

Randomized Controlled Trial of a Mindfulness-based Social Emotional Learning Curriculum for Preschool Children

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Background and Objectives: Research has suggested that social-emotional learning (SEL) in children predicts success later in life by enhancing emotional self-regulation skills, increasing positive affect and prosocial behaviors, and decreasing emotional problems. Contemplative practices, such as meditation and yoga, are beneficial in improving executive function skills, and have been found to increase the positive effects of social emotional learning. These practices are particularly appropriate for preschool children who have attention and emotion regulation challenges which may be exacerbated by the effects of poverty. The objective of this study is to determine the comparative effectiveness of a mindfulness-based SEL curriculum versus an active control intervention on the executive function (i.e., metacognitive and self-regulation skills) of preschool children attending a Head Start program for low-income families. **Methods:** In a randomized controlled trial, 3-5 year old preschool children in Head Start programs were randomized into one of two interventions: OpenMind (mindfulness-based SEL curriculum), and a standard Head Start curriculum. **Results:** The data collection has been completed and data analysis has been initiated. Effectiveness data will be presented. **Discussion and Conclusion:** The results of this study will highlight the impact of a mindfulness-based social emotional learning curriculum on the executive function of preschool children.