

Supporting Caregivers in Implementing Behavioral Interventions and Home-School Communication Strategies

Statement of Problem

Children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are at an increased risk for a range of negative outcomes, including academic and social difficulties, poor vocational outcomes, and chronic health conditions, which have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, is it more urgent than ever to ensure that children with and at-risk for ADHD receive early, effective intervention.

Well-established interventions for children with ADHD include behavioral parent training at home and behavioral classroom management interventions at school, both of which show strong meta-analytic evidence of effectiveness. Additionally, interventions that aim to promote the family-school relationship are effective in improving outcomes. However, it can be challenging for both teachers and parents to implement these interventions.

Description

This project builds on [previous research](#) which involved developing and pilot testing resources to support teachers in using evidence-based classroom management interventions. Findings revealed a need for additional resources for parents and caregivers to support them in using similar practices and to support home-school coordination. Therefore, this current project will focus on iteratively developing a coordinated set of resources for caregivers to complement the previously-developed resources for teachers.

Our team seeks to address the gaps in knowledge on approaches to effectively support caregivers—in coordination with teachers—in using evidence-based behavioral interventions for students with symptoms of ADHD. In collaboration with caregivers and school staff, the research team will develop a set of resources for caregivers and will pilot test them in combination with the resources for teachers.

For the first step of this work, we will iteratively develop the implementation resources for caregivers. We will use two approaches to ensure that caregiver and school staff perspectives are represented. First, we will collaborate with an advisory board of caregivers and school staff to incorporate their perspectives and input throughout the development process. Second, we will “try out” versions of the resources with caregivers. After each try out, the research team will assess the caregiver’s perceptions of acceptability, appropriateness, and feasibility of the resources through a survey and an interview. In partnership with the advisory board, we will use this feedback to refine the resources.

Next Steps

The next step of this project will be to pilot test the resources for caregivers in a small-scale randomized controlled trial. We will compare teacher, caregiver, and child outcomes for children whose teacher and caregiver both receive implementation resources, as compared to those whose teacher only receives the implementation resources.

The results of this study will address a gap in understanding the implementation of behavioral interventions across school and home.

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PolicyLab Leads

Gwendolyn Lawson PhD

Faculty Member

Gwendolyn Lawson (she/her) is a faculty member at PolicyLab and in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and an assistant professor of psychiatry at the Perelman School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania. She is a licensed clinical psychologist, with a particular interest in disruptive behavior disorders and classroom consultation.

Dr. Lawson is a former classroom teacher and has a background in implementing evidence-based interventions for children in schools, including consulting with teachers regarding managing disruptive behavior difficulties. Her current research focuses on developing and testing implementation strategies to promote teacher use of behavioral classroom interventions for students with symptoms of ADHD. Overall, her research aims to increase the quality of services youth with or at-risk for mental health problems receive in schools, particularly within under-served communities.

Dr. Lawson earned her doctorate in psychology with clinical training from the University of Pennsylvania in 2017. She completed her predoctoral internship at the University of Maryland's Center for School Mental Health, where she provided prevention, intervention and consultation services in a Baltimore elementary school. She completed a T32 postdoctoral fellowship in implementation science at Penn's Center for Mental Health. Her research is currently funded by a K23 award from National Institute of Mental Health.



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Team

Peter Cronholm MD, MSCE, CAQHPM, FAAFP

Faculty Scholar

Peter Cronholm is a faculty scholar at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and an associate professor, director of Community Programs and associate program director in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. His research interests have focused on health services regarding: 1) integration of trauma-informed care and primary prevention strategies into systems of primary care; and 2) developing novel mixed methodologies and patient-centered outcomes into research paradigms. He is an affiliate faculty member in the Graduate Program in Public Health Studies, a senior fellow in the Center for Public Health Initiatives, a senior scholar at the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, an associate of the Firearm and Injury Center at Penn, an associate of the Philadelphia Collaborative Violence Prevention Center, and an affiliate of the Evelyn Jacobs Ortner-Unity Program in Family Violence at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice.

Dr. Cronholm is the co-director of the University of Pennsylvania's Mixed Methods Research Lab (a University of Pennsylvania Service Center that supports investigators in the development of conceptual and methodological approaches for community-based and clinical research questions) and has content expertise in program evaluation of health services using mixed methodologies and Community-Based Participatory Research techniques. He is actively involved in community programs addressing health disparities with a focus on preventing and reducing the impact of trauma throughout the lifespan having served as a member of the Board of Directors for the Academy on Violence and Abuse, Institute for Safe Families, the Men's Resource Center, Women Organized Against Rape, and Prevention Point Philadelphia. Dr. Cronholm is an active member of the Philadelphia Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Task Force's research committee as Lutheran Settlement House's Research Advisory Board. He has collaborated closely with PolicyLab in developing programming related to early home visitation, child injury and maltreatment and building qualitative and implementation science methodologies into research strategies.



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Molly Kerstetter

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Clinical Research Coordinator

Molly Kerstetter (she/her) is a clinical research coordinator at PolicyLab and within the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). Molly is interested in utilizing school-based research and programming to improve equitable outcomes for children and adolescents. She currently works with Dr. Gwen Lawson, developing and testing implementation strategies to support caregivers' and teachers' use of behavioral interventions to support students with symptoms of ADHD within the School District of Philadelphia. In her role, Molly is also supporting the CHOP Tri-County School Mental Health Consortium to implement Tier I and II mental health programming for Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery County school districts.

Prior to her role at CHOP, Molly completed her Master of Public Health at Temple University in Social and Behavioral Sciences. While completing her degree, Molly also coordinated a school-based project for Temple with the aim of improving implementation of the school meal program within the School District of Philadelphia. She helped to conduct a needs assessment, consisting of surveys and focus groups with students, caregivers, and school faculty and staff to better understand barriers and facilitators to meal program implementation. In her free time, Molly loves to cook and bake for friends and family and trains Brazilian jiu jitsu.



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Related Tools & Publications

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[How Can Community-partnered Research Help Schools & Teachers Support Students with ADHD?
Blog Post](#)

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Related Projects

[Supporting Implementation of Behavioral Classroom Interventions for Children with ADHD in Urban Schools
Behavioral Health](#)