



RESEARCH BRIEF

Child and Youth Protection and Development [March 2014]

The **Parents Make the Difference** project in Liberia aimed to promote the development and wellbeing of young children aged 3 to 7 through reducing harsh punishment, improving parenting practices, and increasing malaria prevention behavior. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) and research partner Duke University found that **caregivers reduced the use of violence and children reported increased positive parenting practices, but there was no impact on malaria prevention or early childhood development outcomes.**

An estimated 200 million children under the age of five in developing countries are not meeting their developmental potential due to exposure to multiple risks including poverty, lack of nurturing and responsive care, and poor health and nutrition.¹ Among these risk factors, harsh parenting has been consistently associated with poor cognitive, social and health outcomes during childhood and across the entire life course. Research shows that positive parenting practices and a nurturing relationship between caregiver and child can buffer the adverse effects of poverty and violence, and contribute to positive developmental outcomes.² There is a strong evidence base on the effectiveness of parenting interventions in high-income countries, and an emerging body of research from low and middle-income countries suggesting that such interventions may be effective at improving parenting practices in low-resource settings.³ Few studies have been conducted on the impact of parenting interventions in post-conflict settings. The IRC and Duke University conducted a randomized impact

