

To Help Kids Thrive, Coach Their Parents

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The New York Times:

IN 1986, in a few of the poorest neighborhoods in Kingston, Jamaica, a team of researchers from the University of the West Indies embarked on an experiment that has done a great deal, over time, to change our thinking about how to help children succeed, especially those living in poverty. Its message: Help children by supporting and coaching their parents.

The researchers divided the families of 129 infants and toddlers into groups. The first group received hourlong home visits once a week from a trained researcher who encouraged the parents to spend more time playing actively with their children: reading picture books, singing songs, playing peekaboo. A second group of children received a kilogram of a milk-based nutritional supplement each week. A control group received nothing. The interventions themselves ended after two years, but the researchers have followed the children ever since.

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Psychologists including Mary Dozier at the University of Delaware and Philip Fisher at the University of Oregon have studied home-visiting interventions in which parents of infants and young children are provided with supportive, personalized coaching that identifies and reinforces the small moments — such as the face-to-face exchanges sometimes called “serve and return” interactions — that encourage attachment, warmth and trust between parent and child.

Read the whole story: [The New York Times](#)