



Addressing disparities in Learn the Signs. Act Early.



Reaching families at risk for maltreatment



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Project Goals

- Immediate goal: Assess the impact of ***Learn the signs. Act early.*** (LTS/AE) materials delivered by home visitors (HVs) to families in the child welfare system (CWS)
- Long-term goal: Demonstrate an effective approach to increasing developmental awareness of families and follow-up of children in the CWS with developmental delays

Background

- Half of the children under age five in the CWS have identifiable delays in development that warrant early intervention or preschool special education services
- More than half of these delays were not identified until children entered the CWS
- Rates of delays were equivalent for children and independent of whether maltreatment was substantiated

Project Description

- Integrate LTS/AE materials into the SafeCare[®] home visitation program for use with families at risk for child maltreatment
- Assess potential adaptations of LTS/AE to support low-literacy families
- Assess usability of the LTS/AE materials by diverse families
- Conduct a randomized control trial of LTS/AE with SafeCare-trained home visitors

SafeCare®

- SafeCare is an evidence-based, training curriculum for parents reported or at-risk for child maltreatment
- SafeCare home visitors provide in-home training sessions for parents of children ages 0-5 in weekly visits of 1-2 hours over 18-20 weeks
- Safe Care is being implemented in more than ten states in conjunction with the National SafeCare Training and Research Center (NSTRC)

SafeCare Content

- *Health*: the use of health reference materials in preventing illness, identifying symptoms of childhood illnesses or injuries, and providing or seeking appropriate treatment
- *Home Safety*: how to identify and eliminate safety and health hazards by making them inaccessible to children
- *Parent-Infant/Parent-Child Interaction*: how to provide engaging and stimulating activities, increase positive interactions, and prevent troublesome child behavior
- *Problem Solving and Counseling*: how to plan and implement activities with their children, respond appropriately to child behaviors, and address health and safety issues

LTS/AE and SafeCare

- LTS/AE content was integrated into the *Parent-Infant/Parent-Child Interaction* module three years ago
- It fits with many aspects of the program, such as the use of structured checklists, coaching on talking to medical professionals, and teaching problem-solving skills
- Concern about LTS/AE literacy level raised by SafeCare trainers/home visitors
- Single-subject pilot project examined *Milestone Moments* text vs. line drawings on knowledge of 24-month milestones by two mothers (Guastaferrero, MPH thesis, 2011)

Teaching Young Mothers

- Research question: “*Can a combination of line-art drawings and discussion increase a mother’s recognition of developmental milestones?*”
- Multiple-probe, single case design
- Two mothers (ages 20 with a 25-month old daughter, and 17 with a 29-month old daughter) living in a residential program to promote self-sufficiency with their children agreed to participate
- Weekly sessions that focused on mothers’ awareness of child development
 - Baseline – mothers had access to *Milestone Moments* booklet
 - Intervention – mothers had access to picture cards



Copies Others

Points to Ear



PICK UP YOUR SHOES AND PUT THEM IN THE CLOSET



Follows Instructions



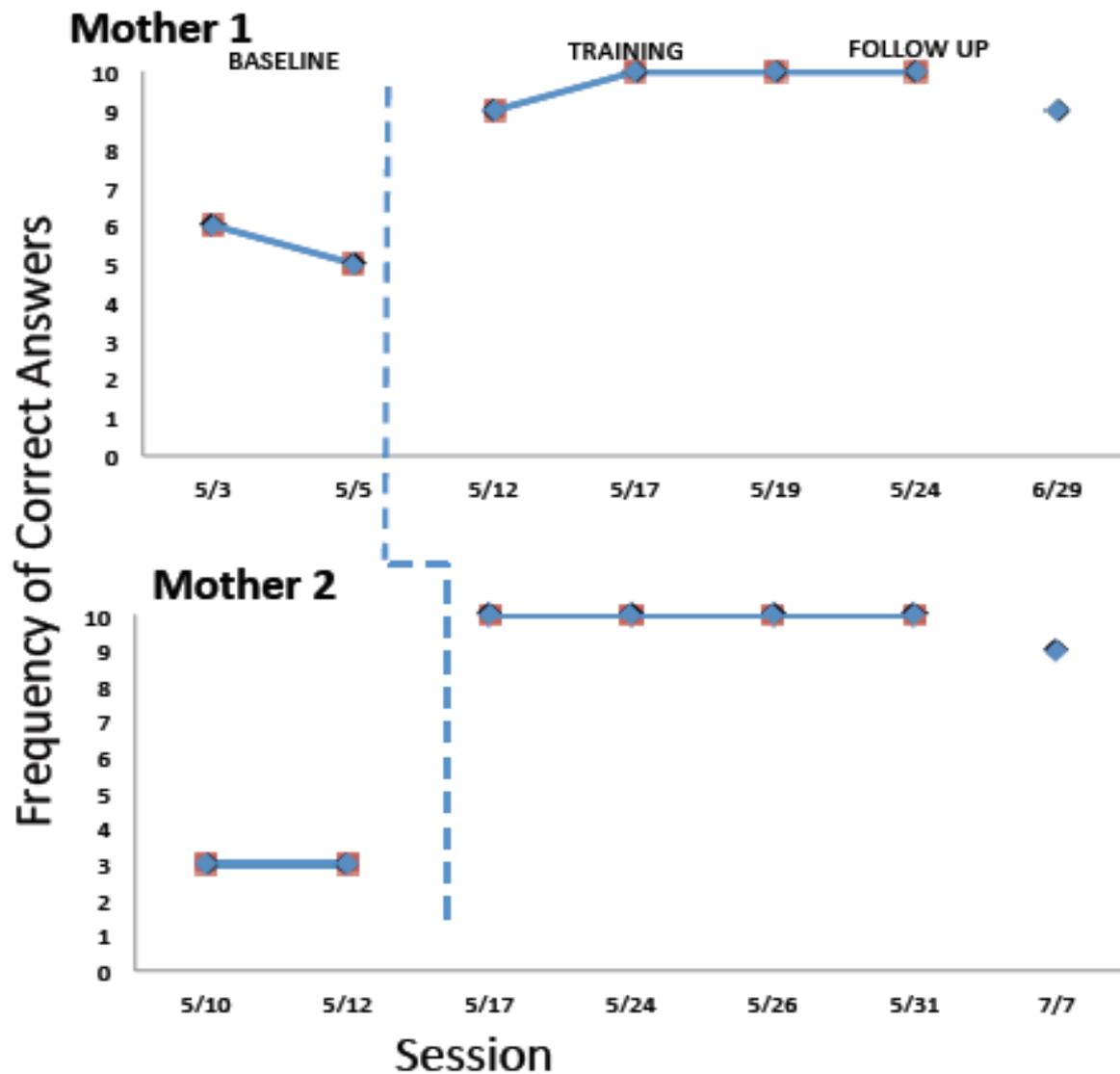
Knows Familiar People



Finds Things



Stands on Tip-Toes



Sheltering Arms Evaluation

- Sheltering Arms (SA) provides child care, family support, and coordinated health care to more than 200 children in one of their Atlanta sites
- Members of the CDC LTS/AE team provided training on child development to SA teachers and parent educators, using the *Milestone Moments* booklet
- Parent educators, in turn, distributed 109 copies of the *Milestone Moments* booklet to the families they work with and had a brief discussion of how it might be used
- A 10-item satisfaction survey was constructed on the usability and usefulness of the booklet
- Surveys were given to parents two weeks later; 89 surveys were returned
- Surveys were also distributed to the parent educators ; five were returned
- We are seeking IRB approval to analyze these survey responses

Conducting the RCT

- An exercise in frustration in times of shifting public policies
- Proposed RCT has three arms –
 - Families receive *Milestone Moments* booklet with no additional instruction (Control)
 - Home visitation staff review the *Milestone Moments* booklet with the parent(s) of a child younger than five as a component of parent training
 - Home visitation staff review *Milestone Moments* booklet , PLUS provide coaching on structured problem solving training to communicate with their doctors and early intervention (EI) specialists

False Starts

- A case study of futility and shifting policy priorities
- False start #1 – Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS)
- False start #2 – Oklahoma
- False start #3 – State of Washington

Finally!

- Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) has contracted with NSTRC to train 40 home visitors in the SafeCare Parent Infant/Parent Child Interaction module (which includes the LTS/AE milestones)
- Trainings in Savannah, Macon, and metro-Atlanta
- Administered through Children 1st program
 - Identifies children at-risk for “poor health and developmental outcomes”
 - Provides preventive program for children at-risk for maltreatment, where cases are unsubstantiated

Current Status

- Negotiating data sharing agreement
 - Aggregate state data for families who enroll
 - Seeking client level data including individual case records
 - Potential for a matched control sample of families who do not enroll
- Preparing IRB application for DPH

Conducting the RCT

- Home visitors will ask assigned families if they are willing to be contacted by research staff who will enroll them in the study
- Families whose children are receiving services for developmental delays will be excluded from the study
- Enroll three to five families for each home visitor, with a goal of recruiting 108 families
- Conduct SafeCare as usual, *Milestone Moments* review, or *Milestone Moments* review PLUS problem solving
- Administer short questionnaires at baseline and three months (completed by parents AND home visitors)

Measures

- Parent outcomes:
 - Awareness of child development
 - Rates of identification of potential developmental delays
 - Rates of follow-up of the potential delays
 - Satisfaction with the *Milestone Moments* booklet
 - Perceptions of home visitors
- Home visitor outcomes:
 - Satisfaction with the *Milestone Moments* booklet
 - Fidelity to *Milestone Moments* booklet, during teaching and coaching
 - Perceptions about the utility of *Milestone Moments* booklet
- Coach (HV fidelity monitor) outcomes:
 - Perspectives on the usefulness of *Milestone Moments* booklet

Hypothesized Findings

- A high percentage of potential families will have children already known to EI or preschool special education systems
- Some children will display with concerns that were known, but not acted upon; others will have previously unknown concerns
- Families in the intervention arms will identify potential developmental delays more frequently
- Families in the intervention arms will seek follow-up at low rates initially, but increase over time
- Families in the problem-solving arm will obtain follow-up screening, diagnosis, and treatment more frequently
- Home visitors will rate the material as engaging, practical, and useful in their work with parents





Questions??