

A large-scale parenting program to prevent violence against children: Evaluation of the
facilitators training at a state-level

Elisa Rachel Pisani Altafim, Rafaela Jürgensen, Luiza Machado dos Santos, Maria

Beatriz Martins Linhares

University of São Paulo

altafim.elisa@gmail.com; luizammds@gmail.com; rafaela.jur2@gmail.com

linhares@fmrp.usp.br

Violence prevention against children has been supported globally through several initiatives, including parenting programs to promote positive and responsive relationships between parents and children. In Brazil, two current laws stipulate that the government should provide interventions for families to improve affective relationships and teach positive discipline without violence (Lei No. 13.010, 2014; Lei No. 13.257, 2016). Implementing an evidence-based parenting program on a large scale in partnership with the state government constitutes an opportunity to break the cycle of intergenerational violence. The ACT-Raising Safe Kids parenting program (American Psychological Association) is an evidence-based, low-cost parenting intervention that has shown feasibility and efficacy in developed and developing countries, including Brazil. Although several studies have been carried out with the program, there is still no study in the literature that evaluated a large-scale implementation model linked to public policies for early childhood. Additionally, no study evaluated the online training of ACT facilitators. The present study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the ACT facilitators' training to improve professionals' knowledge on positive parenting to implement the program on a large scale at a state level. Participants were 164 professionals of public services, mainly of the Social Protection and Education areas, from 24 cities of the Ceará

State (Northeast, Brazil). The professionals participated in the ACT-Raising Safe Kids facilitator workshop conducted remotely by two Master Trainers and a support team during four days and 16 hours (Zoom Platform). The participants answered an online survey via Google Forms, including sociodemographic characteristics and their knowledge to guide parents on positive parenting. The pre-and post-evaluation questionnaire section of positive parenting included 13 questions (3-points Likert scale) on positive discipline, violence prevention strategies, child development, electronic media monitoring, and anger management, generating a score from 0 to 26. The post-evaluation also included questions regarding participants' satisfaction with the program and if participants felt prepared to guide the parents. The results showed that, in comparison to the pre-evaluation, there was a statistically significant increase in participants' knowledge about parenting and violence prevention according to their perception (pre-evaluation mean = 18.08 ± 5.90 ; post-evaluation, mean = 24.44 ± 2.75 ; $p < 0.001$), in post-evaluation. The findings also showed that 99% of participants reported that the training reached their expectations, and all participants agreed that the training activities helped prepare them to conduct the program with parents. Additionally, 98% of the participants reported that they would probably integrate the ACT program with other pre-existing programs in their workplace. The major of the participants considered that they were prepared to guide parents on anger management (very prepared 52% and prepared 46%), positive conflict strategies (very prepared 61% and prepared 37%), and positive discipline strategies (very prepared 64%, prepared 35%). In conclusion, the online facilitator training effectively improved professionals' knowledge on positive parenting and violence prevention against children and showed acceptance by the front-line professionals in the public system. This validated training model has the potential to be implemented in public policies at a large scale.

Funding: Fundação Maria Cecília Souto Vidigal, Fundação Porticus, and Fundação Bernard van Leer.