

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CAROLYN WEBSTERSTRATTON And the INCREDIBLE YEARS PROGRAMMES

INTRODUCTION

Dr Carolyn Webster-Stratton is Professor and Director of the Parenting Clinic at the University of Washington. Thirty years ago she founded the Incredible Years programmes. Since then Incredible Years programmes have been applied in more than twelve countries.

ABOUT CAROLYN WEBSTER-STRATTON

Carolyn Webster-Stratton is internationally renowned as a leading authority on teaching parenting and teacher classroom management skills to prevent antisocial behaviour in children and promote social competence and problem solving skills. She has both a distinguished academic career and extensive 'hands-on' experience in clinical work and with delivering these programmes. While she insists that she is 'just an ordinary person', she has made some extraordinary contributions both academically, personally and professionally.

Academic achievements:

- Masters in Paediatric Nursing from Yale University.
- Outstanding Alumna of Yale University School of Nursing.
- Masters in Public Health from Yale School of Medicine.
- PhD in Educational Psychology from the University of Washington.
- PhD - dissertation on the Effectiveness of Videotape Modelling Parental Education.
- Outstanding Alumna of University of Washington Department of Education.

Professional achievements

- Carolyn travelled to Africa in 1970 as part of a project to send white and black Americans together to Africa to promote greater understanding of each other's cultural heritage. Her challenge was to train a group of indigenous people to change the toilet habits of the local people to prevent the spread of schistosomiasis and to promote healthier births and babies. She took a small generator and slide projector with her which began her interest in videotape modelling.
- In 1974, as a qualified nurse, Carolyn worked at the Alaska Indian Health Service as Nurse Practitioner in the Family and Child Guidance Clinic. The Service provided mental health services to Native Americans, including prenatal and parenting classes.
- In 1983 Carolyn became a Licensed Clinical Psychologist.
- She was Director of the Paediatric Nurse Practitioner Programme at Washington University from 1979 to 1990. In 1989 she was appointed Professor.
- In 1982 Carolyn started set up the Parenting Clinic at the University of Washington and in 1990 gave up the
- Paediatric Nurse Practitioner Programme directorship to concentrate full-time on the parenting clinic and on research. The clinic has now helped over 1000 families of children with conduct problems through 'The Incredible Years Programmes'

- Carolyn has received a Research Scientist Award from the National Institute of Mental Health.
- She was visiting Professor at Oxford University and at The Maudsley Hospital in South London in 1990 and 1997.

Program Content

The Incredible Years (IY) Training Series is a set of three comprehensive, multifaceted, and developmentally based curricula for parents, teachers, and children. The program is designed to promote emotional and social competence and to prevent, reduce, and treat aggression and emotional problems in young children 0 to 12 years old.

Young children with high rates of aggressive behavioural problems have been shown to be at great risk for developing substance abuse problems, becoming involved with deviant peer groups, dropping out of school, and engaging in delinquency and violence. Ultimately, the aim of the IY teacher, parent, and child training programs is to prevent and reduce the occurrence of aggressive and oppositional behaviour, thus reducing the chance of developing later delinquent behaviors.

This series of programs addresses multiple risk factors across settings known to be related to the development of conduct disorders in children. In all three types of training programs, trained facilitators use video scenes to encourage group discussion, problem-solving, and sharing of ideas. The BASIC parent series has three versions: baby/toddler (1 month to 2 years), preschool (3-5 years) and school age (6-12 years). The BASIC is “core” and a necessary component of the prevention program delivery. The other parent training components and the teacher and child components are strongly recommended with particular high risk populations.

Incredible Years Training for Parents. The BASIC series emphasizes parenting skills known to promote children's social competence and reduce behaviour problems such as: how to play with children, social, emotional , academic and persistence skills coaching, effective praise and use of incentives, establishing predictable routines and rules and promoting responsibility, effective limit-setting, strategies to manage misbehaviour and teaching children to problem solve. The ADVANCE parent series emphasizes parent interpersonal skills such as: effective communication skills, anger and depression management, problem-solving between adults, ways to give and get support and family meetings. The SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION series (known as SCHOOL) emphasizes parenting approaches designed to promote children's academic skills such as: reading skills, parental involvement in setting up predictable homework routines, and building collaborative relationships with teachers.

Incredible Years Training for Teachers. This series emphasizes effective classroom management skills such as: the effective use of teacher coaching skills, attention, praise and encouragement, use of incentives for difficult behaviour problems, proactive teaching strategies, how to manage inappropriate classroom behaviours with discipline hierarchies, the importance of building positive relationships with

students, and how to teach empathy, social skills and problem-solving in the classroom.

Incredible Years Training for Children. The Dinosaur Curriculum emphasizes training children in skills such as emotional literacy, empathy or perspective taking, friendship skills, anger management, interpersonal problem-solving, school rules and how to be successful at school. There are two versions of this curriculum, one is a “pull out” treatment program for small groups of children (4-6 per group) presenting with conduct problems. The other is a classroom-based preventive program designed to be delivered to all students two to three times a week.

Target Population

Incredible Years Series has been tested in multiple randomized control studies with 2- to 12-year-old children diagnosed with conduct problems (i.e., having high rates of aggression, defiance, oppositional, and impulsive behaviours) and attention deficit disorder. It has also been evaluated as a prevention program with children 2 to 7 years old, who are at high risk by virtue of living in poverty. The new baby program (6 weeks to 18 months) is currently undergoing evaluations.

The Incredible Years curricula may be implemented by Schools, Children centres, Sure Start centres , Nurseries etc. as early prevention programs for teachers, parents and children. Additionally, the child and parent programs may be used in Social care, mental health services and related services as a treatment for families with children who are diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder/Conduct Disorder (ODD/CD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or for high risk families.

ABOUT THE INCREDIBLE YEARS PARENTING PROGRAMMES

The Incredible Years parent training intervention is a series of programs focused on strengthening parenting competencies (monitoring, positive discipline, confidence) and fostering parents' involvement in children's school experiences in order to promote children's academic, social and emotional competencies and reduce conduct problems. The Parent programs are grouped according to age. Babies & Toddlers (0-3 years), BASIC Early Childhood (3-6 years), BASIC School-Age (6-12 years) and ADVANCED (6-12 years).

The Leader's manuals for these programs include questions commonly asked by parents, brainstorm and values exercises, role play practice suggestions, home activities and hand-outs. These manuals can be used when the program is being self-administered by a parent or teacher either at home or in a clinic or school. These manuals may be purchased separately.

The parenting programs are recommended by the American Psychological Association Task Force as meeting the stringent "Chambless criteria" for empirically supported mental health intervention for children with conduct problems.

The Parenting Programmes in more detail

Parents: Babies & Toddlers Programs (Ages 0-3 Years)

Parents and Babies Program

Ages 0-12 months. The Incredible Years Parents and Babies program supports parents and their babies (8-10 weeks). The Parents & Babies program consists of a 6-part program focused on helping parents learn to observe and read their babies' cues and learning ways to provide nurturing and responsive care including physical, tactile, and visual stimulation as well as verbal communication. The series includes:

- Part 1 - Getting to Know Your Baby (0-3 months)
- Part 2 - Babies as Intelligent Learners (3-6 months)
- Part 3 - Providing Physical, Tactile and Visual Stimulation
- Part 4 - Parents Learning to Read Babies' Minds
- Part 5 - Gaining Support
- Part 6 - Babies' Emerging Sense of Self (6-12 months)

Parents and Toddlers Program

Ages 1-3. (14 weeks programme)The Incredible Years Parents and Toddlers Program support parents and builds optimal parenting skills. The Parents & Toddlers program consists of an 8-part program focused on strengthening positive and nurturing parenting skills. Each program builds on the previous. The series includes:

- Part 1 - Child-Directed Play Promotes Positive Relationships
- Part 2 - Promoting Toddler's Language with Child-Directed Coaching
- Part 3 - Social and Emotion Coaching
- Part 4 - The Art of Praise and Encouragement
- Part 5 - Spontaneous Incentives for Toddlers
- Part 6 - Handling Separations and Reunions
- Part 7 - Positive Discipline-Effective Limit Setting
- Part 8 - Positive Discipline-Handling Misbehaviour

Preschool/Early Childhood BASIC Series (Ages 3-6 Years)

This training is comprised of Programs 1 - 4. (14 weeks programme) The program focuses on strengthening parenting skills and consists of components which build upon one another. *This program is also available in a Spanish/English combo package.* The series includes:

- Program 1 - Strengthening Children's Social Skills, Emotional Regulation and School Readiness Skills
- Program 2 - Using Praise and Incentives to Encourage Cooperative Behaviour
- Program 3 - Positive Discipline - Rules, Routines and Effective Limit Setting
- Program 4 - Positive Discipline - Handling Misbehaviour
- Preschool Home Visiting - Coaches and Parents Manual -

This one-on-one parent-coach model is an option for use if parents cannot attend parent groups because of schedule conflicts or if a group program is not available in the time needed to start an intervention with a family.

School Age BASIC Series (Ages 6-12 Years)

(12-14 weeks programme) This series focuses on the importance of promoting positive behaviours, interpersonal issues such as building social skills, and effective praise. *This program is also available in a Spanish/English combo package.* The series includes:

- Program 9 - Promoting Positive Behaviours in School Age Children
- Program 10 - Reducing Inappropriate Behaviours in School Age Children
- Program 8 - Supporting Your Child's Education

ADVANCED Series (Ages 4-12 Years) (9-13 weeks programme) This series builds on the BASIC School Age Parent Training Program by focusing on parent interpersonal issues such as effective communication and problem solving skills, anger management and ways to give and get support. The program comprise the following components:

- Program 5 - How to Communicate Effectively with Adults and Children
- Program 6 - Problem Solving for Parents-Adults
- Program 7 - Teaching Children to Problem Solve

HOW IT WORKS

Parents meet as a group (normally 2 hours per week), with two trained facilitators and are given opportunities to collectively and individually develop new strategies for managing their children. The course includes role plays, homework, setting personal goals, and feedback. Facilitators use videotaped scenes to encourage group discussion, problem-solving and sharing of ideas. Parents and teachers are given hand-outs, activities to practice with children, and reminder notes to put on their refrigerator.

OUTCOMES

The Incredible Years programmes have been evaluated by the developer and independent investigators. Evaluations have included randomised control group research studies with diverse groups of parents and teachers. The programmes have been found to be effective in strengthening teacher and parent management skills, improving children's social competence and reducing behaviour problems. Evidence shows that the programmes have turned around the behaviours of up to 80 percent of the children of participating parents and teachers. If left unchecked these behaviours would mean those children are at greater risk in adulthood of unemployment, mental health problems, substance abuse, early pregnancy/early fatherhood, criminal offending, multiple arrests and imprisonment, higher rates of domestic violence and shortened life expectancy.

Incredible Years gives parents and teachers strategies to manage behaviours such as aggressiveness, on-going tantrums, and acting out behaviour such as swearing, whining, yelling, hitting and kicking, answering back, and refusing to follow rules. Through using a range of strategies, parents and teachers help children regulate their emotions and improve their social skills so that they can get along better with peers and adults, and do better academically. It can also mean a more enjoyable family life.

The Incredible Years program was selected as a "Model" *Strengthening Families* program by the Centre for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), as an "exemplary" program by the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and as a "Blueprints" program by OJJDP. The programs have also been recommended by the *Home Office* in UK as one of the evidenced-based interventions for antisocial behaviour and by Sure Start as a recommended program for families with children under five years. As such, the series has been subject to quality reviews by independent groups of scientists, evidenced excellent effectiveness in multiple randomized control group studies, and attained high overall consumer satisfaction ratings.

Evidence of Effectiveness:

Six randomized control group evaluations of the parenting series by the program developer and colleagues at the University of Washington as well as five independent replications by other investigators has indicated significant:

- Increases in parent positive affect such as praise and reduced use of criticism and negative commands.
- Increases in parent use of effective limit-setting by replacing spanking and harsh discipline with non-violent discipline techniques and increased monitoring of children.
- Reductions in parental depression and increases in parental self-confidence.
- Increases in positive family communication and problem-solving.
- Reduced conduct problems in children's interactions with parents and increases in their positive affect and compliance to parental commands.

Two randomized control group evaluations of the teacher training series by the program developer and colleagues at the University of Washington

- Increases in teacher use of praise and encouragement and reduced use of criticism and harsh discipline.
- Increases in children's positive affect and cooperation with teachers, positive interactions with peers, school readiness and engagement with school activities.
- Reductions in peer aggression in the classroom.

Two randomized control group evaluations of the child training series indicated significant:

- Increases in children's appropriate cognitive problem-solving strategies and more prosocial conflict management strategies with peers.
- Reductions in conduct problems at home and school.

Proven Results for Children Diagnosed with ODD/CD

- Multiple (over 9) randomized control group studies with diagnosed children have been conducted by the investigator and by independent investigators which have indicated:
- At least 66% of children previously diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder/Conduct Disorder (ODD/CD) whose parents received the parenting program were in the normal range at both the 1-year and 3-year follow-up assessments.
- The addition of the teacher and/or child training programs significantly enhanced the results for diagnosed children, resulting in significant improvements in peer interactions and behaviour at school.

Proven Results for Selective and Indicated Prevention Programs

- Multiple (over 4) randomized trials have been conducted with high risk populations including Head Start (preschool) and schools with a high percentage of children (kindergarten to grade two) living in poverty. These programs have shown success with culturally diverse groups, including Hispanic/Latino, Asian American, African American and new Immigrant families. The programs have also been evaluated by independent investigators in many countries including United Kingdom, Canada, Norway, Holland, Russia and Portugal.
- Parent programs have resulted in increased nurturing parenting, decreased harsh discipline, more parent/school involvement and decreased behaviour problems.
- Classroom social skills and problem solving curriculum resulted in increased children's school readiness (defined as social competence, emotional regulation and parent involvement), increased problem-solving and decreased conduct problems.
- Teacher classroom management program resulted in increased proactive teaching strategies including positive discipline and more focus on students' social and emotional competence. In turn, children in classrooms where teacher received training were more cooperative, on task, and showed fewer behaviour problems

For more information please see the following link

www.incredibleyears.com

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