

Implementation of the SafeCare model in Georgia for preventing child maltreatment

Daniel J. Whitaker, PhD, and Theresa L. Glasheen, MS

Georgia State University

Corresponding author: Daniel J. Whitaker • Georgia State University • PO Box 3995, GSU/CHD, Atlanta, GA • 404-413-1282 • dwhitaker@gsu.edu

Background: The SafeCare model is a behaviorally-based parenting model used in the prevention of child maltreatment. SafeCare targets three proximal risk factors for child neglect and abuse: parent-child interactions, home safety, and child health. SafeCare is one of only a few evidence-based practices for preventing child neglect, the dominant problem in child welfare, accounting for over 75% of child maltreatment cases. SafeCare has been broadly implemented in several states in the US, including Georgia, and is disseminated by the National SafeCare Training and Research Center (NSTRC) at Georgia State University. The presentation will (1) describe SafeCare and associated data, (2) describe the SafeCare implementation.

Methods: SafeCare has been implemented in Georgia since 2008 using a rigorous implementation model, which includes on-going quality assurance of SafeCare providers and skill acquisition evaluation in families. Providers of child welfare services have been trained to deliver SafeCare and have been coached by trainers from NSTRC. Evaluation data are regularly collected which include provider fidelity via observed sessions, family outcomes relating to completion of SafeCare, and skill acquisitions (i.e., changes in parenting behaviors, reductions in home hazards, and increases in knowledge and behaviors regarding child health care).

Results: Recent evaluation data (2013-2015) indicate 115 families have been referred to a SafeCare provider and 100 families completed at least one session. Thirty-eight (38%) have completed the program in its entirety. Provider fidelity data collected monthly indicate high program fidelity (mean of 91% of desired behaviors performed). Family behavior data indicate excellent skill acquisition among families completing each SafeCare model. Parenting skills increased by 104%; home hazards were reduced by 85%, and child health care skills increased by 34%.

Conclusions: The SafeCare model is an effective parenting program for reducing child maltreatment, and has been implemented successfully in Georgia. Broader impact of SafeCare will require increased implementation of the model to increase reach.

Key words: child maltreatment, neglect, parenting, implementation, maternal-child health

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