

Research Matters

Cognitive, Emotional, and Family Interventions for Children with Acquired Brain Injury: Review

ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

This article updates the literature on effective cognitive rehabilitation and emotional treatments for children with acquired brain injury (e.g., traumatic brain injury, stroke, brain tumor). Fifty-six articles published between 2006 and 2017 were selected then carefully peer reviewed. Treatment approaches were categorized as one of the following according to the degree and amount of experimental evidence: (1) *Practice Standard* (highest degree); (2) *Practice Guideline*; and (3) *Practice Option*.

The following table lists examples of treatment domains and examples of studies that fall within the “Practice Standard” category.

Treatment Domain	Examples
Attention & Memory	Butler, R. W., Copeland, D. R., Fairclough, D. L., Mulhern, R. K., Katz, E. R., Kazak, A. E., ... Sahler, O. J. Z. (2008). A multicenter, randomized clinical trial of a cognitive remediation program for childhood survivors of a pediatric malignancy. <i>Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology</i> , 76(3), 367–378.
Emotional Control & Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	Wade, S. L., Stancin, T., Kirkwood, M., Brown, T. M., McMullen, K. M., & Taylor, H. G. (2014). Counselor- assisted problem solving (CAPS) improves behavioral outcomes in older adolescents with complicated mild to severe TBI. <i>Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation</i> , 29(3), 198–207.
Executive Functions	Kurowski, B. G., Wade, S. L., Kirkwood, M. W., Brown, T. M., Stancin, T., & Taylor, H. G. (2013). Online problem-solving therapy for executive dysfunction after child traumatic brain injury. <i>Pediatrics</i> , 132(1), e158–e166.
Family/Caregiver	Wade, S. L., Karver, C. L., Taylor, H. G., Cassedy, A., Stancin, T., Kirkwood, M. W., & Brown, T. M. (2014). Counselor- assisted problem solving improves caregiver efficacy following adolescent brain injury. <i>Rehabilitation Psychology</i> , 59(1), 1–9.

The authors suggested that self-guided/metacognitive approaches are likely most beneficial for adolescents and older students, whereas parent and teacher-guided interventions are most helpful for younger, school-aged children, including the use of environmental supports.

Studies that did not fall within the “Practice Standard” category, nonetheless, offer potential for improvements. Examples of these studies include those focused on motor skills/functional activities and technology use (e.g., use of mobile devices by the student for daily reminders).

REFERENCE

Laatsch, L., Dodd, J., Brown, T., Ciccio, A., Connor, F., Davis, K., ... & Yaeger, L. (2020). Evidence-based systematic review of cognitive rehabilitation, emotional, and family treatment studies for children with acquired brain injury literature: From 2006 to 2017. *Neuropsychological rehabilitation*, 30(1), 130-161.