

# Gang Prevention through Early Intervention: Evaluation of the Family COACH Programme

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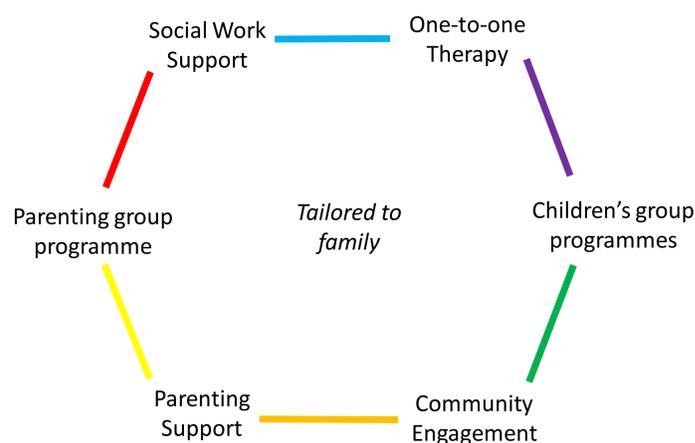
## Introduction

- Hackney faces challenges in supporting gang-involved young people<sup>1</sup>.
- The London borough of Hackney funded the Family COACH Programme to address this issue.
- The pilot was funded by the London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime.
- The aim was to deliver evidence-based support as a preventative intervention to reduce the number of children becoming gang-affiliated.

## Method

### The Family COACH Programme

- The 40-week programme focused on
  - Couple & family work
  - Individual work
  - Home-school-community work
  - Group work
- Different interventions were used:



- The children's group programmes were:
  - 1) A 10-session cognitive behavioural- and social learning theory-based group programme adapted from the 'Coping Power' programme<sup>2</sup>, focused on developing self-regulation and social problem solving skills
  - 2) An adapted 10-session Jigsaw<sup>3</sup> PSHE programme, focused on local psychosocial stresses.
- The parenting group programme was based on the Incredible Years Programme<sup>4</sup>, focusing on strengthening parenting competencies.
- Various approaches were used: e.g. CBT, motivational interviewing
- The end of the programme was celebrated with a graduation ceremony.

### Participants

- 13 male children (aged 7 to 13) and their families
- Chosen based on the Early Intervention Foundation's<sup>5</sup> 'high-risk' criteria:
  - Family connections to gangs
  - Low educational attainment
  - Being a victim of crime
  - Behavioural difficulties
  - Bereavement
  - Parental mental health needs
  - Conduct problems
- Criteria also included local risk factors: e.g. having a gang-affiliated family member.

## Design & Measures

- Data was collected from the children, their parents/carers and their teachers pre- and post-intervention.
- Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to measure the following: stress, emotional and behavioural difficulties, social issues, educational attainment and physical and/or mental illness.

Parents/Carers' Outcome Measures	Children's Outcome Measures	Teachers' Outcome Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSI-4SF<sup>a</sup></li> <li>• SDQ-P<sup>b</sup></li> <li>• CBCL - ASEBA<sup>c</sup></li> <li>• CORE-OM<sup>d</sup></li> <li>• COACH Questionnaire</li> <li>• FAS<sup>e</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BYI-2<sup>f</sup></li> <li>• SDQ-S<sup>b</sup></li> <li>• SCORE-15<sup>g</sup></li> <li>• YSR - ASEBA<sup>c</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDQ-T<sup>b</sup></li> <li>• TRF - ASEBA<sup>c</sup></li> <li>• School Attendance and Behaviour Form</li> </ul>

## Results

### Key clinically significant findings were:

- Children's behavioural difficulties were rated lower by themselves, their parents/carers and their teachers.
- Children's perceptions of their level of anger and disruptive behaviours were more positive.
- Parents/carers rated the children as exhibiting less aggressive behaviours.
- Teachers perceived the children as more hard-working, better behaved and happier.
- The children's risk of developing behavioural disorders and ADHD was reduced.
- Schools reported that there were fewer exclusions.

### Key statistically significant findings were:

- Teachers' ratings indicated a reduction in the children's behaviour difficulties ( $p < .05$ ), rule-breaking behaviours ( $p < .05$ ) and aggressive behaviour ( $p < .01$ ).
- Parents/carers' scores indicated a reduction in the children's hyperactivity and concentration problems ( $p < .05$ ).

## Conclusions

- The Family COACH programme had a positive impact on the children and their families.
- Early intervention is a promising approach for gang prevention as risk factors can be reduced.
- The study provides a good foundation for other areas to implement and build upon, when tackling the issue of gangs.
- It is recommended that the Family COACH Programme is evaluated using a larger and more diverse sample.
- User participation could also be incorporated in the design of future programmes.

## References

<sup>1</sup>Raby et al. (2013). *Tackling Gang Violence: Listening to the Experts*. Off Centre Service Improvement Report.  
<sup>2</sup>Lochman, J. E. (2000). Parent and family skills training in targeted prevention programs for at-risk youth. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 21, 253–65.  
<sup>3</sup>JigsawPSHE - <http://www.jigsawpshe.com/>  
<sup>4</sup>The Incredible Years – <http://www.incredibleyears.com/>  
<sup>5</sup>Early Intervention Foundation. (2015). Preventing gang and youth violence: a review of risk and protective factors.

**Measures:** <sup>a</sup>Parenting Stress Index – Fourth Ed. Short Form, <sup>b</sup>Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Parent, Self-Completion, Teacher), <sup>c</sup>Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (Child Behaviour Checklist, Youth Self-Report, Teacher Report Form), <sup>d</sup>CORE Outcome Measure, <sup>e</sup>Family Activity Scale, <sup>f</sup>Beck Youth Inventories – Second Ed., <sup>g</sup>SCORE-15 Index of Family Functioning and Change