

Acknowledgements

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i. Executive Summary

There is increasing recognition of the need to intervene at an early stage with children exhibiting aggression and behavioural problems. Research has shown that such problems become very resistant to change as the child gets older and are likely to lead to violence, substance abuse and delinquency in adolescence and adulthood. Therapeutic interventions have been shown to be much more effective in treating conduct problems when children are very young (below the age of 8 years). Research also points to the fact that aggression in young children is on the increase, with between 7 and 25% of pre-school and early school-age children being diagnosed with behavioural disorders (Campbell, 1990). Despite this knowledge, psychological and family support services for children tend to be under-staffed resulting in long waiting times for families. By the time clinicians are in a position to assist, the children are older, behavioural difficulties tend to have escalated and to be less amenable to treatment.

In response to this, a number of children's services in Ennis, Co. Clare formed a steering group to look at evidence-based ways of disseminating skills and knowledge in the community in order to prevent children from developing behavioural and anti-social difficulties. This led to the development of the Incredible Years Pilot Project in 2005.*

The Incredible Years Parent, Teacher and Child Training Series was designed by Carolyn Webster-Stratton (1984; 1998) to prevent, reduce and treat conduct problems in children between the ages of 2 and 10 years. It uses group discussion, videotape modelling and rehearsal to assist parents and teachers in building children's social and emotional competencies. It has been very well researched over the past twenty years and is well established now as one of the main effective treatments for conduct disorder.

* These services were HSE Clinical Psychology Service, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Clarecare, and the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

All three elements of the Incredible Years Training Series (teacher, child and parent training programmes) were implemented and evaluated in Scoil Chríost Rí, a local Ennis primary school, between October '05 and June '06. This was the first time in Ireland that all three elements of the Incredible Years Programme were implemented simultaneously. In order to ensure the school's ownership and self-sufficiency in the model following completion of the project, a number of school staff trained as facilitators of the teacher, child and parent training programmes and co-delivered the teacher and child training programmes with the project team.

Parents who participated in the Parent Training aspect of the Incredible Years programme, which was delivered by Clarecare, showed an 88% attendance rate over the 15 weeks of the parent training programme. 50% of them then went on to complete the Advanced Parent Training programme. Parents themselves reported a high level of satisfaction with the parenting course and more positive relationships with school staff. They reported improved relationships with their children and enhanced self-esteem and confidence in themselves.

Following the participation of teachers in the Teacher Training in Classroom Management, there was a significant increase in their reported levels of confidence in managing their classroom and the use of more positive strategies with children. Teachers also reported significantly lower levels of hyperactivity in junior classes.

Following completion of the IY Child Training Programme (Dina Dinosaur) with a small group of 'at risk' children, teachers reported a significant increase in the children's self-control. The school's positive experience of using the Child Training Programme, resulted in their decision to implement it as a whole class curriculum in Junior classes in September '07. It is the school's long-term vision to increase the social and emotional competencies of all children attending the school.

Overall, outcomes have been very positive and have led to the school's decision to continue to apply the principles of the Incredible Years programme throughout the school and to train new incoming staff in the model. School and classroom rules have been amended and all current staff (including Special Needs Assistants) have received training in the Incredible Years approach.

There were a number of key ingredients to the success of the project: Firstly, it was essential to implement all three aspects of the Incredible Years Programme, so that parents as well as teachers and children were equipped with the skills for promoting social and emotional competence. A collaborative approach was crucial in ensuring joint decision-making and a sense of ownership and agency among all stakeholders involved. Fostering the self-sufficiency of the school through their involvement in facilitator training and co-delivery of the child and teacher programmes ensured that the principles of the Incredible Years Programme could continue to be used and consolidated in the long-term.

The pilot has highlighted the benefits of a preventative, community –based approach which equips communities with the skills and knowledge needed to foster resilience and well-being in children. The steering group envision the expansion of the IY programme to other schools as well as pre-schools in conjunction with continued access to the IY Parent Training programme in the schools' local communities. The future implementation of the Incredible Years Early Intervention programme in Co. Clare is dependent upon:

- The integration of Incredible Years into the work plan of all services currently involved in the delivery of it.*
- The appointment of a Coordinator to manage the roll out and delivery of the Incredible Years programme in Co. Clare.*
- The appointment of Parent Group Facilitators to offer IY parent training on a continuous basis to each school's community of parents.*

Project Team

Incredible Years Steering Committee

Chairperson:	Dr. Suarla Fitzsimons, Clinical Psychologist, HSE West, Co. Clare.
Secretary:	Jacinta Swann, Manager of Family Support Services, Clarecare.
Treasurer:	Richard Egan, Educational Psychologist, NEPS.
Public Relations:	Sian Harris, Senior Clinical Psychologist, CAMHS, Co. Clare.

School Involved in the Project

Scoil Chríost Rí, Cloughleigh, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Principal:	Pat Hanrahan
Deputy Principal:	Fionna Power (current Acting Principal since September 2007)

Facilitators of the Incredible Years Programmes

Parent Training:	Jenny Shaw, Social Worker, Clarecare Breda Hallissey, Social Worker, Clarecare
Liaison between School, Parents & Clarecare	Sabrina Sheehan, Family Resource Person, School Completion Programme, Scoil Chríost Rí
Teacher Training:	Fionna Power, Deputy Principal, Scoil Chríost Rí Brid O'Connor, Class Teacher, coil Chríost Rí Richard Egan, Educational Psychologist, NEPS Dr. Suarla Fitzsimons, Clinical Psychologist, HSE
Child Training:	Sian Harris, Senior Clinical Psychologist, CAMHS Angela Kirrane, Child Care Worker, CAMHS Mick Collins, Clinical Nurse Specialist, CAMHS Anne Tiernan, Resource Teacher, Scoil Chríost Rí Hanora O'Dea, Resource Teacher, Scoil Chríost Rí Rena Considine, Resource Teacher, Scoil Chríost Rí
Data Analyst:	Sandra Hoare, M.A., Independent Consultant.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Incredible Years Pilot Project

There are several services in Co. Clare who have responsibility for the emotional and behavioural well-being of children:

- **The HSE Clinical Psychology Service** provides assessment and therapeutic intervention for children up to the age of 18 years.
- **The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)** consists of a multi-disciplinary team who provide a service to children presenting with psychiatric or long term mental health issues up to the age of 16 years.
- **Clarecare** is a voluntary agency which provides a comprehensive range of services in response to the needs of individuals and families. Their Family Support Service provides a range of parenting programmes throughout Co. Clare.
- **The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)** is a service under the aegis of the Department of Education and Science. NEPS provide a consultation service to schools in relation to concerns regarding children's learning or behavioural needs within the school environment.

It was acknowledged by all four services that referrals of children presenting with conduct problems or severe emotional and behavioural difficulties absorbed significant amounts of limited clinical time, staff and resources with very little change or positive outcome. The research literature confirmed this experience and showed that problems such as aggression become very resistant to change as the child gets older and are

likely to lead to violence, substance abuse and delinquency in adolescence and adulthood (Carr, 1999). All four services therefore came together out of a common conviction of the need to equip families and communities with a skill set that promotes the development of emotional resilience and pro-social behaviour in children which would in turn lead to the reduction of childhood aggression and conduct problems.

It was in this context in early 2004, that there was openness to investigating alternative models of service delivery which moved away from a one to one crisis-driven and clinic-based model to ways of intervening at an earlier stage in order to strengthen and empower families. There was also a desire to develop a more unified and coherent approach between services, given that it was often the case that a number of services would be involved separately in addressing various needs in the same troubled families. The employment of well-researched and evidence-based methods that have been proven to work was recognised as essential to our goals. The school, being a central part of the community was seen by all services as having a crucial role to play in bringing this new approach to families. Our primary focus was the development of social and emotional competencies in children and families.

1.2 What the research says about children with behaviour problems

The research shows that conduct problems constitute 30 – 50% of all clinic referrals (Kazdin, 1995). Conduct Disorder is defined as a repetitive and persistent pattern of behaviour in which the basic rights of others are violated through behaviour which causes harm to others, property loss or damage, deceitfulness or theft and serious violations of rules (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Children who have conduct disorder often have other difficulties such as ADHD or emotional disorders. Conduct disorder has been termed the single most costly disorder of childhood and adolescence for a number of reasons:

1. It is unresponsive to treatment with only 20 - 40% showing a positive outcome (Carr, 1999).
2. Longitudinal research has consistently shown that children with untreated conduct disorder turn to adult criminality and develop a variety of psychological difficulties such as anti-social personality disorder and alcohol-related problems. They also have more problems with health, educational attainment, occupational adjustment, marital stability and social adjustment (Carr, 1999).
3. Adults with a history of conduct disorder in turn tend to rear children with a high rate of conduct difficulties. (Kazdin, 1995; Farrington, 1995).

A number of risk factors have been identified throughout the literature which have been shown to increase the likelihood of childhood conduct problems. These risk factors are as follows:

1. Parent Practices: Parenting interactions associated with the development of conduct problems in young children include permissive, inconsistent, irritable or harsh discipline practices and low monitoring. These characteristics, along with the absence of a nurturing relationship and low involvement in school-related activities are linked to the child's development of poor emotional regulation, aggressive behaviour, poor social skills and academic underachievement (Patterson et al., 1992; Deater-Decker et al., 1996).

2. Family or contextual Factors: Depression, marital conflict, poverty and high negative life stress can deplete parents' coping resources, disrupt their parenting skills and reduce their availability and their bond with their child. This affects the child's acquisition of key emotional and social skills.

3. Child Factors: Children born with a developmental delay or difficult temperament are more at risk as they may find it harder to acquire emotional regulation skills, which can lead to aggressive interactions and rejection by their peer group (Moffit & Lynam, 1994).

4. School Factors: Research shows that children who show anti-social behaviour in school are less likely to receive encouragement from their teachers for appropriate behaviour and are more likely to be punished for negative behaviour (Walker, 1995). Children with behavioural problems tend not to have the skill to elicit a supportive and nurturing response from their teachers, which can result in them experiencing the same rejection and criticism that they receive at home. A spiralling pattern of child negative behaviour and teacher reactivity can develop, which results in escalating aggression in the classroom and a poor bond between the child and the school. This, in turn can lead to eventual school drop out (Webster-Stratton, 2001).

Prevention is Better than Cure

The literature indicates that multi-component interventions which have parent training at their core, show evidence of preventing the development of conduct disorder in young children who show early signs of conduct problems (McMahon et al. 1995; Reid et al., 1999; Webster-Stratton et al., 2001). Brestan & Eyberg (1998) found that from 82 studies of psychosocial interventions for conduct disorder in peer reviewed journals, only two interventions met the American Psychological Association's criteria for well established treatments. Both were parent training programmes. One of these was the videotape modelling parent training programme (Webster-Stratton, 1984; 1994), which subsequently became known as the Incredible Years (IY) programme.

1.3 What is the Incredible Years Programme?

The Incredible Years series is a comprehensive programme for parents, teachers and children designed to promote emotional and social competence in young children aged between 2 and 10 years, and to prevent, reduce and treat behaviour and emotional problems (*see figure 1*). In each programme, trained facilitators use videotaped scenes to encourage group discussion, problem solving and sharing of ideas.



Figure 1: Incredible Years Programme

All three programmes were designed to dovetail together and to target the risk factors described above that are known to increase the likelihood of childhood conduct disorder:

The Basic Parent Training programme is the core component of the Incredible Years and focuses on strengthening parenting competencies (monitoring, positive discipline, confidence) and fostering parents' involvement with their children in order to promote the children's social, emotional as well as academic competence. The Teacher Training intervention is focused on strengthening the teacher's classroom management strategies

so as to promote children's pro-social behaviour and school readiness, as well as to reduce classroom aggression and children's non-cooperation with peers and teachers. The Child Training intervention teaches children social skills, empathy, anger management and conflict management skills.

The Incredible Years series was chosen for this pilot project because it is an empirically-validated intervention that has been ratified by the Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado. It has been awarded Blueprint status, indicating that it meets a rigorously evaluated and high scientific standard of programme effectiveness (Blueprints for Violence Prevention Series, 1998; www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints.html)

1.4 Content and format of the IY Programmes

1.4.1 Parent Training:

The Basic Parent Training programme is the core of the Incredible Years Series and consists of a 12-14 week programme for parents involving group-led discussions of a series of video vignettes of parents interacting with children in family life situations. There are four modules, each of which builds on the previous one, therefore the sequence is essential. Group facilitators can respond flexibly to the needs of the group and spend longer on a module before moving on to the next one. Parents are encouraged to attend the parent program with a partner or friend as the research suggests that doing so results in more long-lasting effects. Child care is provided in order to reduce the obstacles standing in the way of parents participating. The modules are as follows:

- 1. Play:** The first step in breaking the negative cycle of behaviours is to infuse positive feelings into the parent-child relationship through play. Parents are taught how to play with their child in a way that facilitates the development of the child's

self-esteem and learning as well as nurturing a positive bond between them. This is particularly important for parents of children with conduct problems who may be feeling resentful, critical, angry, distant or hopeless about their relationships with their children (Webster-Stratton, 2001).

- 2. Praise and Rewards:** Parents are helped to give children consistent attention, approval and praise for good behaviour rather than discipline for misbehaviour. They are helped to identify the behaviours that they want to promote, to look for those behaviours and to praise them. Many parents who don't praise their children don't praise themselves either. Facilitators therefore also teach parents how to speak to themselves in positive self-statements and create positive and rewarding experiences for themselves.

- 3. Limit-setting:** Parents are taught the importance of rules and limits in providing the child with a sense of stability and security. They are taught how to set consistent limits and how to respond to children in clear, predictable ways so that they can learn which behaviours are appropriate and which are not.

- 4. Handling Misbehaviour:** Parents are taught non-violent discipline techniques, including logical and natural consequences, problem-solving strategies, "Ignore" and "Time Out".

IY Advance Parent Training

This is a 10-12 week supplement to the Basic parent programme. It addresses other risk factors that parents may be coping with such as depression, marital discord, poor coping skills and lack of support. The content focuses on adult skills such as; effective communication, anger management, depression management, coping skills and problem-solving between adults.

Group Process and Methods

Webster Stratton (2001) sees the art of collaboration as crucial to the success of the parent programmes. She states that the “facilitator must be extraordinarily skilled in collaborating with families in ways that promote parents’ self-management, sense of competency, empowerment and hope for themselves and their children” (p. 72).

Group facilitators employ a collaborative and non-blaming attitude by actively eliciting the views and ideas of the group. Role-play and rehearsal of parenting techniques are used frequently to enable group members to practice new behaviours. Weekly homework activities are given which helps to transfer the learning to real life at home and to stimulate discussion during sessions. Phone calls are made by facilitators to each group member between sessions to monitor progress and offer support. A group support system is created through “buddy calls” where each parent is asked to call another parent every few weeks to share progress with home assignments.

1.42 Teacher Training in Classroom Management

The Teacher Training (classroom management) programme focuses on promoting the teacher’s self-confidence and competence in using positive and pro-active classroom management strategies and discipline approaches. It also helps teachers understand how they can teach social skills, problem-solving and anger management in the classroom. The modules are as follows:

- 1. Building Positive Relationships with Students:** A positive teacher-student relationship built on trust, understanding and caring fosters the students’ cooperation and motivation and increases their learning and achievement at school. Teachers are encouraged not to take children’s misbehaviour or negative attitudes personally, but to look past the disruptive behaviours and reach out to

the child to develop a meaningful relationship. Ways of building positive communication with parents is also emphasised and explored.

- 2. Teacher Attention, Encouragement and Praise:** When teachers recognise the power of their attention as a reinforcer of student's behaviour and begin to decrease their attention to inappropriate behaviours and instead, increase their use of attention, praise and encouragement for positive behaviours, they can have a dramatic impact on the individual, child and the whole classroom.
- 3. Motivating Children through Incentives:** Teachers learn how to help children to learn a new behaviour that is particularly difficult for them by using incentives. The most effective ways of setting up such reward programmes are explored in detail.
- 4. Preventing Behaviour Problems - the Proactive Teacher:** Rather than reacting to problems when they arise, facilitators help teachers to anticipate the kinds of classroom conditions that are likely to produce disruptive or disengaged behaviours and take pro-active steps to prevent them.
- 5. Decreasing Student's Inappropriate Behaviour:** Teachers are taught how to devise a discipline plan so that students know exactly how the teacher will respond to the misbehaviour. Many strategies are discussed and teachers are encouraged to organise consequences for misbehaviour in a hierarchy starting with the least disruptive intervention. The key principle is to provide an ethical approach to discipline where students learn that violent or negative behaviours will not be tolerated, but establishes positive expectations for future appropriate behaviour and conveys to them that they are deeply valued despite their mistake.

6. How to Teach Social Skills, Problem Solving and Anger Management in the

Classroom: This module is optional and illustrates how teachers can implement the Child Training programme (Dino Dinosaur Curriculum) in the classroom. This helps students to learn thinking and social skills related to making good choices and assuming responsibility for their own behaviour.

Group Process and Methods

The collaborative method and group processes described in the parent training groups is also employed in the Teacher Training groups. Teachers are shown a series of video vignettes and are encouraged to share their ideas. Role play, home work assignments and the development of behaviour plans are used to help teachers practice the techniques. Training can take place in five full-day workshops (four excluding module 6 which is optional) which occur one day per month or in weekly two hour sessions lasting 14-18 weeks.

1.43 Child Training (Dina Dinosaur)

The child training programme was the last addition to the Incredible Years Series. It was originally designed as a “pull out” treatment program for small groups of 5 or 6 children exhibiting conduct problems. The 2 hour sessions occur weekly for 18-20 weeks. It now also comes in the form of a whole class curriculum (Classroom Dina) which the teacher can use as a regular part of the weekly class curriculum. The programme emphasises emotional literacy, empathy and perspective taking, friendship development, anger management, interpersonal problem solving, following school rules and school success.

The modules are as follows:

1. Making friends and learning School Rules
2. Understanding and Detecting Feelings
3. Detective Wally teaches Problem Solving Steps
4. Molly Manners Teaches how to be Friendly
5. Molly explains how to Talk with Friends
6. Dina Dinosaur Teaches how to do your Best in School

Group Process and Methods

Facilitators/ teachers use near child-size puppets and a variety of animal puppets to narrate the video scenes and key concepts. Such sociodramatic play gives children the opportunity to develop perspective taking, social participation and intimacy skills (Webster Stratton, 2001). Role play, rehearsal and viewing video vignettes are used to help children to practice and remember the skills learned. Praise, encouragement as well as incentives and rewards are given to reinforce positive behaviours.

1.5 Facilitator Training

Group leaders of all three programmes complete separate 3 day facilitator training courses from a certified Incredible Years Trainer prior to facilitating parent, child or teacher groups. When facilitating a group programme, facilitators are encouraged to record their sessions on video-tape so that they can receive feedback on their delivery of the programme, either during peer supervision meetings or as part of follow-up consultation meetings with IY Trainers. It is highly recommended that facilitators meet regularly for supportive peer supervision which provides the opportunity to trouble shoot and to enhance one's skills and learning. When facilitators have conducted two groups, they are eligible to seek certification by submitting videotapes of their group sessions for evaluation. This serves to maintain the quality and fidelity of the programme delivery to the original evidence based one. It also ensures that programmes are delivered at a high standard by certified IY group leaders.

2. Implementation of the Incredible Years Pilot Project

2.1 Initial Steps

A steering group was established to coordinate the overall project with a view to planning for the future development of the Incredible Years in Co. Clare. The group consisted of a professional from each of the four services involved; Clinical Psychology Service, HSE; National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and Clarecare Family Support Service. Clear roles and responsibilities evolved over the duration of the project and were shared out among the steering group. This was essential given the high level of usual work demands on each professional and the lack of dedicated staff to coordinate and implement the project.

In Spring 2005, seven schools in the Ennis/Shannon region were invited to attend a presentation about the Incredible Years Programme, with a view to deciding whether they were interested in becoming involved in the pilot project. The seven schools were selected based on NEPS involvement, proximity to Ennis (where services were based) and level of disadvantage. As a result of this process, Scoil Chríost Rí, Cloughleigh, Ennis expressed an interest in participating and became the pilot school for this project.

Scoil Chríost Rí is a primary school of 256 children and has DEIS Urban 1 status, which means it is in a designated highly disadvantaged area. It is a multi-cultural school, comprising 35% foreign nationals and 16% travellers. One fifth of the children avail of subsidised lunches and 8% have special needs.

An initial meeting was held on 23rd June, 2005 in Scoil Chríost Rí, with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Family Resource Person and other staff representatives to discuss the format of the training and how this could be best implemented in their school. We were conscious of the importance of including the school staff as collaborative partners in the

project as we wanted to encourage a sense of ownership within the school of the Incredible Years ideas and principles. It was therefore decided to invite school staff members to act as co-facilitators of the teacher training and child training programmes, as this would lead to an expertise remaining in the school following completion of the training. The teachers who trained as facilitators could then act as supports to the rest of the school staff in their implementation of ideas. The school was receptive to this idea and made the decision to seek funding so that a number of staff members could be trained to become co-facilitators of the school-based programmes.

2.2 Costs and Funding

At the outset, there was no allocated funding to acquire the Incredible Years programme materials or to train staff to deliver the programmes. There was however a commitment from all services involved, including the school to re-direct staff hours to the project so that staff members could facilitate the IY programmes. Allocating time to the project was seen as compatible with the core work and aims of each service involved.

Funding was sought on behalf of the project by Clarecare and Scoil Chríost Rí. A total of €30,200 was raised from applications to the funding sources listed in Table 1 below. This covered the cost of facilitator training, programme materials, group running costs and data analysis. Subsequent funding has been received from the National Lottery (€8,007) and the Edmund Rice Fund (€2,500) for the continuation of the Parenting Programme and the extension of the IY Child Training Programme as a whole class curriculum (“classroom dina”) in junior classes at Scoil Chríost Rí. Table 2 gives the breakdown of costs incurred in the Incredible Years project.

Table 1: Funding Sources (1st January 2005 to 1st January)

Funding Source	Funding	Accessed by:
- HSE Section 10 Grant - National Lottery Funding - Fees from outside professionals who attended Facilitator Training event in Ennis	€12,000 €7,409 €800	Clarecare
- DES Social Inclusion Fund - St. Vincent De Paul	€6,000 €2,000	Scoil Chríost Rí
Ely Lily & Co.	€1,991	CAMHS
TOTAL	€30,200	

Table 2: Breakdown of Costs for the Incredible Years Project (Jan 1st '05 to Jan 1st '07)

Areas of Cost	Subtotal	Total Cost
IY Parent Training Programme - Training of 2 facilitators, travel & accommodation, Dublin - Contribution towards childcare for group participants - Programme materials (manuals, videos, books & hand-outs for participants) - Catering & Administration - Administrator Fee	€1,829 €1,770 €2,893 €2,186 €1,941	€10,619
IY Child Training Programme - Training of 6 facilitators, travel & accommodation, Dublin & Wales - Programme materials (incl. puppets) x 2 - Administration (incl. rewards/ incentives)	€4,000 €4,000 €782	€8,782
IY Teacher Training in Classroom Management x 2 - Training of 4 facilitators, travel & accommodation, Wales - Programme materials x 2 (for two parallel groups)	€4,400 €5,181	€9,581
Training of 23 professionals as IY Parent Group Leaders, Ennis		€4,000
Data Analysis	€3,342	
GRAND TOTAL		€36,324*

* The difference of €6,124 between the money spent and funding received is accounted for by the facilitator training and programme materials which was paid for by HSE.

Table 3 below gives an estimation of the cost in terms of staff time in implementing and evaluating the Incredible Years project between January 1st '05 and January 1st '07. It does not include the subsequent time invested in completing the current report.

Table 3: Estimation of Staff Costs based on time dedicated to the IY project between Jan 1st '05 and Jan 1st '07.

Organisation	People	No. of Days (approx.)
Clarecare	Jacinta Swann, Manager Jenny Shaw, Social Worker Breeda Hallissey, Social Worker	15 days 30 days 30 days
Scoil Chríost Rí	Fionna Power, Deputy Principal Brid O'Connor, Teacher Anne Tiernan, Teacher Hanora O'Dea, Teacher Rena Considine, Teacher	10 days 10 days 20 days 20 days 20 days
CAMHS (HSE)	Sian Harris, Senior Clinical Psychologist Mick Collins, Clinical Nurse Specialist Angela Kirrane, Child Care Worker	29 days 20 days 20 days
NEPS	Richard Egan, Educational Psychologist	21 days
Clinical Psychology (HSE)	Suarla Fitzsimons, Clinical Psychologist	36.5 days

2.3 Training

Group facilitators for the Incredible Years Child, Basic Parent and Teacher Training programmes completed Facilitator training courses led by certified IY Leaders. Parent Training took place in Lucena Clinic, Wicklow, Co. Wicklow and at the Clondalkin Partnership, Dublin 22. Child Training took place at the Clondalkin Partnership, Dublin 22. Training for facilitators of the Teacher Training was not available in Ireland and was therefore completed at the Incredible Years Centre, University of Bangor, Wales. Peer supervision was attended by the facilitators of the IY Parent Training Programme in Lucena Clinic, Wicklow.

2.4 Timeline for the Implementation of the Incredible Years Programmes

As can be seen from Table 4 below, the IY Teacher Training in Classroom Management was completed first. This helped staff at Scoil Chríost Rí to have a better understanding of the underlying principles of the Incredible Years Programmes in advance of some of the school's pupils and parents participating in the parent and child training programmes. The Child Training (Dina Dinosaur) Programme began two weeks prior to the Basic Parent Training as recommended so that the learning across both programmes dove-tail appropriately.

Table 4: Timeline for the Implementation of the Incredible Years Programmes

1. Teacher Training in Classroom Management:	November '05–March '06
2. Child Training (Small Group Programme):	February '06 – June '06
3. Basic Parent Training:	March '06 – June '06

2.5 Implementation of the IY Basic Parent Training

Training for Facilitators of the programme

The two group leaders for this programme completed facilitator training for the IY Basic Parent Training Programme in Lucena Clinic, Wicklow, Co. Wicklow. Given Clarecare's key role in providing parenting courses to the community throughout Co. Clare, it was decided to invite the IY Trainers from Wicklow to Ennis so that a large number of Clarecare staff could benefit from facilitator training for the IY Parent Training Programme. Other interested professionals in the region were also invited to attend, which helped to cover costs and also provided a 'bank' of trained facilitators who have the potential to contribute to the expansion of the Incredible Years model throughout Clare in the future. This training took place in Clarecare commencing on January 30th '06 and was attended by 23 professionals from different disciplines ranging from childcare, social work, psychology, traveller support and teaching.

Recruitment of parents to participate in the IY Parent Training:

School staff members were able to identify children in the junior classes who they felt were a risk of developing conduct problems. They acknowledged difficulties in building positive relations with the parents of these children and reported that they had tried in the past, without success to encourage parents' participation in parenting programmes. It was agreed from the beginning that we did not want parents to feel "singled out" in a negative way for inclusion on the programme. The first step therefore was to inform all parents through the school newsletter of the exciting new Incredible Years initiative in the school, involving training for teachers, children and parents. Parents were invited to contact the school if they wished to participate in the parent training aspect. They were also informed that a member of school staff would be in contact if their child was selected for participation in the Children's Dina Dinosaur Group. Places on the Basic Parent Training Programme were therefore filled in two ways; by parents who responded to the general invitation to participate and by the school contacting parents whose children had been selected to attend the Dina Dinosaur programme and inviting them to attend the Parent Training Programme.

Initial contact with parents was made by the School Family Resource Person. A follow up visit was then made by her with one of the Parenting Group Facilitators. This gave parents an opportunity to meet the leader at first hand and be reassured about the content of the group where necessary. This process required close liaison between the Parenting Group Facilitators and the School Family Resource Person. It proved time-consuming and uncertain as there was difficulty gaining parents' interest.

Interested parents were invited to an individual meeting with the two Group Facilitators in the local Clarecare office. The key objectives of this meeting was to give parents the opportunity to become familiar with the location of the group programme and with the group leaders themselves; to inform them of practical arrangements and to dispel any

fears that the parents might have about their participation in the group. Parents were given a brief introduction to the content of the programme, style of delivery and the level of commitment needed from them. Some preliminary forms were completed and facilitators had the opportunity to address any literacy issues of concern to parents.

A decision was taken early on in the planning of the programme that support with childcare and lunch would be provided for participants in order to reduce some of the impediments that often lead to the poor uptake of services by low-income and marginalised families. This approach is advocated by the Incredible Years model and has been supported by research evidence. Childcare issues were discussed with each parent as part of the introduction to the programme. Based on these discussions, each parent was given €10 towards the cost of childcare at the end of each session attended. One parent who needed a specific child care placement was supported to find one and the costs were paid for the duration of the programme. Lunch was provided following each parent training session.

Weekly Group Preparation:

There was a number of tasks that needed to be completed on a weekly basis by the parent group facilitators:

- Pre-session planning required a half-day per week for each group session. Time was also needed to set up the room each week and to be available to parents as they arrived.
- Post-session review involved an examination of the programme format, facilitators' roles and performance, parents' participation and any issues that had arisen.
- Follow up phone calls were made on a weekly basis to each participant. Letters/handouts were sent to parents who missed a week.
- Arrangement of funds for participants each week. This was organised by Clarecare administration and took approximately half an hour per week.
- The provision of sandwiches and soup for lunch.

The Parent Training programme commenced in March 2006 and ended in June 2006 with 15 sessions in total. Ten primary care-givers attended, all of whom were female; three of whom were Traveller women and 4 of whom were Non-Irish Nationals (3 of these were of African origin).

2.51 Group Leaders' Review

Group Process: While the recruitment phase had been time consuming and difficult, the ten parents who elected to take part attended consistently for the duration of the training (15 weeks). The high level of attendance and commitment to the programme was attributed to the collaborative approaches recommended by the IY training, which were found to be extremely important in creating a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for the group. This accomplishment was particularly significant given the heterogeneous nature of the group which consisted of parents from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The use of rewards (eg. grapes/ sweets/ goodie bags) with parents in the group, helped to model the behaviours that the facilitators wanted the parents to try out with their children and also added a sense of fun and encouragement. Similarly the ending ceremony highlighted their achievements to parents and for some it was their first time receiving a certificate. Also, the use of role-play gave parents an opportunity to gain experience of skills in a practical and fun way.

Having lunch together created a valuable opportunity for group members to unwind and to get to know each other as well as the group facilitators. Being served up lunch helped to meet parents' physical and practical needs as well as providing a model of self-care. They commented that it meant they had more time to do tasks when they got home.

Teachers from the school were invited to take part in the weekly lunches. This provided a valuable opportunity for parents to become more familiar with school staff in an informal and less threatening setting. School staff found it difficult to commit to the lunch on a regular basis, however, given the constraints of their intensive work day.

Programme Characteristics: The group leaders found the length of the programme, which comprised 15 weekly sessions gave parents much more time to understand and assimilate the skills being taught, in comparison with the usual parent training approach used which comprises 8 weekly sessions. The extra time afforded facilitators the opportunity to spend multiple sessions on a particular module when this was necessary. It was helpful that video vignettes featured parents from a variety of cultures and ethnicities, which coincided with the multi-cultural nature of the group. However, the group leaders reported that some of the vignettes did not clearly illustrate the principles as intended.

The group leaders found the manual was not user-friendly. For example, the content needed for a session tended to be spread over a number of sections rather than conveniently located in the one place. Similarly, there were too many handouts, which had to be reduced in number so as not to overwhelm group participants.

In terms of peer supervision, the group leaders reported that the regular supervision sessions that they attended in Dublin were extremely useful in enhancing their knowledge and skill in facilitating the programme.

2.6 Implementation of the IY Teacher Training in Classroom Management

An important decision made by the school was that all members of teaching staff should participate in the Incredible Years Teacher Training in Classroom Management and not just teachers of the junior classes (the programme targets the junior class age range). The school valued the idea of a whole school approach, where all staff had an opportunity to learn about the ideas inherent in the Incredible Years programme. They also reasoned that while the programme is aimed at the junior classes, teachers tend to rotate between the senior and junior classes from year to year. Also many of the teachers in the senior classes have daily contact with young children in the yard and on the corridors. This decision in favour of whole school involvement was an indication of the school's motivation and commitment to the development of a whole school philosophy that would nurture their students' emotional and behavioural competencies.

The Teacher Training sessions were planned to take the format of 4 one-day workshops occurring on a monthly basis, beginning in November '05 and ending in March '06*. Given the participation of all 22 teachers in the school, two parallel groups were organised – one for the teachers of Junior classes and one for the teachers of Senior classes (11 in each group). It was surmised that the smaller group format would allow for greater interaction and individual attention during the workshops. Once funding was achieved, all four facilitators of the Teacher Training programme attended two leader training days together in Bangor, Wales in September 2005. Table 5 below illustrates the format of Teacher Training Workshops:

Table 5: Format of the Teacher Training Workshops

	Number of Teachers who Attended	IY Facilitators
Junior Class Teachers (Junior Infants to 2nd Class)	11	Class Teacher & Educational Psychologist
Senior Class Teachers (3rd Class to 6th Class)	11	Deputy Principal & Clinical Psychologist

Facilitators met to prepare training modules prior to the delivery of each training day. Given the different locations of facilitators and their busy schedules, these meetings had to be arranged well in advance and preparation was found to be very time consuming.

Following each training day, a summary of the main points and principles that the group had generated was emailed to the participants as a refresher of what they had learnt. Participants were invited to contact the facilitators in between sessions to trouble shoot any problems they might experience with their practice assignments and behaviour plans. Workshop evaluations were completed by participants after each workshop in order to gauge whether learning objectives had been met to their satisfaction and to take on board any suggestions.

2.61 Group Leaders' Review

Group Process: Completion of the facilitator training in Wales by the four facilitators together allowed them to develop good working relations while discussing the programme principles and ideas. The actual teacher training went smoothly and this was greatly assisted by the school's help in organising rooms and lunch for the day. The small size of the groups (11 in each) encouraged maximum participation and group discussion.

Having one month between workshops worked well in allowing participants to practice and process the information and skills covered.

In terms of follow through on Practice Assignments, while participants reported back on some strategies that they had tried out during the intervening period, they tended not to have completed behavioural plans for particular students of concern in their classes as expected. It was felt that this lessened the learning and skill-building achieved by participants. Facilitators reflected that in future training, more emphasis would need to be placed on the importance of homework completion. Some senior class teachers commented that the ideas and strategies were less applicable to the age group that they were dealing with (given that the programme is aimed at junior classes). However, they were encouraged to think creatively about ways of adapting strategies in order to apply the same principles to an older age group.

Programme Characteristics: While the content of each module was very relevant, facilitators found that the manual was put together in a confusing and unwieldy way which made preparation time longer than necessary. They also felt that video vignettes tended not to illustrate key points and principles clearly enough. Participants made similar comments on their feedback sheets, reporting that they found them to be too American and not similar enough to the Irish classroom set up.

2.7 Implementation of the IY Child Training (Dina Dinosaur)

Children were selected to participate in the Dina Dinosaur Programme based on the concerns of their teachers regarding their emotional and behavioural presentation at school. As described in the previous section, the parents of these children were invited to attend the Parent Training programme so that all three strands of the Incredible Years programme could dovetail together to address the child in context. All child participants were between the ages of 4 and 10 years.

Planning

The IY Child Training Programme was delivered to three separate groups of children and was facilitated by 3 clinical staff and 3 resource teachers from the school. All staff completed IY facilitator training in Dublin and attended planning meetings together prior to the commencement of the programme. While the intention had been that each resource teacher would facilitate a group in conjunction with a clinician, this was not possible for a number of practical and logistical reasons. Table 6 shows the final group format:

Table 6: Format of the Child Training Groups

	Class	Number attending	IY Facilitators
Group 1	Junior & Senior Infants	5	2 clinicians
Group 2	Junior & Senior Infants	5	1 clinician, 1 resource teacher
Group 3	1st, 2nd & 3rd Class	5	2 resource teachers

The programmes commenced in February 2006 and were completed in June 2006 with 17 sessions in total.

Weekly Group Preparation

Staff from the school and clinic attempted to meet on a regular basis following commencement of the programme in order to share ideas, lend support to each other and to monitor progress. However, it proved very difficult to coordinate suitable times between all facilitators, given the number of facilitators involved and their separate work schedules. Therefore, school and clinic staff tended to prepare separately. Planning and preparation time in general for each session was substantial, particularly given the adaptations that needed to be made to meet the specific needs of each group.

Similarly, while the intention had been to meet with the parents of group participants prior to each session on a weekly basis to discuss their child's progress and to explain home work tasks, this became impossible due to time and logistical constraints.

2.71 Group Leaders' Review

Group Process: The children enjoyed attending the group as it was a positive experience for them. The rewards component worked well to motivate them to change their behaviours and learn from each other's positive role-modelling. One obvious draw-back was that the skills being learned by the group were not being used generally by the rest of the children in the school. It was therefore very difficult for the children within the group to generalise the skills into the classroom /playground.

The intention of facilitators was to link in with the parents of the children attending the IY Child Training Programme regarding IY concepts and homework so that they could support the children in using these strategies at home. However, while efforts were made to facilitate this link by running the groups at the beginning of the school day, regular communication with parents did not happen in practice as planned due to time limitations. Similarly, class teachers were not informed from week to week of the skills being taught which did not support transfer of the learning to the classroom. It was also noted that there was a lack of "real life" experiences within the group through which participants could practice new skills, in comparison with the rich opportunities presented in the classroom situation. The need for positive role models within each group became of paramount importance.

It was therefore concluded that the skills would be much better taught as part of the whole class curriculum version of the programme (ie. Classroom Dina). In this way, all children in the class could learn and practice the same social and emotional skills with each other in a "real life" way throughout the day. It was felt that the Small Group

format could continue to be of benefit to those in need of extra support, giving them extra practice at using the skills gained as part of whole class curriculum. If delivered in an after-school setting, it would allow for better contact and involvement with parents which would help to transfer the learning to the home environment.

Programme Characteristics: Completion of the Teacher Training helped teachers to understand the content and objectives of the child training, which greatly facilitated its delivery. The structured nature of the programme facilitated group leaders in working well together. Group leaders found that while the modules were appropriate to the ability level of the 1st and 2nd class participants, the concepts were beyond the ability level of many of the Junior and Senior Infants participating. This led to significant lengths of time being deployed to adapt aspects of the programme for the junior group members.

3. Evaluation Strategy

An effort was made to evaluate the impact of the Incredible Years programme on teachers, children and parents. The evaluation component of the project was not as comprehensive as we would have wished because we did not have a researcher to design, coordinate and carry out the relevant procedures due to financial, staffing and time constraints. Ideally, we would have liked to evaluate the impact of each programme on the child by using observational methods to measure changes in the child's behaviour at different time points, in comparison with a control group. It would also have been useful to assess changes in parents' relationships with their children as a result of their participation in the IY Basic Parenting Programme. A longitudinal design would also have been ideal to monitor changes over a longer time period (eg. one year).

In reality, given that observational research was not feasible, standardised self-report questionnaires were employed to see if parents and teachers noted any improvements in children's difficult behaviour, pro-social behaviour and self-control over the course of the interventions. We also investigated changes in teachers' behaviour and attitudes towards students. Information regarding group participants' satisfaction with their experience of the Incredible Years programmes was also sought. The sensitivity of measurement had to be weighed against the ease and speed with which the information could be gathered, given that group facilitators had to collect the data, in addition to their responsibilities in preparing for, organising and delivering the group programmes. This meant that measures were reduced to the minimum possible.

It must be highlighted that while many of the group leaders had experience of facilitating groups, this was the first time that any of them had facilitated the Incredible Years series. Also, in some cases, group leaders were working together as co-facilitators for the first time, adding a further set of challenges to the task. An important learning

outcome from the evaluation process was the necessity for a research coordinator. Given that the steering committee was so actively involved in facilitating the IY programmes and the IY project in itself was an ‘add-on’ task to their workload, they were not in a position to focus solely on the evaluation procedure. This had a negative impact on the organisation and smooth running of data collection. Many complexities emerged given that the evaluation encompassed three different programmes whose running times overlapped, which made it very difficult to evaluate the separate contribution and impact of each one.

The key measures employed in the evaluation are described below* . They were administered prior to and upon completion of the intervention programmes. Once the data was collected, it became obvious that there was a need to employ additional support to collate and analyse them due to the volume and complexity of data gathered. A data analyst was therefore employed on a contract basis through funding acquired.

3.1 Measuring the Impact of IY Basic Parent Training

1. Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997; www.sdqinfo.com)

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a behavioural screening questionnaire for parents or teachers, which asks the respondent to rate the child on 25 attributes. These attributes are divided into 5 scales as follows; emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/ inattention, peer relationship problems and pro-social behaviour. The questionnaire has been normed for British and American populations. It is used frequently to screen for psychiatric problems in children. It is also used as a “before and after” tool to evaluate the outcome of specific interventions.

In this evaluation, the SDQ was completed by parents attending the IY Basic Parent Training Programme just before the group commenced and when it had finished assessing any changes in their children’s behaviour.

* Some other measures were also employed but are not reported due to difficulties with the data collection.

However, a methodological error unfolded as the data collection progressed. Some of the parents attending the IY Parent Training had children attending the IY Child Training Programme (Dina Dinosaur), while some did not. It was therefore impossible to separate the effect of the parent training from the small group programme. Furthermore, due to data collection problems, pre and/or post data were not available for some participants of the parenting group and their children. This data was therefore excluded from the evaluation. As stated previously, this highlights the level of pressure on facilitators who were implementing the IY programmes for the first time as well as managing the whole project and evaluation. It points clearly to the need for a separate researcher to manage the research design and data collection to ensure that interventions can be evaluated in a comprehensive and methodologically sound way in the future.

2. Incredible Years Parent Satisfaction Questionnaire

(Webster-Stratton; www.incredibleyears.com/resources/assess_forms.asp)

This questionnaire assessed group participants' satisfaction with the Basic Parent Training Programme in the areas of; overall satisfaction; usefulness of the teaching format; ease of performing parenting techniques; usefulness of parenting techniques and satisfaction with group facilitators. It was completed at the end of the Basic Parent Training Programme.

3.2 Measuring the Impact of IY Teacher Training in Classroom Management

1. Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997; www.sdqinfo.com)

In this evaluation, an SDQ was completed by class teachers for a sample of 9 children from each class (Junior Infants to Sixth class) in the school. A total of 96 SDQs were analysed and out of this total, 40 children (41.5%) were classified as having difficulties. This sample of 40 was then examined post-intervention (5 months later) to see if there was any change in their presentation following the Incredible Years Teacher Training

input. This was a broad measure in order to gauge whether the input with Teachers in Classroom Management had an effect on the children's classroom behaviour as rated by their teacher before and after the Teacher Training Programme was conducted.

2. Teacher Strategies Questionnaire

(Webster-Stratton; www.incredibleyears.com/resources/assess_forms.asp)

This self-report instrument assesses three main areas; confidence in managing classroom behaviour, positive approaches with parents and the use of positive strategies in the classroom. All teaching staff in the school completed this questionnaire prior to the commencement of and one month following completion of the four one-day monthly IY Teacher Training in Classroom Management workshops.

3. Incredible Years Teacher Workshop Satisfaction Questionnaire

(Webster-Stratton; www.incredibleyears.com/resources/assess_forms.asp)

This questionnaire assessed participant's level of satisfaction in the following areas; overall programme; usefulness of programme content; methods of programme delivery and evaluation of group leaders. It was completed by participants at the end of the Teacher Training Programme.

3.3 Measuring the Impact of IY Child Training (Dina Dinosaur)

1. Self Control Rating Scale, (Kendall & Wilcox, 1979).

This questionnaire assesses self-control in primary school children. It contains 33 items which relate to self-control or impulsivity. A lower score indicates increased self-control. The Self-Control Rating Scale was completed by the parent and the class teacher for each child who participated in the Child Training Programme, prior to commencement of the programme and following its completion.

4. Results of Evaluation

4.1 Demographic Information

In order to be able to describe the population who took part in the Incredible Years Project, a short questionnaire was developed and given to parents who attended the IY Parent Training programme and/or whose children attended the IY Child Training Programme. In total, 16 parents (10 involved in Parent Training and 6 whose children attended the Child Training), and 25 children were involved in the Incredible Years Parent and Child programmes. See Appendix A for a copy of this questionnaire.

Parents

All of the primary caregivers who took part in the Incredible Years Project were women (15 mothers and 1 grandmother). The majority (63%) of parents who took part were aged between 30 and 39 years and were married (63%) to the child's biological father. 25% were single parents. In terms of ethnicity, 44% were Irish Caucasian, 31% were Irish Travellers and the final 25% were foreign national (mainly African). This accurately reflected the population mix within the school as described earlier (p. 17 paragraph 3). The primary language spoken at home was English for 88% of participants.

In terms of employment, 56% of primary caregivers were not working outside of the home and 38% were working part-time. 44% of spouses/ partners were unemployed; 31% were working full-time and 6% worked part-time.

Children

44% of the children who participated were male and 56% were female. The majority (60%) were aged between 4 and 7 years. 72% of the children were noted as having an emotional or behavioural problem. 32% were noted to have a learning delay and 20% a language delay. 60% of the children were reported to be attending professional services such as CAMHS, NEPS, Clinical Psychology or Speech and Language Therapy.

4.2 Impact of IY Basic Parent Training

1. Incredible Years Parent Satisfaction Questionnaire

A high level of satisfaction was indicated for each subscale of this questionnaire. The mean scores for each subscale are displayed below in Figure 2.

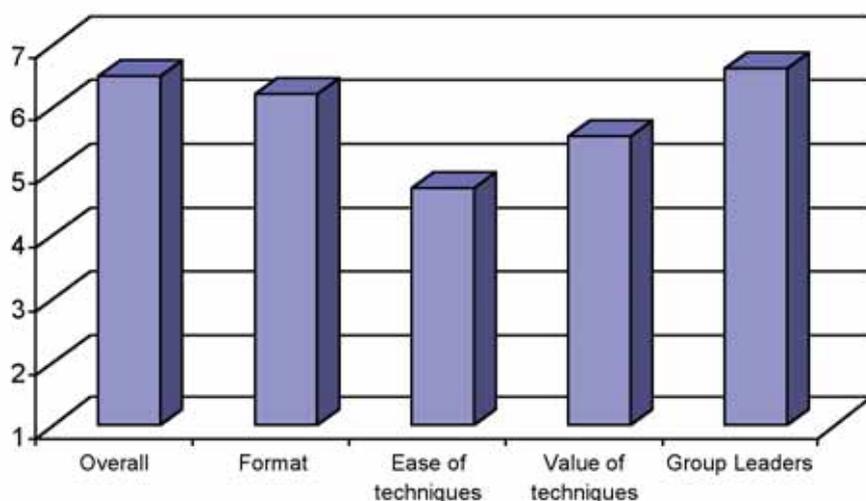


Figure 2: Parents' Satisfaction with the IY Parent Training Programme. (Scores could range from 1 - 7).

The highest mean ratings were for satisfaction with the group leaders and overall satisfaction. The lowest rating was for ease of performing parenting techniques ($M = 4.74$), indicating that while parents found the techniques useful ($M = 5.58$), they experienced difficulty in putting them into practice. “Ignoring” and “Time out” were the techniques that parents reported finding the most difficult to perform in practice.

Parents highlighted the use of praise with their children as one of the most helpful parts of the programme. All participants commented that they found the group members to be very supportive and very interested in their children. They valued the opportunity to

meet new people and to be-friend them and 77% said that they would like to continue to meet as a group.

The following quotes from parents who attended the group sum up the general level of enthusiasm experienced by participants on the course:

"I'd like if it had gone on for a lot longer. I loved going to it. [It] gave me great confidence 'coz [child] loved the praise and would do a lot more for me. [I liked] meeting everyone, all their ideas, Breedra and Jenny (course facilitators). I'd like to start it all over again."

"There are two things I would like to talk about from this course:

- 1) The praising everyday - my kids' faces lit up and when they started returning the praise it would make your heart melt. It gave them more confidence as well.*
- 2) The second thing; I was new to the area. When I started meeting the people [from the course] in town and at the school I finally felt that I belonged."*

"One thing I took away from the course was spending time with the kids, getting down on the ground, making jigsaws, playing games. It gave them more confidence and it gave myself more confidence to play better with them. We now have a brilliant relationship, we can go to the park together and we have great fun."

"What I brought out from the course was to listen to my kids more and they listen to me, and it has made our relationship more stronger."

4.3 Impact of IY Teacher Training in Classroom Management

1. Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

A total of 96 SDQs were administered before the Teacher Training in Classroom Management commenced. Out of this, 40 children (41.5%) were classified as having difficulties (they scored in the Borderline or Abnormal range). When this sub-group was examined 5 months later following completion of the Teacher Training programme, it was found that the mean scores across all 5 scales of the SDQ moved in the expected direction pre to post- intervention. For example, pro-social behaviour scores increased and scores for peer problems, hyperactivity, conduct problems and emotional symptoms decreased. One score reached statistical significance: There was a statistically significant decrease in teacher ratings of hyperactivity in the Junior classes (Junior Infants to 2nd class) following completion of the IY Teacher Training Programme. This suggests that teachers became more confident and effective in managing and reducing hyperactive behaviour in junior classes. Figure 3 illustrates this significant finding.

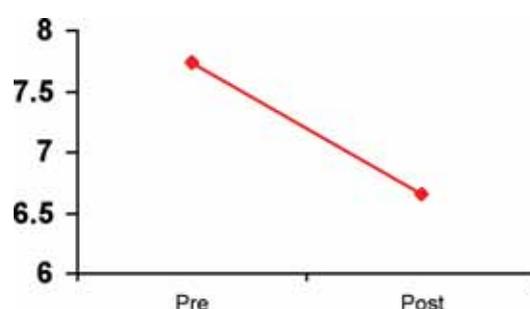


Figure 3: Reduction in hyperactivity in Junior classes from following IY Teacher Training

(Standard scores could range from 1 - 10)

2. Teacher Strategies Questionnaire

The Teacher Strategies Questionnaire assessed the following three areas: (i) Confidence in managing the classroom; (ii) Use of positive strategies; (iii) Positive approaches with parents. Teachers were asked to rate themselves on the use of these strategies before and after their participation in the IY Teacher Training in Classroom Management programme.

(i) Confidence Managing the Classroom:

There was a statistically significant increase in teacher's ratings of their confidence in managing classroom behaviour following completion of the IY Teacher Training programme ($p = .018$). See Figure 4.

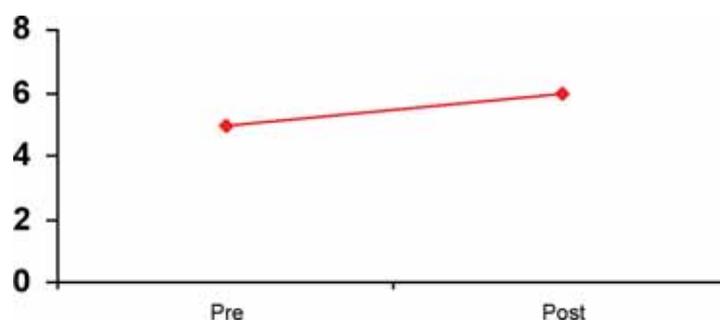


Figure 4: Increase in Teachers' Confidence in Managing Classroom Behaviour following completion of the IY Teacher Training Programme.

(Scores could range from 1 - 7).

(ii) Use of Positive Strategies:

Teachers rated the usefulness of positive strategies in the classroom significantly higher post-training ($p = .043$). The strategy given the highest rating in relation to both frequency and usefulness in managing classroom behaviour was praise and incentives. Also, teachers' ratings of the usefulness of limit-setting as a classroom strategy was significantly higher post training compared with pre-training ($p = .002$). See Figures 5 and 6 below.

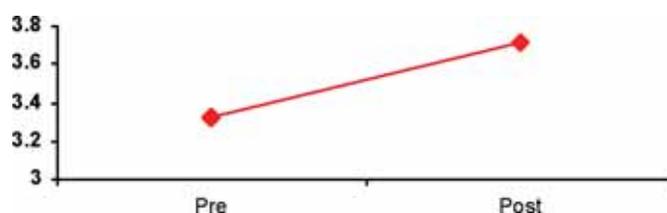


Figure 5: Increase in Teacher's Use of Positive Strategies in the Classroom (Scores could range from 1 - 5).

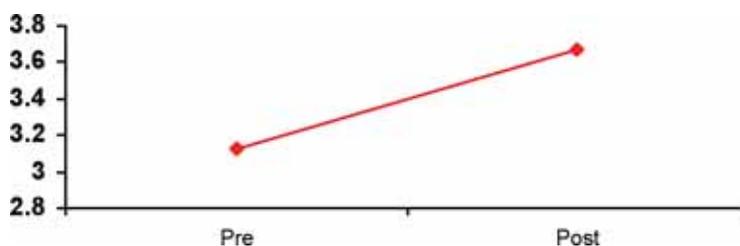


Figure 6: Increase in Teachers' ratings of Limit-setting as a classroom strategy. (Scores could range from 1 - 5).

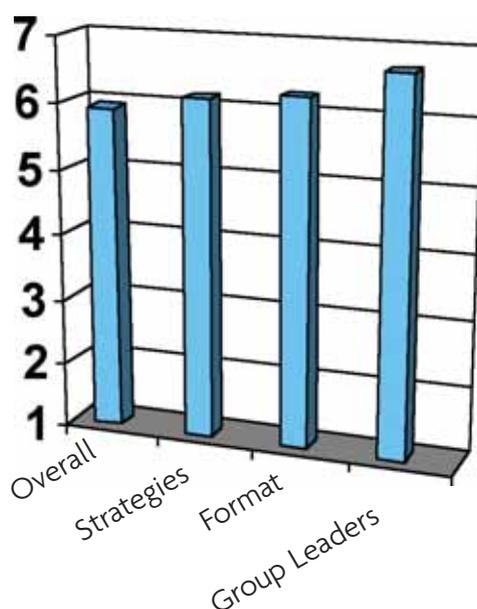
(iii) Positive Approaches with Parents:

Teachers rated themselves quite low in terms of their positive approaches with parents. On a scale of 1 to 6, the average teacher rating was 2 and this did not change at post-measure.

3. Incredible Years Teacher Workshop Satisfaction Questionnaire

A high level of satisfaction was indicated for each subscale of this questionnaire. (See Figure 7). Overall, teachers expressed a high level of satisfaction in their confidence to manage current behaviour problems and future behaviour problems.

Figure 7: Participants' satisfaction with the IY Teacher Training Programme.
(Scores could range from 1-7)



What emerged as being particularly important to the teachers were the discussions and interactions with other teachers. They liked being able to discuss strategies, behavioural problems and classroom management with their colleagues. They liked the use of positive strategies such as descriptive praise, incentives and strategies for promoting good behaviour. Other aspects of the programme which the teachers liked included the presentation of the material in a friendly and unthreatening manner and the positive angle of the programme (eg. focusing on children's good behaviour as opposed to negative behaviours).

At least half the respondents described the video vignettes as being unhelpful, commenting that they were Americanised and not suited to the Irish situation. Some suggested that Irish video examples be used in the programme and that the programme present more strategies which would be useful to the older child.

It was also observed that the teachers of junior classes rated the usefulness of teaching techniques significantly higher than teachers of the senior classes ($p = .005$) (see Figure 8).

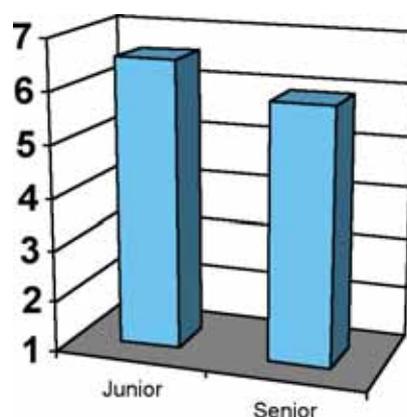


Figure 8: Usefulness of the Teaching Techniques as rated by Teachers of Junior and Senior Classes. (Scores could range from 1 – 7).

4.4 Impact of IY Child Training (Dina Dinosaur)

1. Self Control Rating Scale

There was a statistically significant increase in teachers' ratings of the children's self-control following the IY Child Training Programme (See figure 9). This indicates that the children who attended the IY Child Training Programme demonstrated enhanced levels of self-control at school following the intervention. However, there was no significant change in parent's ratings of their children's self-control from pre to post-measure. Interestingly parents rated their children as having higher levels of self-control than teacher's ratings in both the before and after measures.

Note: Lower scores indicate more self-control.

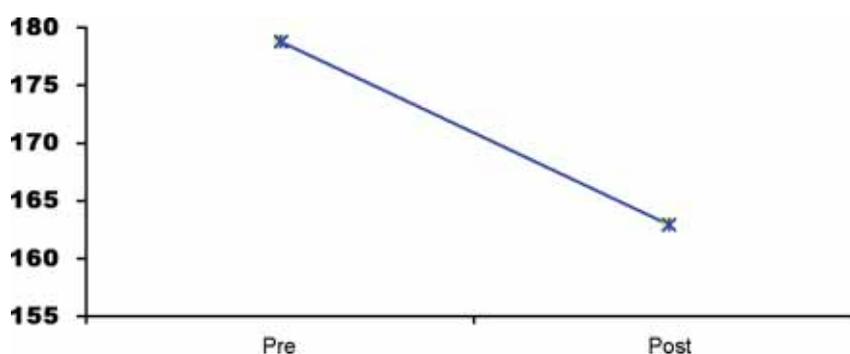


Figure 9: Increase in Self-Control of Children who participated in the IY Child Training Programme as rated by their teachers.

(Scores could range from 33 - 231)

5. Overall Outcomes

5.1 Parent Outcomes

Parents who participated in the Parent Training aspect of the Incredible Years programme showed a very high attendance and completion rate (88%). Clarecare staff reported that the attendance and completion rate was significantly higher than the usual rate in their experience of delivering parenting programmes. Parents also reported a high level of satisfaction with the parenting course. They reported improved relationships with their children and enhanced self-esteem and confidence in themselves. They also reported increased confidence in visiting the school and approaching school staff regarding their children. This was helped by the opportunity to meet members of the school staff outside of the school environment at the parent-training lunches. It was also helped by the social support of meeting the friendly faces of the other parent group participants at the school gates. The parents requested further input and in response to this, the Advanced Parent Training programme was offered. 50% of the original group went on to complete this programme*.

Parents reported being more open to engaging with the school following training. This was related to increased self-confidence on their part as well as enhanced knowledge of how to communicate their concerns in an effective and assertive way. The school also reported an increased openness to building positive relationships with parents.

5.2 School Outcomes

Teacher Confidence

The results of our evaluation showed an increase in teacher's confidence in managing children's behaviour. It also showed that teachers were employing more positive strategies with their students following the Incredible Years training. In Junior classes, a

significant reduction in hyperactivity was reported. The fact that these results showed statistical significance within such a short time-frame (5 months) is impressive and bodes well for impact of the programme in the school over the long-term.

School & Classroom rules

Apart from the quantitative outcomes outlined above, there were other qualitative changes that school staff experienced and reported. The school principal observed that the IY approach placed more emphasis on a positive approach to discipline and on helping children to learn to make the right choices for themselves. The school rules were therefore amended to reflect these objectives. Class rules for the junior classes were also modified and posted up on the classroom walls using positive, child-friendly language (eg. 'use my indoor voice', 'keep my body to myself', 'be friendly to others'). See Appendix B for examples of the school's new classroom rules.

Senior Classes

Senior class teachers expressed disappointment that their new approach to classroom management did not bring about the same significant impact on their students as it did in junior classes. They did note however, that their use of positive strategies and interactions with their students was having a beneficial impact on teacher-student relationships. They recognised that the difficult behaviours exhibited by some of these children have been entrenched as part of their interaction style for a very long time and would therefore take a significant amount of time to change. Indeed, the Incredible Years programme was designed to target children up to the age of ten years due to the research evidence that behavioural problems are much more resistant to change in older children.

Parent- Teacher Relationships

While teachers did not report any increase in their positive approaches to parents, the school has begun to show that it recognises the importance of adopting a more welcoming and inclusive attitude towards parents. This has been demonstrated by the school's recent organisation of a comfortable meeting room with tea-making facilities, where parents and teachers can meet to talk.

A significant amount of effort was required on the school's part initially, to inform all parents of children attending the school about the Incredible Years Programme and to invite their participation. This was then followed up through personal contact with the parents of children in the junior classes who had been identified as in greatest need of intervention. The development of trust between the school and parents was therefore the first essential building block towards encouraging parents to participate in the parenting programme. Indeed school staff expressed disappointment that not all of the parents that they hoped would engage in the parenting programme did so. However, it is hoped that over time, if the parent training can continue to be offered in conjunction with the school, that parents who complete it can help to encourage others and dispel any fears or apprehensions about its purpose or content.

Introduction of Classroom Dina

Following their delivery of the child training as a 'pull out' training programme for a small group of children, school staff concluded that it would have a much greater impact if it was taught as part of the curriculum to the whole class. In this way, every child could benefit through learning the same social and emotional skills, which could then become a natural part of the class ethos. Classroom Dina was therefore implemented in 2nd class on a trial basis by school staff in September '06. Teachers reported a positive impact on the children's attitude and behaviour and noted that the children really benefited from being taught how to label and express their feelings verbally. They also noted that the

IY Classroom Dina was particularly useful in accomplishing SPHE (Social, Personal & Health Education) goals and requirements and therefore expanded the delivery of the Classroom Dina to Senior Infants and 1st class in September 2007.

Reduction in Referrals

School management noted a decrease in their referrals of children for emotional/behavioural problems in the year following IY intervention. This may be due to staff's increased understanding and confidence about how to address such issues themselves in the classroom. This trend needs to be monitored over a period of years before such attributions can be made with certainty. The school reported that it was very beneficial to them to have made stronger links with HSE Clinical Psychology Service, CAMHS, Clarecare and NEPS. It led to an enhanced understanding of the different roles and referral pathways of each service and they reported feeling more comfortable about contacting each agency to consult with them regarding issues of concern. This enhanced perception of support may also have contributed to the decrease in referrals for emotional/behavioural problems in the school.

Role of Leadership & Commitment

School staff highlighted the importance of strong leadership from the School Principal and a strong commitment on the part of staff in the successful implementation of the programme. Teachers had to modify their teaching styles and to try out new strategies in between training modules. It therefore required a significant amount of thought, time and practice on their part. Despite the level of commitment needed, the school have demonstrated continued enthusiasm for the development of the Incredible Years model within the school. For example one of the teachers in the school has completed a Master's degree looking at the impact of the Incredible Years within the school.

5.3 Key Ingredients in the Process

The fact that this project was completed whilst also juggling regular work demands is testimony to the strength of conviction of the professionals involved in the need to reach children and their parents as early as possible, in order to prevent the litany of social problems that arise as a result of emotional and behavioural disturbance.

This shared belief in the importance of preventative work to the community at large fired the team with the energy and enthusiasm needed to overcome numerous obstacles along the way. The collaborative approach adopted ensured a healthy respect for each other's views and promoted joint decision-making. It also fostered a sense of ownership of the project and its goals to all parties involved.

Regular communication between agencies was essential in the process of team-building, in the development of trust and in maximising the learning from each other. In fact, this team-building process mirrored the philosophy of the Incredible Years programme which strives to develop positive relationships between families and their community so as to enhance the social and emotional development of children.

Participation in facilitator training days as well as peer supervision meetings ensured that all team members were using the same conceptual framework. Common principles helped to clarify how best to go about achieving objectives which in turn aided decision-making. This contrasted sharply with the traditional tendency of agencies to work independently from each other, often without awareness of, or sometimes even at odds with each other's interventions with families, which can lead to confusion, mistrust and a lack of coherence for the families being served.

6. Conclusions

This was the first time in Ireland that all three strands of the Incredible Years Programme were implemented in conjunction with each other. The outcomes clearly confirm that this is a very effective way to enhance children's social and emotional competencies and ultimately reduce and prevent the development of conduct disorder and anti-social behaviour in the community.

Parents showed a high attendance and completion rate of the IY Parent Training Programme. They expressed a high level of satisfaction with the training and reported improved relationships with their children as well as enhanced self-esteem and confidence in themselves. They also reported increased confidence in visiting the school and approaching school staff regarding their children.

Scoil Chríost Rí reported calmer classrooms and less stressed teachers. They reported a full commitment to continuing with the IY philosophy in the school and described their long term goal to increase positive attitudes and behaviours throughout the school in terms of how teachers relate with pupils and parents and also how teachers support each other. They commented that the school had "opened out more" in that there was a more welcoming atmosphere towards parents. They noted that the IY approach worked best in the junior classes, but anticipated that as these junior children move up through the school, the philosophy will become more infused within the school system and begin to have a more observable impact on the behaviour of senior class students.

Overall, while schools can become self-sufficient in the IY approach and promote it within the school environment, the core intervention is the training that parents receive, given that they have the most profound influence on the child's social and emotional development. With this in mind, continued input in the form of IY parent training in conjunction with the IY teacher and child training, is crucial to the success of this intervention in reducing and preventing conduct problems.

7. Recommendations

This pilot has highlighted the benefits of a preventative, community-based approach which equips communities with the skills and knowledge needed to foster resilience and well-being in children. The steering group envision the expansion of the IY programme to other schools in conjunction with continued access to the Parent training programme in the schools' local communities.

This pilot has identified key ingredients needed in this process;

1. The implementation of all three aspects of the Incredible Years programme: This is essential so that parents as well as teachers and children are equipped with the skills for promoting social and emotional competence.

2. A whole school approach: This is recommended so that the school can develop a full staff commitment to the IY principles and approaches.

3. It is important to foster the self-sufficiency of the school in the Incredible Years model: This is fostered through the school's involvement in facilitator training and co-delivery of the child and teacher programmes, which ensures that expertise is left behind in the school once the training period has been completed.

4. Preference for the IY Classroom Dina (whole class curriculum): The Classroom Dina was found to be preferable to the use of the Small Group Child Training format, given the much wider reach and impact of the whole class approach within the school. It was concluded that the Small Group format would still be of benefit to those children in need of extra support, giving them extra practice at using the skills gained as part of the whole class curriculum. It was felt that the delivery of the Small Group format in an

after-school setting would allow for better contact and involvement with parents which would help to transfer the learning to the home environment.

5. Link between IY Classroom Dina and the SPHE curriculum: Given that teachers found the IY Classroom Dina helpful in accomplishing SPHE (Social, Personal & Health Education) goals and requirements, an important next step would be for consultation to occur between schools and SPHE coordinators within the Department of Education and Science (DES) in relation to the role that Classroom Dina can play within the SPHE framework.

6. Facilitator certification is recommended: Once facilitators of each of the three Incredible Years programmes have led the groups more than once, it is important that they apply for certification. Achievement in this regard implies a high level of fidelity to the original evidence-based programme and will ensure continued successful outcomes from the implementation of the Incredible Years Series.

7. Target the Pre-school population: All services involved in this project, including Scoil Chríost Rí, recognise the need for this early intervention programme to target the pre-school population so that children and their parents are equipped with social and emotional competencies as early as possible. The Incredible Years Programme was designed to target children as young as 2 years and is therefore applicable to the pre-school environment. While its implementation across pre-schools will bring with it many new logistical and organisational challenges given the current structure of services, the steering group feel that it is important for this aspiration to remain part of the long term vision for the roll-out of the Incredible Years in the community.

8. The need for a Research Coordinator: An important learning outcome of the evaluation process was the need for a research coordinator. This role would allow for comprehensive evaluation of the Incredible Years interventions as they are implemented

throughout the region in the future. It would enable the assessment of short and long term outcomes in terms of children's behaviour and the impact of this early intervention approach on referrals to Child Protection, Family Support and Psychological services.

9. Expansion of the Incredible Years Programme: The services involved in this project are committed to continuing their collaborative work to promote the ongoing development of Incredible Years in Co. Clare within the current constraints of limited resources. However, the full roll-out of the programme to all primary schools, families and communities in Co. Clare is dependent upon:

- **The integration of Incredible Years into the work plan of all services currently involved in the delivery of it.**
- **The appointment of a Coordinator to manage the roll out and delivery of the Incredible Years programme in Co. Clare.**
- **The appointment of Parent Group Facilitators to offer IY parent training on a continuous basis to each school's community of parents.**

Looking to the Future

It is now time to respond to the irrefutable literature which highlights the importance of early intervention in order to address children's social and emotional skills from a very early age. We have the knowledge and tools to significantly reduce the societal costs currently paid in terms of crime, drug abuse, the juvenile and adult justice systems and the high cost of out-of-home placements. The Incredible Years Model gives us a practical and workable way of achieving these savings and realising this vision. This pilot project has shown the significant progress that can be achieved over a short time frame by a group of committed and enthusiastic people. The potential benefits of this model being made available to all schools, pre-schools and local communities in Co. Clare are immense.

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APPENDIX A

Demographic Information Questionnaire

Ennis Incredible Years Project – Demographic Form

1. Child Participating In The Study

1st Name: _____ Surname _____ Age _____ D.O.B. _____

2. Mother/Primary Caregiver Age _____

3. Primary Caregiver's relationship to child

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Mother | <input type="checkbox"/> Step Parent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Father | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents Partner (living in household) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoptive Mother | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Adult Relative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoptive Father | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Parent |

4. Spouse/Partner's relationship to Child

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Mother | <input type="checkbox"/> Step Parent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Father | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents Partner (living in household) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoptive Mother | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Adult Relative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoptive Father | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Parent |

5. Number Of Children Living At Home _____

6. Marital Status

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single, never married | <input type="checkbox"/> Living together as if married |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Separated | <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced | <input type="checkbox"/> Married |

7. Does your child (in this study) take any medications on a regular basis?

_____ For What?

8. Does your child (in the study) have any of the following:

- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Language delay | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Learning delay | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Physical disability | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Vision or Hearing Impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Specific Learning Difficulty (e.g. dyslexia) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Emotional or Behavioural Problem | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

9. Is your child attending any professional services for these difficulties?

	Yes	No
a. HSE Clinical Psychology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. CAMHS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. NEPS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Speech and Language Therapy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. CDC (Child Development Centre)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Enable Ireland	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Clare Early Intervention Service (CEIS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. What Is Your Ethnic Group/Nationality?

- Irish Caucasian
- Irish Traveller
- African
- Asian
- Eastern European
- Other _____

11. What Is The Primary Language Spoken In your Home?

- English
- Other _____

12. What Is The Highest Level Of Education You Have Completed?

- Primary School
- Some Secondary School
- All Secondary School
- Some College
- College Graduate

13. Are You Working Right Now?

- Yes, Full Time _____
- Yes, Part Time _____
- Not Working But Looking For A Job
- Not Working by choice (home maker, retired)

14. Is your spouse/partner working right now?

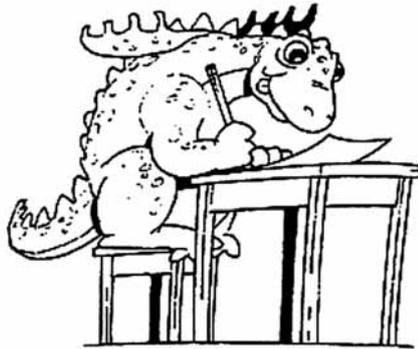
- Yes, Full Time _____
- Yes, Part Time _____
- Working At Home (Childcare)
- Not Working But Looking For A Job
- Not Working by choice (home maker, retired)

APPENDIX B

Examples of modified classroom rules in Scoil Chríost Rí



Be Friends

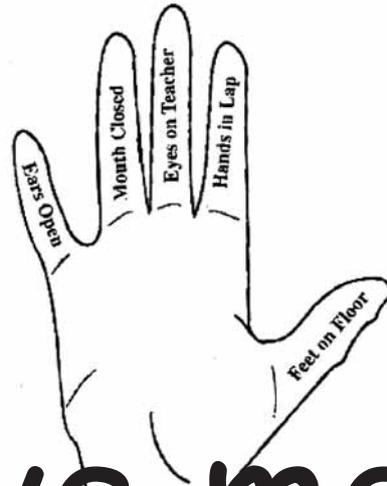


4 on the floor



I will use my indoor voice

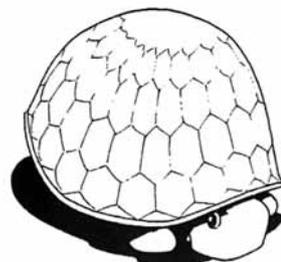
Indoor Voice



Give me 5



Quiet Hand



Keep Your body
to yourself