

Intergenerational Child Maltreatment and MCA Proficiency among 3rd through 8th Graders

Translating research to practice may be difficult, yet a better understanding of current research is necessary to ensure child welfare workers engage in best practices when working with children and families. The Minn-LINK Discussion Guide is designed to help facilitate thoughtful discussions about the information presented in the research brief in order to inform practice and enhance discussion surrounding meaningful issues.

In this issue, we examined whether or not children in families experiencing child maltreatment across multiple generations differ in MCA proficiency from maltreated children whose parents were not maltreated. In particular, we were interested in whether MCA proficiency varies by the number of generations experiencing child maltreatment among third through eight graders. Overall findings indicate that the association between child maltreatment and MCA math proficiency revealed a graded relationship; a child's odds of demonstrating proficiency in math and reading decreased with each additional generation experiencing child maltreatment within the child's family. This association was reduced after adjustment for demographic confounders but remained statistically significant.

Discussion on Practice Implications

- 1.** The results of this study suggest that children who experience intergenerational child maltreatment (IGM) tend to have worse educational outcomes than their peers. Child protection workers, school social workers and psychologists, and educators have different roles but common concerns, and often these professionals are very familiar with IGM and its profound effects on children and families. In your role, do you have access to information about whether the children with whom you work have experienced IGM? How could you (or do you) use that information to support the children and families with whom you work? What additional information about children or families would be beneficial to have in your role?
- 2.** While this study focused specifically on IGM, previous research has shown that children who experience maltreatment and other childhood traumas are more likely to struggle academically. What training opportunities were provided to you to support you in your role as you work with children who have experienced trauma? What other training would be helpful in your current role?
- 3.** Collaboration among child protection and educational professionals, and parents is critical. In what ways do you support collaboration in your role? What could you do to improve the collaboration that occurs?

Discussion on Agency- & System-Level Changes

- 1.** Understanding the trauma histories of children and families with whom you work is imperative. What barriers exist in gaining access to this information? What can be done to overcome these barriers?
- 2.** Understanding that breaking the cycle of maltreatment can be difficult, what strategies might your agency or school employ to reduce IGM and/or its effects on children and families? What policies may need to be developed or changed to support this work?