Abstract

The aims of the present study were, first, to establish the effect of brief, in-home intensive family preservation programs on prevention of out-of-home placement, family functioning, child behavior problems and social support and, second, to study moderators of these effects. The results of this meta-analytic study, consisting of 20 studies (31,369 participants), show that intensive family preservation programs had a medium and positive effect on family functioning \((d = 0.486)\), but were generally not effective in preventing out-of-home placement. Intensive family preservation programs were effective in preventing placement for multi-problem families, but not for families experiencing abuse and neglect. Moreover, the effect on out-of-home placement proved to be moderated by client characteristics (sex and age of the child, parent age, number of children in the family, single-parenthood, non-white ethnicity), program
The discussion addresses implications for evaluation and practice.

Highlights

- Generally no out-of-home placement prevention through intensive family preservation.
- Intensive family preservation programs are effective in improving family functioning.
- Effect of IFPP moderated by client-, program-, study-, & publication characteristics.
- Less effect on placement prevention in the more rigorous studies.

Keywords

Child safety; Crisis; Family functioning; Intensive family preservation programs; Out-of-home placement
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