

BASE Babywatching Study 2016 – Pilot Research Summary

What is Babywatching?

Babywatching is primarily a school-based programme where a parent and their baby visit a class of primary-aged children, once a week, for half an hour. Guided by a trained Group Leader who is very often a teacher, supported by a Mentor, the children watch the interactions between parent and baby, learning about the pair's developing relationship. The programme's aim is to reduce children's anxiety and aggression by promoting understanding, empathy and positive social-emotional and behavioural adjustment in children aged 4 to 10 years. Successful, too, with small groups of older children, it has also helped professionals in social care to deepen their understanding of attachment.

What was the research project testing?

A research project undertaken by academics from the Department of Biological and Experimental Psychology, Queen Mary University of London, has evaluated the efficacy of the BASE Babywatching programme in a primary/junior school over a period of ten months from September 2015 to June 2016. The sample group of 161 children (53.8% boys; 46.2% girls) was split into a control group and an intervention group. Empathy, prosocial competences, conduct problems, emotional problems, hyperactivity, and problems in peer relationships were assessed by teachers at three time points - before, during (five months in) and at the end of the programme. At the first assessment, before children experienced BASE Babywatching, the children in the intervention group were significantly more at risk than children belonging to the control group. They were rated higher by their teachers for conduct problems and emotional problems and as being less prosocial and having less empathy.

What were the results?

According to ratings provided by teachers it was found that the children allocated to the intervention group had significantly more problems before the intervention compared to children in the control group; however, after the intervention, there were no longer any significant differences between the groups. The results of the study suggest that the BASE Babywatching programme:

- allowed children belonging to the intervention group to reach levels of social competences comparable to that of their peers in the control condition.
- reduced emotional problems in the intervention group to levels comparable to children belonging to the control group.

Conclusion

Results of this study suggest that the BASE Babywatching programme could potentially be an effective programme in promoting positive change in prosocial competence, conduct and emotional problems in children over time.

The full QMUL research paper is available on our website: www.base-babywatching-uk.org under **NEWS**.