

GUIDEBOOK

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Pyramid Club Transition

Review: March 2017

Pyramid Club is a targeted programme for children who are identified as being quiet, shy and behaviourally more likely to internalise. Pyramid Club Transition is provided to children transitioning to secondary 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.

Evidence
rating: **2+**

Cost rating: **1**

EIF Programme Assessment

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

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.

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.

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 and child self-report)

Based on study 1

Increased emotional intelligence (teacher report and child self-report)

Based on study 1

Enhancing school achievement & employment

Decreased peer problems (teacher report and child self-report)

Based on study 1

Decreased total difficulties score (teacher report and child self-report)

Based on study 1

Increased pro-social behaviour (teacher report and child self-report)

Based on study 1

Preventing crime, violence and antisocial behaviour

Decreased peer problems (teacher report and child self-report)

Based on study 1

Decreased total difficulties score (teacher report and child self-report)

Based on study 1

Increased pro-social behaviour (teacher report and child self-report)

Based on study 1

Key programme characteristics

Who is it for?

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

- Primary school
- Preadolescents

How is it delivered?

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

- Group

Where is it delivered?

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

- Primary school

How is it targeted?

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

- Targeted indicated

Where has it been implemented?

England, Northern Ireland, Wales

UK provision

This programme has been implemented in the UK.

UK evaluation

This programme's best evidence includes evaluation conducted in the UK.

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 give 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

Bronach Hughes Pyramid Project Co-ordinator pyramid@uwl.ac.uk

www.uwl.ac.uk/pyramid

About the evidence

Pyramid Club Transition'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), hence why a higher rating is not achieved.

This programme is underpinned by one study with a level 2+, so the programme receives a level 2+ rating overall.

Study 1

Citation: Cassidy et al (2015) | **Design:** RCT

Country: United Kingdom | **Study rating:** 2+

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

Timing: Post-intervention and 12-week follow up

Child outcomes:

Decreased emotional problems (teacher report and child self-report)
Increased emotional intelligence (teacher report and child self-report)
Decreased peer problems (teacher report and child self-report)
Decreased total difficulties score (teacher report and child self-report)
Increased pro-social behaviour (teacher report and child self-report)
Decreased peer problems (teacher report and child self-report)
Decreased total difficulties score (teacher report and child self-report)
Increased pro-social behaviour (teacher report and child self-report)

Other outcomes:

None measured

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-emotionfocusedint>

Study design and sample

This study is a RCT conducted in Northern Ireland. Children were from both year four and year seven (Northern Irish school years, equivalent to years three and six in England and Wales). Therefore, two cohorts of pupils were tested, one receiving Pyramid Club Primary and one receiving Pyramid Club Transition. In each cohort, students were randomised to Pyramid Club or a waiting list control. 520 children were analysed. For the year seven cohort, this consisted of 162 from the intervention group and 132 from the control group.

Measure

The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Child: Teacher rating version (TEIQue-360S) (teacher rated), the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Child Short Form (TEIQue-CSF) (child rated), the SDQ (teacher rated) and the SDQ (self-rated) were used.

Findings

This study identified statistically significant positive impact on a number of child outcomes: a reduction in emotional problems, peer problems and overall total difficulty score. It also produced a significant increase in prosocial behaviour and emotional intelligence values.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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).

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.

[How to read the Guidebook](#)

[EIF evidence standards](#)

[About the EIF Guidebook](#)

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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10 Salamanca Place, London SE1 7HB | +44 (0)20 3542 2481

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