

# Pyramid Club Primary

Review: March 2017

**Note on provider involvement:** This provider has agreed to EIF's terms of reference, and the assessment has been conducted and published with the full cooperation of the programme provider.

**Pyramid Club is a targeted programme for children who are identified as being quiet, shy, and behaviourally more likely to internalise. Pyramid Primary is provided to children in primary school, with activity content and material tailored to this group.**

Pyramid clubs run once a week for 10 weeks. The clubs are run by trained leaders, usually as an after school activity, but sometimes during the school day. Activities at the club are structured around circle time, art and craft, games, and food.

Each session runs for 90 minutes with up to 12 children and three club leaders. Pyramid Primary is provided to children in primary school, with activity content and material tailored to this group.

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Evidence  
rating: 2+

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Cost rating: 1

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## EIF Programme Assessment

Pyramid Club Primary has **preliminary evidence** of improving a child outcome, but we cannot be confident that the programme caused the improvement.

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Evidence  
rating: **2+**

### What does the evidence rating mean?

**Level 2** indicates that the programme has evidence of improving a child outcome from a study involving at least 20 participants, representing 60% of the sample, using validated instruments.

This programme does not receive a rating of 3 as its best evidence is not from a rigorously conducted RCT or QED evaluation.

### What does the plus mean?

The plus rating indicates that a programme's best available evidence is based on an evaluation that is more rigorous than a level 2 standard but does not meet the criteria for level 3.

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## Cost rating

A rating of 1 indicates that a programme has a low cost to set up and deliver, compared with other interventions reviewed by EIF. This is equivalent to an estimated unit cost of less than £100.

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Cost rating: **1**

# 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

**Decreased emotional problems (teacher report)**

Based on study 1

**Increased emotional intelligence (teacher report)**

Based on study 1

## Preventing crime, violence and antisocial behaviour

**Decreased peer problems (teacher report)**

Based on study 1

**Decreased total difficulties score (teacher report)**

Based on study 1

**Increased pro-social behaviour (teacher report)**

Based on study 1

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## Key programme characteristics

### Who is it for?

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

- Primary school

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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:

- Primary school

The programme may also be delivered in these settings:

- Primary school

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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?

England, Northern Ireland, Wales

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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 includes evaluation conducted in the UK.

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## Spotlight sets

EIF includes this programme in the following Spotlight sets:

- school based social emotional learning programmes for children with recognised or possible special education needs
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# About the programme

## What happens during delivery?

### How is it delivered?

- Pyramid Club is delivered in 10 sessions of 1.5 hours' duration each by three practitioners to groups of 8-12 children.

### What happens during the intervention?

- Pyramid Clubs begin and end with circle time. Circle time takes the form of collaborative group discussions which gives children the opportunity to listen and speak.
- Clubs involve art and craft, which provides the opportunity to be creative.
- Games are played, which are typically team based and promote negotiation and collaboration.
- Food preparation and sharing is also a core activity, which provides opportunities to develop skills, acknowledge different cultures and understand people's likes and dislikes.

## What are the implementation requirements?

### Who can deliver it?

- Pyramid Club is delivered by a school or voluntary organisation staff member or volunteer with recommended QCF-level 3.

### What are the training requirements?

- School or voluntary organisation staff have 10 hours of training and volunteers have 15 hours. Booster training of practitioners is recommended.

## How are the practitioners supervised?

- It is recommended that practitioners are supervised by one external supervisor, qualified to QCF-level 7/8, who receives six hours of training per year.

## What are the systems for maintaining fidelity?

- Training manual,
- Other printed material,
- Other online material,
- Face-to-face training,
- Fidelity monitoring

## Is there a licensing requirement?

Yes, there is a licence required to run this programme.

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

### How does it work?

- Strong socio-emotional competences will enable children and young people to achieve their full potential in school and in life.
- Pyramid clubs allow children to observe and practise coping skills and encourage effective social interaction with both peers and adults, developing increased socio-emotional competence.
- In the short term, children and young people who attend Pyramid clubs demonstrate better emotional self-management, improved peer interaction and greater school engagement.
- In the longer term, improvements in socio-emotional competence in childhood reduce the likelihood of mental health problems and other difficulties in later life, such as failure in school and job instability.

## 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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[www.uwl.ac.uk/pyramid](http://www.uwl.ac.uk/pyramid)



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## About the evidence

Pyramid Primary's most rigorous evidence comes from an RCT conducted in the UK.

This study identified statistically significant positive impact on a number of child outcomes. The conclusions that can be drawn from this study are limited by methodological issues pertaining to a lack of intention-to-treat analysis and high overall attrition (without analysis of whether those who drop out of the programme and those who complete the programme differ), which is why a higher rating is not achieved. This programme is underpinned by one study with a level 2+, hence the programme receives a level 2+ rating overall.

## Study 1

**Citation:** Cassidy et al (2015)

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**Design:** RCT

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**Country:** United Kingdom

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**Sample:** 630 children were randomised, consisting of two cohorts of pupils: ages seven to eight years ('Pyramid Primary') and aged 11 years ('Pyramid Transition'). All presented as quiet, shy, and behaviourally more likely to internalise

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**Timing:** Post-intervention and 12-week follow up.

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**Child outcomes:**

- Decreased emotional problems (teacher report)
  - Increased emotional intelligence (teacher report)
  - Decreased peer problems (teacher report)
  - Decreased total difficulties score (teacher report)
  - Increased pro-social behaviour (teacher report)
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**Other outcomes:**

- None measured
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**Study rating:** 2+

Cassidy, T., McLaughlin, M., & Giles, M. (2015). Socio-emotional health in school children: An emotion-focused intervention. *International Journal of School and Cognitive Psychology*, 2(4), 1–7.

**Available at** <https://www.omicsonline.com/open-access/socioemotional-health-in-school-children-an-emotionfocusedinterv>

## 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.

Ohl, M., Fox, P., & Mitchell, K. (2012). Strengthening socio-emotional competencies in a school setting: Data from the Pyramid project. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 83(3), 452–466 - **This reference refers to a quasi-experimental design, conducted in the UK.**

Buckinghamshire Educational Psychology Service (2005). Buckinghamshire Pyramid Trust Evaluation Report January 2002 – July 2005. Buckinghamshire Pyramid Trust.

Cassidy, T., McLaughlin, M., & Giles, M. (2014). Group-based intervention to improve socio-emotional health in vulnerable children. *Journal of Psychology and Clinical Psychiatry*, 1(7), 45 - **This reference refers to a quasi-experimental design, conducted in the UK.**

Jayman, M., Ohl, M., Hughes, B., & Fox, P. (2015). Improving the socio-emotional health of young people in early secondary education: Preliminary findings from a study of the Pyramid Intervention Project. In *Resilience and Health in a Fast-Changing World*. Jagiellonian University Press - **This reference refers to a quasi-experimental design, conducted in the UK.**

Jayman, M. (n.d.). Evaluating the impact of a school-based intervention on the socio-emotional health and school performance of pupils in early secondary education. PhD thesis in final editing stage - **This reference refers to a quasi-experimental design, conducted in the UK.**

Lyons, R. E. (2011). An evaluation of the use of a Pyramid Club to support shy and withdrawn children's transition to secondary school. Thesis submitted to University of Manchester for Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology - **This reference refers to a mixed-methods study, conducted in the UK.**

Lyons, R., & Woods, K. (2012). Effective transition to secondary school for shy, less confident children: A case study using 'Pyramid' group work. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 29(3), 8–26 - **This reference refers to a mixed-methods study, conducted in the UK.**

McKenna, Á. E., Cassidy, T., & Giles, M. (2014). Prospective evaluation of the pyramid plus psychosocial intervention for shy withdrawn children: An assessment of efficacy in 7? to 8?year?old school children in Northern Ireland. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 19(1), 9–15 - **This reference refers to a mixed-methods study, conducted in the UK (Northern Ireland).**

Ohl, M. A. (2009). The efficacy of a school-based intervention on socio-emotional health and well-being of children in middle childhood: An evaluation. A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Thames Valley University - **This reference refers to a mixed-methods study, conducted in the UK.**

Ohl, M., Fox, P., & Mitchell, K. (2013). The Pyramid Club elementary school-based intervention: Testing the circle time technique to elicit children's service satisfaction. *Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology*, 3(2), 204 - **This reference refers to a mixed-methods study, conducted in the UK.**

Ohl, M., Mitchell, K., Cassidy, T., & Fox, P. (2008). The Pyramid Club primary school-based intervention: Evaluating the impact on children's social-emotional health. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 13(3), 115–121 - **This reference refers to a mixed-methods study, conducted in the UK.**

Shepherd, J., & Roker, D. (2005). An evaluation of a 'transition to secondary school' project run by the National Pyramid Trust. Undertaken by the Trust for the Study of Adolescence (TSA) - **This reference refers to a mixed-methods study, conducted in the UK.**

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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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