

The Effectiveness of the Smart Love, Smart Parenting: 7-Day Parenting Program on Parental Positive Parenting Behaviors, Holistic Intelligence, and Emotional Intelligence in School-Age Children in Roi Et Province

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Abstract

This quasi-experimental study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the Smart Love, Smart Parenting: 7- Days Parenting Program on parents' positive parenting behaviors, holistic intelligence, and emotional intelligence among school-aged children in Roi Et Province. Participants consisted of 84 parent-child pairs, divided into an experimental group (42 pairs) and a comparison group (42 pairs) using simple random sampling. Research instruments included questionnaires assessing parents' positive parenting behaviors, holistic intelligence, and children's emotional intelligence. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and independent t-tests performed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 30. Baseline characteristics of participants in both groups were comparable. The results indicated that parents in the experimental group demonstrated significantly higher mean scores in positive parenting behaviors compared with those in the comparison group ($p < 0.001$). In addition, school-aged children in the experimental group showed significantly greater improvements in holistic intelligence and emotional intelligence than those in the comparison group ($p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that the Smart Love, Smart Parenting:7- Days Parenting Program is effective in promoting positive parenting practices and enhancing holistic and emotional development among school-aged children. The program may serve as a practical intervention model for strengthening child development in areas with identified emotional intelligence needs.

Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is a crucial factor influencing children's social, cognitive, and emotional development. The 2021 survey on EQ in Thailand found that 65.9% of children scored at or above the normal range, while 16.9% were identified as needing

further development (Department of Mental Health, 2021). In Health Region 7, 64.3% of children were at or above the normal range. At the provincial level, Roi Et Province had a slightly lower proportion of children with EQ at or above the normal range (61.3%) and a higher proportion requiring development

(17.8%) compared to neighboring provinces, such as Maha Sarakham (14.4%) and Kalasin (13.9%). These findings suggest a gap in EQ development among children in Roi Et, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to enhance emotional intelligence in this population. The lower proportion of children with EQ at or above the normal range in Roi Et Province compared with other provinces reflects not only a quantitative difference but also qualitative developmental concerns related to the core components of emotional intelligence. Specifically, reduced EQ levels may indicate difficulties in the moral component, such as limited emotional regulation, empathy, and social responsibility, which can manifest as aggressive behavior, poor impulse control, and challenges in adhering to social norms. In terms of the skill component, children with lower EQ may experience deficits in self-awareness, motivation, problem-solving, decision-making, and effective communication. These limitations can negatively affect academic engagement, peer relationships, and the ability to cope with daily challenges. Furthermore, impairments in the well-being component are often associated with lower EQ levels, including reduced self-esteem, emotional instability, lower life satisfaction, and increased vulnerability to stress and emotional problems. When these three components are inadequately developed, children are at higher risk of long-term behavioral, emotional, and social difficulties. Therefore, the comparatively lower EQ levels observed in Roi Et Province signify not merely a statistical variation across provinces but a meaningful developmental concern that underscores the need for targeted interventions. Programs that strengthen positive parenting behaviors are particularly important, as they directly influence children's moral development, emotional skills, and overall well-being. Targeted parenting interventions, such as the 7 Days Parenting Program, are thus essential to address these multidimensional EQ deficits and promote holistic development among school-aged children.

Emotional intelligence enables children to understand their own emotions, perceive others' feelings, and manage interpersonal conflicts effectively. Self-understanding involves recognizing personal emotions and needs, while understanding others entails empathy and appropriate responses

to others' emotions. Effective conflict resolution requires children to manage stress and interpersonal disagreements constructively (Wannasin, 2024). EQ is generally conceptualized through three components: the moral component, which encompasses emotional regulation, empathy, and social responsibility; the skill component, which includes self-awareness, motivation, decision-making, problem-solving, effective self-expression, and interpersonal competence; and the well-being component, which relates to life satisfaction, self-esteem, and overall emotional well-being (Noppawan, 2022). Research in Thailand since 2013 has emphasized the role of family and primary caregivers in shaping children's EQ and holistic development (Wannasin, 2024). Currently, many children have limited opportunities to live with or receive direct care from both parents. Only 62% live with both parents, 14% are raised by one parent due to work-related separation, 32% come from separated families, and 8% have lost a parent. Approximately 6% of households nationwide lack sufficient parental care, leaving children under the supervision of older relatives such as grandparents. This situation can result in inadequate developmental support, reduced parental warmth, and increased risk of emotional and behavioral problems.

In Roi Et Province, particularly in Selaphum District, school-aged children face behavioral and emotional challenges that affect learning and social development, including aggression, lack of concentration, and mood swings (Northeastern Institute of Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 2020). These challenges are linked to family environment, insufficient parental support, and limited mental health resources. The evidence indicates a clear need for structured interventions that promote emotional intelligence and life skills in children. Positive parenting plays a central role in addressing these challenges. Beyond cognitive intelligence (IQ), holistic intelligence, which integrates cognitive, emotional, social, and practical skills, is essential for children to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world. Families serve as the primary environment where children acquire these skills, and parental understanding, care, and guidance are pivotal in fostering children's holistic development. Children who receive consistent support and

appropriate caregiving are more likely to become emotionally healthy, competent, and responsible citizens. To address these gaps, the present study evaluated the effectiveness of the Smart Love, Smart Parenting: 7 -Days Parenting Program, developed by the Rajanagarindra Institute of Child Development, Department of Mental Health (2024). The program is designed to enhance positive parenting behaviors, equip parents with the knowledge and skills to support children’s holistic and emotional development, and establish mechanisms for sustainable promotion of life skills in school-aged children. By cultivating parental literacy and participatory child-rearing practices, the program aims to improve the quality of parenting and the developmental outcomes of children in Selaphum District, Roi Et Province.

Objective

The objective of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the Smart Love, Smart Parenting: 7-Days Parenting Program on parental positive parenting behaviors, holistic intelligence, and emotional intelligence among school-age children in Roi Et Province.

Conceptual Framework

The 'Smart Love, Smart Parenting: 7 Days Parenting Program on Parental Positive Parenting Behaviors, Holistic Intelligence, and Emotional Intelligence in School-Age Children, developed by the Rajanagarindra Institute of Child Development, Department of Mental Health (2024), aims to enhance positive parenting behaviors, holistic intelligence, and emotional intelligence in school-aged children in Roi Et Province. The program consists of three components: Smart Love, which fosters affectionate and supportive parent-child relationships; Smart Parenting, which promotes positive parenting practices; and Smart Care, which strengthens parents’ ability to nurture and support their children’s overall development. The program is implemented over a 9-week period, during which parents participate in structured activities designed to improve their caregiving skills and, consequently, enhance their children’s emotional, cognitive, and social competencies. Through improving parental positive parenting behaviors, the program is expected to indirectly promote holistic intelligence and emotional intelligence among school-age children.

independent variable

Experimental group
 The 'Smart Love, Smart Parenting' :
 7 -Day Parenting Program
 1)Smart Love 2)Smart Parenting 3) Smart Care

independent variable

- 1. Parental behavior in positive parenting to promote life skills and holistic intelligence in school-aged children
- 2. Holistic intelligence of school-aged children
- 3. Emotional intelligence of school-aged children

Method

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design, with participants divided into two groups: an experimental group and a comparison group. Data were collected using a two-group pre-test and post-test design. The experimental group participated in the Smart Love, Smart Parenting Program (7 Days Parenting), whereas the comparison group did not receive the program. Each group consisted of 42 school-aged children and their 42 respective parents. The study was conducted following approval from the research ethics committee, between July 2025 and September 2025.

Sample

Sample size estimation was based on a related quasi-experimental study, as the Smart Love, Smart Parenting: 7- Days Parenting Program has not yet been empirically evaluated. Based on Jinsirikulwit et al. (2023), sample size was calculated using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) with an effect size of 0.50, alpha = 0.05, power = 0.80, and a one-tailed independent t-test, indicating 51 parent–child pairs per group. Due to program constraints allowing a maximum of 42 families per cycle, the final sample consisted of 84 parent–child pairs (42 per group). Participants were selected by simple random sampling from eligible

parents at two schools in Selaphum District, Roi Et Province.

The selection criteria were as follows:

1) Parents

Inclusion criteria consisted of the following:

- Parents were biological fathers, mothers, or primary caregivers of school-age children, aged between 20 and 60 years.
- Parents were able to read and write in Thai.
- Parents voluntarily participated in the research and were willing to attend all research activities continuously for 9 weeks.
- Parents resided in the study area throughout the implementation of the program.

Exclusion criteria: Parents who had been diagnosed by a physician with uncontrollable neurological or psychiatric disorders, such as Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Dementia, or other related conditions.

2) School-age children under parental care

Inclusion criteria:

Children aged between 6 and 11 years.

Exclusion criteria:

- Children with physical disabilities.
- Children with psychological or intellectual disorders who had been diagnosed by a physician as having intellectual impairment.

Research Instruments The instruments used in this study consisted of two components: (1) instruments for the experimental intervention and (2) instruments for data collection.

(1) Instrument for the Experimental Intervention

The experimental intervention was the Smart Love, Smart Parenting: 7 -Days Parenting Program (Chalad Rak Chalad Liang), developed by the Rajanagarindra Institute of Child Development, Department of Mental Health (2024). The program is grounded in concepts of positive parenting, attachment, discipline, and holistic child development, aiming to strengthen parental caregiving skills and promote children's holistic and emotional intelligence. The program was implemented over a 9-week period and comprised three group-based sessions, each lasting approximately 3 hours. Sessions were conducted at three-week intervals. Group sizes ranged from 10 to 42 families per session, with one trained group leader responsible for 10–20 families. An intervention manual and standardized guidelines developed by the

Department of Mental Health were used to ensure consistency of program delivery. Program adherence was monitored through session plans, facilitator supervision, and activity checklists.

(2) Instruments for Data Collection

Data were collected using standardized questionnaires administered to both the experimental and comparison groups. The questionnaires assessed:

- parental caregiving skills,
- holistic intelligence characteristics of school-age children, and
- children's emotional intelligence.

Parental caregiving skills and holistic intelligence were measured using instruments developed by the Rajanagarindra Institute of Child Development, based on theoretical frameworks of positive parenting and holistic child development. Children's emotional intelligence was assessed using the Emotional Intelligence (EQ) Assessment for Children Aged 6–11 Years (short form), a standardized tool developed by the Department of Mental Health and widely used in Thailand.

Instrument Validation

Content Validity. Content validity of the parental caregiving skills and holistic intelligence questionnaires was evaluated using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). For this study, IOC values ranged from 0.80 to 1.00 for both instruments, indicating high content validity. The instruments had previously undergone expert review by the Rajanagarindra Institute of Child Development.

Reliability. The questionnaires were used without modification; therefore, test–retest reliability was not conducted in this study. Reliability had been previously established by the Rajanagarindra Institute of Child Development using Cronbach's alpha. The parental caregiving skills questionnaire demonstrated a reliability coefficient of 0.804. The EQ assessment is a standardized instrument with established psychometric properties.

Administration of Instruments The questionnaires were administered by trained research staff at the participating schools. Data collection took place before the intervention (Week 1) and after completion of the 9-week study period (Week 9). Standardized instructions were provided to participants, and procedures were implemented consistently across

both groups to ensure accuracy and reliability of data collection.

Experimental Procedure This study employed the 7 Days Parenting (Chalad Rak Chalad Liang) program over a 9-week period following approval from the research ethics committee. The program aimed to enhance parental caregiving skills and promote holistic intelligence and emotional intelligence in school-age children. Data collection was conducted between July and September 2025 using a pre-test and post-test design for both groups.

Comparison Group Participants in the comparison group did not receive the parenting program during the study period. They completed the questionnaires at baseline (Week 1) and after the 9-week period (Week 9). After the post-test assessment, educational pamphlets on positive parenting, holistic intelligence, and emotional intelligence were provided for ethical consideration.

Experimental Group

Parents in the experimental group participated in the 7 Days Parenting program, which consisted of three group-based sessions (approximately 3 hours per session) delivered at three-week intervals. The program was implemented by trained facilitators following a standardized manual and activity guidelines. Sessions were conducted at times and locations convenient for participants, and adherence to the program protocol was monitored through facilitator supervision and session checklists

Data Analysis To test the statistical hypotheses in this study, the researchers used statistical software, setting the significance level at 0.05, corresponding to a 95% confidence level. Statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), latest version.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, median, maximum, and minimum values.

Inferential Statistics

- To compare the mean scores of the experimental and comparison groups for continuous dependent variables, the data distribution was first examined using the Shapiro-Wilk *W* test, which indicated a normal distribution. Therefore, an independent *t*-test was used to compare the mean differences

between the two independent groups.

- To compare the mean scores of the experimental group before and after the intervention for continuous dependent variables, the mean differences were analyzed using a paired approach for dependent samples, reporting 95% confidence intervals (CI) and *p*-values, after confirming the normality of the data distribution.

Ethical Considerations The researcher completed training in human research ethics from the Human Research Ethics Committee at Khon Kaen University on November 16, 2024, and adhered to ethical principles throughout the research process. Ethical approval for this study was granted by Khon Kaen Rajanagarindra Psychiatric Hospital (Certificate No. 009/2015) on July 15, 2025. Prior to data collection, written informed consent was obtained from all participating parents. In addition, age-appropriate assent was obtained from school-age children after the study procedures were explained in simple and understandable language. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity of all participants were strictly maintained.

Results

General Characteristics of the Sample

The experimental group consisted of 42 participants. Most parents were female, aged 40–49 years, married, and had completed secondary education. The majority were engaged in trade or business. Most were mothers of the children, and the family structure was predominantly extended families, with an average of 5.43 members per household. The average family income was 14,357.1 baht per month. Among the school-age children, most were female, with the majority aged 11 years. The mean age was 10.29 years (*SD* = 0.73), with the minimum age being 9 years. The comparison group consisted of 42 participants. Most parents were female, aged 40–49 years, married, and had completed secondary education. The majority were engaged in agricultural work, followed by trade or business. Most caregivers were mothers of the children, and the predominant family structure was

extended families, with an average of 5.52 members per household. The average family income was 7,817 baht per month. Among the school-age children in the comparison group, most were female. The majority were aged 10 years, followed by 11 years. The mean age was 10.12 years (SD = 0.62), with ages ranging from 9 to 11 years.

Comparison of Mean Scores on Positive Parenting Behavior in Promoting Life Skills and Holistic Intelligence of School-Age Children

After the intervention, the experimental group had significantly higher mean scores than the comparison group in positive parenting behavior, promoting life skills, and holistic intelligence of children (Mean difference = 13.7; $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: 12.17–15.20), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of Mean Scores on Positive Parenting Behavior in Promoting Life Skills and Holistic Intelligence of School-Age Children Between the Experimental and Comparison Groups

Positive Parenting Behavior in Promoting Life Skills and Holistic Intelligence of School-Age Children	n	\bar{X}	S.D.	Mean Difference	95%CI	t	p-value
Before the Intervention							
Experimental Group	42	45.4	8.0	10.7	7.21 - 14.07	6.1	<0.001
Comparison Group	42	34.7	7.8				
After the Intervention							
Experimental Group	42	50.8	4.6	13.7	12.17 - 15.20	17.9	<0.001
Comparison Group	42	37.1	1.5				

Comparison of Mean Scores on Holistic Intelligence in School-Age Children Between the Experimental and Comparison Groups

After the intervention, the experimental group had significantly higher mean scores on holistic intelligence compared to the comparison group (Mean difference = 8.2; $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: 6.92–9.45), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Comparison of Mean Scores on Holistic intelligence in School-Age Children Before and After the Intervention Between the Experimental and Comparison Groups

Holistic intelligence in School-Age Children	n	\bar{X}	S.D.	Mean Difference	95%CI	t	p-value
Before the Intervention							
Experimental Group	42	20.6	5.2	2.1	-0.58 - 4.24	1.4	0.05
Comparison Group	42	18.5	4.6				
After the Intervention							
Experimental Group	42	24.8	3.3	8.2	6.92 - 9.45	12.9	<0.001
Comparison Group	42	16.6	2.3				

Comparison of Mean Scores on Emotional Intelligence in School-Age Children

The study found that after the intervention, the experimental group had significantly higher mean scores on emotional intelligence compared to the comparison group (Mean difference = 10; $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: 8.25–11.78), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Comparison of Mean Scores on Emotional Intelligence in School-Age Children Before and After the Intervention Between the Experimental and Comparison Groups

Emotional Intelligence in School-Age Children	n	\bar{X}	S.D.	Mean Difference	95%CI	t	p-value
Before the Intervention							
Experimental Group	42	41.7	3.5	2.1	-0.58 - 4.24	2.8	0.06
Comparison Group	42	38.8	5.1				
After the Intervention							
Experimental Group	42	46.8	5.2	10	8.25 - 11.78	11.3	<0.001
Comparison Group	42	36.8	2.1				

Discussion

The effects of the Chalad Rak Chalad Liang (7 Days Parenting) program on positive parenting behaviors, holistic intelligence, and emotional intelligence in school-age children in Roi Et Province revealed that participation in the program led to significant improvements in the experimental group. Changes were observed in parental behaviors as well as in children's holistic and emotional development. In particular, the within-group analysis using paired t-tests demonstrated that, after the intervention, the experimental group showed statistically significant improvements in positive parenting behaviors, holistic intelligence, and emotional intelligence compared with pre-intervention levels. These findings indicate that the observed changes were not merely due to chance or baseline differences, but were associated with participation in the 7 Days Parenting program. The significant pre-post improvements within the experimental groups suggest that the program effectively enhanced parents' caregiving practices and supported children's holistic and emotional development over the 9-week intervention period. This is consistent with the program's emphasis on structured parenting activities, emotional communication, and practical caregiving skills, which may directly influence both parental behavior and children's emotional regulation and intelligence. The findings can be discussed as follows:

Baseline Characteristics Prior to the intervention, there were no statistically significant differences between the experimental and comparison groups in terms of age, sex, parental education, or socioeconomic status. This indicates that the two

groups were comparable at baseline, allowing for a more accurate interpretation of the observed program effects.

Positive Parenting Behavior in Promoting Life Skills and Holistic Intelligence After completing the program, parents demonstrated more positive parenting behaviors, effectively promoting life skills and holistic intelligence in their children. The experimental group showed significantly higher mean scores than the comparison group, consistent with the study hypothesis. These outcomes resulted from parents' participation in the three program activities, which enhanced skills such as age-appropriate life skills promotion, emotional support, and behavior management. Parents consistently applied techniques learned in the program, including physical affection, praise, structured play, discipline, and rewards, which were monitored by the researchers. The structured program activities, such as guided parent-child interactions, problem-solving exercises, and play-based learning, directly facilitated the adoption of positive parenting strategies. These findings align with previous studies indicating that family-involved programs can significantly improve children's behaviors and parental practices Saranjit et al. (2021)

Holistic Intelligence of School-Age Children

Children in the experimental group had significantly higher mean scores on holistic intelligence than those in the comparison group. The program's activities, which emphasized engagement, play-based learning, critical thinking, and positive family communication, likely contributed to this improvement. In contrast, the comparison group's mean scores decreased, suggesting that children who did not participate in

the program may have lacked sufficient stimulation for skill development. These findings indicate that structured, supportive, and interactive activities can enhance children's holistic development, particularly in areas such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and social relationship skills. This is consistent with CASEL (2020), which recommends systematic, continuous promotion of social-emotional skills involving parents, teachers, and the community.

Emotional Intelligence of School-Age Children

The experimental group showed significant improvements in emotional intelligence after the intervention. Program activities guided parents in applying practical strategies to support their children's skillfulness, goodness, and happiness (Dek Keng, Dek Dee, Dek Suk). For example, parents practiced discipline activities promoting patience and social rules, shared storytelling, facilitated age-appropriate skill-building exercises, and engaged children in fun play and praise activities. These program components clearly link parental involvement to children's emotional development. The findings are consistent with previous research showing that structured parental guidance and family involvement can enhance children's emotional intelligence across multiple domains (Chulalak et al., 2019; Romero Gonzalez et al., 2021).

Conclusion

Overall, the 7 Days Parenting Program effectively promoted positive parenting behaviors as well as the holistic and emotional development of school-age children in Selaphum District, Roi Et Province. Despite baseline differences between the experimental and comparison groups, within-group analyses (pre-post changes) in the experimental group demonstrated statistically significant improvements across all primary outcomes, confirming the effectiveness of the program within this specific community context. The linkage between key program activities such as guided parent-child interactions, play-based learning, and emotional support and the observed outcomes highlights the mechanisms through which the intervention enhanced parenting practices and supported children's holistic intelligence

and emotional skills in Selaphum District. While significant improvements were observed over the 9-week intervention period, long-term follow-up and continued collaboration with parents, teachers, and community stakeholders in Selaphum District are recommended to sustain and further strengthen these positive outcomes.

Recommendations and Practical Implications

For Parents and Caregivers

Apply positive parenting skills learned in the program, including guided play, praise, emotional support, and age-appropriate discipline. Spend quality time with children through joint activities (e.g., storytelling, singing, playing) to strengthen family bonds and promote holistic and emotional development.

For Program Implementation

Encourage safe, structured group activities where parents can practice new behaviors and share experiences. Involve children in activities to promote social skills, confidence, and cooperative play, while motivating parents to participate consistently.

For Policy and Community Promote collaboration among parents, teachers, healthcare professionals, and the community to support children's holistic and emotional development. Develop clear policies and programs to create safe, stimulating environments that reinforce positive parenting and social-emotional skills.

For Future Research Conduct long-term follow-up to assess sustained effects of the program. Test the program in other regions and ensure comparability of parent age between experimental and control groups.

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