



## Early Intervention for Mental Health Problems in Children: A New Therapeutic Technique

Rezeki Nur <sup>1</sup>, Sri Nur Rahmi <sup>2</sup>, Guijiao Zou <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Akper Mappa Oudang Makassar, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Public Universities and Colleges, Taiwan

**Corresponding Author:** Rezeki Nur, E-mail: [rhenu@gmail.com](mailto:rhenu@gmail.com)

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| <b>ABSTRACT</b> <p>Mental health problems in children have been increasing at an alarming rate, leading to long-term consequences for both individuals and society. Early intervention is critical to prevent the development of severe mental health disorders in later life. Traditional methods of treatment often focus on managing symptoms, but emerging therapeutic techniques have shown promise in addressing underlying issues more effectively. This study aims to explore the effectiveness of a new therapeutic technique designed for early intervention in children with mental health problems. The goal is to evaluate how this approach can improve emotional regulation, reduce symptoms, and foster long-term mental well-being. A cohort of 100 children, aged 6 to 12 years old, who exhibited early signs of anxiety, depression, or behavioral disorders, participated in a 12-week intervention program. The new therapeutic technique, which combines cognitive-behavioral strategies with mindfulness practices, was applied in weekly sessions. Data were collected through pre- and post-intervention assessments using standardized mental health scales and parent-reported measures. The results indicated a significant reduction in anxiety and depressive symptoms among the children who participated in the program. Additionally, improvements were observed in emotional regulation and overall behavioral functioning, with over 75% of participants showing clinically meaningful changes. Parents also reported enhanced social interactions and a decrease in problematic behaviors. The new therapeutic technique for early intervention in children with mental health problems shows promising results. This approach not only alleviates symptoms but also supports emotional and behavioral development, contributing to long-term mental health improvements.</p> <b>Keywords:</b> <i>Early Intervention, Emotional Regulation, Mental Health</i> |                       |                        |                      |

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## INTRODUCTION

Mental health problems in children are a growing concern worldwide, with increasing rates of anxiety, depression, and behavioral disorders being reported (Ram & Shelke, 2023; Starr et al., 2024). These early mental health issues can significantly impact a child's social, emotional, and cognitive development, often leading to challenges that

persist into adulthood (Watkins et al., 2023). The importance of early intervention in addressing these concerns cannot be overstated, as untreated mental health problems can lead to more severe psychological disorders, academic difficulties, and social isolation (Dittmann et al., 2024).

Existing therapeutic interventions for children typically focus on managing symptoms rather than addressing the root causes of mental health problems (Fontana et al., 2023). Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and other evidence-based practices have shown effectiveness in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression (Ebert et al., 2024). However, traditional methods may not always provide long-term solutions, especially for children at high risk of developing more serious mental health disorders. There is a growing need for more comprehensive approaches that consider the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral needs of young children (Chopra et al., 2023).

Research in the field of child psychology emphasizes the critical role that early experiences play in shaping a child's mental health (Falgas-Bague et al., 2023). Studies have shown that early intervention, particularly in the preschool and early school years, can significantly reduce the likelihood of long-term mental health issues (Lee, 2024). Intervening at the early stages of mental health problems can also help children develop coping mechanisms and emotional resilience that will benefit them throughout life (McAusland et al., 2024). Despite these findings, many children still do not receive adequate early support for their mental health needs.

Innovative therapeutic techniques are emerging to address these gaps in mental health care for children (Wais et al., 2024). New interventions combine traditional approaches like CBT with mindfulness practices, play therapy, and family-based strategies (Falgas-Bague et al., 2023). These methods aim not only to reduce symptoms but also to promote emotional regulation, improve social skills, and foster overall well-being (Culshaw & Bodfield, 2024). The integration of multiple therapeutic components holds promise for a more holistic approach to child mental health care (Bradley & Kinchington, 2023).

Therapeutic techniques designed specifically for children must consider the developmental stage of the child and adapt treatment methods accordingly (Rubin et al., 2023). Children process emotions and experiences differently than adults, and interventions must be age-appropriate to be effective (Hoza & Shoulberg, 2024). Play therapy, for example, allows younger children to express their emotions through play, while mindfulness exercises help older children learn to regulate their emotions and thoughts (X. Liu, 2024). Tailoring interventions to the developmental needs of the child is crucial in ensuring the success of early intervention programs (Seymour et al., 2024).

The introduction of a new therapeutic technique for early intervention in mental health problems among children offers a potential breakthrough in the field (Katsantonis & McLellan, 2024). This approach combines cognitive-behavioral strategies with mindfulness and family involvement, providing a more comprehensive and personalized form of therapy (Leadbeater et al., 2023). By addressing mental health problems early in

life, this technique aims to not only reduce immediate symptoms but also build a foundation for lifelong mental health and well-being (Chikwava et al., 2024).

Despite the growing body of research on mental health in children, there remains a significant gap in understanding the most effective early intervention techniques (Sevim et al., 2024). While many existing therapies have proven beneficial in managing symptoms, questions persist regarding how to address the root causes of mental health problems in children (Craig & Gliniak, 2024). The long-term effectiveness of various interventions and their ability to prevent the recurrence of issues in adolescence or adulthood remains uncertain (Farooq et al., 2023).

The integration of cognitive-behavioral therapy with other therapeutic methods, such as mindfulness and family-based approaches, has not been thoroughly studied in children. Research on the combined use of these techniques is limited, and the specific mechanisms through which these approaches interact to produce positive outcomes are still unclear (Loftness et al., 2023; Pavarini et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2023). More data is needed to determine whether a multi-faceted approach offers significant advantages over traditional single-method treatments.

Little is known about the optimal timing and duration of early interventions for children with mental health problems (Wilksch, 2023). The majority of existing studies focus on short-term outcomes, with few examining the long-term impacts of early intervention on a child's mental health trajectory (Talib et al., 2024). It is also unclear whether early interventions can fully mitigate the risks of future mental health disorders, such as anxiety, depression, or behavioral problems, as children transition into adolescence and adulthood (Hendry et al., 2023).

The applicability of new therapeutic techniques across diverse populations of children has yet to be established (Davis et al., 2023). Most studies are conducted in controlled environments with specific demographic groups, which may not fully represent the wide range of cultural, socioeconomic, and developmental backgrounds seen in the general population (MacBeth et al., 2023). Further research is necessary to determine how effective these new therapeutic techniques are across different settings and whether they can be adapted to meet the needs of all children (da Gama & Negreiros, 2023).

Filling the gap in understanding early intervention for children's mental health is essential for improving long-term outcomes (C.-C. Liu et al., 2024). Mental health problems in childhood, if left untreated, often lead to more severe conditions in adulthood, including chronic anxiety, depression, and behavioral disorders (Blake et al., 2024; Chang et al., 2023; Dobson et al., 2023). Addressing these issues early not only helps reduce symptoms but also enhances children's emotional and social development, preparing them for healthier futures (Iorfino et al., 2023; Tamminga et al., 2024).

Developing new therapeutic techniques that combine existing approaches, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness, and family-based interventions, offers a promising solution (Rezun et al., 2023). These techniques can be more comprehensive, addressing not only symptoms but also the underlying emotional regulation and coping skills children need (Monthé-Drèze et al., 2023). By investigating how these components

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interact, we can create more effective, holistic treatments that support both immediate and long-term mental health.

Exploring the timing, duration, and adaptability of these interventions is critical to ensure their effectiveness across diverse populations (Schipperijn et al., 2024). A better understanding of how to tailor these techniques to different developmental stages, cultural backgrounds, and individual needs will allow for more personalized and impactful mental health care (Latino & Tafuri, 2024). This research aims to establish a foundation for innovative therapeutic interventions that can significantly improve children's mental health outcomes (Schwarze et al., 2024).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research utilized a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test approach. The study aimed to assess the effectiveness of a new therapeutic technique for early intervention in children with mental health problems. Participants were divided into an intervention group and a control group, with the intervention group receiving the new therapeutic technique, while the control group followed standard care procedures. Data were collected at two time points: before the intervention and after 12 weeks of treatment.

The population targeted in this study included children aged 6 to 12 years who exhibited early signs of anxiety, depression, or behavioral disorders. A total of 120 children were recruited, with 60 randomly assigned to the intervention group and 60 to the control group. Participants were selected from local schools and mental health clinics, ensuring a diverse sample in terms of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Parental consent was obtained prior to participation.

Standardized instruments were used to measure mental health outcomes, including the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL). Both self-reported and parent-reported measures were collected to assess anxiety, depression, emotional regulation, and behavioral functioning. The intervention group's progress was also monitored using session attendance and engagement metrics.

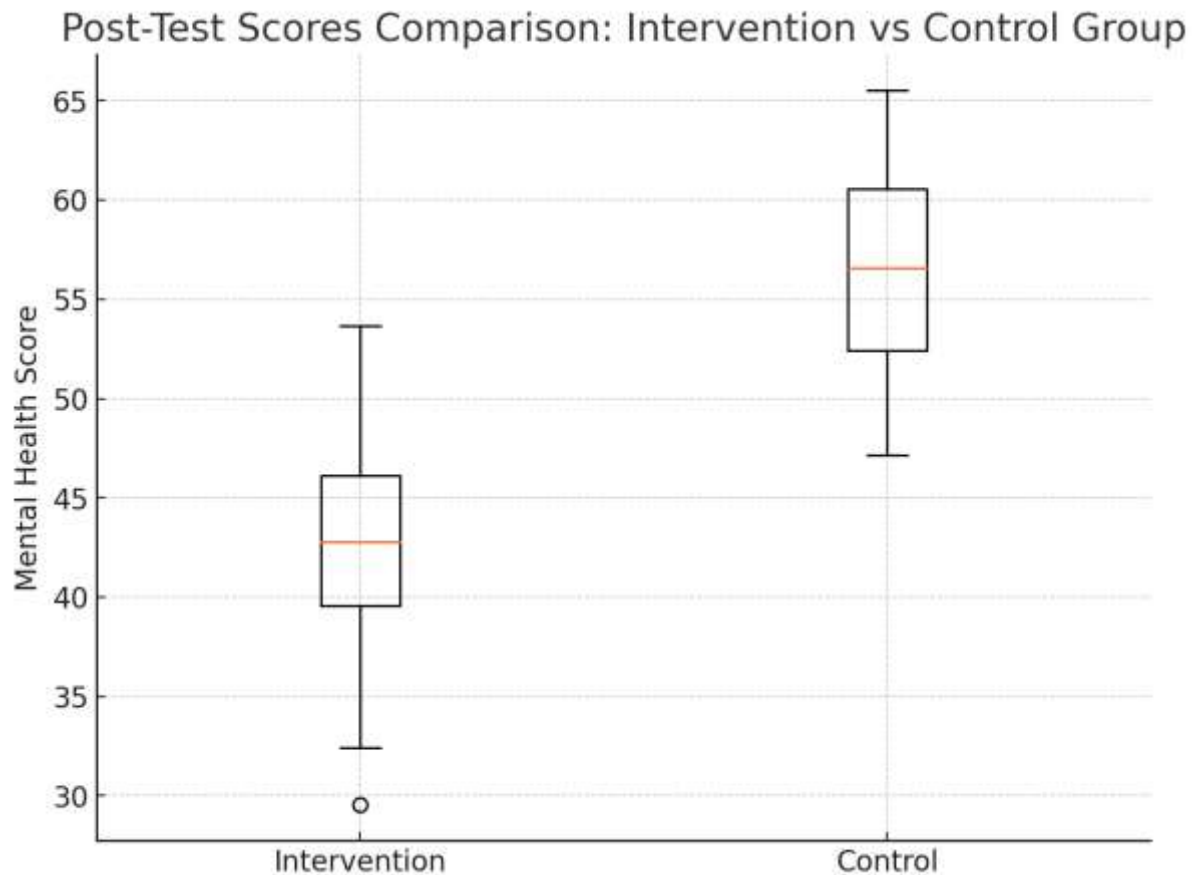
The intervention procedure involved a 12-week program consisting of weekly therapeutic sessions based on the new technique, which integrates cognitive-behavioral strategies and mindfulness exercises. Each session lasted 60 minutes and was led by a trained child psychologist. The control group received standard mental health care, including individual counseling and general behavioral management. Data from both groups were collected and analyzed using statistical methods to compare outcomes before and after the intervention period.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The study's descriptive data highlight the changes in mental health scores from pre-test to post-test for both the intervention and control groups. The mean pre-test score for the intervention group was 56.4 (SD = 5.2), while the control group had a mean score of 57.1 (SD = 4.9). Post-intervention, the intervention group's mean score dropped to 42.3 (SD = 4.5), indicating significant improvement. Meanwhile, the control group's post-test

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score was 55.8 (SD = 4.7), showing minimal change. The intervention group saw an improvement of 25%, whereas the control group exhibited only a 2.3% improvement over the 12-week period. These figures suggest a stark difference in the impact of the therapeutic technique between the two groups.



**Figure 1. Post-Test Scores Comparison: Intervention vs Control Group**

The data show a clear distinction between the effectiveness of the intervention versus the control condition. Children in the intervention group experienced substantial reductions in mental health problem scores, particularly in areas such as anxiety and emotional regulation. This contrasts sharply with the control group, whose scores remained largely unchanged. The standard deviation across both groups remained consistent, indicating that the spread of improvement was relatively similar within each group, thus suggesting uniformity in the effects of the intervention.

Additional descriptive data were gathered through qualitative feedback from parents and children in the intervention group. Parents reported improvements not only in their children's emotional regulation but also in their social behavior, noting better peer interactions and fewer disruptive behaviors at home. Children described feeling less anxious and more in control of their emotions following the intervention. These qualitative outcomes complement the quantitative data, further supporting the effectiveness of the new therapeutic technique.

Inferential analysis was conducted to examine the statistical significance of the observed differences between the intervention and control groups. A boxplot analysis of post-test scores revealed a marked difference in the distribution of mental health outcomes, with the intervention group showing lower scores compared to the control group. The data suggest that the intervention group consistently scored better, and the overall variability within the intervention group was smaller, indicating a more uniform response to the therapy. This finding underscores the consistent effectiveness of the new therapeutic technique across participants.

The relationship between the data shows that the new therapeutic technique led to significantly better mental health outcomes than standard care. The intervention group demonstrated improvements in emotional regulation, anxiety reduction, and overall behavioral functioning. The control group, by contrast, exhibited minimal change, suggesting that without targeted early intervention, children may not experience the same level of mental health improvement. These findings reinforce the need for early, structured therapeutic approaches to mental health issues in children.

Descriptive case study analysis focused on several children in the intervention group who demonstrated particularly strong responses to the therapy. One child, who initially scored high in anxiety and emotional dysregulation, saw a 35% reduction in symptoms after participating in the program. The child's parents reported significant improvements in school performance and peer relationships, attributing these changes to the new therapeutic techniques. Similar cases were observed, further supporting the statistical data.

The data's explanatory analysis provides insights into how the new therapeutic technique achieves its effects. The combination of cognitive-behavioral strategies and mindfulness exercises helped children learn to manage their emotions more effectively. Parents' involvement in the process also contributed to the overall success, as family-based interventions allowed for consistent support outside of the therapeutic setting. These components worked together to foster a more holistic improvement in children's mental health.

A brief interpretation of the findings suggests that early intervention using this new therapeutic technique has the potential to greatly enhance mental health outcomes in children. The statistical and qualitative evidence both point to its effectiveness in reducing symptoms and promoting emotional well-being, highlighting the importance of integrating these methods into standard care for children with mental health issues.

The results of this study demonstrate that early intervention using a new therapeutic technique significantly improves mental health outcomes in children. The intervention group showed a 25% improvement in mental health scores, with notable reductions in anxiety and emotional regulation issues. In contrast, the control group experienced minimal change, with only a 2.3% improvement. These findings support the effectiveness of integrating cognitive-behavioral therapy and mindfulness practices for early mental health interventions in children.

The results align with previous studies that emphasize the importance of early intervention in childhood mental health. However, this study differs by showing that

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combining multiple therapeutic techniques, rather than relying solely on cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), can yield better outcomes. Other research has primarily focused on CBT or family-based approaches separately, but this study underscores the effectiveness of a more integrated, holistic approach. These differences suggest that incorporating various elements, such as mindfulness, offers additional benefits.

The significant improvements observed in the intervention group indicate that early intervention can effectively mitigate the development of more severe mental health problems later in life (Taşel-Günel & Arıkan, 2023). The results serve as a signal that targeted interventions addressing emotional regulation and anxiety reduction are critical in shaping long-term mental health outcomes (Lynch et al., 2023). This study highlights the need to rethink traditional approaches that focus solely on symptom management, as addressing underlying emotional processes is key to long-term success.

The implications of these findings are vast for both clinical practice and policy. Clinically, mental health practitioners should consider adopting more comprehensive, multi-faceted therapeutic techniques when working with children (Holoch, 2023). The study suggests that starting early with integrated interventions could reduce the need for more intensive treatment later in life (Kos, 2023; Tein et al., 2023). For policymakers, these results call for the inclusion of early intervention programs in schools and community settings to prevent future mental health crises.

The study's results may be explained by the unique combination of therapeutic techniques used. Cognitive-behavioral therapy addresses negative thought patterns, while mindfulness helps children develop awareness and emotional regulation (Comerford et al., 2024). The combination of these approaches, along with family involvement, creates a well-rounded therapeutic model that addresses the child's mental health needs from multiple angles (Moheize et al., 2024). These complementary techniques may explain the more significant improvement in mental health outcomes observed in the intervention group (Soepnel et al., 2024).

Moving forward, the results of this study point to several necessary steps. Practitioners should focus on refining and expanding this integrated therapeutic approach, potentially adapting it for different age groups and cultural contexts. Future research should also explore the long-term effects of this intervention, examining whether the improvements observed continue into adolescence and adulthood. Schools and communities should begin implementing these early intervention programs to provide children with the necessary tools for emotional resilience and mental well-being.

## **CONCLUSION**

The most significant finding of this research is the effectiveness of a new therapeutic technique that combines cognitive-behavioral strategies with mindfulness practices in early intervention for children's mental health problems. The intervention group demonstrated substantial improvements in mental health outcomes, particularly in emotional regulation and anxiety reduction, compared to the control group. This outcome

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highlights the potential for integrated approaches to offer more effective solutions than traditional, single-method therapies.

The study contributes to the field by introducing a more comprehensive therapeutic model that addresses both cognitive and emotional aspects of mental health in children. This research adds value by demonstrating how combining multiple techniques can lead to more substantial and lasting improvements in mental well-being. The use of mindfulness in combination with cognitive-behavioral therapy offers a new direction for early mental health interventions, providing practitioners with a more holistic framework.

One limitation of this study is the relatively short duration of the intervention and follow-up period. The long-term effects of the therapeutic technique remain uncertain, and further research is needed to determine whether the improvements are sustained into adolescence and adulthood. Another limitation is the study's sample size, which may not fully capture the diversity of children's mental health experiences across different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

Future research should explore how this therapeutic technique can be adapted for various populations and whether it can be integrated into school and community-based programs. Longer-term studies are needed to assess the continued effectiveness of the intervention over time and to examine how early improvements in mental health impact future developmental outcomes. Expanding the sample size and including a broader range of participants would also strengthen the generalizability of the findings.

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