Types of Research Evidence

The CEBC reviews all research evidence that has been published in peer-reviewed journals for each program and, if applicable, gives the program a scientific rating.

- **Anecdotal**
  Information based heavily or entirely on casual observations or personal testimony rather than rigorous or scientific analysis.
  Example: A program participant reports on how parent training has helped him become a better father.

- **Descriptive**
  Data on participant characteristics, the numbers served by the program, case studies, or observational studies.
  Example: A program reports on their participant demographics and highlights stories of successful cases.

- **Pre-Experimental**
  Research that does not have a control group (i.e., comparison group). This can include measuring outcomes of a single participant posttreatment or one group of participants pretest/posttest.
  Example: At the end of the mentor program, youth report a higher level of confidence compared to their entry scores.

- **Quasi-Experimental**
  Measures outcomes across one or more groups of program participants and a control group without participants randomly assigned to a group. Participants complete standardized assessments prior to entering the program and after completing the program.
  Example: The class that completed the program showed significant improvement in behavior compared to other classes in the same grade.

- **Experimental**
  A Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) randomly assigns participants to either the program or a control group. Any differences seen in the groups at the end can be attributed to the differences in the intervention alone, and not to bias or chance.
  Example: Comparisons of both groups at pretest and posttest show that the program group experienced less parenting stress than those in the control group.

Weakest Types of Evidence

Strongest Types of Evidence