

Response/Child Wellbeing: Child Knowledge and Awareness

Interventions to improve response to abuse increase child knowledge and awareness about abuse, though this finding is based on only few studies.

Evidence status	Some concerns	The evidence is thin, but response-focussed programmes can increase children’s knowledge and awareness regarding abuse.
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The summary in brief

This cell has only one primary study and four systematic reviews.

The primary study is a school-based programme with (i) training for teachers to respond better to potential abuse situations with their students and (ii) teaching students to recognize abuse when it happens and to talk to a trusted adult.

These interventions increase knowledge and awareness among children about how to recognize abuse and what they should do when they face a dangerous situation. There are numerous prevention-focussed programmes conducted in schools that can increase knowledge and awareness, but only few studies focus on response (i.e., relevant to this cell).

Contents of the cell

The cell has one study (*Nickerson 2019*) and four systematic reviews (*Quadara 2015, Radford 2017, Ricardo 2011, Sherr 2017*).

<i>Nickerson 2019</i> RCT, low risk of bias.	US (eight schools in one state). 161 teachers in study. Evaluation of <i>Second Step Child Protection Unit</i> , a multipronged approach to child sexual abuse prevention and response.
<i>Quadara 2015</i> Scoping review, low quality	Australia: A broad review to identify the prevalence of child sex abuse, risk factors, and intervention approaches.
<i>Radford 2017</i> Rapid evidence assessment, low quality	UK: A rapid evidence synthesis commissioned by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.
<i>Ricardo 2011</i> Systematic review, low quality	Global: A systematic review of interventions to prevent boys and young men from committing sexual violence. The interventions could look to address gender inequitable attitudes, bystander intentions, and other related behaviours.
<i>Sherr 2017</i> Rapid evidence assessment, low quality	A series of systematic reviews on child maltreatment in institutional care, examining the prevalence of abuse and peer violence in institutions, interventions to reduce abuse, and

A. PRIMARY STUDIES

The intervention

The Second Step Child Protection Unit (CPU) curriculum aims to empower students to address false assumptions regarding child sexual abuse. The programme provides teachers with tools so that they can identify and respond to abuse situations and teaches children about personal safety, not keeping secrets, and good/bad touch. School staff are trained via online sessions with simulated scenarios. Teachers also receive support to teach the lessons to their students. CPU lessons are delivered over six weeks in children’s regular classrooms. Younger children (pre-K¹ and kindergarten) get short, daily lessons, while older students (grades 1-4) receive longer weekly sessions. Teachers use discussion, pictures, videos, puppets, and vignettes to teach prevention concepts.

Does the intervention work in improving child knowledge and awareness?

The CPU program was effective in improving child sexual abuse prevention knowledge and self-efficacy among elementary school students. The programme was more effective for younger students (lower grades) than for older students (higher grades). Girls gained more knowledge and self-efficacy than did boys.

Has the intervention been implemented at scale?

No.

Which type of organisation delivered the interventions?

Teachers receive online training and some resources before they deliver the curriculum in their regular classrooms.

What do the interventions cost?

No information on costs.

How are the programmes meant to work? The theory of change

No specific theory is mentioned in the paper.

How reliable is the evidence?

¹ In the US, ‘kindergarten’ is the first year of primary school. Pre-school is called ‘pre-K’.

The one primary study in the cell is judged to have a ‘**low** risk of bias’.

Risk of Bias for Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs)

Study (Author and year)	Overall risk of bias	Randomised process	Deviations from intended interventions	Missing outcome data	Measurement of the outcome	Selection of the reported result
<i>Nickerson 2019</i>	Low risk of bias	Low risk	Low risk	Low risk	Low risk	Low risk

B. SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS

What are the systematic reviews about?

Quadara 2015 is a broad scoping review to understand the prevalence of child sexual abuse in the Australian context, to identify risk factors for abuse, and look at available interventions to address abuse.

Radford 2017 is a rapid review commissioned by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in England and Wales (IICSA). It investigates whether public and non-state institutions have adequately protected children and young people from CSA and exploitation. The rapid review sought to learn how institutions (state and non-state) outside of England and Wales have prevented and responded to CSA and exploitation.

Ricardo 2011 is a systematic review that examines the global evidence on effective interventions to reduce the use of sexual violence by boys and young men. The review looked at engaging with boys and men directly in the community and in schools to intervene on various risk factors for sexual violence. Interventions could target gender equitable attitudes, bystander intentions, and other behaviours.

Sherr 2017 is a series of systematic reviews on multiple aspects of child violence in institutional care: (i) the prevalence of maltreatment of children in institutional care; (ii) interventions to reduce abuse in these settings; (iii) peer violence in institutions and (iv) the cognitive and social development of children in institutional care.

What are the findings on child knowledge and awareness?

There are not many response-focussed interventions available. In general, interventions looking to reduce child maltreatment can improve children’s knowledge and awareness of how to recognize abuse and be inclined to report it to a trusted adult. However, most interventions have a prevention focus rather than a response or disclosure focus.

What information is available on cost and cost-effectiveness?

No information is provided on cost or cost-effectiveness.

How reliable is the evidence?

Not very. The quality of all systematic reviews is rated as **high risk of bias**. This means that there is at least one major flaw in how they were conducted.