

# EARLY INTERVENTIONS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE

Building an evidence based support system for parents in South Africa

Chandre Gould  
Catherine Ward



**Click here to see the  
'Parenting and  
violence prevention'  
video**


# GOVERNMENT GETS IT

Numerous studies have provided evidence that exposure of children to biological and psycho-social risk factors associated with poverty leads to inequalities in early development, and in turn impact on later educational achievement and life opportunities, which reinforces the cycle of poverty.

The Honourable Angeline Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education



## RELEVANT LAW AND POLICY

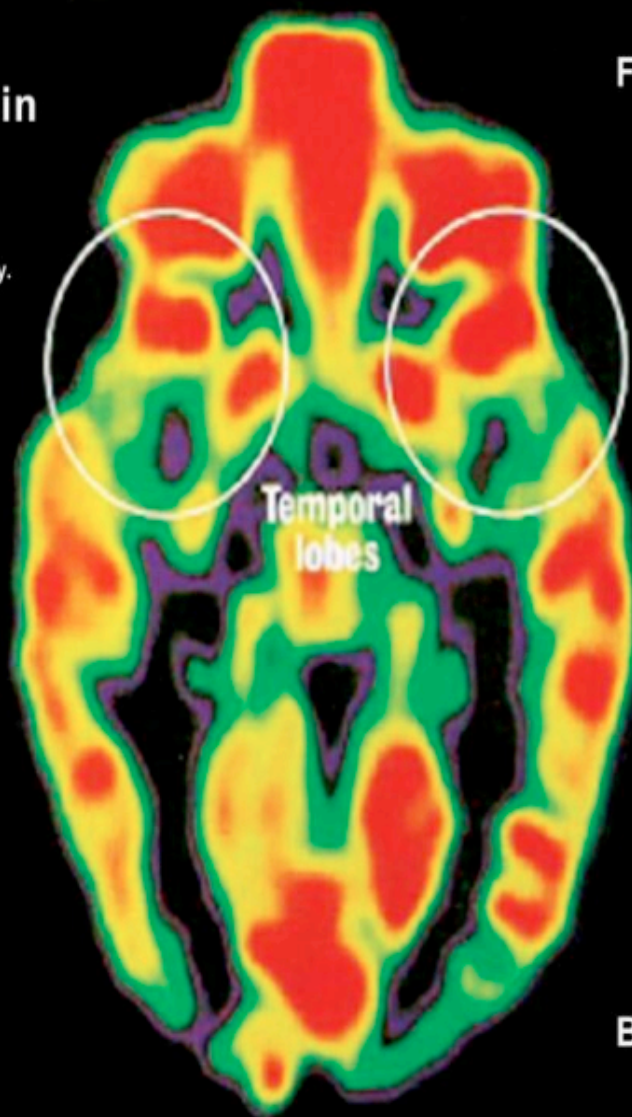
- The Children's Act (no. 41 of 2007)
  - DSD's Draft National Strategic Plan for Prevention and Early Intervention (2013 – 2017).
  - The South African Integrated Programme of Action Addressing Violence Against Women and Children
  - The DSD White Paper on Families in South Africa
  - The DSD Fatherhood Strategy
  - The DSD Integrated Parenting Framework
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# HOW NEGLECT AND ABUSE REDUCES NEUROLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

## Healthy Brain

This PET scan of the brain of a normal child shows regions of high (red) and low (blue and black) activity. At birth, only primitive structures such as the brain stem (center) are fully functional; in regions like the temporal lobes (top), early childhood experiences wire the circuits.

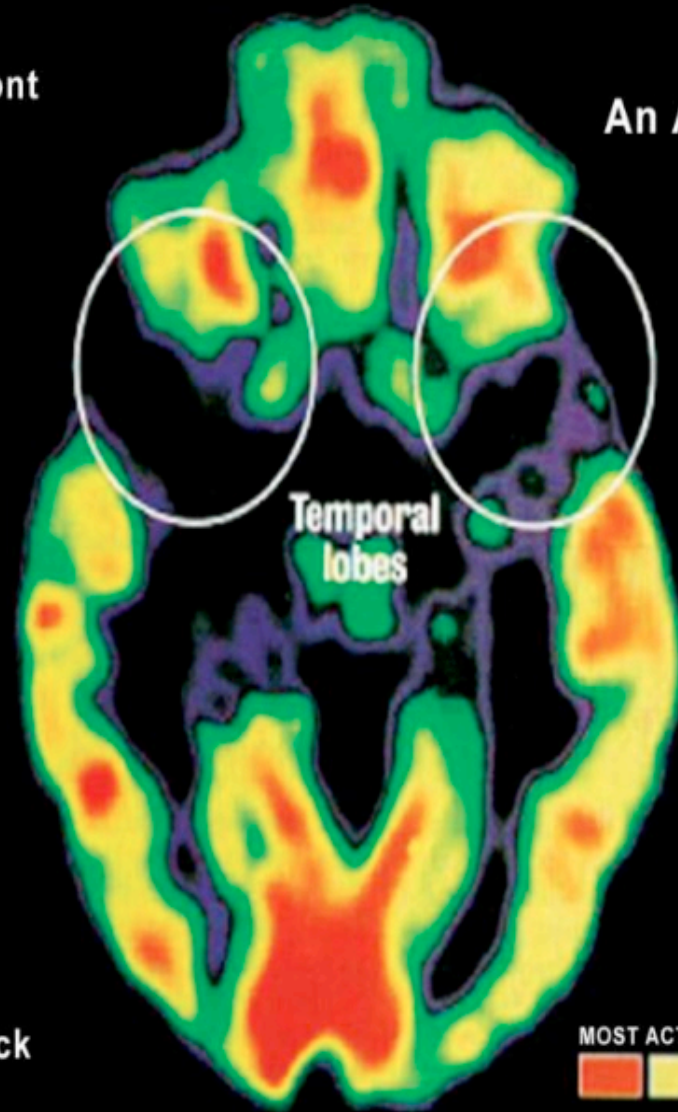


Front

Back

## An Abused Brain

This PET scan of the brain of a Romanian Orphan, who was institutionalized shortly after birth, shows the effect of extreme deprivation in infancy. The temporal lobes (top), which regulate emotions and receive input from the senses, are nearly quiescent. Such children suffer emotional and cognitive problems.



MOST ACTIVE      LEAST ACTIVE

Red	Yellow	Green	Blue	Black
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# THE CONTEXT OF PARENTING

## Parenting stress

- 96% of parents in the clinical range for high stress
- 96% of parents at risk for child abuse

## Intimate partner violence

- 36.2% of parents had experienced some form of IPV in the last three months

## CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR IN TOUWSRANTEN - SURVEY DATA

<b>Scale (Wave 2)</b> <b>N=214</b>	<b>N (%) children in borderline and clinical ranges</b>
<b>Internalising problems</b>	39 (12.7%)
<b>Externalising problems</b>	47 (15.3%)

## IS PARENTING RELATED TO CHILDREN'S EXTERNALISING BEHAVIOUR?

	Beta	Std. error	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Age	0.009	0.008	1.059	0.291
Gender	0.058	0.05	1.099	0.273
Inconsistent discipline	0.036	0.006	<b>6.310</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Corporal punishment	0.84	0.015	<b>5.671</b>	<b>0.000</b>

$R^2=0.329$

## IS PARENTING RELATED TO CHILDREN'S INTERNALISING BEHAVIOUR?

	Beta	Std. error	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Age	-0.66	0.55	-1.204	0.230
Gender	0.009	0.008	1.081	0.281
Corporal punishment	0.077	0.015	<b>4.987</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Inconsistent discipline	0.019	0.006	<b>3.213</b>	<b>0.002</b>

$R^2=0.187$



# PARENTING AND CHILDREN'S EXTERNALISING BEHAVIOUR IN CONTEXT

	Beta	Std. error	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Age	0.007	0.009	0.783	0.435
Gender	0.85	0.58	1.483	0.140
Inconsistent discipline	0.026	0.007	<b>4.019</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Corporal punishment	0.054	0.017	<b>3.108</b>	<b>0.002</b>
Parental stress	0.007	0.002	<b>3.939</b>	<b>0.000</b>
IPV	0.019	0.006	<b>3.083</b>	<b>0.002</b>
Parents' mental health	0.031	0.014	<b>2.236</b>	<b>0.027</b>

$R^2=0.441$

# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT VIOLENCE AND HOW TO PREVENT IT?

## What the research shows

“Early onset behavioural problems such as aggression and non-compliance are the best predictors of antisocial and criminal behaviour in adolescence and adulthood”, and are best addressed through parenting interventions

Children who have experienced harsh, inconsistent parenting behaviour are more likely to become perpetrators of violence than those who have not

Some parenting programs have been shown to be effective in randomized trials both in improving parenting practices and in improving children’s cognitive and behavioural outcomes

## THE EVIDENCE BASE

- Number of evidence-based parenting programmes internationally
- Several programmes in South Africa currently undergoing RCT
- Only two South African programmes for which there is currently evidence of effect – Thula Sana and Book sharing

# WHAT CAN BE DONE

Rolling out parenting programmes nationally means a commitment to implementing those for which we have evidence of effect

## Why only evidence-based programmes?

- Without evidence of effect we can't be certain we are spending public money well
- Programmes without evidence of effect could either not achieve the results we are hoping for, or worse, could cause harm
- Responsibility when spending public funds



# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCALING UP

## Challenges

Careful attention needs to be paid to

- Where services are offered
- How to reach those most in need to support
- How to ensure fidelity of programme delivery
- Unsustainable relationship between state and NGOs that deliver services
- How to ensure on-going monitoring and evaluation and feed data back to improve services

## Opportunities

- Favorable policy environment
- Recognition that we need to build our evidence base and find what works to reduce violence
- Two programmes for which there is already evidence of effect and several others being tested through RCT
- 'Spare' capacity
- Potential for practical inter-departmental collaboration
- One province is keen to try this – so there are lessons that can be learned



