

ABOUT THE INCREDIBLE YEARS PROGRAMME

INCREDIBLE YEARS is a series of programmes for parents and teachers that are intended to reduce challenging behaviours in children and to increase their social and self-control skills.

WHERE INCREDIBLE YEARS CAME FROM

Incredible Years was started 25 years ago in the United States by Dr Carolyn Webster-Stratton who is the Director of the University of Washington's Parenting Clinic in Seattle.

Since then Incredible Years has been applied in more than nine countries. It has been shown to work across a range of ethnic groups.

HOW WE KNOW IT WORKS

The Incredible Years programme is evaluated using randomised control groups. These have found that parents use more proactive strategies and less reactive strategies to manage children.

For the children themselves, the programme effectively reduces problematic behaviours and increases social, academic and emotional competencies. These results have been independently replicated in Wales and Chicago and there is more research under way.

About the Incredible Years programme

Incredible Years is a 14 week parenting programme for parents of children aged 3-8 years. It involves weekly sessions of two and a half hours. Over the weeks, parents develop strategies to build positive relationships with their children and to manage problem behaviours. They come to group sessions each week, talk through what has, or hasn't worked, set goals for what they want to happen and ways to achieve those goals during the following week.

Topics covered include:

- how to play/spend special time together
- praising and rewarding children
- communicating positively
- setting limits
- dealing with disobedience, selectively using distractions, ignoring, time out and other penalties
- helping children to problem-solve.

The programme spends a lot of time looking at how parents can develop good relationships with children, through play and spending time together.

The programme then looks at encouraging the behaviours that parent would like to see, through using praise and encouragement.

Consequences such as time out and loss of privilege are used selectively, once clear and sensible limits and rules have been tried.

The Incredible Years programme is extensively tested. With a 25 year history, the programme now operates successfully in a wide range of countries. Programmes in New Zealand show reductions in problem behaviour across a range of families and cultures.