

Can a structured parent-teacher conference in kindergarten have a positive effect on children`s mental health?

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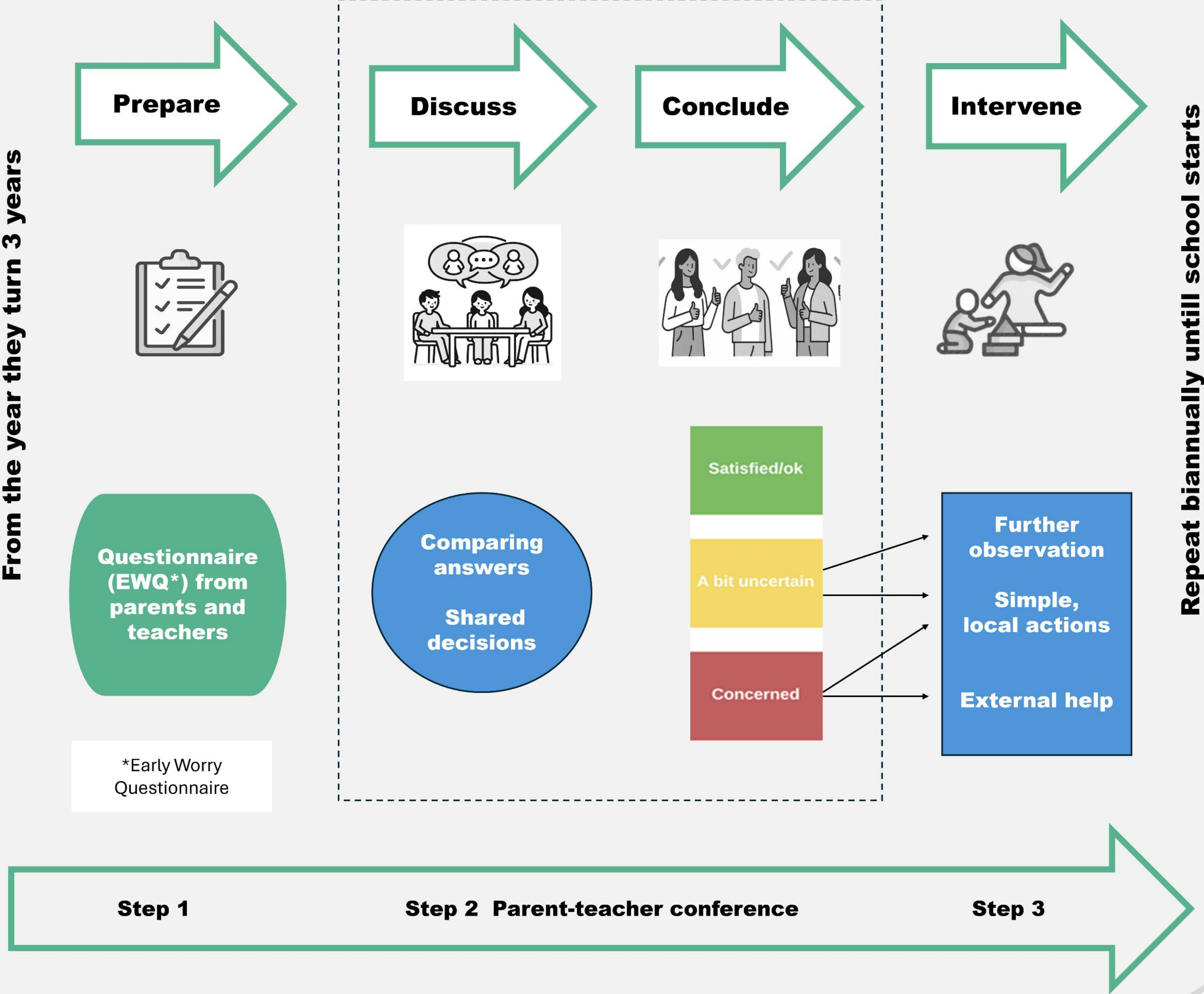
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Take-home message

- Dialogue-Based Early Detection (DBED) is a promising new method for early identification of children with mental health problems and developmental delay in kindergartens
- The method is well accepted by parents and teachers

Dialogue-Based Early Detection (DBED)



Background

There is a need for a kindergarten-specific method for prevention of mental health difficulties and developmental challenges. - Kindergarten is a highly suitable arena for secondary prevention (85-95% coverage in Western countries) <sup>1,2</sup>

Objective

To examine the potential effect of Dialogue-Based Early Detection (DBED) —an approach to parent-teacher conference in kindergarten—on children's mental health

Methods

- PRO-DIALOG is a cluster randomized controlled trial evaluating a complex intervention
- Parent-teacher conferences are carried out biannually in both intervention kindergartens and control kindergartens by DBED and treatment as usual (TAU)
  - The children are followed up during the three last years in kindergarten and the first two years in school
  - Collection of data started in the autumn of 2023

Preliminary results

- DBED was developed and tested in close collaboration with teachers and parents <sup>3</sup>
- DBED holds promise as a tool for improving early awareness and identification of developmental and mental health<sup>3</sup> problems of children in kindergartens
  - In January 2025 we finalized recruitment

Potential impact

The PRO-DIALOG study will produce new knowledge on kindergarten as an arena for promotion of mental health among young children. If effective, DBED has a great potential for a wide dissemination <sup>3</sup>

**References:**  
<sup>1</sup> Sheldrick RC, Marakovitz S, Garfinkel D, Carter AS, Perrin EC. Comparative accuracy of developmental screening questionnaires. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2020;174(4):366–74.  
<sup>2</sup> OECD. *Education at a glance 2024: OECD indicators* [Internet]. Paris: OECD Publishing; 2024 [cited 2025 Jun 18]. Available from: [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/education-at-a-glance-2024\\_c00cad36-en.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/education-at-a-glance-2024_c00cad36-en.html)  
<sup>3</sup> Bjelland I, Posserud M-B, Wergeland GJ. Dialogue based early detection—Development of a novel approach for detection of mental health problems among children in daycare centers [Methods]. *Front Psychiatry* [Internet]. 2022 [cited 2025 Jun 18];13. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2022.696531>

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t= time

Age at recruitment	Birth cohort	KINDERGARTEN / SCHOOL YEAR											
		2023/24		2024/25		2025/26		2026/27		2027/28		2028/29	
2-3	2020	t <sub>1</sub>	t <sub>2</sub>	t <sub>3</sub>	t <sub>4</sub>	t <sub>5</sub>	t <sub>6</sub>	t <sub>7</sub>	t <sub>8</sub>	t <sub>9</sub>	t <sub>10</sub>		
2-3	2021			t <sub>1</sub>	t <sub>2</sub>	t <sub>3</sub>	t <sub>4</sub>	t <sub>5</sub>	t <sub>6</sub>	t <sub>7</sub>	t <sub>8</sub>	t <sub>9</sub>	t <sub>10</sub>

Sample

Kindergarten

School

