

# Incredible Years Child Training (Dinosaur School)

Review: September 2017

**Incredible Years Child Training (Dinosaur School) is a group-based programme for children with behavioural difficulties between the ages of 4 and 8.**

The programme teaches children self-regulation and problem-solving skills in small groups with developmentally-appropriate materials. Parents and teachers are updated on session goals and are asked to help reinforce target behaviours.

The full name of the programme is 'Incredible Years Dina Dinosaur's Social Skills and Problem Solving Curriculum (Dinosaur School)'.

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Evidence  
rating: **3+**

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Cost rating: **2**

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## EIF Programme Assessment

Incredible Years Child Training (Dinosaur School) has evidence of a **short-term positive impact** on child outcomes from at least one rigorous evaluation.

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Evidence  
rating: **3+**

### What does the evidence rating mean?

**Level 3** indicates **evidence of efficacy**. This means the programme can be described as evidence-based: it has evidence from at least one rigorously conducted RCT or QED demonstrating a statistically significant positive impact on at least one child outcome.

This programme does not receive a rating of 4 as it has not yet replicated its results in another rigorously conducted study, where at least one study indicates long-term impacts, and at least one uses measures independent of study participants.

### What does the plus mean?

The plus rating indicates that this programme has evidence from at least one level 3 study, along with evidence from other studies rated 2 or better.

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## Cost rating

A rating of 2 indicates that a programme has a medium-low cost to set up and deliver, compared with other interventions reviewed by EIF. This is equivalent to an estimated unit cost of £100–£499.

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Cost rating: **2**

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## Child outcomes

According to the best available evidence for this programme's impact, it can achieve the following positive outcomes for children:

### Supporting children's mental health and wellbeing

Improved social competence with peers (expert observation of behaviour - based on **study 1**)

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Improved social competence with peers (expert observation of behaviour and teacher report) - based on **study 2a, study 2b**

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### Preventing crime, violence and antisocial behaviour

Improved behaviour (mother report) - based on **study 1**

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Improved behaviour (expert observation of behaviour) - based on **study 1**

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Improved behaviour at home (parent report and expert observation of behaviour) - based on **study 2a, study 2b**

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Improved child behaviour at school (teacher report and expert observation of behaviour) - based on **study 2a, study 2b**

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*This programme also has evidence of supporting positive outcomes for couples, parents or families that may be relevant to a commissioning decision. Please see the 'About the evidence' section for more detail.*

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# Key programme characteristics

## Who is it for?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to the following age-groups:

- Preschool
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## How is it delivered?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to implementation through these delivery models:

- Group
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## Where is it delivered?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to its implementation in these settings:

- Children's centre or early-years setting
  - Primary school
  - In-patient health setting
  - Out-patient health setting
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## How is it targeted?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to its implementation as:

- Targeted indicated
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## Where has it been implemented?

Denmark, Norway, United Kingdom, United States

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## UK provision

This programme has been implemented in the UK.

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## UK evaluation

This programme's best evidence does not include evaluation conducted in the UK.

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## About the programme

### What happens during delivery?

#### How is it delivered?

- Incredible Years Child Training (Dinosaur School) is delivered in 18-20 sessions of 2 hours' duration each by 2 practitioners to groups of around 6 children.

### What happens during the intervention?

- The sessions include coached play, puppet interactions, video vignettes, games, activities, and circle time. Children receive 'chips' for positive behaviours that are tailored to each child's treatment goals.
- Children are given weekly homework assignments to complete with their parents. Parents are also updated regularly on session goals (in personal meetings or letters or phone calls) and given suggestions for specific behaviours to praise and reward at home.
- Teachers are updated regularly on session goals (through behaviour planning conferences, letters or phone calls) and invited to participate in behaviour planning.

### What are the implementation requirements?

#### Who can deliver it?

- The practitioners who delivers this programme are two therapists, counsellors, psychologists, school psychologists, or teachers, one with QCF-7/8 and one with QCF-6 level qualifications.

### What are the training requirements?

- The practitioners receive 18 hours of programme training.
- Booster training of practitioners is recommended.

## How are the practitioners supervised?

- It is recommended that practitioners are supervised by 1 programme developer supervisors qualified to QCF-7/8 level.

## What are the systems for maintaining fidelity?

Programme fidelity is maintained through the following processes:

- Training Manual
- Other printed material
- Video or DVD training
- Face-to-face training
- Fidelity monitoring
- Review of therapy sessions via video
- Skype consultation

## Is there a licensing requirement?

There is no licence required to run this programme.

## How does it work? (Theory of Change)

### How does it work?

- Strong emotion-regulation and problem-solving skills help children to cope with peer conflict, reduce aggressive responses, increase prosocial responses and be academically ready to learn.
- Ability to identify and recognize emotions in self and others helps children to develop emotional literacy, to problem solve and to understand and respond appropriately to social interactions with peers and adults.
- Increased problem solving skills reduce children's use of aggressive and antisocial responses to peers and adults and improve the use of prosocial solutions to problems.
- Increased school readiness skills (following directions, listening, paying attention) improve compliance and attention in school settings.

## **Intended outcomes**

Supporting children's mental health and wellbeing  
Enhancing school achievement & employment  
Preventing crime, violence and antisocial behaviour

## **Contact details**

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## About the evidence

Incredible Years Child Training (Dinosaur School)'s most rigorous evidence comes from two RCTs which were conducted in the USA.

Both studies are rigorously conducted RCTs; these studies identified statistically significant positive impact on a number of child outcomes.

This programme has evidence from at least one rigorously conducted RCT along with evidence from an additional comparison group study. Subsequently, the programme receives a 3+ rating overall.

*Although EIF identified two studies that were conducted in the UK, these were pilot studies whose methodology precluded them from contributing to the programme rating.*

### Study 1

**Citation:** Webster -Stratton & Hammond, (1997) | **Design:** RCT

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**Country:** United States | **Study rating:** 3

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**Sample:** 97 families, with children with conduct problems between 4 and 8 years old

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**Timing:** Post-test and 12 month follow up

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**Child outcomes:**

Improved social competence with peers (expert observation of behaviour)

Improved behaviour (mother report)

Improved behaviour (expert observation of behaviour)

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**Other outcomes:**

Improved parenting

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Webster-Stratton, C., & Hammond, M. (1997). Treating children with early-onset conduct problems: A comparison of child and parent training interventions. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 65, 93-109

**Available at** <http://psycnet.apa.org/record/1997-03014-011>

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## Study design and sample

The first study is a rigorously conducted RCT.

This study involved random assignment of children to an Incredible Years Child Training (Dinosaur School) treatment group (CT), an Incredible Years Parent Training treatment group (PT), a combined Child and Parent Training treatment group (CT&PT) and a wait-list control (WLC).

This study was conducted in the US with a sample of children between the ages of 4 and 8 who had met diagnostic criteria for oppositional defiant disorder and conduct disorder. Of the 49 families assigned to the CT condition (n=27) or to the WLC (n=22), 51% had an annual income of \$40,000 or more. 71.4% of the children were male and 87.8% were Caucasian.

## Measures

Child behaviour was measured using:

### Parent report

Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL), Eyberg Child Behaviour Index (ECBI) – intensity score, Parent daily report (mother report), Parent Stress Index Child Domain

### Teacher report

Behar Preschool Behavior Questionnaire (PBQ)

### Observational measures

WALLY child Social Problem-Solving Detective Game (WALLY), Dyadic Parent-child interactive Coding System– Revised (DPICS-R), The Peer Problem-Solving-Interaction Communication-Affect Rating System (PPS-I CARE) coding system

## Findings

This study identified statistically significant positive impact on a number of child outcomes.

This includes:

### Mother report

Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory Score, Parent Stress Index, PDR (target negative behaviours, no negative per 24 hours, target positive behaviour, no positive per 24 hours)

### Observational measures

WALLY (Object Acquisition: no of different solutions, Friendship Categories: no of different positive solutions & proportion of positive to negative solutions), PPSI-CARE (Total negative conflict management, Ratio of positive conflict management to negative)



## Study 2a

**Citation:** Webster-Stratton et al, (2004) | **Design:** RCT

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**Country:** United States | **Study rating:** 3

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**Sample:** 159 families with children with conduct problems between 4-8 years old

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**Timing:** Post-test and 12 month follow up

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**Child outcomes:**

Improved behaviour at home (parent report and expert observation of behaviour)

Improved child behaviour at school (teacher report and expert observation of behaviour)

Improved social competence with peers (expert observation of behaviour and teacher report)

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**Other outcomes:**

Improved mothers' parenting

Improved teachers' classroom management and class atmosphere

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Webster-Stratton, C., Reid, M. J., & Hammond, M. (2004). Treating children with early-onset conduct problems: intervention outcomes for parent, child, and teacher training. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 33(1), 105-124.

**Available at**

[http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/S15374424JCCP3301\\_11](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/S15374424JCCP3301_11)

## Study design and sample

The second study is a rigorously conducted RCT.

This study involved random assignment of children to an Incredible Years Child Training (Dinosaur School) group (CT); an Incredible Years parent training treatment group (PT); a parent plus teacher training group (PT+TT); a child training plus teacher training group (CT+TT); a parent, child, plus teacher training group (PT+CT+TT); and a waitlist control (WLC).

This study was conducted in the U.S. with a sample of children between the ages of 4 and 8 who had met the diagnostic criteria for oppositional defiant disorder. There were 30 families in the CT group and 26 in the control group. The average social class of these families was 'minor professional'. 91% of the children were male and 83% were Euro-American.

## Measures

Child behaviour and social competencies were measured using composite scores from subscales of a variety of different validated measures. This included:

- Child Conduct Problems at Home Composite Score
- Child Conduct Problems at School and With Peers Composite Score
- Child Social Competence With Peers Composite Score

## Findings

This study identified statistically significant positive impact on a number of child outcomes. These improvements included the Child Conduct Problems at Home Composite Score, Child Conduct Problems at School and With Peers Composite Score, Child Social Competence With Peers Composite Score.

## Study 2b

**Citation:** Reid et al, (2003) | **Design:** RCT

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**Country:** United States | **Study rating:** 2

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**Sample:** 159 families with children with conduct problems between 4-8 years old

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**Timing:** 2 years follow up

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**Child outcomes:**

Improved behaviour at home (parent report and expert observation of behaviour)

Improved child behaviour at school (teacher report and expert observation of behaviour)

Improved social competence with peers (expert observation of behaviour and teacher report)

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**Other outcomes:**

Improved mothers' parenting

Improved teachers' classroom management and class atmosphere

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Reid, M. J., Webster-Stratton, C., & Hammond, M. (2003). Follow-up of children who received the Incredible Years intervention for oppositional defiant disorder: Maintenance and prediction of 2-year outcome. *Behavior Therapy*, 34, 471-491.

Reid et al (2003) describes a follow-up paper to study 2a described above.

Families were assessed 2 years later with the same measures as study 2a. There was no active control group as the original wait-list control had received treatment. Comparisons with original pre-test scores revealed that all significant results had been maintained in the treatment group at 2 year follow up.

## Other studies

The following studies were identified for this programme but did not count towards the programme's overall evidence rating. A programme receives the same rating as its most robust study or studies.

Webster-Stratton, C., Reid, J., & Hammond, M. (2001). Social skills and problem-solving training for children with early-onset conduct problems: Who benefits?. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 42(7), 943-952.

Drugli, M. B., & Larsson, B. (2006). Children aged 4-8 years treated with parent training and child therapy because of conduct problems: Generalizing effects to day-care and school settings. *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 15(7), 392-399.

Larsson, B., Fossum, S., Clifford, G., Drugli, M., Handegard, B., & Morch, W. (2009). Treatment of oppositional defiant and conduct problems in young Norwegian children. *European Child Adolescent Psychiatry*, 18, 42-52.

Drugli, M. B., Larsson, B., Fossum, S., & Morch, W. T. (2010). Five- to six-year outcome and its prediction for children with ODD/CD treated with parent training. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 51(5), 559-566.

Webster-Stratton, C. H., Reid, M. J., & Beauchaine, T. (2011). Combining parent and child training for young children with ADHD. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 40(2), 191-203.

Webster-Stratton, C., M.J. Reid, and T.P. Beauchaine, One-Year Follow-Up of Combined Parent and Child Intervention for Young Children with ADHD. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 2013. 42(2): p. 251-261.

Linares, L. O., Li, M., & Shrout, P. E. (2012). Child training for physical aggression?: Lessons from foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(12), 2416-2422.

Hutchings, J., Bywater, T., Gridley, N., Whitaker, C. J., Martin-Forbes, P., & Gruffydd, S. (2012). The incredible years therapeutic social and emotional skills programme: A pilot study. *School Psychology International*, 33(3), 285-293.

Hutchings, J., Bywater, T., Daley, D., & Lane, E. (2007, February). A pilot study of the webster-stratton incredible years therapeutic dinosaur school programme. In *Clinical Psychology Forum New Series* (Vol. 170, p. 21). British Psychological Society.

Venter, J., MD; Cardinal, A., LCSW; Shaw, M., LPC; Wiskerchen, L., LCSW; DeSimone, S., LCSW and Ledesma, A., LPC. 2012. PowerPoint Presentation. Authors: Venter, Cardinal, Shaw, Wiskerchen, DeSimon



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## Guidebook

The EIF Guidebook provides information about early intervention programmes that have at least preliminary evidence of achieving positive outcomes for children. It provides information based on EIF's assessment of the strength of evidence for a programme's effectiveness, and on detail about programmes shared with us by those who design, run and deliver them.

The Guidebook serves an important starting point for commissioners to find out more about effective early interventions, and for programme providers to find out more about what good evidence of impact looks like and how it can be captured. As just one of our key resources for commissioners and practitioners, the Guidebook is an essential part of EIF's work to support the development of and investment in effective early intervention programmes.

Our assessment of the evidence for a programme's effectiveness can inform and support certain parts of a commissioning decision, but it is not a substitute for professional judgment. Evidence about what has worked in the past offers no guarantee that an approach will work in all circumstances. Crucially, the Guidebook is not a market comparison website: ratings and other information should not be interpreted as a specific recommendation, kite mark or endorsement for any programme.

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[How to read the Guidebook](#)

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[EIF evidence standards](#)

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[About the EIF Guidebook](#)

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## EIF

The Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) is an independent charity and a member of the What Works network. We support the use of effective early intervention for children, young people and their families: identifying signals of risk, and responding with effective interventions to improve outcomes, reduce hardship and save the public money in the long term.

We work by generating evidence and knowledge of what works in our field, putting this information in the hands of commissioners, practitioners and policymakers, and supporting the adoption of the evidence in local areas and relevant sectors.

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[www.EIF.org.uk](http://www.EIF.org.uk) | [@TheEIFoundation](https://twitter.com/TheEIFoundation)

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