The Effects of Mindfulness-Based Intervention on Children’s Attention Regulation

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Journal of Attention Disorders August 29, 2014
DOI: 1087054714548032

Objective: This article describes results from a randomized clinical trial of a mindfulness-based intervention for parents and children, Mindful Family Stress Reduction, on a behavioral measure of attention in youths, the Attention Network Task (ANT).

Method: Forty-one parent–child dyads were randomly assigned to either the mindfulness-based intervention condition or a wait-list control. School-age youths completed the ANT before and after the intervention.

Results: Results demonstrate significant, medium-size ($f^2 = -.16$) intervention effects to the conflict monitoring subsystem of the ANT such that those in the intervention condition decreased in conflict monitoring more than those in the wait-list control. Youths in the intervention condition also showed improvements in their orienting subsystem scores, compared with controls.

Conclusion: Mindfulness-based interventions for youths have potential utility to improve attentional self-regulation, and future research should consider incorporating measures of attention into interventions that use mindfulness training.