



Songs, Rhymes and More

Songs, Rhymes and More is an attachment-focused, group parenting intervention, adapted from an empirically validated, manual-supported intervention: *'Right From the Start.'* The intervention was designed for a diverse group of caregivers who were looking for an activity-based program for themselves and their infants and toddlers, with whom they were experiencing difficulty.

One goal of the current adapted intervention was to improve maternal sensitivity. Maternal sensitivity is a mother's ability to perceive her child's signals accurately and to respond to them promptly and adequately. Another goal of the program was that participating parents would show changes in parenting stress and parenting confidence. Last, since the adapted programme also incorporated nursery rhymes and games, it was postulated that this might result in an increase in parental capacity for cognitive growth fostering.

Research: To examine the effectiveness of the adapted version of *Songs, Rhymes and More*, caregiver-child dyads were videotaped while completing the Nursing Child Assessment Teaching Scenario (NCATS; Sumner & Spietz, 1994), which is used to assess caregiver sensitivity. Following the videotaped interaction, each caregiver filled out two self-report questionnaires on parenting confidence and parenting stress. During the final two days of each eight-week program, each dyad was videotaped again while participating in another episode of the NCATS. Caregivers also filled out the self-report questionnaires a second time.

Results indicate that participants benefitted in several domains of parenting. Caregivers' infant-directed cognitive growth fostering skills increased, parenting confidence improved, and parenting stress decreased. However, the program did not meet its central goal of improving maternal sensitivity.

The next step in this research initiative will involve additional programme modifications to improve maternal sensitivity training for such diverse groups.