



# GEM OF THE MONTH



Highlighting an exemplary intervention study



## Child and Parenting Outcomes after 1 year of Educare

Educare is a high-quality birth to age 5 program designed to promote school readiness for infants and young children from low-income families. Core features of Educare include 1) collecting data for program improvement, 2) ongoing professional development and coaching, 3) high-quality teaching, and 4) supporting families and encouraging positive parent-child relationships. This study describes a RCT following children less than 19 months of age, with n=118 children in the Educare intervention group (n=112 at 1-year follow-up) and n=121 (n=94 at 1-year follow-up) in the no-treatment control group. A battery of assessments was used to examine language and social-emotional development, and parent-child interactions at baseline and at a 1-year follow-up. The researchers used four sets of analyses to evaluate baseline equivalence between groups, examine descriptive statistics after 1-year of Educare, investigate treatment impacts with hierarchical linear modeling, and test the robustness of the results with sensitivity analyses. Results suggest children in Educare demonstrated significantly greater auditory and expressive language skills, fewer problem behaviors, and more positive parent-child interactions. Yazejian, N., Bryant, D. M., Hans, S., Horm, D., St Clair, L., File, N., & Burchinal, M. (2017). Child and parenting outcomes after 1 year of Educare. *Child Development*. doi: 10.1111/cdev.12688

## Advancing Knowledge to Bridge the Word Gap

This study highlights how Educare programming at an early age may ameliorate many risks experienced by children and families in poverty; therefore, potentially setting children on more positive developmental trajectories. This study indicates Educare appeared to positively affect children in multiple developmental domains (i.e., language and behavior regulation), as well as parent responsiveness. Overall, Educare provides high quality services, setting children up for later academic success.

### Meet the First Author

Noreen Yazejian, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

#### Why did you do this study?

**Noreen:** We know from seminal work in the field (e.g., Abecedarian) that high-quality early education can ameliorate effects of poverty for children from low-income families. We wanted to know whether a program like Educare could do the same in today's context.

#### How is this study informing your next research steps?

**Noreen:** The results reported were the first follow-up after random assignment, when children were about 2 years old. Next steps are to analyze data gathered when children were ages 3 and 5 to learn about Educare's effects on children and families and also to understand associations that other care settings might have with child and family outcomes, particularly for children in the control group.



### Commentary by the Nominator

Dale Walker, University of Kansas

This study expands our knowledge about the important role that high-quality early care and education can have in improving child language and social-emotional skills as well as positive parent-child interaction. With over 200 ethnically and linguistically diverse children and their families, the authors' documented that after just one year, children attending Educare Schools showed increased receptive and expressive language and behavior regulation skills compared to peers who did not attend Educare. Differences in parent-child interaction levels across groups were also documented. Their results underscore the potential of the Educare model to impact outcomes for young children and their families experiencing poverty.