



THE MINISTRY OF PARENTING

PROMOTING CREATIVITY IN PARENTING SUPPORT A COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY

Incredible Years Attentive Parenting  
project  
Program Evaluation Report:

2013-14

## Introduction

This report is based on the Attentive Parenting project which was implemented in Colchester, Essex, UK

The Incredible Year's Attentive Parenting Programme is a six to eight week course (2 hours per week) which aims to support parents in their ability to promote their children's emotional regulation, social competence, problem solving, reading and school readiness. It:

- Gives parents and child-care workers the skills to strengthen and encourage their children's social and emotional ability
- Helps your child understand about friendships and sharing
- Helps your child to manage feeling, such as anger and frustration
- Gives your child the ability to become more independent
- Helps your child solve problems and learn empathy skills
- Assists your child with reading and academic readiness
- Helps prepare your child for pre-school and the school environment

Attentive is a group-based "universal" parenting program that can be offered to ALL parents to promote their children's emotional regulation, social competence, problem solving, reading and school readiness.

There is a training protocol for delivery to parents of children aged 2-4 years and another protocol for ages 5-6 years.

This is not a program for children with significant behaviour or developmental problems or family mental health difficulties. These families require the comprehensive Basic Parenting program which focuses on positive discipline and relationship building strategies.

The Attentive Parenting program may also be used as a supplement to the Basic program or for follow up booster sessions.

### **The course content includes:**

#### **Topic One: Attentive Child-Directed Play Promotes Positive Relationships and Children's Confidence**

- Being Child-Directed and Attentive
- Supporting Children's Independence and Confidence
- Understanding the Importance of Individual Time
- Responding to Children's Developmental Readiness
- Giving Your Child Time
- Importance of Pretend Play
- Building a Supportive Relationship with Children
- Understanding How to End Play

## **Topic Two: Attentive Academic and Persistence Coaching to Promote Children's Language Skills and School Readiness**

- Using Descriptive Commenting with Toddlers to Build Language
- Promoting School Readiness with Academic Coaching
- Avoiding Too Many Questions
- Using Persistence Coaching to Promote Children's Attention
- Using Coaching to Encourage School Age Children's Homework
- Coaching Pre-reading and Reading Readiness

## **Topic Three: Attentive Emotion Coaching Strengthens Children's Emotional Literacy**

- Learning How to Strengthen Children's Emotional Literacy with Books
- Encouraging Positive Expression of Emotions
- Knowing How to Model Emotion Language
- Combining Emotion with Persistence Coaching for Uncomfortable Emotions
- Using Pretend Play to Strengthen Children's Emotional Learning
- Understanding How to Respond to Negative Emotions
- Enhancing Children's Beginning Empathy Skills
- Using Pretend Play to Strengthen Children's Empathy Learning

## **Topic Four: Attentive Social Coaching Promotes Children's Cooperative Friendships**

- Using Puppets to Practice Social Skills
- Modelling, Prompting and Giving Attention to Toddler's Social Skills
- Knowing How to Link Social Actions to Emotions
- Using One-On-One Modelling and Prompting to Encourage Social Skills
- Using Social Coaching to Promote Sibling and Peer Cooperation
- Using Pretend Play to Learn about Inclusion of Others
- Learning How to Help Children to Make Friends
- Combining Social and Emotion Coaching to Enhance Friendships
- Using Social Coaching Beyond Play Times

## **Topic Five: Attentive Imaginative Parenting Interactions Promote Children's Emotional Regulation Skills**

- Teaching Children Self-Regulation Skills (e.g. positive self-talk, deep breathing, happy images)
- Helping Children Stay Regulated by Using Words
- Modelling, Prompting and Using Puppets to Practice Self-Regulation Skills
- Learning How to Explain the Calm down Thermometer to Children
- Helping Children Practice Calm-down Strategies

## **Topic Six: Attentive Creative Parent Play Promotes Children's Problem Solving and Empathy**

- Using Puppets and Pretend Play to Teach Children the Problem Solving Steps
- Understanding How to Combine Emotion, Social and Persistence Coaching during Problem Solving Interactions
- Understanding How to Respond to Negative Emotions
- Supporting Empathy Understanding and Learning
- Know How to Link Social Actions to Emotions
- Using One-On-One Modelling and Prompting to Encourage Social Skills
- Using Social Coaching to Promote Sibling and Peer Cooperation
- Using Pretend Play to Learn about Inclusion of Others
- Learning How to Help Children to Make Friends
- Combining Social and Emotion Coaching to Enhance Friendships
- Using Social Coaching Beyond Play Times

## **Funding**

Funding for this course was provided by the Barnardos Innovation Fund and implemented in partnership with the local Barnardos children's centre and their staff.

The funding enabled the project to deliver three Attentive groups (6 week model) with fully staffed crèche.

## **Referrals**

29 parents were referred to the project; 25 parents started and 22 completed. 18 parents completed the pre and post evaluation forms in full.

The project had an impact on 34 children

### **Reason for not starting post referral;**

- Offered work so could not attend the times.
- Wanting the longer IY programme
- Personal marriage conflict and issues

### **Reasons for non-competition;**

- Baby arrived early
- Pregnancy; sickness
- Contact with child withdrawn
- Felt course was a repeat of course undertaken in the past

## **Evaluation**

Parents were asked to undertake the following evaluations;

- pre and post distant travelled questionnaire
- weekly evaluation forms
- Incredible Years final programme questionnaire

As group leader we also completed:

- Weekly fidelity checklist
- Video review of session

## **Project Leads summary of programme practicality**

- Use programme as a filter to longer IY ; I was surprised that the parents who had not done the Incredible Years programme were happy to maintain the content of coaching and they also didn't jump to a higher level of disciplinary tactic such as 'time out'. We feel this was due to the excellent recruitment and discussions that the group leaders had carried out prior to the group in really explaining that this was a universal programme with focus on communication, school readiness and self-regulation. Ten parents have requested to attend the IY early years group and /or toddler IY groups post the attentive project. One parent who was unable to complete all Attentive sessions was given one coaching sessions
- For parents on weekly supervision access "contact" via court not social care; two fathers attended who had "contact" only with their child. The course was more suitable than the longer Incredible Years course as 1) it was more manageable with the fathers working timetables 2) the Attentive programme is less therapeutic than the longer programme and this suited the fathers situation better as we maintained strong focus on the content 3) the fathers were more able to complete the home play tasks as the focus on "attentiveness" meant they could practice the tasks in the contact session. 4) The time frame suited the external demands of court hearings.
- For parents who have completed IY and want to review foundations; the parents who had completed the Incredible Years programme acted as really supportive role models, they were very positive and actually they felt the reminder was really helpful to them and we were able to expand on their current knowledge, so they took the lead. What also surprised us was that in the feedback there was very little difference in those who had previously completed the group and those that hadn't. We were expecting parents who had completed a group to perhaps feel that it was a bit repetitive, or for them to jump higher up on the pyramid strategies and contents, but this did not happen; they stayed really focused in the coaching sessions.

## **Suggestions for future groups:**

We delivered the course programme in 6 weeks; however I felt that we had enough time to end the programme appropriately, go through the goals, final celebration etc. as there is a lot of content in week 6. Also I'm concerned that after week 6 we were not able to follow up on how they progressed with the problem solving and we would be able to do this if we had

7 sessions. Therefore I would recommend that it be a 7 week course programme (as recommended by programme author).

## **My Thanks**

I feel very lucky to have been funded by Barnardo's for this project and given the resources of implementing this programme with three outstanding Barnardo's local children's centre staff (as co-Incredible Years facilitators/observers)

## Parents Evaluation

### OVERALL PROGRAM

**My child's social and emotional skills are:**

CONSIDERABLY WORSE	WORSE	SLIGHTLY WORSE	THE SAME	SLIGHTLY IMPROVED	IMPROVED	GREATLY IMPROVED
			2	1	12	3

**My child's pre-academic skills for language, reading and persistence at a task are:**

CONSIDERABLY WORSE	WORSE	SLIGHTLY WORSE	THE SAME	SLIGHTLY IMPROVED	IMPROVED	GREATLY IMPROVED
			2	7	7	2

**My child's self-regulation and problem solving skills are:**

CONSIDERABLY WORSE	WORSE	SLIGHTLY WORSE	THE SAME	SLIGHTLY IMPROVED	IMPROVED	GREATLY IMPROVED
			1	8	5	4

**My overall feelings about my personal progress at using the attentive and coaching parent skills are that I am:**

VERY PESSIMISTIC	PESSIMISTIC	SLIGHTLY PESSIMISTIC	NEUTRAL	SLIGHTLY OPTIMISTIC	OPTIMISTIC	VERY OPTIMISTIC
				2	10	6

**I feel that the approach used to strengthen my child's social and emotional behaviours in this program is:**

VERY INAPPROPRIATE	INAPPROPRIATE	SLIGHTLY INAPPROPRIATE	NEUTRAL	SLIGHTLY APPROPRIATE	APPROPRIATE	GREATLY APPROPRIATE
				2	7	9

**Would you recommend the program to a friend or relative?**

STRONGLY NOT RECOMMEND	NOT RECOMMEND	SLIGHTLY NOT RECOMMEND	NEUTRAL	SLIGHTLY RECOMMEND	RECOMMEND	STRONGLY RECOMMEND
					4	14

**My overall feeling about achieving my goal in this program for my child and family is:**

VERY NEGATIVE	NEGATIVE	SLIGHTLY NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	SLIGHTLY POSITIVE	POSITIVE	VERY POSITIVE
				1	11	6

## TEACHING FORMAT

Content of information presented was:

EXTREMELY USELESS	USELESS	SLIGHTLY USELESS	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	USEFUL	EXTREMELY USEFUL
				2	7	9

Demonstration of parenting skills through the use of video vignettes was:

EXTREMELY USELESS	USELESS	SLIGHTLY USELESS	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	USEFUL	EXTREMELY USEFUL
				1	7	10

Group discussion of parenting skills was:

EXTREMELY USELESS	USELESS	SLIGHTLY USELESS	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	USEFUL	EXTREMELY USEFUL
					9	9

Practice of play and coaching skills at home with your child was:

EXTREMELY USELESS	USELESS	SLIGHTLY USELESS	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	USEFUL	EXTREMELY USEFUL
			1		6	11

Reading chapters from the Incredible Years or Incredible Toddlers book was:

EXTREMELY USELESS	USELESS	SLIGHTLY USELESS	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	USEFUL	EXTREMELY USEFUL
			1		7	9

*\*1 attendee did not comment\**

Weekly handouts (e.g. tips & others) were:

EXTREMELY USELESS	USELESS	SLIGHTLY USELESS	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	USEFUL	EXTREMELY USEFUL
			1	1	8	7

*\*1 attendee did not comment\**

Uses of practice or role plays during group sessions were:

EXTREMELY USELESS	USELESS	SLIGHTLY USELESS	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	USEFUL	EXTREMELY USEFUL
			1	4	7	6

## SPECIFIC PARENTING TECHNIQUES

### Attentive Child –Directed Play

EXTREMELY USELESS	USELESS	SLIGHTLY USELESS	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	USEFUL	EXTREMELY USEFUL
			1	1	8	7

*\*1 attendee did not comment\**

### Academic and Persistence Coaching

EXTREMELY USELESS	USELESS	SLIGHTLY USELESS	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	USEFUL	EXTREMELY USEFUL
			1	3	6	7

*\*1 attendee did not comment\**

### Social Coaching

EXTREMELY USELESS	USELESS	SLIGHTLY USELESS	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	USEFUL	EXTREMELY USEFUL
					7	10

*\*1 attendee did not comment\**

### Emotion Coaching

EXTREMELY USELESS	USELESS	SLIGHTLY USELESS	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	USEFUL	EXTREMELY USEFUL
					6	11

*\*1 attendee did not comment\**

### Teaching Children to Problem Solve Through Play

EXTREMELY USELESS	USELESS	SLIGHTLY USELESS	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	USEFUL	EXTREMELY USEFUL
				1	7	9

*\*1 attendee did not comment\**

### Helping child control his/her anger

EXTREMELY USELESS	USELESS	SLIGHTLY USELESS	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	USEFUL	EXTREMELY USEFUL
			1		7	9

*\*1 attendee did not comment\**

### This overall group of techniques

EXTREMELY USELESS	USELESS	SLIGHTLY USELESS	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	USEFUL	EXTREMELY USEFUL
					8	9

*\*1 attendee did not comment\**

## EVALUATION OF GROUP LEADER(S)

### Group Leader #1:

I feel that the group leader's teaching was:

VERY POOR	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE	SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT
					10	8

The group leader's preparation was:

VERY POOR	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE	SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT
					11	7

Concerning the group leader's interest and concern in me and my problems with my child, it was:

VERY DISSATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	SLIGHTLY DISSATISFIED	AVERAGE	SLIGHTLY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	EXTREMELY SATISFIED
					7	11

At this point, I feel that the group leader in the program was:

EXTREMELY UNHELPFUL	UNHELPFUL	SLIGHTLY UNHELPFUL	NEUTRAL	SLIGHTLY HELPFUL	HELPFUL	EXTREMELY HELPFUL
					8	9

*\*1 attendee did not comment\**

## Group Leader #2/3/4:

I feel that the group leader's teaching was:

VERY POOR	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE	SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT
					10	8

The group leader's preparation was:

VERY POOR	POOR	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE	SUPERIOR	EXCELLENT
				2	8	8

Concerning the group leader's interest and concern in me and my problems with my child, it was:

VERY DISSATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	SLIGHTLY DISSATISFIED	AVERAGE	SLIGHTLY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	EXTREMELY SATISFIED
					6	12

At this point, I feel that the group leader in the program was:

EXTREMELY UNHELPFUL	UNHELPFUL	SLIGHTLY UNHELPFUL	NEUTRAL	SLIGHTLY HELPFUL	HELPFUL	EXTREMELY HELPFUL
				1	7	9

*\*1 attendee did not comment\**

## PARENT GROUP

I feel that the group was:

VERY UNSUPPORTIVE	UNSUPPORTIVE	SOMEWHAT UNSUPPORTIVE	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT SUPPORTIVE	SUPPORTIVE	VERY SUPPORTIVE
					6	12

Concerning other group members interest in me and my child, I felt they were:

VERY UNINTERESTED	UNINTERESTED	SOMEWHAT UNINTERESTED	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT INTERESTED	INTERESTED	VERY INTERESTED
				1	10	7

I WOULD LIKE TO KEEP MEETING AS A GROUP

YES	NO
8	5

*\*5 attendees did not comment\**

**How likely is it that you will continue meeting with one or more of the parents in your group?**

HIGHLY UNLIKELY	UNLIKELY	SLIGHTLY UNLIKELY	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT LIKELY	LIKELY	VERY INTERESTED
		1	6	1	5	3

*\*2 attendees did not comment\**

## **YOUR OPINION**

**How could the program have been improved to help you more?**

- I found it a little bit patronising at times – it’s a bit of a turn off, but there was a big range in personalities in the group so probably impossible to meet everyone’s needs. Hard to pitch right for everyone
- Longer
- For it to continue and explore aspects further or different aspects
- Update videos as too old
- I think I would like to do the longer course but am very happy with how things are going
- It couldn’t, it was very useful
- I think it was just what I needed in the time available
- Would prefer videos of children here rather than America
- Not much need for improvement – VERY GOOD and comprehensive

**At this time do you feel the need for additional further parenting assistance? Please elaborate:**

- I’ll read the book 😊
- Going to IY group in September
- I would like to experience some more training – next level?
- Yep, I would love to continue parenting courses further. Maybe a more advanced level course please!?
- Support on knowing how to deal with up and coming challenges
- Yes, additional home help would be brilliant
- I think I would like to do the longer course but am very happy with how things are going
- Not at the moment
- Would like to do a 12 week course on strategies
- No
- I would really like to do the longer course to help with discipline/consistent boundary setting – I often struggle to know which ‘battles’ I should be fighting
- Yes, I think I have much more to learn and my parenting exercises are more practiced when it is fresh and relevant
- Could do with some more for my old daughter but found this one very useful for my younger two
- Not at present – when he is slightly older
- Yes, as I enjoyed it so much and learnt loads

### **What did you see as the main benefit of the Attentive Parenting program?**

- Lots of idea, positive tools, reassurance, chance to discuss etc.
- Meeting other parents
- Helping me to be confident in her development
- I feel more experienced to parent my children and have much more confidence and a further range of tools to use
- Learning new tools – seeing from a child’s point of view – looking at myself
- Learning more ways to deal with our children
- Being a better and calmer parent with happier children
- Giving my child more freedom to lead thus improving his confidence and self-esteem and him having a greater awareness of all emotions. I have thoroughly enjoyed this course and the teaching style, I will defo recommend to friends
- Learnt how to talk through games and play
- Techniques/coaching child lead play and being attentive
- Changing the way I use language, positive praise. Simple things can make a big difference
- Learning how to play and praising your child
- Learning how important play is and how effective positive attention and ignoring the negative can be
- Endorsing my self-belief that I am doing OK and that it is OK to shift my attitude for a better more effective approach
- To control with frustration, to make the children learn to share more
- I am now able to get my son to concentrate more
- Helping with my youngest child
- All the tasks to go away and do each week. Can’t wait to go on the next course 😊

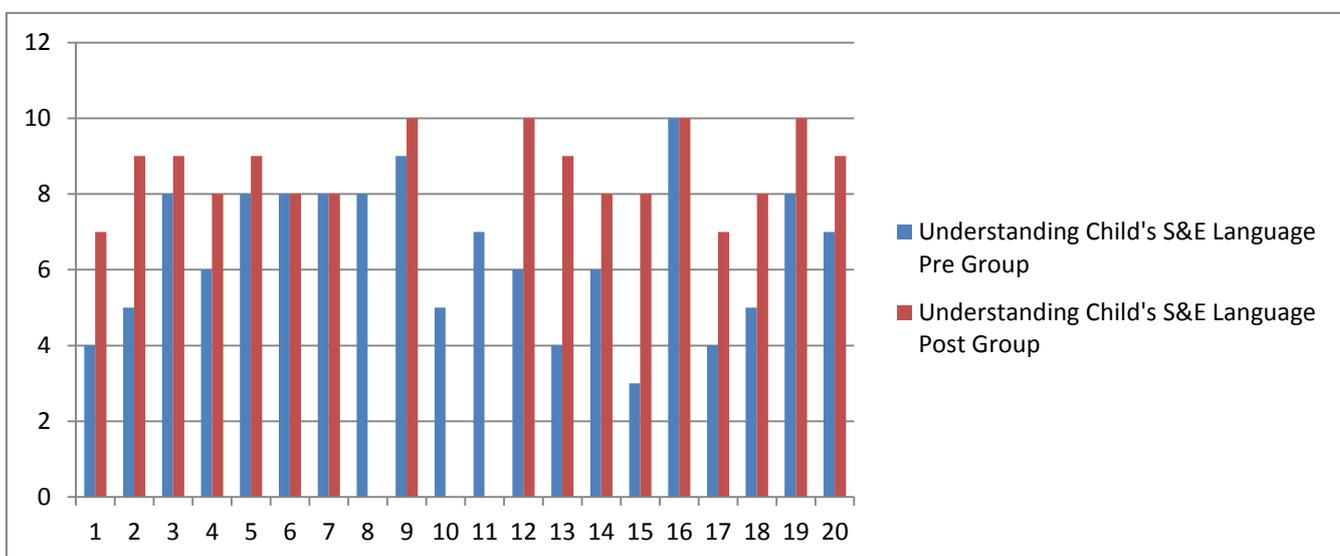
## Outcomes Pre and Post

We designed a pre and post parental questionnaire to provide good evidence of distance travelled. The questionnaires were designed based on the Barnardo's soul assessment which needed scale measurements of 0-10. To keep this simple the design took a key question from each session and scaled score 0 to 10. On reflection we detected it was difficult for them to understand as we used words that they may not fully be familiar with as yet. This we feel did affect the scores reliability.

We asked 6 questions;

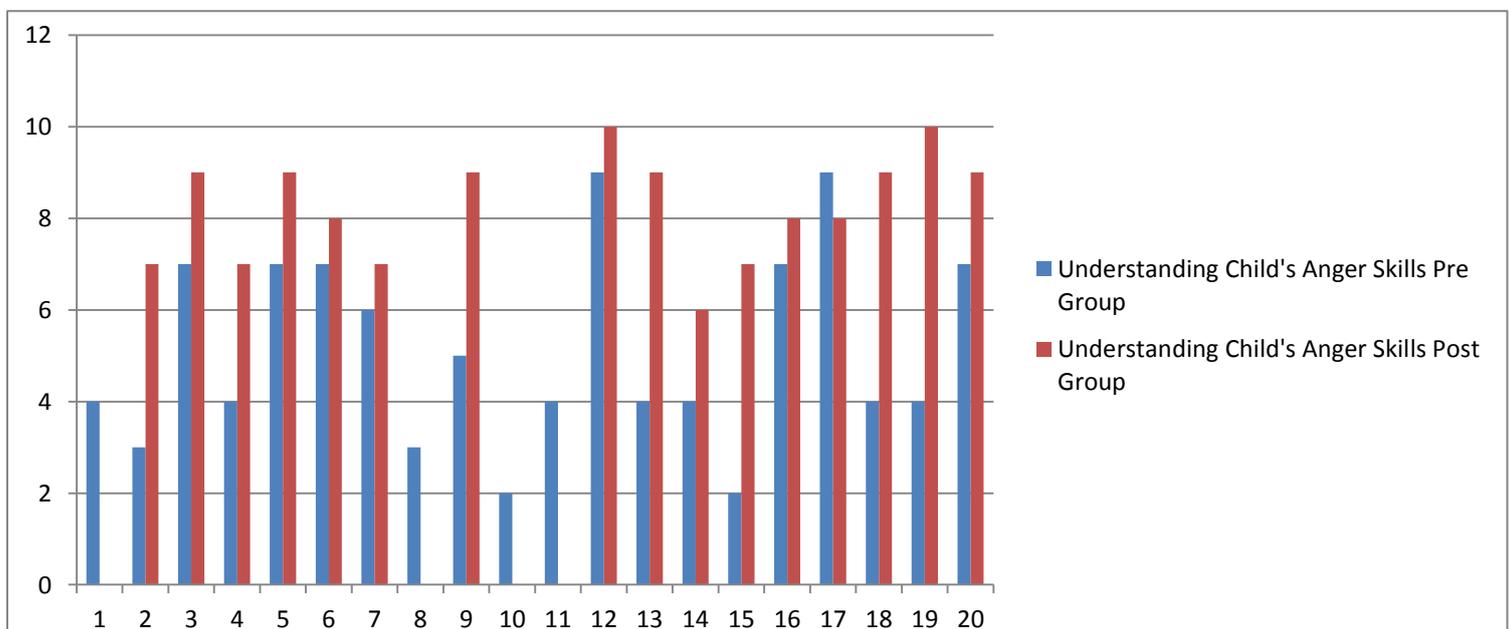
**Q1)** how would you rate your ability and understanding of developing your child's social and emotional language (making friendships and self-expression)

**Outcome (Chart 1);** an increase indicates positive outcome



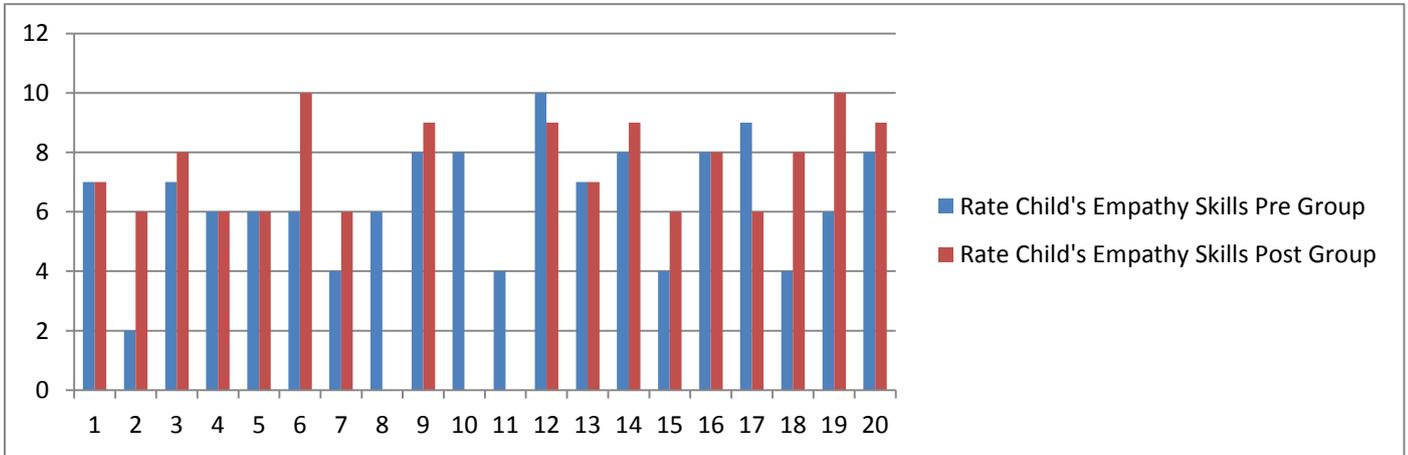
**Q 2 ;** how would you rate your ability and understanding of developing your child's problem solving and managing anger skills

**Outcome (Chart 2);** an increase indicates the parent has a greater understanding of their child's emotional needs and is more attentive to these emotions



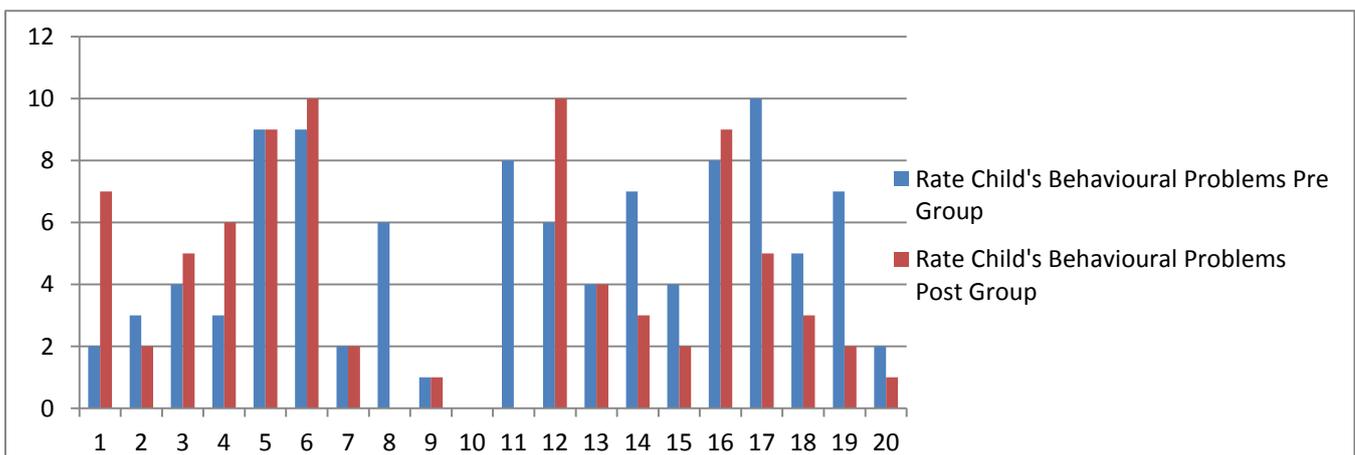
**Q 3)** how would you rate your child's empathy skills (thinking of situations from another person's point of view)

**Outcome (Chart 3)** an increase indicates the parent has a greater understanding of their child's feelings and is more able to develop their child's empathy understanding



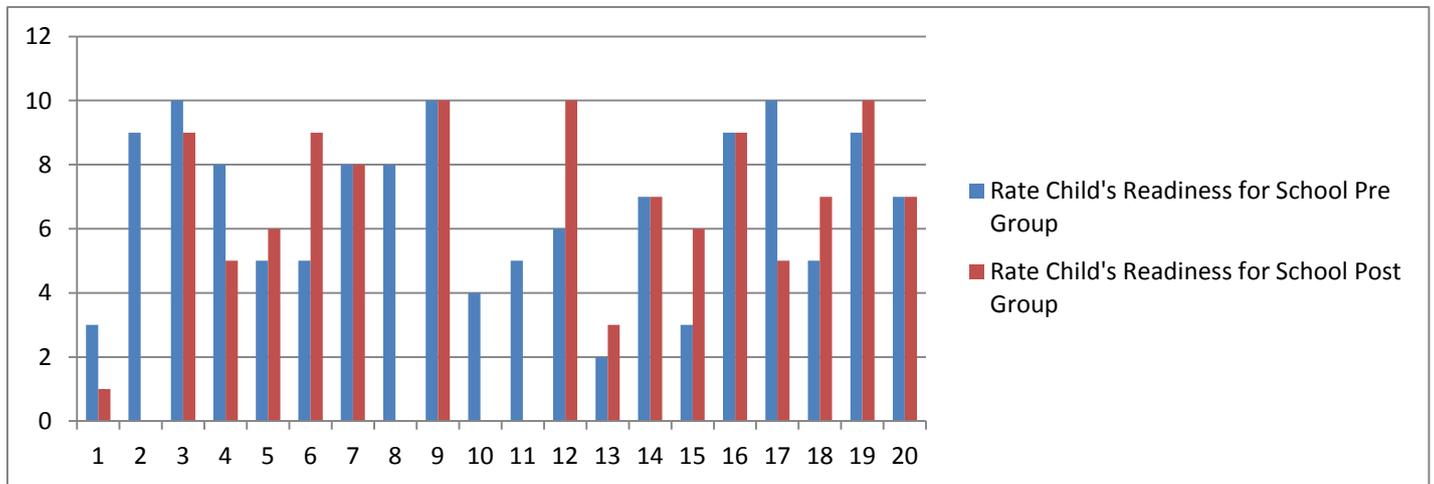
**Q4)** How would you rate the level of your child's behavioural problems

**Outcome (Chart 4)** a decrease indicates parent has a greater understanding of their child's behaviour and is more attentive to managing behaviour in a positive manner



**Q5) How would rate your child's readiness for school (reading skills and keeping to a task)**

**Outcomes (Chart 5 )** an increase indicates a positive outcome



**Q6) How would you rate your child's self-esteem and curiosity for learning**

**Outcomes (Chart 6 )** an increase indicates a positive outcome

