

# Do childhood development programs help children living in conflict and crisis settings?

May 23 2018

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Millions of young children living in conditions of war, disaster, and displacement are at increased risk for developmental difficulties that can follow them throughout their lives. A new *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* article reviews what's known about the effectiveness of early childhood development programs in humanitarian settings and present a framework and recommendations for future research.

The authors note that while there is robust evidence from stable contexts demonstrating effectiveness, research in humanitarian settings is lacking, and more evidence is needed to demonstrate not only which programs are effective, but importantly why, how, and in which contexts, settings, and populations these programs effectively operate. Such research would produce insights that will enable humanitarian actors to adapt, transfer, and scale successful [program](#) models to mitigate the negative effects of war, disaster, and displacement.

"We know from decades of research that early childhood programming has the powerful potential to improve the lives of children and families living in adversity. Yet in conflict and crisis settings, where experiences of severe and prolonged stress threaten healthy development, these programs are largely absent," said lead author Katie Maeve Murphy, of the International Rescue Committee. "There is a clear need for further research—with a focus on implementation processes associated with effective outcomes in order to change the trajectory and significantly enhance the lives of children and families living in crisis and conflict."

The paper is part of a special issue on implementation research and practice for early childhood development, intended to advance evidence for effective scaling up of nurturing care interventions that promote early childhood [development](#).

**More information:** *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, DOI: [10.1111/nyas.13691](https://doi.org/10.1111/nyas.13691)

Provided by Wiley

Citation: Do childhood development programs help children living in conflict and crisis settings? (2018, May 23) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-05-childhood-children-conflict-crisis.html>

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