

THE INCREDIBLE YEARS

teacher programme
(for teachers of children aged 3-8)



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga



“I had one boy who was physically hurting other children. It was like he didn’t recognise that it was wrong because he’d hurt someone and then look at you for recognition.”



“One child, his big thing was about people watching him. He’d flare up about that. I didn’t know where to start with him because it was the first time I’d ever had a child like that.”



“It’s very frustrating when you have a child that just won’t sit and be part of the class. It’s very hard to get a lesson finished without interruptions.”



- Anti-social behaviour in children is a reality in most New Zealand classrooms and early childhood education centres at some point.

We know if children are being disruptive and are not participating or listening, then they're not learning.

Research has shown that teachers give three to 15 times more attention to misbehaviour than they do to appropriate behaviour. It's not hard to understand why – children who need positive attention, praise and encouragement ask for it in the most unloving ways!

But a positive and harmonious classroom or early childhood centre IS possible.





“It’s good having an opportunity to talk to other people from other decile schools and other backgrounds and realise that we all have the same problems.”



“Before we went on the course we thought we had ways of dealing with behaviour. But we got experience from other teachers who were there. We came back quite excited – let’s try this with these children.”



“This gives teachers a wonderful opportunity to reflect, practise, change, develop and start the process again.”

- Incredible Years is a six-month programme for teachers of children aged three to eight years.

The programme looks at teaching strategies that turn around problem behaviour and promote positive behaviour.

Two to three teachers from a school or early childhood education centre meet with colleagues from other schools or centres once a month over six months. There is also a follow-up one-day session three months later. In between sessions, teachers have a chance to apply new approaches and be observed by and receive feedback from their facilitators.

Teachers share experiences, revisit common approaches and practise ways of managing behaviour more effectively.

Over the course, teachers develop their own behaviour plan for a particular child in their class. The group supports teachers to set goals for the child and identify ways to achieve those goals.





“Your whole group is being ratty and they’re all a bit distracted and then you pick on someone who’s doing the right thing and give them a sticker or just say something to them and the others will all sit up – ‘They’re getting attention for doing the right thing and I want to get attention too’. They want to please you.”



“Because of the research it gives the teachers a lot of confidence that these are the strategies, these are the ones that have been shown to be really effective with these kids and so I know that I’m on the right track.”



“There’s a lot of emphasis on strategies that teachers can use to coach children in social behaviours. It’s actually about children being able to manage themselves, which is part of the Health curriculum.”

- In the first three sessions teachers work on strategies to increase the behaviours we value and want to see more of. These are the foundations for positive behaviour. They include developing meaningful relationships with the child, collaborating with parents/caregivers, and teacher attention, encouragement and praise.

When these positive foundations are in place, the programme looks at options for minimising disruptions. It then looks at consequences for inappropriate behaviour.

Evidence shows that the programme not only helps the teacher with a specific child but the strategies used will raise the social competence of every child in the class or centre – now and in future years.



What the Incredible Years Teacher programme covers

Building positive relationships with children

Fostering trust, fostering a sense of responsibility, good listening and speaking, feeling talk, problem-solving, how to ask in appropriate ways, promoting positive self-talk, developing positive relationships with parents/caregivers.

Preventing behaviour problems: the proactive teacher

Establishing clear, predictable centre/classroom rules, giving effective commands or instructions, engaging children's attention, using non-verbal signals and cues for communication.

The importance of teacher attention, encouragement and praise

Using praise and encouragement more effectively, teaching children how to praise themselves and each other, involving other centre/school personnel and parents/caregivers in praise.

Motivating children through incentives

Ways to use an incentives programme for social problems, using incentives in a way that fosters the child's internal motivation and focuses them on the process of learning rather than the end product, involving parents/caregivers in incentives programmes.



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Decreasing children's inappropriate behaviour

Knowing how to redirect and engage children, knowing how and when to ignore inappropriate responses, using verbal and non-verbal cues to re-engage off-task children, using reminders and warnings, how to set up timeout, recognising when to use logical consequences or removal of privileges as discipline.

Helping children learn social skills, empathy training and problem-solving

Helping increase children's awareness of different feelings and perspectives in social situations, building children's emotional vocabulary, understanding how to help children identify a problem and to generate possible solutions, helping children recognise their anger and learn ways to manage it successfully, using puppets to present hypothetical problem situations, such as being teased, bullied or isolated, helping children learn how to use friendly talk.

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“It’s not just like a passive learning – it’s interactive.”

“I was confident but now I know if this strategy doesn’t work, I can use another one.”

- The programme is interactive – teachers spend a lot of time practising new strategies and playing the role of teacher or child. This helps teachers to find the most comfortable way of putting new strategies into action. It also gives teachers an opportunity to experience interactions from a child's point-of-view.

Teachers are given tools to help them identify the underlying causes of behaviour – if we consider the underlying causes of a behaviour, then we're better able to find the right strategies to address this behaviour.



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“Shouting at them doesn’t work ... it’s just giving them the attention they want.”

“It’s been eight months since we finished it and we’re still talking about it. Every staff meeting we’re still going over situations.”

- Teachers are encouraged to prepare for anti-social behaviour and have planned ways of managing what goes on in the classroom or centre. Incredible Years emphasises prevention strategies and offers tools to move away from reacting to the behaviour.

Incredible Years provides an approach to discipline that is planned and therefore proactive. It emphasises non-intrusive discipline strategies so that teachers are able to respond to disruptive behaviour while keeping the classroom or centre running smoothly.



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“I think going
there and
actually having
a ‘focus child’
gave you a
sense of hope.”



**It all adds up to a positive, safe environment,
confident teachers and children who are
engaged and learning**





Contact your local Ministry of Education office for information about the Incredible Years programmes available in your area.

To find out more from the developers of the Incredible Years programme, visit www.incredibleyears.com



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