



Military REACH's review of
AFTER DEPLOYMENT, ADAPTIVE PARENTING TOOLS: 1-YEAR OUTCOMES OF AN EVIDENCE-BASED PARENTING PROGRAM FOR MILITARY FAMILIES FOLLOWING DEPLOYMENT

Gewirtz, A. H., DeGarmo, D. S., & Zamir, O. (2018). After deployment, adaptive parenting tools: 1-year outcomes of an evidence-based parenting program for military families following deployment. *Prevention Science*, 19(4), 589-599.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-017-0839-4>

BRIEF SUMMARY: This study tested the After Deployment, Adaptive Parenting Tools (ADAPT) Intervention, a 14-week parenting program tailored to military families. This program was modeled after the social interaction learning (SIL) model, which posits that children's adjustment worsens when parents have fewer positive interactions with children and use harsh discipline. The current study examined the program's outcomes on child adjustment (reported by teacher, parent, and child) and effective parenting (based on observed parent-child interactions). The current randomized control trial consisted of two groups: the intervention group ($n = 207$) and the control group ($n = 129$) and was primarily comprised of National Guard and Reserve families. Findings suggest the efficacy of interventions such as ADAPT for military families post-deployment.

KEY FINDINGS

- Participation in the ADAPT program was associated with an increase in effective parenting.
- Increases in effective parenting were related to improved child adjustment.
- Parents that attended a majority of the ADAPT sessions (seven or more) showed stronger impacts of the program than parents who attended fewer than seven sessions.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FAMILIES

- Participation in parenting programs, such as ADAPT, may improve parenting practices thereby enhancing children's adjustment following deployment.
- Parents looking to improve their parenting may benefit from focusing on engaging in more positive behaviors rather than solely focusing on reducing negative and coercive behaviors.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HELPING PROFESSIONALS

- Given the association between parenting behavior and child adjustment, efforts focused on military children's adjustment issues may be more successful if parents are included in intervention efforts.
- Practicing effective parenting skills with parents in family therapy may help with children's mental health symptoms.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS

- Programs may benefit from targeting parents and teaching positive parenting practices, rather than focusing directly on children's symptoms.
- Because the ADAPT program was empirically validated for use with military families, considering it for widespread use following deployment may enhance parenting.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✓ Military families; $N = 336$ families (reports from parents, teachers, and children)
- ✓ The sample was comprised of Army National Guard (59%), Air National Guard (11%), Army (13%), Navy (7%), Air Force (3%), and Marine Reserves (0.3%) service members
- ✓ Longitudinal randomized controlled trial for a parenting program

METHODOLOGY

- Child adjustment was measured by *child reports* of school problems, loneliness, and social dissatisfaction, *teacher reports* of functional communication, adaptability, social skills, leadership, and study skills, and *parent reports* of adaptability, social skills, activities of daily living, and functional communication.
- Parents in the intervention and control groups completed a baseline/pre-intervention assessment and a 12-month, post-baseline assessment.
- Parent-child interactions were observed, and parenting scores were computed on domains such as problem-solving outcome, discipline, and positive involvement.
- Structural equation modeling was used to investigate the relationship between the ADAPT program, parenting scores, and children's adjustment.
- Results were examined via intent-to-treat (ITT) analysis, which interprets treatment effects based on group allocation (intervention or control). However, CACE (complier average case effects) analyses were used to account for varying levels of intervention compliance within each group.

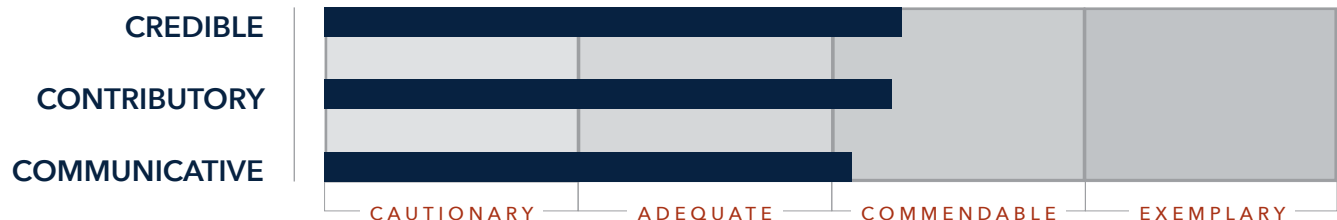
ARTICLE STRENGTHS

- The ADAPT intervention, and the study itself, was framed using the social interaction learning (SIL) model.
- Multiple methods and multiple informants enhance the reliability of study findings.
- The randomized control trial design employed along with analyses accounting for compliance generally reduce the likelihood of bias related to selection effects and confounding factors.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Minimal information was included related to the control group (i.e. what did the control group receive?).
- The analytical plan lacked clarity, specifically when discussing the CACE analyses.
- The sample was mostly middle-class, well-educated, and married, which is likely representative of the National Guard population in the Midwest, but findings may not generalize to other military populations with different socio-economic statuses.

ASSESSMENT OF THE STUDY



DIMENSIONS OF ASSESSMENT

- CREDIBLE: Research that is rigorous, transparent, consistent, and generalizable. This dimension reflects an evaluation of the study's scientific methodology.
- CONTRIBUTORY: Research that is original, applicable, and has the potential to enhance the well-being of military families. This dimension examines the impact of the study.
- COMMUNICATIVE: Research that is coherent, understandable, and readable. This dimension assesses how effectively the authors convey the content of the study.

* These dimensions are adapted from the work of Mårtensson et al. (2016). For more information on the REACH evaluation framework and rubric visit: militaryREACH.org

PARTNERSHIP

This work is result of a partnership funded by the Department of Defense (DoD) between the DoD's Office of Military Family Readiness Policy and the U.S. Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA/NIFA) through a grant/cooperative agreement with Auburn University. USDA/NIFA Award No. 2017-48710-27339, PI, Mallory Lucier-Greer.

