

# Interventions May Have Lasting Benefits

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The term “intervention” is often used when concerned family members and friends confront a loved one about a troubling aspect of their life, such as an unhealthy dependence or relationship. In the social sciences, however, interventions are anything that practitioners or experimenters use in order to change people in some way.

[Read the full report here.](#)

A comprehensive review of past studies published in the journal [Psychological Science in the Public Interest](#) explores the factors that lead educational interventions’ effects to either persist over the long term or fade out—diminishing or even disappearing completely after the intervention ends. These results stress the need for scientists to conduct long-term evaluations of their interventions.

“The goal of this research is to better predict what will happen to people much later after an intervention that changes a person in the short term and, ultimately, to invest in interventions most likely to improve a child’s life,” said Drew Bailey, a researcher with the University of California, Irvine, and coauthor of the article. “We end by calling on researchers and funders to help improve the evidence base, which we can use to better inform research on persistence and fade-out.”

The researchers based their conclusions on a wide sample of research on interventions. Much of this work is in the form of meta-analyses, which together cover hundreds of studies. “Our review indicates that, across a large set of interventions targeting all sorts of psychological characteristics, persistence and fade-out frequently occur together,” Bailey said.

The authors did not attempt to identify one optimal package of existing interventions to invest in. However, their review clearly indicates that some interventions, such as compulsory schooling and high-quality early education programs (particularly for socioeconomically disadvantaged children), have improved children’s life outcomes.

## **Reference**

Bailey, D. H., Duncan, G. J., Cunha, F., Foorman, B. R., & Yeager, D. S. (2020). Persistence and fade-out of educational intervention effects: Mechanisms and potential solutions. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 21(2), 55–97. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100620915848>