

The Incredible Years Preschool Parents Programme Information



The Incredible Years (IY) Preschool parent's programme forms part of the IY parent training series. This series was devised by Dr. Carolyn Webster-Stratton in the U.S (1984:1998), to prevent, reduce and treat conduct problems in children.

The IY Preschool parent's programme is offered to parents/carers who have children attending a preschool service where staff have participated in the IY Classroom Dinosaur training for preschools and to parents outside of these preschools.

The IY Classroom Dinosaur training has been completed by a number of preschool services in Co. Clare to date, under the leadership of Tusla, Clare Local Development Committee and Clare County Childcare Committee, and in collaboration with IY Clare.

The IY Preschool parent's programme is delivered by experienced professionals from Clarecare's family support team. It is delivered over 14 weeks for approx. 2.5 hours on a weekly basis. The programme uses well researched and validated techniques to help parents/carers promote preschooler's social, emotional and behavioural development. The focus of the programme is on parent's/carer's strengths and on building skills to enhance the parent/carer-child relationship.

Mums, Dads and carers are welcome to participate in the IY Preschool parent's programme, and group members come from a wide range of family settings and ethnic backgrounds. Preschool services that have completed IY Classroom Dinosaur training will advertise and promote the IY Preschool parent's programme at their services.

The weekly IY Preschool parenting group sessions involve group led discussions about everyday challenges and issues faced by parents/carers. Video clips depicting real life scenarios between parents/carers and preschool aged children are used by group leaders to introduce new techniques to the group and offer suggestions about how to manage preschooler's behaviour at home.

Group discussions, guided by group leaders, give parents/carers an opportunity to share their experiences of trying out new techniques at home. Participants in the IY Preschool parent's programme have reported finding tips and support from other parents/carers and group leaders to be of great benefit.

Participants also enjoy:

- Weekly handouts on topics covered from the IY Preschool parent's programme.
- Themed goodies related to the programme.
- Meeting other parents/carers in similar situations.
- Tea/Coffee, snacks during the weekly meetings.
- Availability of childcare allowance, if needed.
- Accessing other services through group leaders.

- Availability of the Incredible Years Parent's book by Dr. Carolyn Webster-Stratton. The book may be accessed through group facilitators to buy or on loan from local library.

Overview of Programme Content:

The following topics are covered in weekly sessions in the IY Preschool programme:

- **Child Directed Play promoting Positive Relationships:** The importance of strengthening children's social skills, emotional regulation and school readiness through child directed play is explored in this programme. Understanding the importance of adult attention to promote positive child behaviours, recognising children's capabilities, needs, temperaments and activity levels all form part of promoting positive relationships between parent/carer and child, while also building on children's self-esteem and self-concept.
- **Academic & Persistence Coaching:** This section looks at promoting children's language skills through descriptive commentary, academic and persistence coaching. Participants learn how to coach preschooler's regarding reading skills and how to coach them to persist with an activity, and to build up frustration tolerance. The technique of modelling positive communication is also explored.
- **Social & Emotion Coaching:** The use of coaching to promote pre-schooler's emotional vocabulary and encourage their expression of feelings is a key technique in this programme. The promotion of preschooler's social skills, self-regulation skills and adults learning how to prompt them to encourage their social skills with peers is explored.
- **Effective Praise & Encouragement:** The importance of using specific, positive praise and encouragement in order to increase preschooler's appropriate behaviours is a key part of this programme. The power of using social rewards, modelling self-praise, and praising steps in the right direction are explored in detail. Building preschooler's self-esteem through praise and positive self-talk to help them learn and master new skills and strengthen positive behaviours is emphasised in this programme.
- **Motivating Children Through Incentives:** This programme seeks to help participants learn how to use tangible rewards or incentives to motivate young children. It can be very helpful to combine positive attention, praise and tangible rewards to teach children how to master a new skill, once it is appropriate for their developmental stage and cognitive ability. Tangible rewards can be both planned and spontaneous and can help to motivate children towards achieving specific goals as well as reminding them of their success at achieving steps along the way. The importance of participants rewarding themselves, partners, teachers and others is also discussed in this programme.
- **Rules, Responsibilities & Routines:** In this part of the programme the emphasis shifts from encouraging and teaching social behaviours to an emphasis on positive discipline strategies aimed at reducing and preventing misbehaviour. It explores the importance of predictable routines and schedules for preschoolers, handling separations and reunions, and setting clear household rules. Predictability offers children a sense of security, and teaches them how to accept limits, therefore it is a key component in children's lives in this age group as they learn how to self-regulate.
- **Effective Limit Setting:** The value of clear limits on children's behaviour, understanding how to give more effective commands and providing children with positive alternatives/choices, reminders and transition time are all explored in this programme. Reducing the number of commands and praising children's compliance are key techniques in effectively setting limits.
- **Handling Misbehaviour, following through with commands:** The purpose of this section is to look at how adults can follow through with commands, avoid power

struggles and be consistent. The importance of maintaining self-control as adults, teaching and modelling calm down strategies for children and accepting that testing behaviour is normal are areas looked at in this programme.

- **Avoiding & Ignoring Misbehaviour:** This programme emphasises the concepts of effective ignoring, selective attention, and how to identify appropriate behaviours to ignore while at the same time building up the positive relationship with children using play, praise, coaching and incentives.
- **Time Out to Calm Down:** This programme looks at teaching children calm down strategies, explaining Time Out to preschool aged children, using Time Out appropriately and dealing with refusals to go to Time Out. Calming strategies for adults while implementing Time Out are also covered.
- **Using Natural & Logical Consequences:** In this part of the programme the use of natural and logical consequences for managing children's inappropriate behaviour in various situations is explored. The use of developmentally and age appropriate consequences, avoiding power struggles that reinforce misbehaviour through lack of follow through and knowing when to use consequences or privilege removal to handle misbehaviour are key techniques in this programme.
- **Problem Solving & Self-Regulation:** This part of the programme aims to teach children about problem solving through the use of puppets and stories. The importance of adults strengthening the beginning steps of children's empathy skills and ability to think about solutions, understand another person's point of view, modelling problem solving skills and encouraging children to express their feelings are key elements of this programme.

Getting Started: Group Leaders arrange to meet parents/carers who have secured a place on the IY Preschool parent's programme individually before the group begins. At this stage parents/carers are asked to fill in some forms with group leaders individually, if they are happy to do so. All information is entirely confidential, non-identifying and is used for evaluation and research purposes only. Parents/Carers can choose not to fill in forms, and still fully participate in the IY Preschool parent's programme.

Video Taping: In order to attain accreditation from the IY committee in Seattle USA, parent group leaders need to tape themselves in action during weekly sessions. This allows them to improve their group delivery skills and maintain high standards as IY group leaders. The camera is on group leaders ONLY and the material is viewed to examine group leader's skills, not participant's responses.

Quotes from Previous Participants

My child changed from the first class, using child directed play, and this made a huge difference to play & behaviour

Easy to understand different techniques and to put into practice. Great parents attending and great tutors

I enjoyed the whole experience of it & find it useful in my everyday life

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