

iLookOut

An online learning program for protecting children

The Need



~700,000 confirmed child abuse victims per year

True incidence = 2-3x higher

Young children (0-5 years)

- Most vulnerable to victimization
- Account for >75% of deaths from abuse

Early childhood professionals Report <1% of substantiated cases

Evidenced-based training is needed

Online Mandated Reporter Training



Evidence-based online learning program

Interactive, video-based storyline

Designed by multi-disciplinary team of experts

Meets requirements for 3-hour mandated reporter training

Advance training Mobile App with micro-learning activities

Can be customized for other states

Results



Research shows that iLookOut
Improves Knowledge (1.55 effect size)
Improves Retention ($p < .001$)
Improves Attitudes (0.98 effect size)
Improves Reporting Practices ($p = 0.02$)

Improvements are sustained after >4 months

>13,000 Early Childhood Professionals have completed *iLookOut*

Satisfaction with *iLookOut* = 9 out of 10 (1=low, 10 high)

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iLookOut for Child Abuse

iLookOut for Child Abuse is an evidence-based, online program that prepares early childhood professionals to better protect young children.

iLookOut is interactive, using a video-based storyline and gamification to engage learners, and has been shown to significantly increase knowledge about abuse, and improve attitudes regarding what is needed to protect children.

The Need:

- Each year, there are ~700,000 confirmed cases of child abuse in the U.S., with strong evidence that the true number of abused children is 2-3 times higher;
- In addition to physical injuries and developmental delays, child abuse often leads to mental health problems (depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, etc.), maladaptive behaviors (alcoholism, drug abuse, intimate partner violence), and further victimization of children;
- Young children (aged 0–5 years) are more vulnerable to victimization, account for $\geq 75\%$ of deaths from abuse, and often cannot speak for themselves to let us know they are being mistreated;
- Early childhood professionals report $< 1\%$ of all substantiated cases of child abuse –despite the fact that 10-12 million children in the U.S. attend some kind of early childhood program;
- Very few interventions have ever been rigorously evaluated and proven to be effective at preparing people to protect children from abuse –hence the critical need for evidence-based programs.

iLookOut:

- Was designed by a multi-disciplinary team of experts in child abuse, instructional design, early childhood education, online learning, mandated reporter training, law, ethics, and child advocacy;
- Prepares early childhood professionals by opening their eyes to the problem, teaching them what to look for, and helping them feel both empowered and responsible to take action when they should;
- Provides 3 hours of (no cost) professional development credit, meets state requirements for mandated reporter training, and includes handouts and other resources that can be downloaded and shared;
- Includes follow-up “micro-learning” activities sent to people’s smartphones or other mobile devices to sustain and expand their knowledge and skills. These advanced training activities cover not only basics of child protection, but also issues such as substance abuse and intimate partner violence. By completing these micro-learning activities, learners can earn (at no cost) professional development credits needed for licensure.

Outcomes Data:

- Randomized controlled trials ($n=741$ & 679) showed that A) *iLookOut* significantly improves knowledge about abuse, and attitudes regarding what is needed to protect children from harm (max. effect sizes = 1.55 and 0.98, respectively); B) resulted in individuals feeling better prepared to respond to child maltreatment (mean=6.5, 1=unprepared, and 7=very prepared); and C) these significant improvements persisted upon repeat testing 4 months later ($p<.001$);
- An open-enrollment study involving $>12,000$ Pennsylvania early childhood professionals demonstrated the same significant improvements in knowledge, attitudes, and preparedness ($p<.001$);
- *iLookOut* improves reporting to child protective services, with significantly more reports resulting in findings of abuse and/or referral for social services ($p=0.02$);
- Learners report being very satisfied with *iLookOut* (mean = 9; where 1=low, and 10=high satisfaction).

Next Steps:

- *iLookOut* is ready to be adapted for use in other states
- Future studies will measure the impact of micro-learning on sustaining and augmenting knowledge/skills
- For further information, contact Nicole Verdiglione at nverdiglione@pennstatehealth.psu.edu