

Smart Start Categories for Evidence Based and Evidence Informed Activities

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EB/EI Category	Icon	Definition	Key Features
<p><i>Evidence-Based: Well-established</i></p>		<p>Programs and practices that have strong evidence of their effectiveness across five or more studies with experimental or quasi-experimental designs. At least one study must be conducted by an independent researcher not affiliated with the program designer or original research group May have a systematic review or meta-analysis with experimental or quasi-experimental designs.</p>	<p>At least 5 studies with experimental or quasi-experimental designs assessing the same program or approach to the practice.</p> <p>At least one study conducted by an independent researcher not affiliated with the program designer or original research group.</p>
<p><i>Evidence-Based: Established</i></p>		<p>Programs and practices that had at least three studies using an experimental or quasi-experimental design that found evidence of their effectiveness.</p>	<p>At least 3 studies with experimental or quasi-experimental designs studying the same program or approach to the practice.</p>
<p><i>Evidence-Informed: Promising</i></p>		<p>Evidence-informed programs and practices that had at least one study that compared the effectiveness of the intervention for people who participated in the program and those who did not participate. The level of evidence suggests the intervention would qualify as evidence-informed as long as a strong logic model and written guidelines exist.</p>	<p>At least one study with comparison group.</p>
<p><i>Evidence-Informed: Emerging</i></p>		<p>Evidence-informed programs and practices that had only preliminary data with no comparison group. The level of evidence suggests the intervention would qualify as evidence-informed as long as a strong logic model and written guidelines exist.</p>	<p>Preliminary results with no comparison group.</p>

Definitions

The following definitions have guided the review of evidence and establishment of the evidence ratings in the *Smart Start Clearinghouse for Evidence-Based Programs and Practices for Early Childhood*.

Experimental studies randomly assign study participants to either receive the intervention or to not receive the intervention. The group receiving the intervention or service is called the treatment group. The group not receiving the service is the control group. Some experimental studies may have more than two groups that vary by type or the amount of the intervention received.

Quasi-experimental is defined as a study with a treatment and a comparison group where group assignment was not decided by randomization and that uses advanced statistical procedures to control for between group differences.

Advanced statistical procedures primarily include multivariate regression analyses designed to control for differences in characteristics between the treatment and comparison groups. These may include logistic regression with substantial control variables, propensity score analysis, difference in difference modeling, fixed effects, etc. These approaches are often used with statistical methods or designs that address unique characteristics of the data such as nested or time lapsed records. Such methods might include hierarchical linear modeling, time-series, analysis, regression discontinuity, etc.

Treatment group includes those study participants who receive the intervention or service being studied.

Control group includes study participants who were randomly assigned to not receive the intervention. They serve as a comparison to the treatment group.

Comparison group includes participants who do not receive the intervention. A comparison group may be determined by convenience or another means other than random assignment.

Random assignment or **randomization** means that study participants have an equal chance of being selected to participate in either the treatment or control group. Assignment is often done through a “chance procedure” which might include flipping a coin, drawing a name out of a hat, or a random number generator.

Systematic reviews of a program or practice look at the findings of as many studies as can be located that investigated a program or practice to determine if results taken together show that it had the outcomes intended.

Meta-analysis is a common type of systematic review. It consists of coding different characteristics of studies of the same or similar program or practice and summarizing the results across studies with similar outcomes using a statistic called an effect size.

Effect size tells us how large the difference in outcome is between the intervention groups and control or comparison group.