



Communities  
& Justice



Centre for  
Evidence and  
Implementation

# Preventing Child Maltreatment Evidence Review Protocol

NSW Department of Communities and Justice

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### Purpose of this document

This document provides detailed information about how the Preventing Child Maltreatment Evidence Review was conducted. It includes an overview of the steps that were followed and key outputs that were developed as part of the evidence review, including:

- Research Question and Scope
- Search Strategies
- List of preventing child maltreatment programs
- List of core components and flexible activities

### Research Team

The Evidence Review was completed by the Department of Communities and Justice and the [Centre for Evidence and Implementation](#) (CEI).

The research team included:

- Evelyn Tan, PhD – Advisor, Centre of Evidence and Implementation
- Kathleen Blair, PhD – Senior Evaluation Officer, Department of Communities and Justice
- Samantha Adams, PhD – Senior Evaluation Officer, Department of Communities and Justice
- Vanessa Rose, PhD – Director, Centre for Evidence and Implementation
- Matthew Burn – Advisor, Centre for Evidence and Implementation

## Method

This Evidence Review followed the method outlined in the [Evidence Portal Technical Specifications](#).

See Table 1 for a brief summary of the steps followed to conduct the review. Where possible, we have included outputs in this document.

If you would like more information for any output that is not hyperlinked below, please email [evidenceportal@dcj.nsw.gov.au](mailto:evidenceportal@dcj.nsw.gov.au).

**Table 1. Overview of the Technical Specifications**

Step	Description	Outputs
<b>Step 1: Define research question and scope</b>	The process for defining the research question and what will be in and out of scope.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Research question document</a></li> </ul>
<b>Step 2: Search for evidence</b>	Develop the search strategy that will be used to identify literature within electronic databases. Identify the data management processes that must be established.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Search strategy form</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Overview of database search</a></li> </ul>
<b>Step 3: Screen studies</b>	Identify how studies identified by the search strategy will be further filtered based on scope, study design and study quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference library</li> <li>• <a href="#">PRISMA flow chart</a></li> <li>• Data Extraction template</li> </ul>
<b>Step 4: Assess for risk of bias</b>	Conduct risk of bias assessments in the included studies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of bias assessments for RCTs/QEDs</li> <li>• Risk of bias assessments for systematic reviews</li> </ul>
<b>Step 5: Extract data</b>	Extract relevant information and data from the included studies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Extraction template</li> <li>• Risk of bias Assessment for each study</li> </ul>
<b>Step 6: Rate the evidence for programs</b>	Rate the evidence for each identified program. Use the Evidence Rating Scale.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">List of identified programs</a></li> <li>• Data extraction template</li> </ul>

## Preventing Child Maltreatment Evidence Review Protocol

Step	Description	Outputs
<b>Step 7. Identify core components and flexible activities</b>	Summarise information about the core components and flexible activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data extraction template</li><li>• <a href="#">List of core components and flexible activities</a></li></ul>
<b>Step 8. Summarise evidence review findings</b>	Summarise key findings from the Evidence Review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Program summaries</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Core component summaries</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Flexible Activity summaries</a></li><li>• Evidence review summary</li></ul>

## Research question and scope

Output: Research question document

<b>Research Question</b>	What programs are effective in preventing child maltreatment in families?
<b>Definitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child maltreatment: As per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “any act or series of acts of commission or omission by a parent or other caregiver that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect</li> <li>○ Studies examining the effect of interventions on harsh parenting and out-of-home placement also included</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Intervention programs: Includes only preventive interventions (focus on child abuse potential in families with <u>no</u> documented abuse/neglect (e.g., in the general population, at-risk families)<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Child: 18 years and under</li> <li>• Families: Includes biological, foster and adoptive families</li> </ul>
<b>Inclusion criteria:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studies report on preventive (not curative) interventions for child maltreatment: Preventive interventions focus on child abuse potential in families with NO documented abuse/neglect (e.g., in the general population, at-risk families). If study has both families with and without documented abuse/neglect, include if majority is without documented abuse/neglect. Exclude if majority is with documented abuse/neglect.</li> <li>• Studies report on the effect of at least one intervention</li> <li>• Studies report on interventions where target recipient is parent/caregiver</li> <li>• Studies assess outcomes of child abuse potential, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, harsh parenting, Shaken Baby Syndrome, or out-of-home placement</li> <li>• Studies assess child maltreatment perpetrated by parent or caregiver</li> <li>• Study designs of dismantling studies, meta-analyses, systematic reviews, randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and quasi-experimental designs (QEDs)</li> </ul>
<b>Exclusion criteria:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studies report on curative interventions: Curative interventions focus on reducing child maltreatment in families with documented abuse/neglect (e.g., involvement with child protection/welfare)</li> <li>• Studies report on interventions where target recipient is not parent/caregiver (e.g., child)</li> <li>• Studies that do not include a valid counterfactual</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> van IJzendoorn, M. H., Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J., Coughlan, B., & Reijman, S. (2020). Annual research review: Umbrella synthesis of meta-analyses on child maltreatment antecedents and interventions: differential susceptibility perspective on risk and resilience. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 61(3), 272–290. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13147>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Studies that do not test the effectiveness of a program/practice</li><li>• Studies that assess child maltreatment perpetrated by non-caregiving adults (e.g., relative, teacher)</li><li>• Studies that are not in English</li><li>• Studies evaluating interventions in low and middle income countries</li><li>• Dissertations</li></ul>
<b>Databases searched:</b>	PsycINFO, Medline, Social Sciences Abstracts, Family and Society Studies Worldwide, Sociological Abstracts, ERIC

## Search Strategy

The search strategy was adapted for each database used.

Adapted for *PsycINFO* database

#	Searches
1	("randomized controlled trial" or "clinical trial" or "randomized clinical trial" or "systematic review" or "meta analysis" or "quasi experimental").id,sh.  OR  (randomized or randomised or randomly or "trial" or RCT or "wait* list" or experiment* or "quasi ex*" or quasiexperiment* or "systematic review" or "meta-analysis" or "metaanalysis" or "meta analysis").ti,ab.
2	(intervention or program* or treatment or service).id,sh.  OR  (intervention or program* or treatment or service).ti,ab.
3	(prevention).id,sh.  OR  (prevent*).ti,ab.
4	("child abuse" or "child neglect" or "child exploitation" or "child welfare" or "child maltreatment" or "child protection").id,sh.  OR  (child* adj2 (abus* or neglect or exploit* or welfare or maltreat* or protection)).ti,ab.
5	S1 AND S2 AND S3 AND S4: N = 477

Adapted for *Medline* database

#	Searches
1	("randomized controlled trial" or "clinical trial" or "randomized clinical trial" or "systematic review" or "meta analysis" or "quasi experimental").id,sh.  OR  (randomized or randomised or randomly or "trial" or RCT or "wait* list" or experiment* or "quasi ex*" or quasiexperiment* or "systematic review" or "meta-analysis" or "metaanalysis" or "meta analysis").ti,ab.
2	(intervention or program* or treatment or service).id,sh.  OR  (intervention or program* or treatment or service).ti,ab.
3	(prevention).id,sh.  OR  (prevent*).ti,ab.
4	("child abuse" or "child neglect" or "child exploitation" or "child welfare" or "child maltreatment" or "child protection").id,sh.  OR  (child* adj2 (abus* or neglect or exploit* or welfare or maltreat* or protection)).ti,ab.
5	S1 AND S2 AND S3 AND S4: N = 508



## Preventing Child Maltreatment Evidence Review Protocol

Adapted for *Social Sciences Abstract (EBSCOhost)* database

#	Searches
1	SU ("randomized controlled trial" or "clinical trial" or "experimental" or "quasi experimental" or "systematic review" or "meta-analysis") OR TI (randomized or randomised or randomly or "trial" or RCT or "wait* list" or experiment* or "quasi ex*" or quasiexperiment* or "systematic review" or "meta-analysis" or "metaanalysis" or "meta analysis") OR AB (randomized or randomised or randomly or "trial" or RCT or "wait* list" or experiment* or "quasi ex*" or quasiexperiment* or "systematic review" or "meta-analysis" or "metaanalysis" or "meta analysis")
2	SU (intervention or program* or treatment or service) OR TI (intervention or program* or treatment or service) OR AB (intervention or program* or treatment or service)
3	SU prevention OR TI prevent* OR AB prevent*
4	SU ("child abuse" or "child sexual abuse" or "sexually abused children" or "child welfare" or "child services") OR TI (child* N2 (abus* or neglect or exploit* or welfare or maltreat* or protection)) OR AB (child* N2 (abus* or neglect or exploit* or welfare or maltreat* or protection))
5	S1 AND S2 AND S3 AND S4: N = 190

## Preventing Child Maltreatment Evidence Review Protocol

Adapted for *Family and Society Studies Worldwide (EBSCOhost)* database

#	Searches
1	SU ("randomized controlled trial" or "clinical trial" or "experimental" or "quasi experimental" or "systematic review" or "meta-analysis") OR TI (randomized or randomised or randomly or "trial" or RCT or "wait* list" or experiment* or "quasi ex*" or quasiexperiment* or "systematic review" or "meta-analysis" or "metaanalysis" or "meta analysis") OR AB (randomized or randomised or randomly or "trial" or RCT or "wait* list" or experiment* or "quasi ex*" or quasiexperiment* or "systematic review" or "meta-analysis" or "metaanalysis" or "meta analysis")
2	SU (intervention or program* or treatment or service) OR TI (intervention or program* or treatment or service) OR AB (intervention or program* or treatment or service)
3	SU prevention OR TI prevent* OR AB prevent*
4	SU ("child abuse" or "child sexual abuse" or "sexually abused children" or "child welfare" or "child services") OR TI (child* N2 (abus* or neglect or exploit* or welfare or maltreat* or protection)) OR AB (child* N2 (abus* or neglect or exploit* or welfare or maltreat* or protection))
5	S1 AND S2 AND S3 AND S4: N = 472

Adapted for *Sociological Abstracts (Proquest)* database

#	Searches
1	<p>SU("randomized controlled trial" or "clinical trial" or experiment* or "quasi experimental" or "systematic review" or "meta-analysis")</p> <p>OR</p> <p>TI(randomized or randomised or randomly or "trial" or RCT or "wait* list" or experiment* or "quasi ex*" or quasiexperiment* or "systematic review" or "meta-analysis" or "metaanalysis" or "meta analysis")</p> <p>OR</p> <p>AB(randomized or randomised or randomly or "trial" or RCT or "wait* list" or experiment* or "quasi experiment*" or quasiexperiment* or "systematic review" or "meta-analysis" or "metaanalysis" or "meta analysis")</p>
2	<p>SU(intervention or program* or treatment or service)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>TI(intervention or program* or treatment or service)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>AB(intervention or program* or treatment or service)</p>
3	<p>SU(prevention)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>TI(prevent*)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>AB(prevent*)</p>
4	<p>SU("child abuse" or "child sexual abuse" or "child exploitation" or "child welfare" or "child maltreatment")</p> <p>OR</p> <p>TI(child* N/2 (abus* or neglect or exploit* or welfare or maltreat* or protection))</p> <p>OR</p> <p>AB(child* N/2 (abus* or neglect or exploit* or welfare or maltreat* or protection))</p>
5	<p>S1 AND S2 AND S3 AND S4: N = 170</p>

Adapted for ERIC (Proquest) database

#	Searches
1	SU("randomized controlled trial" or "clinical trial" or experiment* or "quasi experimental" or "systematic review" or "meta-analysis") OR TI(randomized or randomised or randomly or "trial" or RCT or "wait* list" or experiment* or "quasi ex*" or quasiexperiment* or "systematic review" or "meta-analysis" or "metaanalysis" or "meta analysis") OR AB(randomized or randomised or randomly or "trial" or RCT or "wait* list" or experiment* or "quasi experiment*" or quasiexperiment* or "systematic review" or "meta-analysis" or "metaanalysis" or "meta analysis")
2	SU(intervention or program* or treatment or service) OR TI(intervention or program* or treatment or service) OR AB(intervention or program* or treatment or service)
3	SU(prevention) OR TI(prevent*) OR AB(prevent*)
4	SU("child abuse" or "child sexual abuse" or "child exploitation" or "child welfare" or "child maltreatment") OR TI(child* N/2 (abus* or neglect or exploit* or welfare or maltreat* or protection)) OR AB(child* N/2 (abus* or neglect or exploit* or welfare or maltreat* or protection))
5	S1 AND S2 AND S3 AND S4: N = 106

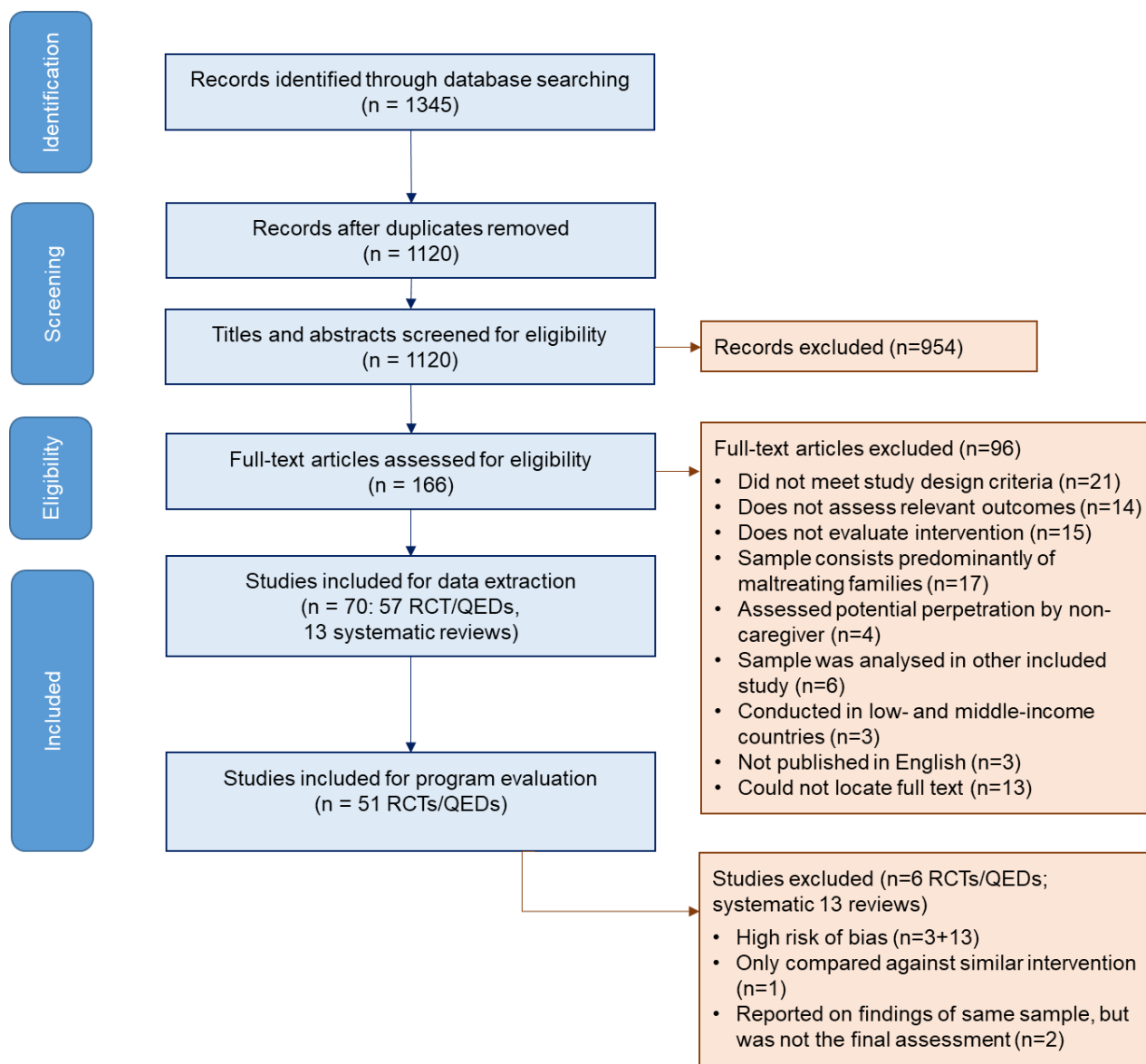
Output: Overview of database search

**Electronic databases search strategy**

<b>Name of database</b>	<i>PsycINFO</i>	<i>Medline</i>	<i>Social Sciences Abstracts</i>	<i>Family &amp; Society Studies Worldwide</i>	<i>Sociological Abstracts</i>	<i>ERIC</i>
Searched	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Date search was conducted	19-10-2020	19-10-2020	20-10-2020	21-10-2020	20-10-2020	20-10-2020
Search string	As above.					
Documented changes	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total number of citations	477	508	190	472	170	106
Exported to reference management library?	Mendeley	Mendeley	Mendeley	Mendeley	Mendeley	Mendeley
Exported to specialised systematic review management software?	Covidence	Covidence	Covidence	Covidence	Covidence	Covidence

## Screening studies

### PRISMA flow chart



## Rating Evidence for Programs

Each program was rated based on the Evidence Rating Scale indicated in the [Technical Specifications](#).

### List of identified programs

Evidence rating	<a href="#">Programs</a>	Outcomes
Supported research evidence	Hawaii Healthy Start - Enhanced with Cognitive Appraisal	Child maltreatment Improved parenting
	Incredible Years Parenting Training Program	Improved parenting
	Nurse Family Partnership	Child maltreatment Improved parenting Child health
	Triple P	Child maltreatment Child health
Promising research evidence	Child FIRST	Improved parenting Service use
	First Steps	Improved parenting
	Parent Support Outreach	Child maltreatment Service use
	Play Nicely program	Improved parenting
	Supporting Father Involvement Intervention	Child maltreatment Parent relationships
	The Parental Daily Diary	Improved parenting
	The Period of PURPLE Crying - Modified educational video	Improve parenting
Mixed research evidence (with no adverse effects)	All Babies Cry	Improved parenting
	Colorado Adolescent Maternity Program	Child maltreatment
	e-PALS Baby-Net	Improved parenting
	e-Parenting Program	Parent mental health Parent substance use
	Family Connections	Social support
	Hawaii Healthy Start	Child maltreatment Improved parenting
	Healthy Families America	Child maltreatment Improved parenting
	The Linkages for Prevention project	Improved parenting Child health Parent substance use
	Home visiting program	Child maltreatment
	My Baby & Me	Improved parenting
	New Zealand Early Start	Improved parenting Child health

	Parent Aide Services & Case Management	Improved parenting
	Parents Under Pressure	Child maltreatment Parent mental health
	Relief Nursery prevention program	Social support
	Safe Environment for Every Kid (SEEK)	Improved parenting Child health
	SafeCare+	Child maltreatment
	The Period of PURPLE Crying program	Improved parenting
	Group Teen Triple P	Improved parenting Family Functioning
	Triple P - Enhanced group behavioural family intervention	Child maltreatment Improved parenting
Mixed research evidence (with adverse effects)	Adults and Children Together Raising Safe Kids program	Improved parenting
	Early Head Start	Child maltreatment
Evidence fails to demonstrate effect	Building Healthy Children	Nil.
	Child Parent Enrichment Project	Nil.
	Family Foundations program	Nil.
	Free to Grow	Nil.
	Nurse Family Partnership (modified for Philadelphia)	Nil.
	Opportunity for Advancement and New Directions for Mothers program	Nil.
	SafeCare Dad2K	Nil.



## Identify core components and flexible activities

Using the data extraction template, a content analysis of each study was undertaken in which descriptions of activities undertaken in the program were coded and grouped under broad category headings (i.e., core components), with examples of different ways the component could be implemented (i.e., flexible activities). The aim was to synthesise and provide a summary of key practices, techniques, strategies or activities common across evidence-informed programs or interventions shown to improve client outcomes.

### List of core components and flexible activities

Core components	Description	Flexible Activities
<a href="#">Engagement</a>	How services engage with families is crucial to ensuring parents/carers participate and remain in a program until they have achieved their goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a positive relationship</li> <li>• Remove barriers to participation</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Case management</a>	Understanding and addressing the needs of families is crucial to improving outcomes. This includes providing material, emotional and practical support to parents/carers, particularly those in crisis or chaotic environments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrap around and coordinated support</li> <li>• Service utilisation and referrals</li> <li>• Family driven goal setting and planning</li> <li>• Case conferencing</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Parenting education, coaching and modelling</a>	Parenting education, coaching and modelling ensures parents have the skills and knowledge to meet their children's needs. It may include practical advice about routines or typical infant and child behaviour. It may also include resolving family conflict or practicing positive parenting behaviours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family problem solving</li> <li>• Newborn and infant care</li> <li>• Prenatal care</li> <li>• Positive parenting behaviours</li> <li>• Child health and safety</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Parental self-care and personal development</a>	Ensuring that parents/carers have their mental health, physical and personal needs met is very important. Parents may be unable to meet the needs of their children if they	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling</li> <li>• Building confidence and self-sufficiency</li> <li>• Address parental risk factors</li> <li>• Support to cope with stress</li> </ul>

	are struggling with their own issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life skills development and education</li> <li>• Anger management</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Building supportive relationships and social networks</u></a>	Supportive relationships between parents/carers and their families ensure that children have a number of adults with their best interest at heart. Supportive relationships also enable parents/carers to seek advice and respite from others when needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multifamily recreation activities</li> <li>• Involve family and friends</li> <li>• Strengthen parent relationships</li> <li>• Improve parents' social support</li> </ul>