



# Comparison of the effectiveness of filial therapy and package of parent-child interaction consultations on psychological well-being of preschool children

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## Abstract

**Aim:** The present study aimed to compare the effectiveness of filial therapy and package of parent-child interaction consultations on psychological well-being of preschool children. **Methods:** The research design was a quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test-follow-up with the control group. The statistical population of the study included all mothers with preschool children in Isfahan in 2019. 45 mothers were selected by convenience sampling method and randomly and equally assigned to two experimental groups and one control group. The research tool included psychological well-being questionnaire for preschool children (Dehghani, 2013). The first experimental group received 8 90-minute sessions of effective parent-child interaction intervention (Bahrami et al., 2021) and the second experimental group received 8 90-minute sessions of filial therapy intervention (Bratton et al., 2006). Analysis of variance with repeated measures was used to analyze the data. **Results:** The results showed that the effect of the filial therapy intervention and parent-child interaction counseling package on the psychological well-being of preschool children ( $F=10.203$ ) was significant ( $P<0.05$ ). Also, a comparative comparison between the two interventions showed that in the cognitive and educational aspects of psychological well-being, a significant difference was observed in favor of the effective parent-child interaction intervention. Also, the effect of filial therapy and effective parent-child interaction on the dependent variable continued in the 60-day follow-up phase. **Conclusion:** According to the findings of this study, it can be stated filial therapy and effective parent-child interaction can play an important role in increasing the psychological well-being of preschool children.

**Keywords:** Filial therapy, parent-child interaction, psychological well-being

## Introduction

The growth and progress of any society in different social, economic and cultural dimensions requires a population that is psychologically and physically healthy. Today's children in any society will be the future builders of that society, so the health and illness of this group can affect the health and future of any society and country. One of the components that influence the formation of this structure is psychological well-being, the formation of high levels of which in a child leads to an increase in self-confidence, emotional and social development (Christner, Esler, Hazam and Pavlos, 2021). Due to the importance of the role of psychological well-being in children's lives and their future, today, psychological science has moved away from focusing only on pathology, and the approach of positive psychology has been placed at the forefront of researchers' work (McDowell, Powell, Roberts, and Taylor, 2020). During the past decades, attention has been paid to the psychological well-being and quality of life of children all over the world.

In a definition of psychological well-being, Wallerand (2012) introduced it with happiness, personal growth and life satisfaction and considers it one of the important dimensions for effective performance and high level in life. According to the definition of UNICEF, health and safety, psychological safety, education and socialization, children's feeling of being loved and valued, being considered in the family and society are examples of their psychological well-being. Also, having the right to participate in decisions related to children's own lives, respecting their points of view and listening to children is one of the basic principles in their psychological well-being (McAlley & Rose, 2010). Alexander (2009) believes that children's psychological well-being depends on respecting children's capacities, needs, desires and concerns, improving their mental, emotional and physical condition and creating happiness, self-acceptance and a positive attitude towards life.

Psychological well-being is a construct that has been addressed from the perspective of health and humanistic psychology (Romate and Rajkumar, 2022). In this regard, one of the treatment methods is the treatment based on the parent-child relationship or filial therapy, in which play is used as The main medium is used to strengthen family relationships, create understanding and respect between children and parents, and solve child and family problems. Filial therapy is a combination of play therapy and family therapy that teaches parents how to have non-directive play sessions with their children so that they can resolve family problems and become competent parents. In this therapeutic approach, children play with their caregivers and learn that they are loved and important. The primary emphasis of filial therapy is on strengthening and enhancing the parent-child relationship by equipping parents with basic play therapy skills (Topham & VanPleet, 2011).

The review of the research literature showed that no research has been conducted on the effectiveness of the mentioned interventions on the psychological well-being of preschool children. Therefore, the current research aims to investigate, evaluate and compare the effectiveness of two filial therapy interventions and effective parent-child interaction on the psychological well-being of preschool children. Therefore, the current research was conducted with the aim of answering the following questions:

1. Is the effectiveness of filial therapy and effective parent-child interaction patterns effective in improving the psychological well-being of pre-primary school children in the post-test stage?
2. Is the effectiveness of filial therapy and effective parent-child interaction patterns on improving the psychological well-being of preschool children stable in the follow-up phase?

### **Method**

The research design was a quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test-follow-up with the control group. The statistical population of the study included all mothers with preschool children in Isfahan in 2019. 45 mothers were selected by convenience sampling method and randomly and equally assigned to two experimental groups and one control group. The research tool included psychological well-being questionnaire for preschool children (Dehghani, 2013). The first experimental group received 8 90-minute sessions of effective parent-child interaction intervention (Bahrami et al., 2021) and the second experimental group received 8 90-minute sessions of filial therapy intervention (Bratton et al., 2006). Analysis of variance with repeated measures was used to analyze the data.

### **Results**

The results showed that the effect of the filial therapy intervention and parent-child interaction counseling package on the psychological well-being of preschool children ( $F=10.203$ ) was significant ( $P<0.05$ ). Also, a comparative comparison between the two interventions showed that in the cognitive and educational aspects of psychological well-being, a significant difference was observed in favor of the effective parent-child interaction intervention. Also, the effect of filial therapy and effective parent-child interaction on the dependent variable continued in the 60-day follow-up phase.

### **Conclusion**

The present study was conducted with the aim of comparing the effectiveness of two filial therapy interventions and a counseling package of effective parent-child interaction patterns on the psychological well-being of preschool children. The results of the analysis of the findings showed that there is a significant difference between the group of effective parent-child interaction patterns and the control group in all sub-scales of psychological well-being including psychological, social, cognitive, educational and family; This effect continued in the 60-day follow-up phase.

It is suggested to use larger samples in order to generalize the results about the effectiveness of the intervention, because of the importance of the role of both parents, fathers should be included in the meetings along with mothers. It is recommended to use this intervention in medical centers and preschools to make parents aware of the importance of parent-child interactions. It is also suggested that mothers with pre-primary school age children can strengthen and improve their child's psychological well-being by participating in effective parent-child interaction model sessions, in addition to benefiting from the benefits of improving their interactions with the child.

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