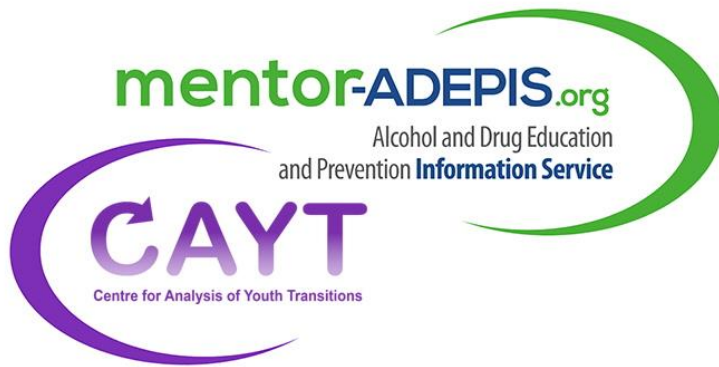


# Incredible Years<sup>®</sup> Parent Programme

Programme Review  
Mentor UK



**Overall Programme Performance  
(Maximum Score 4)**

4



***Excellent Evidence of Research and Impact***

**Evidence  
(Maximum Score 7)**

7

***Excellent Standard of Evidence***

**Outcomes and Impact  
(Maximum Score 4):**

4

***Very High Impact in all intended outcomes in terms of reach and significance***

**PROGRAMME SNAPSHOT**

**Aim:** To strengthen parenting skills, including involvement in children's education, and promote positive skills and behaviour in children.

**Age:** Parents of children 0-12 years old

**Gender:** Both

**Geography:** Rural and Urban

**Setting:** Home and Classroom Based

**Current Programme Status:** Active

**Translation:** The programme has been translated into multiple languages, including Russian, Estonian & Finnish.

**Cost:** Yes

Parents and Baby Programme: \$750

Parents & Toddlers Programme: \$950

Pre-School Programme: \$1670

School Age Programme: \$1370

There are ongoing costs for guides at \$17.95 per copy and costs exclude any group leader training sessions, follow-up consultation and certification costs. Further information on costs is available on the Incredible Years® Website.

**Training required:** Yes

**Related Programmes:**

- Incredible Years® Dina Dinosaur Social Skills & Problem-Solving Curriculum
- Incredible Years® Teacher Classroom Management Training

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## **PROGRAMME PROFILE**

### **Incredible Years® Parent Programme**

- **Programme Summary**

This programme can be delivered as an intervention/ treatment programme for parents who are engaging in problematic parenting practices or who have children with Oppositional Defiant Disorder or ADHD. It can also be used as a prevention programme for families who may be at risk of problematic parenting or for parents with children at risk of having behavioural issues, although not yet displaying them at a significant level. All studies submitted show significant positive changes in both parenting skills and child behaviour post-intervention. Alongside an excellent evidence base, the programme demonstrates very high impact in all intended outcomes in terms of reach and significance. Overall, we have found the Incredible Years® Parent Programme to be of superior quality and subsequently it has achieved the highest possible CAYT standard - **Excellent**.

- **Programme Description**

#### **Programme Goal**

The goal of the programme is to strengthen parenting competencies and foster parents' involvement in children's school experiences. It also aims to promote children's academic, social and emotional skills and reduce problems with their behaviour.

#### **Overview**

The Incredible Years® Parent Programme targets parents of children aged 0 to 12 years and is tailored for different age groups. The length of the programme varies from eight to 22 sessions depending on the age of the children and whether the programme is being run as a prevention programme or a treatment programme. Usually, the following delivery model is used: a) The Parents and Babies Programme (for parents with children aged 0 to 12 months) is delivered in two-hour weekly sessions for eight to 10 weeks; b) The Parents and Toddlers Programme (for parents with children aged one to three years) is delivered in two-hour weekly group sessions for 12-13 weeks; c) The Pre-School Programme (for parents with children aged three to six years) is delivered in two-hour group sessions for 18 to 20 weeks; d) The School-Age Programme (for parents with children aged six to 12 years old) is delivered in two-hour group sessions for 18 to 20 weeks. Generally, all the programmes are held in groups of eight to 12 parents and delivered by two co-leaders.

#### **Theoretical Background**

The programme is based on cognitive social learning theory and particularly Patterson's coercion hypothesis of negative reinforcement (developing and maintaining deviant behaviour); Bandura's notions of modelling and self-efficacy; Piaget's developmental interactive, cognitive learning methods; brain development research; attachment relationship theories; and cognitive strategies for challenging

angry, negative and depressive self-talk as well as increasing parenting self-esteem and confidence.

### **Programme Topics**

The Parents and Babies Programme considers six themes; the Parents and Toddlers Programme considers eight. The Pre-School Programme deals with four themes, each of which has a series of sub-topics, and the School-Age Programme considers three themes and includes sub-topics for each. Detailed information of the content is available on the Incredible Years® website; however, in summary the themes dealt with are:

#### Parents and Babies Programme

- Getting to Know Your Baby (0-3 months)
- Babies as Intelligent Learners (3-6 months)
- Providing Physical, Tactile and Visual Stimulation
- Parents Learning to Read Babies' Minds
- Gaining Support
- Babies' Emerging Sense of Self (6-12 months)

#### Parents and Toddlers Programme

- Child-Directed Play Promotes Positive Relationships
- Promoting Toddler's Language with Child-Directed Coaching
- Social and Emotion Coaching
- The Art of Praise and Encouragement
- Spontaneous Incentives for Toddlers
- Handling Separations and Reunions
- Positive Discipline-Effective Limit Setting
- Positive Discipline-Handling Misbehaviour

#### Parents and Pre-School Children Programme

- Strengthening Children's Social Skills, Emotional Regulation and School Readiness Skills
- Using Praise and Incentives to Encourage Cooperative Behaviour
- Positive Discipline – Rules, Routines and Effective Limit Setting
- Positive Discipline – Handling Misbehaviour

#### Parents and School-Age Children Programme

- Promoting Positive Behaviours in School Age Children
- Reducing Inappropriate Behaviours in School Age Children
- Supporting Your Child's Education

## Therapy Process

The programme is based on the following principles:

- Video modelling
- Observational and experiential learning
- Rehearsal and practice with peers
- Individual goal-setting for each parent and child
- Self-management
- Self-reflection
- Cognitive self-control.

The collaborative group process assumes a self-learning model involving self-monitoring and long- and short-term goal setting. It also explicitly assumes a collaborative relationship between group leaders and parents and promotes the development of a parent support network.

### Training for group leaders/facilitators to run the programme:

Generally, all the programmes are conducted in groups of eight to 12 parents and delivered by two co-leaders. The co-leaders are assumed to be professionals with a master's or higher degree, or diplomas in subjects such as psychology, psychiatry, social-work, nursing, teaching or counselling. Group leaders attend a three-day workshop in groups of up to 25 people and it is recommended that they have follow-up consultation and support at least twice during the delivery of the programme and until their work becomes accredited.

Detailed information about implementing the Incredible Years® Parents Programme, including training opportunities for leaders, can be found on the programme's website: <http://www.incredibleyears.com>

- **Evidence**

#### Evidence Rating (Maximum Score 7)



#### *Excellent Standard of Evidence*

Four articles from peer-reviewed journals, evidencing significant evaluation of the programme, were submitted for consideration. A meta-analytic review was included, which examined results from 50 studies, comparing the programme to a comparison condition. It is clear from the material provided that the programme has been evaluated thoroughly and its effectiveness has been assessed using a significant number of randomised control trials and studies have displayed high quality statistical analyses. The articles submitted show the research and the evaluations of the programme to be accurate, exemplary and of an excellent standard.

### **Evidence base (Studies Reviewed)**

The following articles were submitted as supporting evidence:

#### **Study 1.**

Menting, A. T .A., Orobio de Castro, B., and Matthys, W. 2013. *Effectiveness of the Incredible Years Parent Training to Modify Disruptive and Prosocial Child Behaviour: A Meta-Analytic Review*. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 33, 90-1-913.

#### **Study 2.**

Webster-Stratton, C., Reid, M.J., and Hammond, M. 2004. *Treating Children with Early-Onset Conduct Problems: Intervention Outcomes for Parent, Child, and Teacher Training*. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*.

#### **Study 3.**

Webster-Stratton, C., Reid, M. J. & Hammond, M. Preventing Conduct Problems, Promoting Social Competence: A Parent and Teacher Training Partnership in Head Start. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 2001, 30(3), 283-302.

#### **Study 4.**

Webster-Stratton, C., Preventing conduct problems in Head Start children: Strengthening parenting competencies. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 1998. 66(5): p. 715-730.

- **Impact**

#### **Outcomes and Impact Rating (Maximum Score 4):**



***Very High Impact* in all intended Outcomes in terms of reach and significance**

#### **Expected Outcomes**

- Increased parental positive affect (e.g. praise, reduced criticism and negative commands).
- Increased effective parental limit-setting, replacing hitting and harsh discipline with non-violent discipline techniques and increased monitoring of children.
- Reductions in parental depression and stress alongside increased parental self-confidence.
- Increased positive family communication and problem-solving.
- Reduced conduct problems in children's interactions with parents and increased positive affect, social competence and compliance to parent commands.
- Externalised behaviour of children maintained post-intervention.
- Increased improvements in parenting and parents' mental health.

## **Evaluation Methodology**

### **Study 1.**

The aim of this meta-analytic review was to examine the overall effectiveness of the programme in relation to child behaviour, to examine variability in intervention outcomes and to determine whether programme characteristics, child characteristics, family characteristics and/or methodological features may explain differences in children's outcomes. A literature search for programme studies was conducted for the period 1980 to 2010. In total, 231 citations were identified and checked for eligibility. Based on agreed criteria 50 studies were included in the analysis, in which a group of parents participating in the programme was compared to a control group immediately after programme completion.

### **Study 2.**

Families of 159 children aged four to eight years, with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, were randomly assigned to one of six conditions: a) a parent training group; b) a child training group; c) a combined parent and teacher training group; d) a child and teacher training group; e) a combined parent, child and teacher training group; f) a wait-list control group. Reports and independent observations were collected at home and at school.

### **Study 3.**

This study examined the effectiveness of the programme as a selective prevention programme for 272 mothers and their four-year-old children and 61 teachers participating in the Head Start programme<sup>1</sup>. Fourteen Head Start centres (34 classrooms) were randomly assigned to (a) an experimental condition in which parents, teachers, and family service workers participated in the programme or (b) a control condition consisting of participants in the regular Head Start programme. Assessments included parents' and teachers' reports of children's behaviour and independent observations at home and at school. Construct scores combining observational and report data were calculated for negative and positive parenting style, child conduct problems at home and school, parent-teacher bonding and teachers' classroom management style.

### **Study 4.**

This study also examined the effectiveness of the programme as a selective prevention programme for 394 mothers and their four-year-old children participating in the Head Start Programme. Nine Head Start centres were randomly assigned to a) an experimental condition where parents participated in the Incredible Years® Parents Programme or b) a control condition where only the regular Head Start programme was delivered.

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<sup>1</sup> Head Start is a programme offered by the United States Department of Health and Human Services that provides comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families.

- **Findings**

### **Study 1.**

In this study positive effects for distinct outcomes and distinct informants were reported for disruptive behaviour and prosocial behaviour. Mean effect sizes based on observations were found to be larger than mean effect sizes based on parents' or teachers' judgements. Furthermore, parent-rated effect sizes differed between treatment studies and prevention studies. Results showed that intervention characteristics, child characteristics and methodological features explain the variability in parent-rated intervention outcomes of the programme. Pre-intervention intensity of children's problem behaviour was reported to be the strongest predictor of the programme's intervention impact in parents' reports, with greater effects for studies which included more severe cases. The authors of the meta-analytic review suggest the programme is "an effective intervention regarding child behaviour (as measured immediately after intervention)" and conclude that overall, it could be classed as a "well-established" programme successful at improving child behaviour and positive parenting in a diverse range of families.

### **Study 2.**

This study reports that six weeks into the Incredible Years® Parent Programme there were significantly fewer problems in the conduct of mothers, teachers and peers compared to the control. The authors report that children's negative behaviour with fathers was lower in all three training conditions than in the control group. All parent training conditions resulted in less negative and more positive parenting for mothers and less negative parenting for fathers than in the control group. In addition, researchers also found that, when the programme is added to either the Incredible Years® Teacher Classroom Management Training programme or the Incredible Years® Children's curriculum, there are improved treatment outcomes in terms of teacher behaviour management in the classroom and in reports of behavioural problems in children.

### **Study 3.**

Authors of this study report that, following the programme, mothers in the intervention group displayed significantly fewer negative parenting skills and significantly higher positive parenting skills than mothers in the control group. Children in the intervention group showed significantly fewer conduct problems in the classroom than children in the control group; at home, the children of mothers who attended six or more of the programme sessions demonstrated significantly fewer conduct problems than those in the control group. In a baseline assessment, children categorised as being at the highest risk of behavioural issues (classified by signs of non-compliant and aggressive behaviour) showed more clinically significant reductions in these behavioural traits than those children in the control group classified as high-risk. One year post-intervention the effects were maintained for parents who attended six or more sessions and the clinically significant reductions in problem behaviour for the highest-risk children in the intervention group were also maintained.

### **Study 4.**

Findings from this study showed that, when observed at home, mothers who participated in the programme used significantly fewer critical remarks and instructions and less severe discipline than mothers who did not participate. They were more



positive and capable in their parenting skills when compared with mothers in the control group. Teachers reported that mothers who participated in the programme were more involved in their child's education and their children were more socially competent. Children in the experimental group showed significantly less problematic behaviour, less noncompliance, less negative affect and more positive affect than children in the control group. Most of the improvements were maintained one year post- intervention.

## **ADDITIONAL REFERENCES**

In addition to the material submitted and programme background information stored in the Incredible Years® online research library, the following sources were used in the development of this programme profile:

McGilloway, S., et al., A Parenting Intervention for Childhood Behavioural Problems: A Randomized Controlled Trial in Disadvantaged Community-based Settings *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 2012. 80(1): p. 116-127.

Drugli, M.B. and B. Larsson, Children aged 4-8 years treated with parent training and child therapy because of conduct problems: Generalisation effects to day-care and school settings *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 2006. 15: p. 392-399.

Posthumus, J.A., et al., Sustained effects of Incredible Years as a preventive intervention in preschool children with conduct problems *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 2012. 40(4): p. 487-500.

Gardner, F., J. Burton, and I. Klimes, Randomized controlled trial of a parenting intervention in the voluntary sector for reducing conduct problems in children: Outcomes and mechanisms of change. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 2006. 47(11): p. 1123-1132.

Hutchings, J., et al., Parenting intervention in Sure Start services for children at risk of developing conduct disorder: Pragmatic randomized controlled trial. *British Medical Journal*, 2007. 334(7595): p. 1-7.