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Article information:

To cite this document:
Carolyn Webster-Stratton Tracey Bywater , (2015),"Incredible partnerships: parents and teachers working together to enhance outcomes for children through a multi-modal evidence based programme", Journal of Children's Services, Vol. 10 Iss 3 pp. 202 - 217
Permanent link to this document:
http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JCS-02-2015-0010

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Incredible partnerships: parents and teachers working together to enhance outcomes for children through a multi-modal evidence based programme

Carolyn Webster-Stratton and Tracey Bywater

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Abstract

Purpose – *The purpose of this paper is to explore the utility of an evidence-based suite of programmes, The Incredible Years (IY), to enhance outcomes for children using a parent-teacher partnership model.*

Design/methodology/approach – *A review of the broad evidence base for the IY parent, teacher and child programmes, uniquely focusing on the inter-relationships between home and school contexts.*

Findings – *Evidence suggests that it is beneficial to parents, teachers and children to deliver IY programmes applying a multi-modal approach.*

Originality/value – *This paper, read in conjunction with other contributions in this volume, demonstrates the growing viability of partnership strategies that support children, their families and teachers to enhance school readiness, and promote positive child outcomes.*

Keywords *Child behaviour, Home learning environment, Incredible Years programmes, Parent-teacher partnership, School readiness, Social-emotional wellbeing*

Paper type *General review*

Received 22 February 2015
Revised 29 May 2015
27 July 2015
Accepted 27 July 2015

Conflicts of interest: Carolyn Webster-Stratton has disclosed a potential financial conflict of interest because she disseminates these programmes and stands to gain from favourable reports. Because of this, she has voluntarily agreed to distance herself from certain critical research activities, including recruitment, consenting, primary data handling and data analysis. The University of Washington has approved these arrangements.

Professor Carolyn Webster-Stratton wishes to thank NIMH, NINR and NIDA for 30 years of funding to undertake this research. Professor Tracey Bywater's time is partially supported by NIHR CLAHRC Yorkshire and Humber (CLAHRC-YH).

Introduction

This paper introduces the initial importance of the home learning environment for promoting children's readiness to learn prior to attending school. When children enter nursery, and then primary school, supportive parent-teacher partnerships become important as they can impact on children's social and emotional development and wellbeing, academic readiness, learning and academic outcomes. These partnerships optimally begin in the pre-school years and continue in primary schools. Parents play a major role in developing children's school readiness (Lau *et al.*, 2011), and in forming children's good relationships with peers and teachers (Howes *et al.*, 2008). These relationships help children to settle into school, reduce conduct problems and lead to good academic attainment (Fantuzzo and McWayne, 2002).

The Incredible Years (IY) programmes are outlined and evidence is presented demonstrating how parents and teachers can work in partnership to enhance or improve child outcomes through delivery of the programmes in a multi-modal format. The main emphasis of the paper is on children in toddlerhood through to primary age, and the associated, age-appropriate, IY programmes.

Home learning environment

There is convincing evidence that children's early home experiences contribute to school readiness and school achievement, especially in language development (Sylva *et al.*, 2010). Children who grow up in homes with a nurturing, language-rich environment and positive parent[1]-child interactions show more school readiness with regards to social competence, emotional literacy, conflict management skills, language development, as well as later reading success and school attainment scores (Sylva *et al.*, 2008, 2010). Once children start nursery or primary school, positive parent-teacher relationships that support parental involvement in children's academic and social-emotional learning have further effects in promoting children's school engagement and academic achievement (Stormont *et al.*, 2013; Herman and Reinke, 2014).

In the UK the longitudinal Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) project (Sylva *et al.*, 2008) demonstrated the importance of the home learning environment. A quality home learning environment, where parents are actively engaged in activities with children, promoted child intellectual and social development. Although parents' social class and levels of education were related to child outcomes, the quality of the home learning environment was found to be more important. One of the project's conclusions was that "what parents do (with their children) is more important than who they are".

Conversely, a stressful or non-nurturing home environment puts a child at risk for poor outcomes such as delayed language and academic readiness, delayed social development, conduct disorder (CD) and other unwanted behaviour such as school drop-out and drug abuse (Jaffee and Maikovich-Fong, 2011). Other family risk factors include poor parental supervision, inconsistent, neglectful or harsh discipline and a failure to set clear expectations for children's behaviour, poor parental mental health, parental conflict, social isolation, lack of support and family disruption (Farrington and Welsh, 2007).

Protective factors attenuate children's exposure to risk and include not only a strong bond of affection with a parent, but also their growing sense of feeling valued in school and the wider community (Farrington *et al.*, 2012). Reviews have concluded that association with parents, teachers and other adults who model healthy, pro-social standards of behaviour is protective (Anderson *et al.*, 2005).

Academic readiness

The quality of the home learning environment has the biggest impact on cognitive development, and has three times the impact on literacy than quality of pre-school attended (Sylva *et al.*, 2008). Although the EPPE project found that the home learning environment was more important than the social class of parents to promote positive child outcomes, there are distinct differences between high- and low-income families' language use in the home, which impact on child literacy. Ferguson (2005) found that parents with low income encourage their children less, adopt harsher parenting styles and are less engaged with their child's schoolwork. Similarly, Hart and Risley's (1992) study found parents with lower income said fewer different words in their cumulative monthly vocabularies to their children at age three years compared to the most economically advantaged families (500 vs 1,100), with higher income children hearing approximately three times the number of words per hour than their less advantaged counterparts, equating to a three vs 11 million words per year. The type of words and quality of interactions used in each income level showed startling differences with low-income children hearing a ratio of 5:11 positive to negative words and high-income children hearing 32:5.

More recently a US study by Fernald *et al*. (2013) demonstrated similar results showing by age three years low income children have heard 30 million fewer words than higher income children. If this language exposure gap continues through pre-school, by age five years children from lower income families are already two years behind their peers in vocabulary and school readiness skills. Since early vocabulary is connected to later success in reading comprehension, this language gap presents a barrier to these children's future academic learning achievement.

School influences

Outside of the home environment other factors such as geographical location and community factors, such as levels of disadvantage, can impact on child wellbeing. However, schools can

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positively influence wellbeing through their ethos, organisation, teaching and disciplinary practices and pastoral care, thereby encouraging motivation to learn (Farrington and Welsh, 2007). Underachievement emerging during junior school is an important factor for negative life outcomes, with children who perform poorly more likely to truant, and be at risk of negative outcomes such as unemployment (Anderson *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, language and reading delays contribute to the development of friendship problems, academic failure, school drop-out and conduct problems (Bennett *et al.*, 2003). Conversely conduct problems can contribute to poor academic readiness and a multitude of other negative outcomes as outlined below.

Conduct problems

The combination of the home and wider context that a child grows up in contributes to a child's mental health and behaviour. Negative experiences may result in a child displaying problematic behaviour. Conduct problems are the most common reason for referral for psychological and psychiatric treatment in childhood, and if left unchecked up to 40 per cent of children with early behavioural difficulties will develop CD (Coid, 2003). The prevalence of CD is reported to be 10 per cent in the USA and UK general population (Burke *et al.*, 2002; National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2006).

Conduct problems include defiant, disruptive and aggressive antisocial behaviour, and if severe and persistent, a diagnosis of "early onset" (under ten years) CD may be given (based on ICD-10 or DSM-V criteria). Environmental, family, school and child risk factors contribute to the development of early onset CD, with higher rates found in disadvantaged areas (20 per cent) (Attride-Stirling *et al.*, 2000), among "looked-after" children (37 per cent) (Tapsfield and Collier, 2005), and in boys (2:1 boy to girl ratio) (Green *et al.*, 2004). Early onset conduct problems can lead to negative life outcomes including lack of academic success, criminal behaviour and psychiatric disorders, with increased costs to the education, health, social and criminal justice services (Bywater, 2012).

A recent Cochrane review (Furlong *et al.*, 2012) demonstrated that parenting programmes for three- to 12-year olds at risk of developing CD can promote positive parenting skills, reduce parental depression and stress and enhance child social and emotional wellbeing. Enhancing social and emotional wellbeing enables children to be more self-aware, to problem solve, to recognise their feelings, to be able to calm down more easily, to cooperate with peers and adult directions and therefore be more "ready" and able to learn at school (Webster-Stratton and Reid, 2004). Preventing and treating conduct problems in young children is a matter of public health importance and should begin as early as possible in the home learning environment, followed by home and education settings working in partnerships (Bywater, 2012).

Although parenting programmes are implemented nationally in the UK, it is sometimes difficult for parents to identify where to access this local support. A report by the Centre for Mental Health found parents frequently request advice from their child's teacher about managing their child's behaviour. However, the survey found that UK schools lack information around referral routes to support parents (Khan, 2014). Schools can be important pathway or "referral" routes for families to get additional parenting support delivered locally, or even to parent programmes delivered within the school. It is important that parents who need them receive evidence-based programmes as early as possible, although unfortunately there can be misunderstandings around what constitutes rigorous "evidence".

Recent moves in the UK, for instance the formation of the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) (www.eif.org.uk/), the Education Endowment Foundation (http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/) and the UK Implementation Network (www.uk-in.org.uk/) seek to promote high-quality implementation of evidence-based programmes, which generally have defined logic models, structured training models and quality materials to enable faithful delivery and replicability of outcomes across contexts. The EIF recently published a rapid review (Axford *et al*., 2015) of the evidence of several parent programmes across a variety of outcomes, rated on standards of evidence (results forthcoming), which should make it easier for commissioners to establish which programme is most effective for their local needs.

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Appropriate interventions with proven logic models and robust evidence to reduce child risk factors and enhance protective factors are needed. One such intervention is the suite of IY® programmes for parents, teachers and children, as presented in the logic model (Figure 1), building blocks diagram (Figure 2) and detailed in the following sections.

The logic model indicates "school readiness" and "parent/home – teacher/school partnerships" as short-term outcomes with "academic attainment" as a distal outcome. IY has theoretical underpinnings from social learning theory, and the programmes incorporate identified effective components for behaviour change (NICE, Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2006; Hutchings *et al.*, 2004), including a collaborative model of participant engagement, behaviour modelling and practice (making full use of rewards and praise), with the emphasis on building positive relationships.

Incredible Years®

The core parent programmes

The IY BASIC (core) parent training consists of four different currciulum designed to fit the developmental stage of the child: Baby programme (one to nine months), Toddler Programme (one to three years), Pre-school programme (three to five years) and School-Age programme (six to 12 years) (see bottom row of Figure 2). Each of these programmes emphasises developmentally appropriate parenting skills and include age-appropriate video examples of culturally diverse families and children with varying temperaments and developmental issues. The programmes run from ten to 22 weeks, for two hours per week depending on the specific programme selected and the risk level of the population. For example, recommended programme delivery length is longer for higher risk and child welfare referred families as well as for parents whose children have conduct problems, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD) and/or developmental delays.

For each IY parent programme, trained IY group faclitators show short one to three minute selected DVD vignettes of modelled parenting skills to groups of ten to 12 parents. The vignettes

Figure 1 Incredible Years® logic model

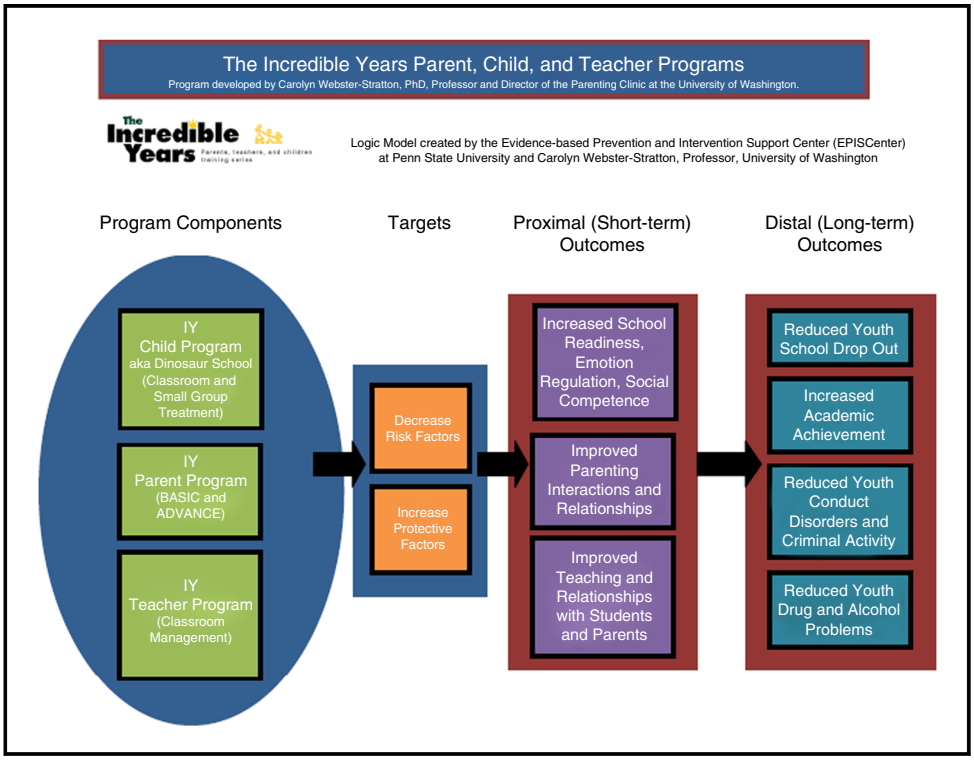

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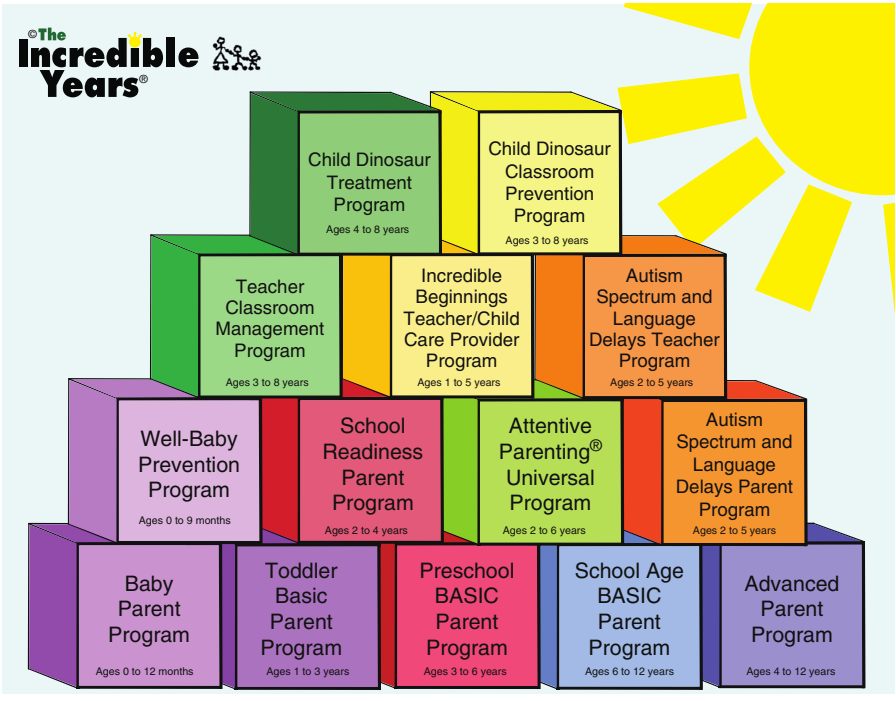
Figure 2 The suite of Incredible Years® programmes



demonstrate child development and parenting principles, and serve as the stimulus for focused discussions, self-reflection, problem solving, practice exercises and collaborative learning. The programmes are designed to help parents understand typical child developmental milestones, child safety-proofing and adequate monitoring, as well as age-appropriate child management skills.

All four parent programmes focus on ways to strengthen parent-child relationships and attachment and encourage children's language, social and emotional development and self-regulation skills. The Pre-school and School-Age programmes additionally focus on ways parents can collaborate and problem solve with child care providers and teachers regarding their children's academic goals and behaviour plans. Parent home activities include ways to promote children's reading skills, set up predictable, daily homework routines, persist with learning despite academic discouragement, motivate children with tangible reward systems, help children problem solve and show active interest in their children's learning at home and at school. See Table I for component content for the Toddler, Pre-school and School-Age parent programmes which, after the programme descriptions, will form the main focus of this paper along with the child Dinosaur training programmes (second row form the top of Figure 2), and the Teacher programme (top row of Figure 2).

Incredible Years® adjuncts to parent programmes

Supplemental or adjunct parenting programmes can be used in combination with the core IY BASIC programmes. The ADVANCE parenting programme, offered after completion of the BASIC Pre-school or School-Age programmes, was designed for selective high risk and indicated populations and focuses on parents' interpersonal risk factors such as anger and depression management, effective communication, ways to give and get support, problem solving between adults and ways to teach children problem-solving skills. A second optional adjunct training to the Pre-school programme is the School Readiness Programme for children ages three to four years designed to help parents support their children's preliteracy and interactive reading readiness skills. A third optional adjunct for the Toddler, Pre-school and early School-Age programmes is the

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Table I IY summary of content

Content components for IY BASIC parent programmes (Toddler, Pre-school, School-age), the Teacher Classroom Management Programme (TCM) and the Child Dinosaur Programme (Dino)	*Toddler*	*Pre-school*	*School-age*	*TCM*	*Dino*
Promoting language development and academic readiness	X	X			
Child-directed play, positive attention, special time – positive relationships	X	X	X		
Building parent support networks	X	X	X		
Social and emotional coaching	X	X	X		
Promoting reading skills and school involvement	X	X	X		
Art of praise and encouragement	X	X	X		
Spontaneous and planned incentives	X	X	X		
Rules and predictable routines	X	X	X		
Responsibilities and monitoring		X	X		
Teaching children and parents self-regulation and calm down skills		X	X		
Teaching children and parents problem solving		X	X		
Parents partnering with teachers		X	X		
Academic and persistence coaching		X	X		
Teachers' classroom management skills, proactive teaching, effective discipline				X	
Academic, persistence, social and emotional coaching with students				X	
Strengthening teacher-student bond				X	
Teaching social skills, anger management and problem-solving skills in class				X	
Home-school collaboration, individual behaviour planning				X	
Building teachers' support networks				X	
Learning about school rules					X
Understanding and detecting feelings					X
How to problem solve					X
Anger control					X
How to be friendly – including teamwork at home and school					X
How to talk with friends – positive peer interaction					X
How to do your best in School – concentrating and good classroom skills					X

Note: X, signifies which programme includes this content

Attentive Parenting Programme for children ages two to six years. This universal group prevention programme is designed to teach all parents social, emotional and persistence coaching, reading skills and how to promote their children's self-regulation and problem-solving skills.

Incredible Years® Teacher Classroom Management (IY-TCM) programme

IY-TCM training programme is a six-day group-based programme delivered monthly by accredited group leaders in small workshops to 14-16 primary school teachers. Like the parent programme the training approach is based on teachers' collaborative, interactive learning, role play practices and shared problem-solving discussions of DVD vignettes of teaching skills. For example, teachers are encouraged to involve parents in developing a home and school incentive programme to help a child achieve a targeted goal. Or, teachers practice setting up a behaviour plan and problem solving with a difficult or resistive parent. Every workshop includes information and discussions about the importance of teachers promoting parent involvement in their child's social, emotional and academic learning. Teachers' assignments between workshops include building a positive connection with a challenging child or parent, practising coaching methods, developing a behaviour plan in partnership with parents and forming positive collaborative parent-teacher-child relationships and a consistent discipline heirarchy, and forming positive relationships with parents. Teachers are given parent home communication letters at every workshop that can be tailored and delivered to parents. The letters include home tips on how parents can support their child's learning in the classroom. Every workshop includes information and discussions about how teachers can continue to promote parent involvement in their child's social, emotional and academic learning.

See Table I for component content for this programme and the teachers' course book *Incredible Teachers: Nurturing Children's Social, Emotional and Academic Competence* (Webster-Stratton, 2012a).

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Incredible Years® child programmes (Dinosaur curricula)

There are two versions of the IY child programme. In the universal prevention classroom version, teachers deliver 60+ social-emotional lessons and small group activities twice a week, with separate lesson plans and curricula for three different developmental age levels (four to five, six to seven and seven to eight years) teacher curriculum includes 20-30 minute circle time lessons, followed by small group practice activities and promotion of the skills throughout the day. The programme includes letters for teachers to send home which provide suggested activities parents can do with their children to reinforce dinosasur classroom learning and promote parent involvement.

The second version of the programme is a small group therapeutic treatment group where accredited IY group leaders work with groups of four to six children in two-hour weekly sessions. The therapeutic version can be delivered as a pull-out programme during the school day for children who require additional support around behaviour or wellbeing. Programme content is delivered using a series of DVD selected vignettes that teach children feelings literacy, social skills, emotional self-regulation skills, importance of following school rules and problem solving. Large puppets are used to bring the material to life and children are actively engaged in the material through role play, games, play and practice activities. Organised to dovetail with the content of the parent training programme, the programme consists of seven main components (see Table I; Webster-Stratton and Reid, 2003, 2004). This programme also includes letters to parents outlining goals for session topics and ways to reinforce this learning at home. Additionally, group leaders call parents weekly to support their efforts in reading and supporting their children's school learning at home as well as calling and/or meeting with teachers monthly to co-ordinate goals and behaviour plans for the child.

Table I highlights IY component content in three parent programmes from toddlerhood in to primary school age, the teacher programme and the child programme – both delivered in primary school. Several objectives, or goals, are included under each of these content areas (for detailed objectives please see www.incredibleyears.com).

Content has been summarised in this simple table to facilitate the readers' understanding of the cross-fertilisation between programme components to enable generalisation of child skills and learning across contexts and the importance of parent-teacher partnerships in this multi-modal system.

The IY programmes can be applied using a systematic approach to building parent-teacher partnerships and can be embedded holistically within schools to enhance child wellbeing, motivation to learn and reduce disruptive conduct problems. Table I highlights that the Toddler parent programme builds strong school readiness indicators such as language development, while the toddler and the pre-school and school-age all include promoting reading skills and school involvement, social-emotional coaching, rules and routines, positive interactions and use of praise. The pre-school and school-age addditionally include content around parent-teacher engagement and self-regulation and problem solving. The TCM and Dina programmes reflect the parent programme content with a continued strong emphasis on partnership working to include teacher-child, child-child, parent-child, teacher-parent and teacher-child-parent.

The logic model (Figure 1) and the content table (Table I) strongly suggest that a multi-modal approach may yield stronger effects, i.e. better behavioural, social emotional and academic (particularly language) outcomes in the short and long-term for children, by building on an early improved home learning environment and early parent relationships with teachers.

The aim of this paper is to explore whether the programmes are effective in enhancing school readiness at home, parent-teacher partnerships and school practices to enhance child learning outcomes.

We will now present the evidence for the IY parent programme as a standalone programme and when delivered in combination with either, or both, the IY teacher and child programmes. The parent and child evidence is presented for both selective populations (high risk), indicated populations (children with symptoms) and treatment populations (children with DSM diagnoses).

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Evidence supporting the Incredible Years® parent programmes

Numerous studies have shown that IY parent programmes, delivered as standalone programmes, result in improvements in parents' positive relationships and coaching language with children, and parent-school involvement, as well as children's social and emotional literacy, problem-solving skills, behaviour problems and academic readiness.

Treatment populations

The efficacy of the IY BASIC parent treatment programme for children (ages two to eight years) diagnosed with Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD) or CD has been demonstrated in eight randomised control group trials (RCTs) by the programme developer plus numerous effectiveness trials by independent investigators. The results were consistent for Toddler, Pre-school and School-Age versions of the programmes (IY publications are available at http://incredibleyears.com/research-library/ and an IY book of 30 years research synthesis (Webster-Stratton, 2011) is accessible at http://incredibleyears.com/books/iy-training-series-book/. Combining the ADVANCE programme with the BASIC programme results in greater improvements in terms of children's pro-social solution generation in comparison to the BASIC only (Webster-Stratton, 1994).

A recent meta-analytic review (Menting *et al.*, 2013) examined 50 studies where the IY parent programme intervention was compared with control or a comparison group. This review included studies from various locations including the USA, UK and Norway. Results were presented for treatment populations as well as indicated and selective prevention populations and the programme was effective in improving child disruptive and pro-social behaviour in a diverse range of families, especially for children with the most severe problems; the programme was also considered "well-established". These findings are important as children with ODD or CD generally have poor academic outcomes; reducing these difficulties may enable children to be more ready to learn.

Two recent long-term follow-up studies from the USA and the UK evaluated families whose children were diagnosed with conduct problems and had received treatment with the IY parent pogramme eight- to 12-years earlier. The US study indicated that 75 per cent of the teenagers were typically adjusted with minimal behavioural and emotional problems (Webster-Stratton *et al.*, 2010). The UK study, conducted by an independent investigator, reported that parents in the IY BASIC parent condition expressed greater emotional warmth and supervised or monitored their adolescents more closely than parents in the control condition that had received individualised "typical" psychotherapy offered at that time. Moreover, their children's reading ability was substantially improved in a standardised assessment, suggesting that an improved home learning environment and more positive parent-child relationships had resulted in increased academic outcomes in relation to reading (Scott *et al.*, 2014a). This is one of the first studies to evaluate long-term academic outcomes as follow-up studies to date have mostly focused on social, emotional and behavioural outcomes.

This section suggests that the parent programmes, delivered as a standalone programme, improve the home learning environment by enhancing parenting skills, child behaviour and emotional regulation, which in turn leads to increased academic outcomes (reading skills) in treatment populations.

Selective and indicated prevention populations

Additionally, four RCTs conducted by the developer used the prevention version of the BASIC programme with multiethnic, socio-economically disadvantaged families delivered in schools (Reid *et al.*, 2001; Webster-Stratton, 1998; Webster-Stratton *et al.*, 2001). Results showed that children whose mothers received the BASIC programme showed fewer externalising problems, better emotion regulation and stronger parent-child bonding than control children. Intervention mothers showed more supportive and less coercive parenting than mothers in the control condition (Reid *et al.*, 2007). As part of the programme parents are encouraged to talk to the teacher to promote early relationship buidling around the child, delivering the programmes in school facilitates this process at the earliest opportunity.

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At least six RCTs by independent investigators with high risk prevention populations have found that the BASIC parenting programme increases parents' use of positive and responsive attention with their children (praise, coaching, descriptive commenting) and positive discipline strategies, and reduces harsh, critical and coercive discipline strategies (see review by Webster-Stratton and Reid, 2010). The social learning, modelling and self-efficacy theories (Bandura, 1986) that underpin the IY programmes suggest that children who receive positive attention by role models such as parents and teachers, display more positive child behaviour and a motivation to learn.

In addition the BASIC programme has been found to improve child reading outcomes. Recently the BASIC parent programme with and without the SPOKES literacy supplemental programme was compared to a control condition (Scott *et al.*, 2014b). Significantly improved outcomes with BASIC alone programme compared with the combined programme and control conditions in terms of reading literacy at one-year and two-year follow-up assessments were reported. This evidence, combined with evidence of reading improvements in a treatment popluation outlined in the previous section strongly implies that the IY content components including language, academic coaching and reading skills, combined with behaviour change principles based on social learning theory are effective.

The programme is transportable and effective with diverse populations and cultures, including Latino, Asian, African-American, Native American and Caucasian background in the USA (Reid *et al.*, 2001), and in England, Ireland, Wales, Norway, Sweden, Holland, New Zealand (including the Maori population), Portugal and Russia (e.g. Azevedo *et al.*, 2013; Bywater *et al.*, 2009; Gardner *et al.*, 2006, 2015; Hutchings *et al.*, 2007; Larsson *et al.*, 2009; Little *et al.*, 2013; McGilloway *et al.*, 2012; Raaijmakers *et al.*, 2008; Scott *et al.*, 2001, 2010; see also Knerr *et al.*, 2013).

In addition to being effective, there is a growing complementary body of qualitative evidence exploring parents'/carers' perceptions of IY parent programme acceptability (McGilloway *et al.*, 2012; Furlong and McGilloway, 2014; Bywater *et al.*, 2010; Hutchings and Bywater, 2013; Oriana Linares *et al.*, 2006). The IY BASIC programme is also cost-effective, or good value for money (Edwards *et al.*, 2007; O'Neill *et al.*, 2011).

A limitation of delivering standalone parenting programmes is that child behavioural or social improvements in the home may not transfer to school settings (Durlak *et al.*, 2011). Schools are excellent settings for the delivery of parent programmes as they can enhance parent-teacher partnership working and break down perceived barriers. Schools are increasingly dealing with significant numbers of children with behavioural and self-regulatory difficulties, particularly in disadvantaged areas where levels of CD reach 20 per cent (Attride-Stirling *et al.*, 2000). These difficulties make it hard for the individual and for children around them in class to concentrate.

A multi-modal delivery model may therefore be more appropriate, for example adding the child and teacher programmes to the parent programme to improve child behaviour in school, and increase positive TCM and parent-teacher partnerships (Webster-Stratton and Hammond, 1997; Webster-Stratton *et al.*, 2004). The following two sections explore in more detail the evidence of this approach.

Evidence supporting IY-TCM programme as an adjunct to IY parent programmes

The IY-TCM programme has been evaluated by the developer in one treatment (Webster-Stratton *et al.*, 2004), and two selective prevention RCTs (Webster-Stratton *et al.*, 2001, 2008), plus five RCTs by independent investigators (Webster-Stratton, 2012b). Research findings have shown that teachers who participated in the IY-TCM training used more proactive classroom management strategies, praised their students more, used fewer coercive or critical discipline strategies and placed more focus on helping students to problem solve and made more efforts to involve parents in their child's school learning – these are all core IY content components (see Table I). Intervention classrooms were rated as having a more positive classroom atmosphere, increases in child social competence and school readiness skills, and lower levels of aggressive behaviour, thus demonstrating impact as a standalone programme.

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However, one study where indicated children were randomly assigned to receive the combined IY-TCM with IY-Dina, plus the BASIC parent programme or only the IY-TCM, indicated that the combined intervention group showed more, supportive and less coercive parenting and teachers reported that parents were more involved in their child's school learning and communicated more with them than mothers in the classroom only and control conditions (Reid *et al.*, 2007). The teacher classroom involvement measure asked teachers to rate parents' comfort in the classroom environment, how much parents valued education, how much time they spent in the classroom or with homework and how comfortable the teachers feel with parents. These results suggest that parent training brings about improved partnerships between parents and teachers which did not occur in the classroom only intervention condition. Research has suggested that parent-school bonding in the early grades is an important predictor of later academic success (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998). Scott's recent studies support this hypothesis (Scott *et al.*, 2014a); again these promising results suggest improved academic outcomes with parent-teacher partnerships.

A recent US study with primary grade teachers has evaluated the benefits of the IY-TCM programme for targeting teacher awareness of the importance of enhancing parent involvement in their children's education (Reinke *et al.*, 2014b) and for improving student academic competence (Reinke *et al.*, 2014a). Preliminary results suggest that improving teacher-parent bonding and parent involvement holds promise for improving child performance at school. In this group randomised clinical trial with 105 teachers and 1,818 students, Herman and Reinke (2014) found that IY-TCM led to significant improvements in parent educational involvement according to teacher reports. Specifically, IY-TCM classroom parents were more likely to transition to adaptive teacher-rated parenting profiles after the intervention compared to control classroom parents. Moreover, patterns of parent involvement were strongly related to student academic and behaviour outcomes.

This section highlights the positive effects of IY-TCM on children's learning outcomes, parent-teacher partnership and continued attention to enhancing children's social emotional and behavioural competencies through applying praise and acknowledgement of achievements. It shows that combining the IY-TCM and BASIC/child training programmes leads to increased improved classroom behaviour and more involvement of parents in their child's education. In addition IY-TCM has qualitative evidence of acceptability from Ireland (Hyland *et al.*, 2014), and is cost-effective (O'Neill *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore Foster *et al.*'s (2007) study indicates that combined programme delivery is cost-effective.

Evidence supporting the IY child programmes as an adjunct to IY parent programmes

Treatment populations

Three RCTs have evaluated the effectiveness of combining the IY small group child-training (Dinosaur Curricula) programme to parent training for reducing conduct problems and promoting social and emotional competence in children diagnosed with ODD/CD (Webster-Stratton and Hammond, 1997; Webster-Stratton *et al.*, 2004). Results indicated that the combined child and parent training condition produced the most sustained improvements in child behaviour at the one-year follow-up. For this reason the child training programme was combined with the parent training programme in a recent study for children diagnosed with ADHD. Results replicated the earlier ODD studies (Webster-Stratton *et al.*, 2011, 2013).

Selective and indicated prevention populations

One RCT in the USA has evaluated the classroom prevention version of the child programme with families enroled in Head Start (a Pre-school programme for socio-economically disadvantaged children) and primary grade classrooms in schools addressing economically disadvantaged populations. Intervention teachers offered the curriculum in biweekly classroom sessions thoughout the school year. Results from multi-level models of reports and observations of 153 teachers and 1,768 students indicated that teachers used more positive management strategies and their students showed significant improvements in school readiness skills, emotional self-regulation and social skills and reductions in behaviour problems in the classroom. Intervention teachers showed more positive involvement with parents than control teachers, and satisfaction with the programme was high (Webster-Stratton *et al.*, 2008).

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The study by Reid *et al.* (2007), outlined in the IY-TCM section above, indicates the added value of combining the IY-Dina in the classroom with the IY parent programme in schools.

The previous two sections highlight the added benefit of offering IY programmes in school settings for enhancing parent-teacher partnerships and for improving children's behaviours and academic learning across parent-teacher settings. It is important to recognise the benefits of parent-teacher partnerships not only for enhancing children's academic outcomes but also for providing a mutually supportive infrastructure.

Conclusions

IY has a clear logic model (Figure 1), effective core components to promote behaviour change, such as behaviour modelling and use of praise and rewards, and role play/practice, in addition to detailed programme content components with several specific objectives (Table I).

This paper has presented evidence demonstrating that IY programmes promote child learning at home, and in school, particularly through parent-teacher partnership working. The parent programmes support parents to interact positively with their children, which promotes better child behaviour and social and emotional wellbeing – which are pre-requisites for being a good learner. The school-based programmes promote positive peer, parent and teacher relationships and also impact on child behaviour, wellbeing and academic performance. It is vital that evidence-based parent and school-based programmes use similar strategies and techniques and shared goals or objectives to ensure that a child has a consistent approach to enhancing positive behaviour, wellbeing and learning. The evidence presented in this review suggests that IY is such a programme. The programmes help parents and teachers work together to achieve common goals and, as a multi-modal approach, can tackle multiple problems in children's lives and acknowledge the increasingly varied influences on their life trajectories (Utting, 2003).

Association with parents, teachers and other adults who model healthy, pro-social standards of behaviour is protective against school failure (Anderson *et al.*, 2005). There is a growing shared responsibility for the prevention of CD and enhancement of children's social emotional and academic competence, suggesting that evidence-based training should be considered as an inclusion in initial training for professionals who are in regular contact with families and children, including nursery workers and school staff.

Implications for policy and practice

- The home environment, particularly parenting practices, and parent partnerships with teachers, impact on children's social, emotional and language development, and academic readiness or achievement.
- The school context offers a unique opportunity to apply a multi-modal approach to increase parent-teacher partnerships, reduce behaviour problems, increase social and emotional competence and bring out academic success.
- IY parent, child and teacher programmes:
  - share common content and objectives, with partnership working as a main aim;
  - can be delivered as a multi-modal intervention;
  - are effective in enhancing child social and emotional wellbeing and school readiness;
  - reduce conduct problems and internalising problems;
  - are transportable to different countries, cultures and contexts; and
  - are acceptable to those participating in or delivering a programme.

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Note

1. Defined here as anyone with the responsibility for caring for a child in a parenting role.

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