punitive and engaged in warmer, more affectionate parenting, according to the authors. At age 10, EHS enrolled children were more socially competent and less emotionally troubled than children in the control group.

For the whole sample, 18% of children had a least one encounter with CPS, 15.7% of children had a substantiated report of child maltreatment by 2009 (age 11-14), and 6.7% had been placed in foster care for varying lengths of time.



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