Reviewer’s report

Title: The effectiveness of universal parenting programmes: The CANparent Trial

Version: 0 Date: 07 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Patty Leijten

Reviewer’s report:

The authors seem to have substantially revised their manuscript to incorporate the reviewers' feedback. I have a few additional suggestions:

- In the Abstract, please make sure that the Conclusion reflects both the significant and the non-significant findings. The Conclusion of the full manuscript is a more balanced conclusion and fits the study design and results well.

- The authors use relatively many abbreviations that may be unknown to readers. While they follow APA guidelines for abbreviations, some of the abbreviations of shorter terms (e.g., "local authorities") could perhaps be changed to the original terms, to improve readability of for example paragraph on p. 4, which was somewhat hard to read for me because of the use of many abbreviations (eLAs, PEIP, DfE and CAN).

- The study has an unusual design, which is both a strength (i.e., it evaluates the effects of an intervention as implemented; this increases external validity) and a weakness (i.e., families were not randomized and intervention and control families were recruited in different ways, intervention families through self-selection and control families more randomly; this reduces internal validity). The authors seem to have handled this difficulty well in the analyses, but it may nevertheless substantially impact the study results (i.e., self-selected families were more distressed and they may be more motivated to change). Please add the implications of this design feature as a study limitation.

- The term "trial" may lead readers to think the study was a "randomized controlled trial," since this is the context in which the word "trial" is usually used. Perhaps the authors could consider changing "trial" to "study" to avoid this confusion.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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