

Linking the Learning

Examining the Links between
The Incredible Years and the
Irish Early Years Curriculum Framework



The Genesis Programme

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Linking the Learning

An Implementation Guide
May 2018

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The Incredible Years and the Irish
Early Years Curriculum Framework

Claire Gleeson

Foreword

There is growing recognition both nationally and internationally regarding the importance of children's social and emotional development. Social and emotional development involves more than just expressing ones feelings and emotions. The promotion of healthy social and emotional development in young children correlates with healthy cognitive development and therefore creates a strong foundation for future school achievement. Whilst this correlation is readily accepted across the board, the past decade has also seen an increased focus on accountability within the Irish education system. This has been manifested in measures such as standardised testing and the introduction of quality and curriculum frameworks in both the Early Years and Primary School settings. Both teachers and early year practitioners are finding themselves under increasing pressure to meet external requirements which in certain instances can adversely affect the amount of time afforded to the social and emotional curricula. To date many of our education policies have focused primarily on language and literacy as well as other cognitive functions. Often forgotten is the foundation on which cognitive growth is built – an emotionally and socially stable young child.

It is the objective of this document to clearly illustrate the ways in which the Incredible Years suite of programmes impact positively upon children's social and emotional learning leading to the development of a classroom environment which is more conducive to learning and results in better developmental outcomes for children.

Claire Woods

Manager, Louth County Childcare Committee

Chairperson, The Genesis Programme Management Group



The Genesis Programme

The Genesis Programme is a consortium of Partner Organisations delivering the Incredible Years® suite of programmes and other evidence-informed interventions to children, families and communities in Dundalk and Drogheda in County Louth as part of the Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme. The Genesis Programme is also a partner in The Changing Lives Initiative which is a cross border initiative providing support to families of children who at risk of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. The project is supported by the European Union INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

The ABC Programme targets investment in evidence-informed interventions to improve the long-term outcomes for children and families living in areas of disadvantage. It aims to break the cycle of poverty within areas where it is most deeply entrenched and where children are most disadvantaged, through integrated and effective services and interventions in the following areas; child development, child well-being, parenting and educational disadvantage.

The Partner Organisations of the Genesis Programme comprise of Early Years settings, Schools, Community Groups, Louth Children & Young People's Services Committee, Louth County Childcare Committee, Dundalk Institute of Technology and a range of departments within the Health Service Executive (HSE) and Tusla – the Child & Family Agency including four School Completion Programmes. Louth Leader Partnership is the lead agency.

Since its establishment in December 2014 The Genesis Programme has delivered the Incredible Years and other evidence based programmes with fidelity to thousands of children and families. In consultation with our Partner Organisations we continue to introduce new evidence based programmes and interventions.

Claire Gleeson is a Development Officer working as part of The Genesis Programme project team. Claire is a trained Group Leader in many of the Incredible Years Parent, Child and Teacher programmes which she has delivered and supported effectively since the commencement of The Genesis Programme in 2014.

Claire works closely with the early years partner organisations to support the effective implementation of the Incredible Years programmes within the various early years settings. She is also an accredited Group Leader in the Incredible Years Incredible Beginnings Programme which was first introduced to Ireland by The Genesis Programme in 2016.



Claire Gleeson

Carolyn Webster-Stratton

Developer, The Incredible Years



As the Incredible Years programme developer, I am delighted to endorse The Genesis Programme and to commend their excellent work in implementing programmes for parents, children and teachers. The Genesis Programme understands the importance of long-term planning and capacity building. They are committed to the provision of quality training and the ongoing support of their staff in order to deliver evidence based programmes with fidelity.

As a result of this dedication they have obtained strong outcomes and are continuously building a strong base of internal Incredible Years expertise across County Louth. The impact upon families and schools in the community is evident from local and national data and in the overwhelming positive feedback from early year services, schools and community agencies alike. It has been my pleasure to work with The Genesis Programme over the past three years, and I look forward to many more years of collaboration.

Acknowledgements

The Genesis Programme would like to acknowledge the following Partner Organisations for their help and support in developing this guide:

Drogheda Early Years Services

Clever Clogs Preschool
Jellytots Day Care and Montessori
Moneymore Childcare Centre
St Johns NS Early Start
The Maples Montessori

Dundalk Early Years Services

ABC Creche
Castletown Preschool
De la Salle Preschool
Holy Family & Claddagh Treasures Community Creche
Lios na nÓg Playgroup
Redeemer Creche and Playgroup
Redeemer GNS Early Start
Scoil Eoin Baiste Preschool
The Playroom Project

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SECTION ONE

Investing in Children



1.1 Overview

The *Growing up in Ireland* (GUI) longitudinal study and other research show that although a majority of Irish children do well, between a fifth and a quarter have poor economic, social and educational outcomes. As defined in the GUI study, economic vulnerability refers to an increased risk of multidimensional material disadvantage, involving a distinctive profile in relation to low income, household joblessness and economic stress.

Not surprisingly the survey carried out indicated a negative impact on children's social and emotional development. This finding highlights the need for a policy focus on child poverty and deprivation particularly in those areas where it is most exacerbated. The foundations of all aspects of human development – physical, psychological, social and emotional – are laid down in early childhood. The GUI study adds to a growing international evidence base that shows children's early life environments determine not only their physical health, but may also contribute to childhood and adult criminality, educational failure, family breakdown and mental health. This supports the case for early intervention as opposed to the later detection of problems.

“
**highlights
the need for a
policy focus on
child poverty
and deprivation**
”





1.2 Evidence Based Intervention

One of the five strategic objectives outlined in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) Statement of Strategy 2016-2019 highlights the need for evidence-based policy to be promoted and supported. Over the past decade there has been a fundamental shift towards practices and interventions that are based upon empirical research findings.

Research and how it is applied in practice has become the primary focus in ensuring effective outcomes for children and their families. It is indeed the case that 'evidence can be a powerful engine for advancing change when practitioners are given robust tools or support to apply it in their work' (Atlantic Philanthropies, 2014). The Teaching Council of Ireland are currently working with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and Centre for Effective Services (CES) on the Research Alive initiative which focuses on empowering educational practitioners to use research as part of their daily work with children and young people. *Research Alive* invites teachers, researchers and policymakers to explore how best to support teachers as researchers, reflecting on what happens in their classrooms and schools, using the work of researchers along with their own professional insights, to ask challenging questions and propose answers.

Similarly, in recent years research and evaluation has played a very important role in the development of the early years sector. There is clear evidence of the long term benefits for the child, economy and society following the provision of high quality care and education informed by research and learning from across Ireland and beyond. Although childhood is short the positive impact of effective evidence based practice can be seen far into the future of our children.

“

Evidence can be a powerful engine for advancing change when practitioners are given robust tools or supports to apply it in their work

”



1.3 Early Intervention and Prevention

One area that has been subjected to ongoing research over the past decade is Early Intervention and Prevention and its combined impact upon children's social and emotional development and overall welfare. The Prevention and Early Intervention Network (PEIN) is a network of evidence-based practice, advocacy and research organisations that share a commitment to improving outcomes for children, young people and their communities. Central to PEINs work is that services and resources concerned with promoting the welfare of children and young people should be based on need, evidence and the development of a continuum of services, from universal to targeted, which are underpinned by the rights of the child.

1. Benefits of prevention, early intervention programmes: international			
Young children	Older children	Parents	Society
<p>Higher birth weight</p> <p>Improved physical and mental health, fitness, less obesity</p> <p>Affectionate relationships with parents, bonding, attachment</p> <p>Reduced accidents and injuries (childhood to working age)</p> <p>Less likely to be in care</p> <p>Less maltreatment (injury, neglect, abuse)</p> <p>Improved conduct, reduced hyperactivity, attention seeking</p> <p>Improved school completion</p> <p>Improved test scores, (English, Maths)</p>	<p>Less likely to use toxins (alcohol, tobacco, drugs)</p> <p>Less teenage pregnancy</p> <p>Less likely to offend</p> <p>Higher school grades</p> <p>Probability of remaining at school</p> <p>Higher graduation rates, resulting in higher earnings</p> <p>Reduced likelihood of repeating grades</p>	<p>Improved mental health, self-esteem</p> <p>More stable lifestyles, fewer behavioural issues, offending, reduced domestic abuse</p> <p>Higher participation in workforce, return to work</p> <p>More effective family planning</p> <p>Better parenting, limit setting, anger management, less physical chastisement</p>	<p>Reduced health costs</p> <p>Reduced anti-social behaviour, youth and adult crime (especially violent crime)</p> <p>Less use of probation, correctional services</p> <p>Reduced health services (GP, hospital, emergency, general, mental health, specialised, drugs)</p> <p>Reduced care services (e.g. children in care)</p> <p>Reduced need for special educational services</p>

Figure 1: Prevention and Early Intervention Network 2016



1.4 Early Intervention and Prevention - The Incredible Years

The Incredible Years suite of programmes developed by Carolyn Webster-Stratton are strongly influenced by the school of developmental psychology. The work of Bowlby, Patterson and Bandura are evident throughout all strands.

The goal of the Incredible Years is to deliver evidence-based programmes and materials that develop positive parent-teacher-child relationships and assist in preventing and treating behaviour problems and promoting social, emotional, and academic competence prior to adolescence.

These preventative programmes have been subjected to rigorous research by independent scientists testing the impact over a period of more than 30 years. Research has shown that early investment in the lives of children has both positive implications for child wellbeing, development and society as a whole. By implementing the Incredible Years suite of programmes we are essentially building our children's bank account for the future.

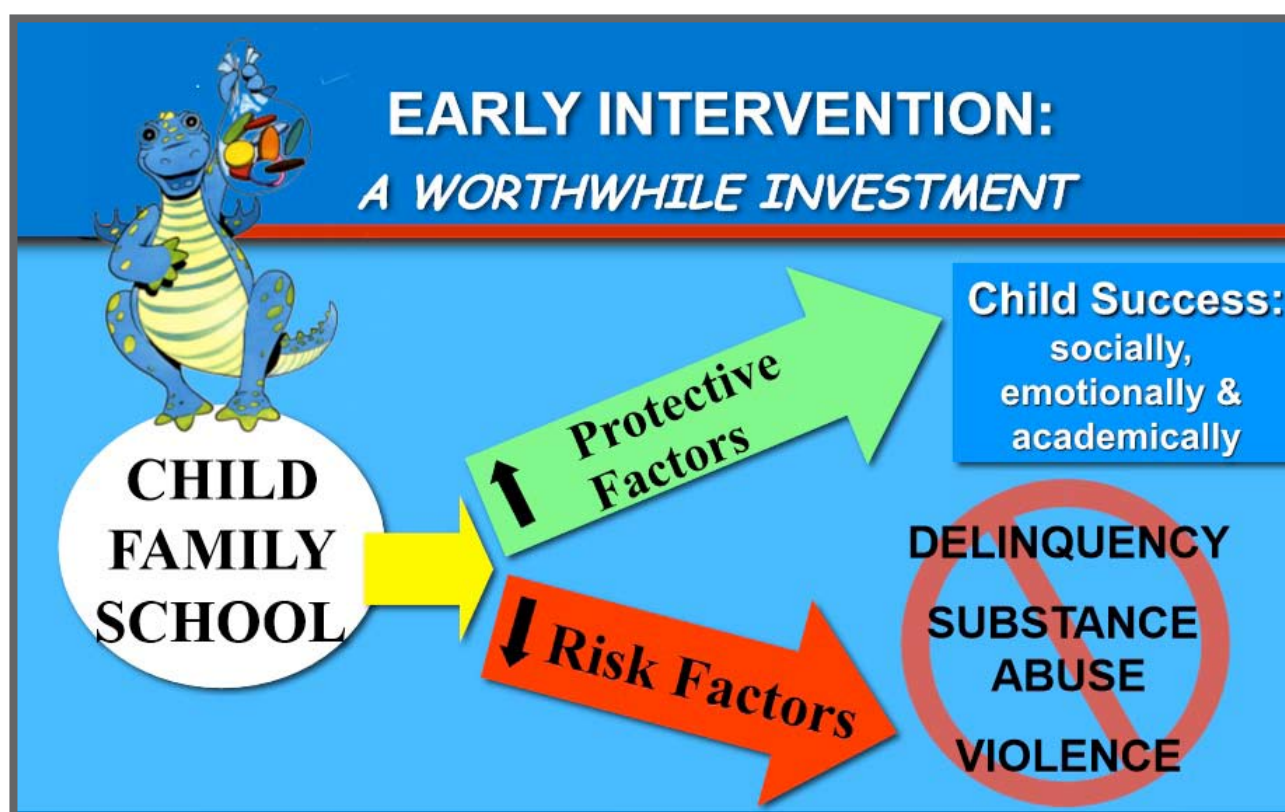


Figure 2. Early Intervention: A Worthwhile Investment. *The Incredible Years* ©2018



SECTION TWO

Incredible Years in the Early Years



2.1 Introduction

The aim of the Early Years section of this document is to provide an outline of the contents and objectives within The Incredible Years programmes and how they support Irish national policy frameworks such as:

- Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (Aistear)
- Síolta, the National Quality Framework (Síolta)

Contributions to the development of this document have been made by practitioners from The Genesis Programme consortium; our early years partner organisations implement strategies and learning to children ages 1 – 6 years from the following Incredible Years programmes:

- Incredible Years Early Years Classroom Dina Programme
- Incredible Years Incredible Beginnings Programme

The information provided is designed to be used primarily by early years practitioners working in the following types of settings:

- Full/Part Time Settings
- Sessional Services
- Naíonra
- Early Start Units

It should be noted that this document is a guide and is therefore dependent on practitioners providing opportunities for play and quality interactions in order for the child to reach his/her full potential.

2.2 Incredible Years Early Years Classroom Dina Programme

The Incredible Years Classroom Dina social skills, problem solving and emotional regulation curriculum is delivered to all children within the preschool room. Whilst the main objective of the programme is to support children's social and emotional competencies, research has shown that social, emotional, school readiness and academic success are connected and so mastery of one area results in success of the other (Webster-Statton, 2012).

The Incredible Years Classroom Dina curriculum is based on the cognitive social learning theory. The curriculum content is divided into three developmental levels, preschool age groups are offered the level one curriculum with children then progressing to level two and three in primary school as concepts become more complex.

The programme is designed to be delivered 2-3 times per week over the course of the academic year to children aged between 3 – 6 years, the lessons may also be delivered over two academic years in accordance with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme.

Below, the areas of The Incredible Years Classroom Dina delivery are outlined in three distinct segments:

- Circle Time
- Small Group Time
- Promotion of lesson throughout the day

Each area provides opportunities for practitioners to use proven pedagogical techniques and strategies to optimise learning for each child in the group.

Circle Time: Presenting

Prior to commencement of the programme the practitioners plan together allocating specific days and times for the programme delivery. This will then form part of the daily/weekly routine ensuring a consistent schedule within the room.

Each session begins with an interactive circle time which is delivered for approximately 10 - 15 minutes (this is a guide and should be determined by the interest and attention of the children). During this time the practitioners introduce the concept of the lesson in an engaging manner through the use of puppets, music or vignettes/video clips from the related Incredible Years DVDs and books along with the practicing of role plays and games to encourage discussion.

Small Group Activities: Practicing

Each circle time is then followed by approximately 10-15 minutes (determined by the interest and attention of the children) of small group activities in which children are invited to take part. During this time the children are divided up into small groups of 4-5 per table to partake in a group/individual activity which is intended to practice the skills introduced during the circle time. Practitioners circulate between the various groups encouraging the concept of the lesson as children participate in the practitioner directed activity.

There is often a misconception that small group activities within The Incredible Years Classroom Dina curriculum are overly structured and adult led.

However, activities provided within each lesson plan are merely suggestions based on the concept of the specific lesson. Practitioners assessing for learning will build on the strengths, interests, abilities and needs of the child and in doing so often adapt small group activities in order to provide stimulating and creative learning opportunities.



Throughout the Day: Promoting the Concept

All practitioners working within the room play a vital role in extending the learning by promoting the concept of the lesson throughout the day. The most effective method of promoting The Incredible Years Classroom Dina concepts is through the use of pedagogical strategies such as modelling, encouragement, descriptive commenting and scaffolding. Practitioners can encourage development of these skills as part of the everyday spontaneous and planned activities which may both child and/or adult led.



2.3 Incredible Years Early Years Programmes supporting Early Years National Policy

Aistear, the curriculum framework (NCCA, 2009) for children aged birth to six years, provides practical support for practitioners working with young children, the framework assists practitioners in the development and expansion of their current curriculum to guarantee that all children are provided with opportunities to have fun and reach their full potential (NCCA, 2009).

Siolta, the early years quality framework is designed to define, assess and support the improvement of quality across all aspects of practice in ECCE settings where children aged birth to six years are present. (CECDE, 2006).

The Genesis Programme recognises the importance of Aistear and Siolta within early education settings and therefore the use of both frameworks is actively encouraged and supported. In collaboration with Louth County Childcare Committee (LCCC) and the NCCA, The Genesis Programme has delivered workshops to Early Years Partner Organisations providing practitioners with a 2 hour introduction to the Aistear Siolta Practice Guide.

Aistear is based on 12 principles of learning and development which are presented in 3 groups:

1. The first group concerns **children and their lives in early childhood**
2. The second group concerns **children's connections with others**
3. The third group concerns **how children learn and develop**

This section will outline how The Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme compliments many of the core principles of Aistear, links to the related areas of Siolta will also be referred to along with any relevant signposts to aistearsiolta.ie the online resource for both frameworks.

Take a look at:

Appendix 1:

Table showing links between Early Years Classroom Dina lessons and Aistear, the Curriculum Framework

2.3.1 The Child's Uniqueness

It is widely recognised that each child brings his/her own set of experiences and unique life story to the early years setting (NCCA, 2009). Getting to know children individually and giving attention to what they are interested in is considered to be the first step to building a positive relationship between child and practitioner (Webster-Stratton, 2012). Recognition of each child as an individual with specific needs, interests and abilities is at the forefront during planning for The Incredible Years Classroom Dina circle and small group activities.

The ethos of The Incredible Years promotes the 'funds of knowledge' concept in which we embrace the knowledge and skills that each child, family and community bring to the setting and using this information to enhance the curriculum in many ways, one such occasion is during planning time when practitioners develop circle time puppet scripts relevant to children's individual interests and needs (Webster-Stratton, 2012).

In Practice:

"Classroom Dina is a great platform to celebrate each child's uniqueness, as part of our circle time we always try to include things that are meaningful to individual children. We do this by including events and interests relevant to the children during the planning stage and through video reflection we also document any emerging interests"

"Children are encouraged to share their own stories both in and out of circle time and also to listen to those of others, Wally and his friends often tell stories which reflect the diversity in the group. For example, Wally was celebrating Eid al-Adha which gave us the opportunity to talk about something which is special particularly important to one of the children"

Take a look at:

- **Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide (2015):**
Curriculum Foundations
- **Síolta: The National Quality Framework (2006)**
Standard 1: Rights of the Child
Síolta Principle: Equality & Diversity
- **The Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme (2018)**
Allosaurus Book 5 – Molly Teaches How to be Friendly – Lesson 54, Recognising Individual Differences

2.3.2 Equality and Diversity

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Equal Status Act (2004) state that equality is a central feature of quality education and care. By embracing equality, diversity and inclusion as part of The Incredible Years Classroom Dina, practitioners can provide opportunities for all children's need and abilities. These essential components must be supported in order for each child to reach their full potential.

The child's sense of belonging is strengthened through the use of The Incredible Years Classroom Dina, a large emphasis is placed on all children being recognised and welcomed into the group, the environment and level of the lesson content can be adapted to meet the varying needs and interest of the children.



In Practice:

"As part of our welcome song we sing 'hello' in the home languages of the children, families and staff in our setting. Parents and children have played an important role in making this successful by helping us to pronounce the words correctly - we all have great fun singing together."

Take a look at:

- **Aistear/Siolta Practice Guide (2015):**
Curriculum Foundations
- **Siolta: The National Quality Framework (2006)**
Standard 1: Rights of the Child
Standard 2: Environments 2.7.2
Síolta Principle: Equality & Diversity
- **The Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme (2018)**
Allosaurus Book 5 – Molly Teaches How to be Friendly – Lesson 54, Recognising Individual Differences



2.3.3 Children as Citizens

Young children as agents in their own learning bring an abundance of knowledge and experience to The Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme. The participation of children in decisions that affect them is an important part of the curriculum; children are encouraged to contribute their views and opinions, sharing their experiences and feelings during interactions with both adults and children in the group.

As part of the lessons children are invited to participate in large and small group activities with their choices being both respected and valued. The Genesis Programme also encourages practitioners to consult with children when planning activities for lessons, this compliments the Síolta Standard 1: Rights of Child, in which it states children should be given 'opportunities to make decisions, and has his/her choices and decisions respected' (CECDE, 2006).

In practice:

"Some of the children made markings on a page to represent the 'rules' that we developed together as a group. These are displayed at the child's level in the room"



Take a look at:

Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide (2015):

Curriculum Foundations

Síolta: The National Quality Framework (2006)

Standard 1: Rights of the Child

Síolta Principle: Equality & Diversity

The Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme (2018)

Apatosaurus Book Level 1 - Lesson 2, 3

Triceratop Book - Wally Teaches about Understanding and Detecting Feelings

Stegosaurus Book - Wally Teaches How to Solve a Problem

2.3.4 Relationships

Aistear (NCCA, 2009) states that 'Children have a fundamental need to be with other people. They learn and develop through loving and nurturing relationships with adults and other children, the quality of these interactions impacts on their learning and development'.

The Apatosaurus Unit of The Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme focuses on making friends and learning social skills, through the lessons the children develop/enhance positive relationships skills. The skills introduced are essential for each child's development and are core to the child's sense of identity and belonging and wellbeing.

In practice:

"I feel the programme has empowered the children; at first we encouraged the children to compliment their peers, but now they compliment themselves and each other without any prompting from the practitioners in the room"

"Classroom Dina compliments the High Scope conflict resolution steps used in our service. The 'feelings language' children have learned helps them to express themselves during problem solving"

Take a look at:

- **Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide (2015):**
Nurturing and Extending Interactions Pillar
- **Síolta: The National Quality Framework (2006)**
Standard 1: Rights of the Child
Síolta Principle: Relationships
- **The Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme (2018)**
Allosaurus Book - Molly Teaches How to be Friendly, Lessons 41 - 54
Brachiosuarus Book - Molly Explains How to Talk with Friends, Lessons 55- 61

2.3.5 Parents, Family and Community

Joining an ECCE service is often a child's first experience of education and care outside of the family/community unit. The Incredible Years recognises the key role that parental involvement plays in each child's education; Murphy (2004) concurs with this by emphasising the significance of parental participation in early years leading to a long lasting support of the child's learning,

The success of The Incredible Years suite of programmes is underpinned by the positive collaboration between child, parent and Early Years Practitioner, this mirrors the recognition of the many benefits of parents and practitioners working together as outlined in Aistear (NCCA, 2009) which can be seen in Figure 3 below.

Parents	Practitioners	Children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feel valued and respected ▪ Are more involved in their children's learning and development ▪ Can share information about their children ▪ Feel their family's values, practices, traditions and beliefs are understood and taken into account ▪ Feel comfortable visiting the setting talking to, and planning with practitioners ▪ Know more about their children's experiences outside the home and use information to support their learning and development more effectively ▪ Understand why early childhood care and education is important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understand better the children and families in their settings and use this information to make learning more enjoyable and rewarding for all children ▪ Can help children develop a sense of identity and belonging in the setting by actively engaging with and finding out about family values, traditions and beliefs, and building on these where appropriate ▪ Benefit from parents' skills expertise ▪ Can provide a more emotionally secure environment for children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feel more secure and benefit more from the educational opportunities given to them ▪ Move from one setting to another with greater confidence ▪ See learning as more enjoyable when their home life is 'visible' in the setting ▪ Enjoy hearing and seeing their home language in the setting when their home language is neither english nor irish ▪ Experience more connections between the different services that support them

Figure 3, NCCA 2009

"We (practitioners and parents) support each other, we work together to ignore challenging behaviour and use positive praise or distraction when needed. It took a little bit of time for parents to see the benefits but we now work as a team using the same strategies at home and in the service"

"We post updates about Classroom Dina on the notice board outside the room each day, we also regularly update parents in conversation and with text alerts about their child's learning as part of the Classroom Dina programme"

Take a look at:

- **Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide (2015):**
Parent Partnerships
- **Síolta: The National Quality Framework (2006)**
Síolta Principle: Parents
Síolta Principle: Relationships
Standard 1: Rights of the Child
Standard 1: Parents and Families
- **The Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme (2018)**
Classroom Dina Home Activities Manual – Letters to Home
Classroom Dina Home Activities – across all units in Level 1
- **The Incredible Years Teacher and Childcare Provider Self Reflection Inventory**
Building Positive Relationships with Children
Building Positive Relationships with Parents



2.3.6 The Adult's Role

When we consider how children learn best we must first take into account the important role that practitioners play in helping to support children to be intrinsically motivated to learn (Webster-Stratton, 2012). While we often focus on ensuring the provision of child led experiences within the early years environment, we must also recognise relevant and meaningful adult led activities contribute to the learning and development of all children.

One of the guiding principles of the Aistear framework relates to the reciprocal relationship between adult and child, Aistear recognises that sometimes the adult leads the learning experience and sometimes the child leads (NCCA, 2009). Practitioners delivering The Incredible Years Classroom Dina curriculum aim to build positive, trusting, respectful relationships with the children in their care, recognising each child's uniqueness and planning for this accordingly. Practitioners scaffold each child's learning during the lessons delivered and again during the promotion of skills learned. They do so by offering varying levels of support and adjusting where necessary to compliment the child as he or she develops. Through the use of this blended approach to learning the practitioner can support each child's need for autonomy and independent exploration which further enhances their motivation to learn (Webster-Stratton, 2012).

In practice:

"we as practitioners in the room model the behaviours we would like to see in the children"

Take a look at:

- **Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide (2015):**
Curriculum Foundations Pillar
Planning and Assessing Pillar
The Learning Environment Pillar
- **Síolta: The National Quality Framework (2006)**
Síolta Principle: The Role of the Adult
Standards 1- 16 (all link to the role of the adult)
- **The Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme (2018)**
Book 1



2.3.7 Communication and Language

Aistear, describes communication as the process of giving, receiving and making sense of information (NCCA, 2009). Exposure to language should be meaningful, deliberate, repetitive and involve active engagement of children in the class, as part of The Incredible Years Classroom Dina the leader utilises the programme material to model and encourage positive communication, providing opportunities for children to communicate with both adults and their peers.

The Incredible Years Classroom Dina curriculum provides ample opportunities to enhance and develop children's language and communication skills, children of all language and communication levels are encouraged to be involved in the programme. The use of nonverbal cues and visuals plays a large role in the programme content and delivery, helping children to recognise and use non-verbal communication skills in their everyday life.

In practice:

"The children in our room have really benefited from the use of feelings faces, now all children can communicate their feelings to us and each other effectively. We have extended on this by developing additional visual aids to help give children choices at planning time and we also display our routine which helps with transitions"

Take a look at:

- **Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide (2015)**

Nurturing and Extending Interactions Pillar

- **Síolta: The National Quality Framework (2006)**

Standard 12: Communication

- **The Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme (2018)**

*Iguanodon Book, Dina Teaches about Doing Your Best in School, Lessons 5 – 6
Wally Teaches about Understanding and Detecting Feelings, Lessons 11 – 22*

- **The Incredible Years Teacher and Childcare Provider Self Reflection Inventory**

Promoting Language Development in Toddlers and Preschoolers



2.3.8 The Learning Environment

The learning environment is vitally important to the successful promotion of concepts explored in The Incredible Years Classroom Dina circle time sessions. Preparation of the learning environment is fundamental, Aistear states that there are two roles for adults preparing the play environment - organising and resourcing (NCCA, 2009)

Indoor and outdoor environments that are both well organised and resourced provide a rich setting for play opportunities, this is the optimal space for practitioner to observe and initiate openings to promote skills explored as part of The Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme such as turn taking, problem solving and emotional literacy.

In practice:

"I use open ended materials where possible for the Classroom Dina small group activities, the process is more important than the end result"

"Our Art Corner is a place where we display children's creations from our small group Classroom Dina sessions. We display things at the child's level, their name and date and anything they may have said about their work (narrative) is written in the corner"

Take a look at:

- **Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide (2015)**
Creating and Using the Learning Environment (3-6 years)
- **Síolta: The National Quality Framework (2009)**
Standard 2: Environment
Standard 7: Curriculum



2.3.9 Play and Hands-on Experiences

During an Incredible Years Classroom Dina lesson, the children are encouraged to participate in small and large group activities allowing the opportunity to play and learn with others. Through fun and engaging hands-on activities the child's social, physical and imaginary worlds are explored (NCCA, 2009). The medium of play is used to provide many opportunities for the child to learn and develop fundamental skills. Children are introduced to the various concepts during lessons, such as problem solving, co-operation and recognition of feelings in others which are then reinforced through the hands on learning experiences during play with others.

“

The medium of play is used to provide many opportunities for the child to learn and develop fundamental skills

”

In practice:

“I use open ended materials where possible for The Incredible Years Classroom Dina small group activities, the process is more important than the end result”

“Through The Incredible Years Classroom Dina our group has developed a respect for the opinions of others, each child's voice is heard and respected as they share things with the group. This is modelled by the staff in the room in their interactions with children and colleagues”

Take a look at:

- **Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide (2015)**

Creating and Using the Learning Environment (3-6 years)

- **Síolta: The National Quality Framework (2009)**

Síolta Principle: Play

Standard 7: Curriculum

2.4 Reflective Practice and On-going Professional Development within Early Years Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme

The Genesis Programme nurtures an ethos of reflection in all areas of programme delivery; one of the key components to successful delivery of The Incredible Years suite of programmes is to ensure that the programmes are being delivered with fidelity. When a programme is being implemented with fidelity, we are able to achieve the same outcomes for children that the evidence based programme was originally designed to accomplish.

The Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme is a manualised evidence based curriculum, as with any curriculum the early years educator must ensure that learning opportunities are planned effectively whereby the needs, interests and developmental ability of the children are consistently met and built upon. Aistear (NCCA, 2009) states that the review of what young children do, say and make helps practitioners to plan effectively and improves practice which in turn leads to improved opportunities for all children within their care (NCCA, 2009, page 11).

Síolta Standard 11. Professional Practice, Component 11.3

'The setting supports and promotes regular opportunity for practitioners to reflect upon and review their practice and contribute positively to the development of quality practice in the setting'

(CECDE, 2006)

The Genesis Programme supports reflective practice at each stage of the Incredible Years journey; collaborative supports used to strengthen programme fidelity align with our ethos of reflective practice, these supports are offered to all group leaders participating in programmes.

The reflective practice supports offered by The Genesis Programme include:

- Best Practice Guidelines (see Appendices 2 & 3)
- Workshops Pre and Post Training
- Videotaping / Video Review
- Peer Coaching / Consultation Days
- Accreditation
- Ongoing Continuous Professional Development Opportunities

Best Practice Guidelines

Best Practice Guidelines developed by The Genesis Programme outline the supports and actions to be followed to ensure best practice when delivering the programme.

Workshops pre and post Incredible Years Training

Support workshops / meetings with The Genesis Programme Development Officer allow the opportunity for practitioners and managers/principals to assess how the programme fits alongside the current pedagogy and curriculum of the setting, along with an opportunity for educators to reflect on their own values and beliefs which may influence programme delivery.

Following attendance at the three-day Incredible Years Classroom Dina training delivered by Incredible Years, supports are made available for practitioners to assist in the planning and implementation of the curriculum lessons. These are collaborative sessions in which The Genesis Programme Development Officer delivers a tailored session/s to meet the current needs of the service.

Videotaping / Video Review

One of the most effective ways of supporting fidelity is for practitioners to regularly video tape their Incredible Years Classroom Dina sessions, videos can then be used for self and peer appraisal of practice. Guided by self-evaluation tools the practitioner can review sessions helping to recognise their own individual successes and challenges along with those of the children in the group, this type of reflection allows for scaffolding of future learning and development (NCCA, 2009).

Peer Coaching / Consultation Days

The Incredible Years promote teacher support teams within schools and early years settings, Webster – Stratton (2012) states that 'teacher support teams help teachers to be confident, reflective and solve problems'. Peer Coaching and Consultation Days for all practitioners delivering the programme allow Group Leaders to come together and to gain support from both peers and trained Peer Coaches. This support is provided by trained Incredible Years Mentors allowing for the enhancement of fidelity to the programme. During the process Coaches and/or Mentors focus on what practitioners are doing well and how they can further develop their skills.

Accreditation

The accreditation process maximises the quality of group leader performance and programme fidelity (Incredible Years, 2017). It is believed that certified leaders implementing the full programme will achieve results similar to those in the original research. The process to accreditation is facilitated by both coaching and mentoring to help attain accreditation in the respective programme (see Appendix 5).



Continuous Professional Development

Accredited group leaders may in time be selected for training as an Incredible Years Peer Coach, this is one of the many opportunities for on-going professional development available. The model of reflective practice used by The Genesis Programme follows the active or experience- based learning model as described by Kolb (1984).

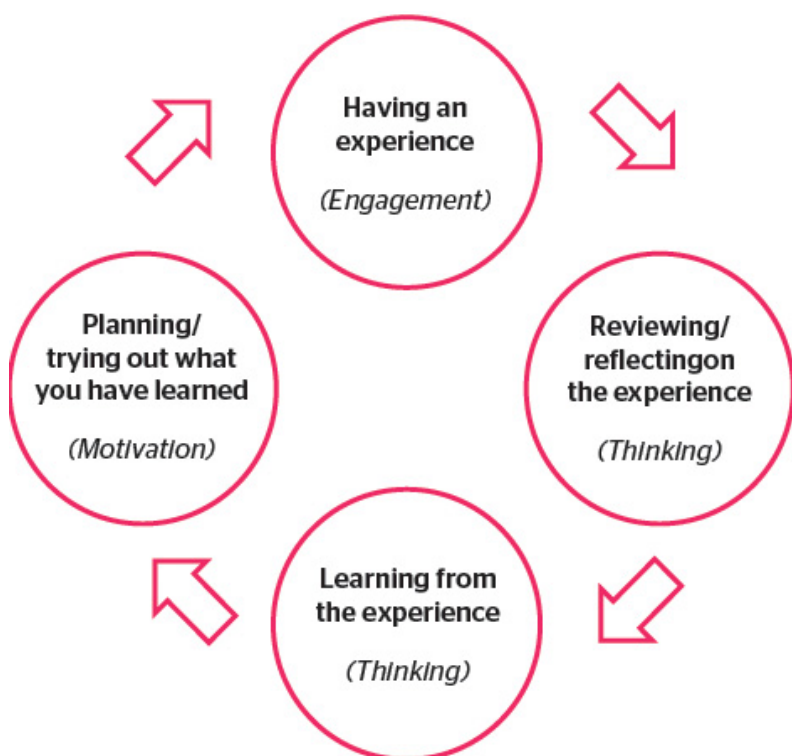


Figure 4: Kolb Model of Learning

In Practice:

"Peer Coaching helped build my confidence; it was one of the best supports. We got to mix with other services and with the positive feedback from our peers and the Coach my confidence grew"

"We video each of our Classroom Dina sessions, it helps us to reflect on our work with The Incredible Years but also can often be used to gather information about children's skills and interests. We use this towards planning as part of our emergent and enquiry based curriculum."

Take a look at:

- **Síolta: The National Quality Framework (2009)**
 - Standard 7: Curriculum
 - Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation
 - Standard 11: Professional Practice
- **Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide (2015)**
 - Element 4: Reflective Practice
- **Appendices:**
 - Appendix 5 – Accreditation Map



2.5 Practitioner Perspective

Incredible Years Classroom Dina Impact on Partnership with Parents

Kerrie Rothwell, Manager, Clever Clogs Preschool, Drogheda

At Clever Clogs we recognise that parents are the most important people in their children's early lives, it is therefore important for us as early years practitioners to have communication with the parents on a daily basis. When working with the children as part of Classroom Dina we focus a lot on the homework. After each session the children bring home their Dina folders in which they will have a note for the parents on what Dina, Wally or Molly talked about and an activity to do with their parents. The children and staff can see the value in Classroom Dina but now the parents do also and we can work together.

Accreditation for Programme Fidelity

*Wendy Hoey, Accredited Classroom Dina Group Leader & Preschool Room Leader
Lios na nÓg Preschool, Dundalk*

After completing training in Classroom Dina, I began to implement the programme into the preschool rooms within my service. Recognising that fidelity in the programme delivery leads to better outcomes for children my goal from day one was to work towards accreditation. I began video recording every lesson and using the checklist not only as an evaluation tool but also as a template to help me plan my lessons. After a year of 'enjoyable' hard work and a series of reflective sessions called 'Peer Coaching' I was ready to send my video recording away to the Incredible Years head office for observation. I achieved my accreditation and received feedback that was so positive and encouraging and I would highly recommend all trained group leaders to take part in this effective and motivating form of reflective practice.

Linking Learning Opportunities

*Denise McManus & Joanne Rogers, Classroom Dina Group Leaders
De La Salle Preschool, Dundalk*

Following training we familiarised ourselves with the programme. By doing so we managed to integrate the lessons into other areas of the short, medium and long term planning – one example of this is how we have linked the Classroom Dina programme to the Road Safety Authority (RSA) programme 'Simon and Friends', each year we use the Simon and friends programme to introduce the concept of road safety to the children. This year we linked this into our planning for a Classroom Dina lesson covering the rules of the room, the small group exercise was adapted to include the 'traffic light game' – a game in which children are encouraged to use their 'looking eyes' and 'listening ears' to follow the rules of the game.



SECTION THREE

Incredible Beginnings in the Early Years



3.1 Incredible Years Incredible Beginnings Programme

The Incredible Years Incredible Beginnings Programme is designed to be delivered to those working with children ages 1-5 years old. In this continuous professional development programme early years educators meet together to discuss and share ways to provide an environment that supports children's optimal early development (ages 1-5 years). This opportunity for practitioners across various early years services to network encourages partnership conversation between services without breaching any confidentiality or professional boundaries.

The methods discussed include using social and emotion coaching, nurturing child-directed play interactions using narrated descriptive commenting, proactive teaching with predictable routines and consistent positive behaviour management strategies. All of these approaches rely on building positive relationships with children using sensitive and responsive approaches.

The Incredible Beginnings Programme is based on Bandura's modelling and self-efficacy theories (Figure 5) the content is delivered through the use of vignettes to encourage discussion, along with role plays and group exercises to promote learning these align with Bandura's principles of live and video modelling, rehearsal and self-reflection.

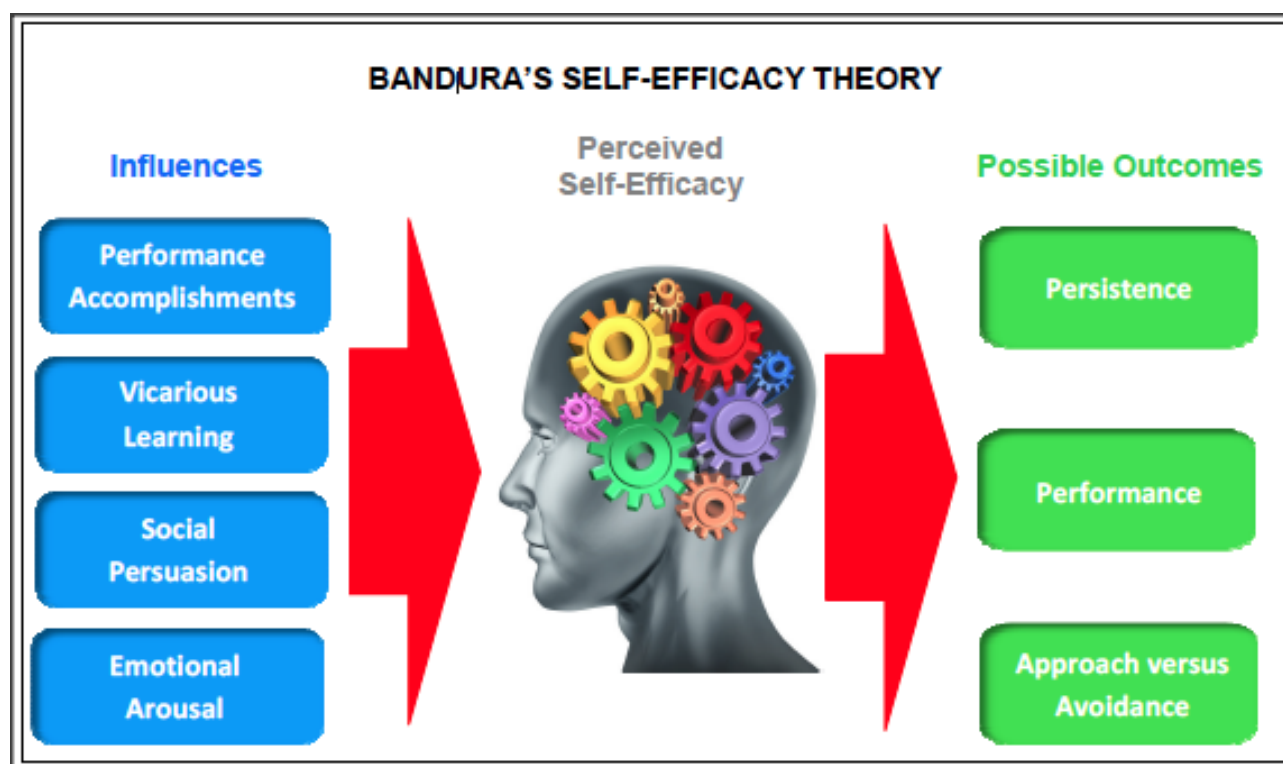


Figure 5 : Banduras Self-Efficacy Theory

Bandura described self-efficacy as a person's belief in his or her capability to successfully perform a task; self-efficacy can be developed or strengthened through accomplishment, learning and influence of others. However self-efficacy can also be affected by emotions such as stress and anxiety, therefore Continuous Professional Development within a supportive network can aid reflection and add to learning conversations with colleagues, parents and children.

Practice ideas:

"The Incredible Beginnings Programme helped us to start planning more as a together; we are reflective as team now!"

"The training helped me to build positive relationships with the children and their parents. I understand separation anxiety much more now."

Take a look at:

- **Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide (2015)**

Element 4: Reflective Practice

- **Síolta: The National Quality Framework (2009)**

Standard 7: Curriculum

Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation

Standard 11: Professional Practice



3.2 Incredible Beginnings Programme complimenting Aistear's Principles of Learning and Development

Aistear is based on 12 principles of learning and development. We have seen in Section Two the links between the Aistear principles and The Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme. The Incredible Years Incredible Beginnings Programme is also underpinned by some of the same values and principles as Aistear.

This is illustrated in the table below, which demonstrates the link between the Aistear principles of learning and development and the Incredible Years Incredible Beginnings Programme objectives.

Aistear Principle	Incredible Beginnings Programme objectives	Activities in Incredible Beginnings curriculum
The Child's Uniqueness	<p>Recognising that parents are partners in their child's learning and development.</p> <p>Engaging in child led play and promoting children's self-confidence and independence.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities to help the child settle in by getting to know things unique to the child before he/she joins the service – likes, interests etc.</p> <p>Take time to get to know about the child's family background and community.</p> <p>Use transition resources to support this important step for child and parent.</p>
Children as Citizens	<p>Engaging in child led play and promoting children's self-confidence and independence</p>	<p>Use child directed play opportunities which give the child the chance to make choices in relation to his learning</p> <p>Include children in decision making (example: classroom rules) and planning of play opportunities</p>
Relationships	<p>Building positive relationships with children</p> <p>Promoting children's sense of security and safety</p> <p>Using intentional commenting to facilitate preschool children's peer relationships</p>	<p>Take time to build positive relationships with children as seen on the teaching pyramid</p> <p>Provide a consistent routine of care which will help the child to feel secure</p> <p>Support the child in building relationships with others, provide the opening for play and learning with others.</p> <p>Model positive relationships with others – children and colleagues</p> <p>Scaffold children's relationship skills such as turn taking, problem solving and conflict resolution</p>



Aistear Principle	Incredible Beginnings Programme objectives	Activities in Incredible Beginnings curriculum
Parents, Family and Community	<p>Recognising that parents are partners in their child's learning and development</p> <p>Reassure parents and debrief child's experiences with them</p>	<p>Recognise the individual differences of children and their families</p> <p>Provide parents with a variety of ways to communicate with their child's teacher.</p> <p>Resources and curriculum should represent the child's family background and culture.</p>
The Adults Role	<p>Building positive relationships with children</p> <p>Importance of positive attention and praise</p>	<p>Model positive relationships with others – children and colleagues</p> <p>Take time to build positive relationships with children as seen on the teaching pyramid</p> <p>Reflect on practice and plan relevant and meaningful opportunities for children</p>
Holistic Learning and Development		<p>Use each child's previous learning and experience with their families and communities (funds of knowledge) to inform future learning</p> <p>Scaffold each child's learning in all areas of development</p> <p>Use observation to monitor and recognise the abilities of each child</p>
Active Learning	<p>Build emotional literacy through interactive reading methods</p>	<p>Use the reading with CARE guidelines to develop ways in which you can use interactive reading strategies</p> <p>Provide opportunities to discover and problem solve</p>
Play and Hands on Experience	<p>Engaging in child led play and promoting children's self-confidence and independence</p> <p>Promoting empathy and friendships through dramatic pretend play</p>	<p>Engaging in adult guided play opportunities</p> <p>Engaging in child led play opportunities</p>



Aistear Principle	Incredible Beginnings Programme objectives	Activities in Incredible Beginnings curriculum
Relevant and Meaningful Experiences	<p>Share child's experiences with parents</p> <p>Give parents the opportunities to share information about the child at home</p>	<p>Collaborate with colleagues & relevant people in each child's life to ensure that you are providing meaningful and relevant experiences for children in your care</p>
Communication and Language	<p>Understand the importance of imitation, repetition, and nonverbal gestures for toddlers and children with language delay</p> <p>Setting up asking and telling practices to promote social communication between pre-schoolers</p> <p>Use descriptive commenting</p> <p>Strategic modelling and prompting use of language</p>	<p>Use visual aids (choice boards etc)</p> <p>Social stories to be used with all children but largely to support children with additional needs</p>
The Learning Environment	<p>Engaging learning environment with predictable, consistent routine</p>	<p>Display consistent routines at the child's level</p> <p>Availability of natural resources for children</p> <p>Clearly defined areas in each room</p> <p>Range of developmentally appropriate materials available to the children</p>



APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Links between Incredible Years Early Years Classroom Dina and Aistear, the Curriculum Framework

Early Years Classroom Dina Unit/Lesson	Aistear Theme			
	Communicating	Identity & Belonging	Wellbeing	Exploring & Thinking
Home activities and letters to Parent/Carer		Aim 2, LG 2		
Apatosaurus Unit: Making Friends and Learning School Rules				
Understanding the importance of rules	Aim 1, LG 1, 2	Aim 3, LG 2	Aim 1, LG 5	Aim 1, LG 2 Aim2, LG 3
Participating in the process of rule making	Aim 2, LG 4	Aim 3, LG 1, 2, 3, 6. Aim 4, LG2	Aim 1, LG 6 Aim 4, LG 6	Aim 2, LG 5
Learning how to earn rewards for good behaviours	Aim 2, LG 1	Aim 3, LG2, 3, 6	Aim 1 LG 6 Aim 4, LG 1	Aim 4, LG 3
Learning to build friendships	Aim 1, LG 2 Aim 2, LG 1	Aim 1, LG 1	Aim 1, LG 1	
Iguanodon Unit: How to be Successful in School				
Learning how to listen & wait	Aim 1, LG1,LG2 Aim 2, LG 1	Aim 3, LG 3 Aim 4, LG 1	Aim 1, LG1 Aim 4, LG 1	
Learning the importance of cooperation with others		Aim 3, LG 2, 3, 6	Aim 1, LG 5	
Practising concentration and good classroom skills		Aim 4, LG 1, 2, 4	Aim 4, LG 1, 2	

Early Years Classroom Dina Unit/Lesson	Aistear Theme			
	Communicating	Identity & Belonging	Wellbeing	Exploring & Thinking
Triceratops Unit: Understanding and Detecting Feelings				
Learning words for different feelings	Aim 2, LG 4 Aim 3, LG 1 Aim 4, LG 1	Aim 1, LG 2	Aim 1, LG 2	Aim 3, LG 4
Learning how to tell how someone is feeling from verbal and non-verbal expressions	Aim 1, LG 3, LG 4	Aim 3, LG 4	Aim 1, LG 2	
Increasing awareness of nonverbal facial communication used to portray feelings	Aim 1, LG 2, 3, 4, 5	Aim 1, LG 2	Aim 1, LG 2	
Learning different ways to relax	Aim 3, LG 4, 5 Aim 4, LG 2	Aim 4, LG 1	Aim 2, LG 6 Aim 3, LG 1	
Understanding feelings from different perspectives	Aim 1, LG 3	Aim 1, LG 1, 3	Aim 1, LG 2	
Practice talking about feelings	Aim 2, LG 4 Aim 3, LG 1 Aim 4, LG 1	Aim 1, LG 6	Aim 1, LG 2, 4	Aim 3, LG 4 Aim 4, LG 2
Stegosaurus Unit: Wally Teaches Problem Solving Steps				
Learning how to identify a problem	Aim 1, LG 3 Aim 2, LG 4 Aim 3, LG 1	Aim 3, LG 5 & 6	Aim 2, LG 3	Aim 2, LG 4
Thinking of solutions to hypothetical problems	Aim 2, LG 4 Aim 3, LG 1	Aim 4, LG 2	Aim 1, LG 6 Aim 3, LG 4 Aim 4, LG 1	Aim 2, LG 5 Aim 4, LG 5
Learning verbal assertive skills	Aim 2, LG 4 Aim 2, LG 3	Aim 3, LG 1	Aim 1, LG 2, 4 Aim 4, LG 3	Aim 2, LG 4
Understanding what apology means		Aim 3, LG 2, 5, 6	Aim 3, LG 4	
Learning to understand that solutions have different consequences		Aim 3, LG 6	Aim 4, LG 1 Aim 4, LG 3	Aim 4, LG 3
Learning how to inhibit impulsive reactions	Aim 2, LG 4		Aim 2, LG 2 Aim 4, LG 2, 3	
Thinking of alternative solutions to problem situations	Aim 2, LG 4		Aim 4, LG 3	Aim 4, LG 2
Learning how to critically evaluate solutions	Aim 2, LG 1, 4	Aim 3, LG 1, 6	Aim 3, LG 4	

Early Years Classroom Dina Unit/Lesson	Aistear Theme			
	Communicating	Identity & Belonging	Wellbeing	Exploring & Thinking
Tyrannosaurus Rex Unit: Tiny Turtle Teaches Anger Management				
Recognising that anger can interfere with good problem solving	Aim 2, LG 4 Aim 3, LG 1			Aim 4, LG 2
Understanding Tiny Turtles story about managing anger	Aim 2, LG 4 Aim 3, LG 2	Aim 3, LG 1, 2		Aim 4, LG 2
Understanding when apologies are helpful	Aim 3, LG 1		Aim 3, LG 4	
Recognising anger in themselves and others	Aim 1, LG 5		Aim 1, LG 2	
Understanding anger is okay to feel "inside" but not to act out by hitting or hurting someone else	Aim 1, LG 5	Aim 3, LG 2	Aim 1, LG 2, 5 Aim 2, LG 1	
Learning how to control anger reactions	Aim 1, LG 5		Aim 1, LG 2 Aim 2, LG 1	Aim 4, LG 2
Brachiosaurus Unit: Molly Explains How to Talk With Friends				
Learning how to ask questions and tell something to a friend	Aim 1, LG5 Aim 2, LG1	Aim 1, LG1, LG6	Aim 1, LG 1, 4	
Learning how to listen carefully to what a friend is saying	Aim 2, LG1	Aim 1, LG1, LG3	Aim 1, LG 1	
Understanding why it is important to speak up about something that is bothering you	Aim 1, LG5	Aim 3, LG 1, 5 & 6	Aim 1, LG 4, 5 Aim 4, LG 3	Aim 4, LG 2
Understanding how and when to give an apology or a compliment	Aim 1, LG5	Aim 1, LG1		
Learning how to make a suggestion rather than give commands	Aim 1, LG5 Aim 2, LG4	Aim 3, LG 6 Aim 4, LG 2		Aim 2, LG 4 Aim 4, LG 4
Learning how to enter into a group of children who are already playing			Aim 1, LG 3	

Early Years Classroom Dina Unit/Lesson	Aistear Theme			
	Communicating	Identity & Belonging	Wellbeing	Exploring & Thinking
Allosaurus Unit: Molly Manners Teaches How to be Friendly				
Learning what friendship means and how to be friendly	Aim 2, LG 1	Aim 1, LG 1, 3	Aim 1, LG 1, 5	Aim 1, LG 2
Understanding ways to help others	Aim 2, LG 1	Aim 3, LG3	Aim 1, LG 5 Aim 3, LG 6 Aim 4, LG 6	Aim 1, LG 2
Learning concepts of sharing			Aim 1, LG 1 Aim 4, LG 6	
Learning what teamwork means	Aim 2, LG 1	Aim 3, LG3	Aim 1, LG 1	Aim 2, LG 5
Understanding the benefits of sharing, helping and teamwork	Aim 2, LG 4		Aim 1, LG 4	Aim 1, LG 2
Practicing friendship skills	Aim 2, LG 1		Aim 1, LG 1	

Appendix 2: Best Practice Guidelines – Early Years Classroom Dina



Benefits of Video-Taping Your Incredible Years Sessions

One of the key components of implementing The Incredible Years Suite of Programmes is to ensure that the programmes are being implemented with fidelity.

When a programme is being implemented with fidelity, it ensures that we are able to achieve the same outcomes for children that the original programme was designed to achieve.

One of the most effective ways of doing this is for the Group Leader to video tape their sessions with the children and parents. Not only does this help ensure fidelity but it also provides for reflective practice, whereby the Group Leader can review how the session went, what went well and what areas could be improved.

Best Practice Guidelines

- It is recommended that 2 Group Leaders deliver the Classroom Dina Programme to the group of children. This is in line with recommended children/staff current ratios. Only those Group Leaders delivering the programme should be in the room unless a child needs the services of an SNA
- The Early Years CRD should be delivered over the full academic year
- It is recommended that Group Leaders are given sufficient time to prepare, plan and deliver the required number of sessions. A session can be broken down and delivered over 3 periods in the week for younger children.
- Tailor lesson plans according to children's interests, attention span and developmental abilities. Each lesson plan provides a content theme (e.g. feeling proud and frustrated) to be discussed in large group circle time, as well as suggested scripts using the puppets, role plays and 3-4 videotape vignettes. Each lesson plan also includes 3-4 ideas for small group practice activities and suggestions for ways to promote the theme throughout the day and week.
- It is important that both circle time and small group must be completed consecutively and in a consistent manner
- For preschool children the emphasis of the content should be on the feelings unit and friendship skills with some beginning work with problem solving and basic school rules such as "keeping hands to own body" and using "walking feet"
- It is recommended that the same Group Leader uses the same puppet for the entire programme
- It is highly recommended that all Group Leaders video tape their sessions from the introduction of the Classroom Dina Programme to completion of same
- It is highly recommended that all Group Leaders participate in Peer Coaching

Benefits to Video Taping

- In order to achieve accreditation in the Incredible Years Suite of Programmes, you must submit a video tape of one complete session.
- When video-taping is introduced from Session One, it becomes a normalized way of working and therefore, submitting the video tape for your accreditation is made easier
- Video-taping helps to ensure that you as a Group Leader can review your sessions, which in turn supports your ability to implement the programme with fidelity and increases the quality of the programme being delivered to the children and parents
- It is also a recognised method which helps improve your skills and gives you time to reflect on your practice
- Video-taping of your sessions is carried out in a confidential manner. The only people who will see your video tapes are yourself, your co-facilitator and your Peer Coach. You choose what clips to show at your Peer Coaching sessions
- Video-taping and reviewing your tape helps you to identify your strengths as a Group Leader and builds on them

Appendix 3: The Incredible Years Teacher and Childcare Provider Self Reflection Inventory



The Incredible Years® Teacher and Child Care Provider Self-Reflection Inventory

Building Positive Relationships with Toddlers and Managing Separation Anxiety

Date: _____ Teacher Name: _____

Teachers and child care providers learn extensively from self-reflection regarding their classroom management and the child care strategies they are using that are working or not working. From these reflections teachers determine personal goals for making changes in their approaches to bring about the most positive learning climate they can. Use this Inventory to think about your strengths and limitations and determine your goals.

1 – Never 3 – Occasionally 5 – Consistently

<i>Building Positive Relationships with Children</i>	
1. I greet children upon arrival with personal and enthusiastic greetings (e.g., using child's name).	1 2 3 4 5
2. I interact with the children with warmth and loving care.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I use "teacher-ese" language, which includes words spoken slowly in a higher pitched, exaggerated, playful voice with positive enthusiasm and lots of repetition.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I combine non-verbal hand gestures with my verbal communication.	1 2 3 4 5
5. I pace my communication and give children a chance to respond non-verbally and verbally.	1 2 3 4 5
6. I personalize my communications with individual children (e.g., favorite books, activities, food, acknowledge birthdays, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5
7. I spend child-directed play time with every child (e.g., on playground, during meals, unstructured play time).	1 2 3 4 5
8. I often provide physical affection with verbal affection and praise with children.	1 2 3 4 5
9. I am clear with children about when their parent(s) will return.	1 2 3 4 5

10. I individualize each child's developmental needs, interests and abilities. (e.g., planning activities or stories based on special interests of children)	1 2 3 4 5
11. I help children to appreciate each other's special talents and needs.	1 2 3 4 5
12. I am child-directed in my approach and behave as an "appreciative audience" to their play.	1 2 3 4 5
13. I avoid too much question-asking and corrections when possible.	1 2 3 4 5
14. I share my positive feelings when interacting with children.	1 2 3 4 5
15. I invite children to help with classroom jobs (e.g., putting away toys).	1 2 3 4 5
16. I adjust activities to be developmentally appropriate for each child.	1 2 3 4 5
17. I use teacher modeling, prompting and guided practice during play interactions.	1 2 3 4 5
18. I work to convey acceptance of individual differences (culture, gender, sensory needs) through diverse planning, material and book selections, and discussion topics.	1 2 3 4 5
19. I participate in pretend and imaginary play with children.	1 2 3 4 5
Future Goals regarding ways I will work to build relationships with identified students:	

<i>Building Positive Relationships with Parents</i>	
1. I set up opportunities for parents to participate or observe in classroom or home day care setting.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I help parents develop predictable routines for separating from their children and saying goodbye.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I meet with parents to make a plan when a child's separation anxiety is more difficult.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I send home regular newsletters/e-mails to parents and positive notes about their children.	1 2 3 4 5
5. I check in regularly with parents to tell them about their children's successes or difficulties and goals.	1 2 3 4 5
6. I have regular posted telephone hours or times parents can reach me.	1 2 3 4 5
7. I schedule parent evenings/meetings to share classroom activities with parents and to present ideas for carrying over classroom activities at home.	1 2 3 4 5
8. I welcome parents' for ideas, materials and support for classroom activities.	1 2 3 4 5
9. I recognize the importance of partnering with parents and collaborating in order to develop strong attachments with children.	1 2 3 4 5
Future Goals regarding involving parents:	



The Incredible Years® Teacher and Child Care Provider Self-Reflection Inventory

Promoting Language Development in Toddlers and Preschoolers

Date: _____ Teacher Name: _____

Teachers learn extensively from self-reflection regarding their classroom management and the teaching strategies they are using that are working or not working. From these reflections teachers determine personal goals for making changes in their approaches to bring about the most positive learning climate they can. Use this Inventory to think about your strengths and limitations and determine your goals.

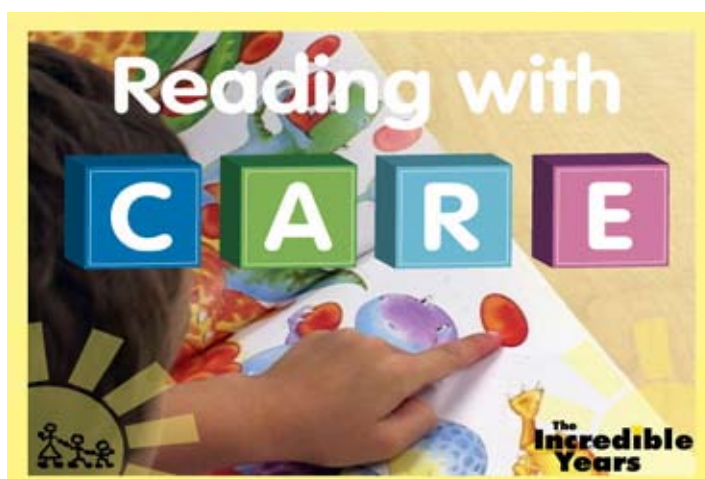
1 – Never 3 – Occasionally 5 – Consistently

<i>Proactive Teacher</i>	
1. I use “teacher-ese” language which includes words spoken slowly, in a higher pitched, exaggerated playful voice with positive enthusiasm and lots of repetition.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I combine non verbal hand gestures with my verbal communication.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I pace my language slowly, give children a chance to respond non verbally and/or verbally and listen before speaking again.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I personalize my communication with individual children (e.g., favorite books or activities or food, birthdays, family members and pets etc.)	1 2 3 4 5
5. I avoid too much question-asking and corrections when possible.	1 2 3 4 5
6. I use descriptive commenting during my play interactions with children (e.g., describing objects, positions, colors).	1 2 3 4 5
7. I use visual supports for children with language delays to prompt their nonverbal responses.	1 2 3 4 5
8. I use nonverbal signals and gestures along with my descriptive commenting.	1 2 3 4 5
9. I imitate children’s syllables, words, sounds, and gestures with positive affect.	1 2 3 4 5
10. I modulate my language complexity according to each child’s receptive and expressive language development.	1 2 3 4 5
11. For children with language, I use the “one up rule” of adding one word longer than the child’s spontaneous word production.	1 2 3 4 5

12. I help children pay attention to the speech of others and to make sense of their information by repeating what another child says. (E.g., intentional communication)	1	2	3	4	5
13. I help children understand the meaning of language by combining language with social interaction experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I immediately praise children's use of nonverbal and verbal responses (e.g., good pointing, nice talking).	1	2	3	4	5
15. I help parents know how they can use descriptive commenting, imitation and child-directed approaches to enhance language development.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I use interactive reading approaches with children allowing them to act out parts and share experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I create opportunities for children to communicate with others by setting up practices and using intentional communication.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I am "child-directed" in my communication interactions and avoid corrections and too many instructions.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I pace my descriptive commenting and choices I give children so they have time to respond.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I frequently sing to children in my classroom or home during play times or transitions to another activity or during circle time.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I pair songs with physical actions.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I use picture snack menus or talks to encourage communication at snack time.	1	2	3	4	5
23. For preschoolers I engage in pre-academic coaching (describing numbers, letters, shapes, textures) and increase the variety of words I use by providing more detailed descriptions of objects, people or animals.	1	2	3	4	5
24. For preschoolers I encourage children to practice telling each other what they want and to share their ideas or plans.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 4: Reading with CARE

Reading with CARE with *Preschoolers*



Written by: Carolyn Webster-Stratton, Ph.D.

Building Blocks for Reading with CARE with PRESCHOOLERS



Comment and describe objects, colors, numbers, sizes, letters, emotions, and actions of pictures in books. Talk about the pictures in your native language while you point to the pictures, or run your finger under the lines of the words as you read them. Take turns interacting and let your child turn the pages and be the story teller by encouraging and listening to him/her talk about the pictures or retell memorized stories





Ask open-ended questions and explore book together. Ask questions that show you are interested in the child's thoughts and ideas. E.g. "What do you think will happen next?" "What's interesting about this page?" Avoid asking too many questions or your child will think you are testing him. To keep a balance you can intersperse open-ended questions with descriptive comments. E.g. "I see a red car and one, two, three, four trees. Oh, there's a little mouse. What do you see?" When you do ask questions, don't "test" your child about facts (e.g., "what color is this?" "what shape is this?"). Questions with right or wrong answers put the child on the spot and may cause anxiety or resistance.

Examples of open ended questions:

*"What do you see on this page?"
(observing and reporting)*

"What's happening here?" (story telling)

*"What is that a picture of?"
(promoting academic skills)*

*"I wonder how she is feeling now?"
(exploring feelings)*

"What is going to happen next?" (predicting)

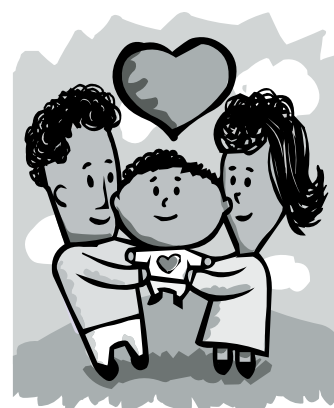


Respond and listen attentively with smiles, encouragement, praise and delight to your child's thinking and responses. Follow your child's lead and empower his or her confidence.

"Good thinking, that is a tall giraffe."

"You really thinking hard about that."

"Wow, you know a lot about trains."





Expand on your what your child says. You can expand by adding a new word or similar word to what your child says or by reminding her of a personal experience or event in her life that is similar to the story in the book.

"Yes, I agree he is feeling excited, and he might be a little scared as well."

"Yes, it is horse; it's also called a mare because it's female."

"Yes, that boy is going to the park. Do you remember going to the park with grandma?"



You can also expand by encouraging your child to write his own stories, or dictate them to you and write them down.

"That's awesome. You are learning your letters and are learning to read and are going to be ready for school."

You can expand by encouraging your child to problem solve solutions to the story plot and act out their ideas with puppets.

Remember:

- Read in a quiet place, turn off any competing noises such as TV, stereo, radio or computer. Even the phone should be turned off during this time.
- Avoid commands and criticisms when children are reading.
- Allow children to reread stories as often as they wish. This is a pre-reading skill and leads to mastery and confidence.
- Read to children every day and allow them to see you reading.
- Offer a variety of books such as folk tales, poems, informational books, fantasy, fables and adventure stories.
- Involve siblings and grandparents in reading to your child in their language.

Connect with us!

www.incredibleyears.com



www.youtube.com/user/TheIncredibleYears

www.facebook.com/TheIncredibleYears

<https://twitter.com/IncredibleYrs>



Appendix 5: Map to Accreditation



Appendix 6: Sample Lesson Plan

Name: Wally Date: September 2017 Key Worker: Wendy

Learning Story

Today at Dina school we talked about Rules (Lesson 2). Dina came to visit us and poor Dina had a plaster on her head. Dina explained that she was running in her house and fell over. The adult asked the children what Dina could do so she doesn't fall over again. Wally suggested that maybe Dina should walk. The children were introduced to the walking feet card. For small group the children helped to make all the dolls better who were not using their walking feet.

Child's Learning

This lesson encourages the children to think of reasons why we need simple rules.

What Happens Next?

To expand on this lesson the adult will:

- Continuously praise and acknowledge the incredible walking feet in our room, remember to explain why you like them e.g. I love the way you are using your walking feet today, it keeps you so safe.
- Add plasters, bandages etc. to the doctor box.
- Revisit the lesson in the coming weeks to refresh the walking feet safety rule.

Links to Aistear

Identity and Belonging

Aim 3:2

In partnership with the adult, children will understand the rules and the boundaries of acceptable behavior.

HighScope

Through active learning children gain knowledge which helps them make sense of the world.

This Lesson Plan is provided courtesy of Lion na nÓg Playgroup, Dundalk

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NOTES



Linking the Learning

Examining the Links between
The Incredible Years and the
Irish Primary School Curriculum



Linking the Learning

An Implementation Guide
May 2018

Examining the Links between
The Incredible Years and the
Irish Primary School Curriculum

Yvonne Forde

Foreword

There is growing recognition both nationally and internationally regarding the importance of children's social and emotional development. Social and emotional development involves more than just expressing one's feelings and emotions. The promotion of healthy social and emotional development in young children correlates with healthy cognitive development and therefore creates a strong foundation for future school achievement. Whilst this correlation is readily accepted across the board, the past decade has also seen an increased focus on accountability within the Irish education system. This has been manifested in measures such as standardised testing and the introduction of quality and curriculum frameworks in both the Early Years and Primary School settings. Both teachers and early year practitioners are finding themselves under increasing pressure to meet external requirements which in certain instances can adversely affect the amount of time afforded to the social and emotional curricula. To date many of our education policies have focused primarily on language and literacy as well as other cognitive functions. Often forgotten is the foundation on which cognitive growth is built – an emotionally and socially stable young child.

It is the objective of this document to clearly illustrate the ways in which the Incredible Years suite of programmes impact positively upon children's social and emotional learning leading to the development of a classroom environment which is more conducive to learning and results in better developmental outcomes for children.

Claire Woods

Manager, Louth County Childcare Committee

Chairperson, The Genesis Programme Management Group



The Genesis Programme

The Genesis Programme is a consortium of Partner Organisations delivering the Incredible Years® suite of programmes and other evidence-informed interventions to children, families and communities in Dundalk and Drogheda in County Louth as part of the Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme. The Genesis Programme is also a partner in The Changing Lives Initiative which is a cross border initiative providing support to families of children who at risk of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. The project is supported by the European Union INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

The ABC Programme targets investment in evidence-informed interventions to improve the long-term outcomes for children and families living in areas of disadvantage. It aims to break the cycle of poverty within areas where it is most deeply entrenched and where children are most disadvantaged, through integrated and effective services and interventions in the following areas; child development, child well-being, parenting and educational disadvantage.

The Partner Organisations of the Genesis Programme comprise of Early Years settings, Schools, Community Groups, Louth Children & Young People's Services Committee, Louth County Childcare Committee, Dundalk Institute of Technology and a range of departments within the Health Service Executive (HSE) and Tusla – the Child & Family Agency including four School Completion Programmes. Louth Leader Partnership is the lead agency.

Since its establishment in December 2014 The Genesis Programme has delivered the Incredible Years and other evidence based programmes with fidelity to thousands of children and families. In consultation with our Partner Organisations we continue to introduce new evidence based programmes and interventions.

Yvonne Forde is a Development Officer working as part of The Genesis Programme project team. Yvonne is a trained Group Leader in several of The Incredible Years Parent, Child and Teacher programmes which she has delivered and supported effectively since the commencement of The Genesis Programme in 2014.

Working closely with the primary school partner organisations, Yvonne has supported the implementation of the Incredible Years programmes within each school and guiding many of their teachers successfully to the point of accreditation in the various programmes. Yvonne has also been instrumental in the introduction of The Incredible Years Autism Spectrum and Language Delays Parent Programme to County Louth which has been delivered across both Dundalk and Drogheda since 2016.



Yvonne Forde

Carolyn Webster-Stratton Developer, The Incredible Years



As the Incredible Years programme developer, I am delighted to endorse The Genesis Programme and to commend their excellent work in implementing programmes for parents, children and teachers. The Genesis Programme understands the importance of long-term planning and capacity building. They are committed to the provision of quality training and the ongoing support of their staff in order to deliver evidence based programmes with fidelity.

As a result of this dedication they have obtained strong outcomes and are continuously building a strong base of internal Incredible Years expertise across County Louth. The impact upon families and schools in the community is evident from local and national data and in the overwhelming positive feedback from early year services, schools and community agencies alike. It has been my pleasure to work with The Genesis Programme over the past three years, and I look forward to many more years of collaboration.

Acknowledgements

The Genesis Programme would like to acknowledge the following Partner Organisations for their help and support in developing this guide:

Drogheda Schools

St John's JNS
St Patrick's BNS
St Brigid's GNS
Marymount NS

Dundalk Schools

St Joseph's NS
St Nicholas' NS
St Nicholas Monastery BNS
Castletown GNS
Redeemer BNS
Redeemer GNS
Scoil Eoin Baiste NS
Gaelscoil Dhún Dealgan

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SECTION ONE

Investing in Children



1.1 Overview

The *Growing up in Ireland* (GUI) longitudinal study and other research show that although a majority of Irish children do well, between a fifth and a quarter have poor economic, social and educational outcomes. As defined in the GUI study, economic vulnerability refers to an increased risk of multidimensional material disadvantage, involving a distinctive profile in relation to low income, household joblessness and economic stress.

Not surprisingly the survey carried out indicated a negative impact on children's social and emotional development. This finding highlights the need for a policy focus on child poverty and deprivation particularly in those areas where it is most exacerbated. The foundations of all aspects of human development – physical, psychological, social and emotional – are laid down in early childhood. The GUI study adds to a growing international evidence base that shows children's early life environments determine not only their physical health, but may also contribute to childhood and adult criminality, educational failure, family breakdown and mental health. This supports the case for early intervention as opposed to the later detection of problems.

“

**highlights the
need for a
policy focus on
child poverty
and deprivation**

”





1.2 Evidence Based Intervention

One of the five strategic objectives outlined in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) Statement of Strategy 2016-2019 highlights the need for evidence-based policy to be promoted and supported. Over the past decade there has been a fundamental shift towards practices and interventions that are based upon empirical research findings.

Research and how it is applied in practice has become the primary focus in ensuring effective outcomes for children and their families. It is indeed the case that 'evidence can be a powerful engine for advancing change when practitioners are given robust tools or support to apply it in their work' (Atlantic Philanthropies, 2014). The Teaching Council of Ireland are currently working with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and Centre for Effective Services (CES) on the *Research Alive* initiative which focuses on empowering educational practitioners to use research as part of their daily work with children and young people. *Research Alive* invites teachers, researchers and policymakers to explore how best to support teachers as researchers, reflecting on what happens in their classrooms and schools, using the work of researchers along with their own professional insights, to ask challenging questions and propose answers.

“
**Evidence can be
a powerful engine
for advancing
change when
practitioners are
given robust tools
or supports to
apply it in their
work**

”

Similarly, in recent years research and evaluation has played a very important role in the development of the early years sector. There is clear evidence of the long term benefits for the child, economy and society following the provision of high quality care and education informed by research and learning from across Ireland and beyond. Although childhood is short the positive impact of effective evidence based practice can be seen far into the future of our children.



1.3 Early Intervention and Prevention

One area that has been subjected to ongoing research over the past decade is Early Intervention and Prevention and its combined impact upon children's social and emotional development and overall welfare. The Prevention and Early Intervention Network (PEIN) is a network of evidence-based practice, advocacy and research organisations that share a commitment to improving outcomes for children, young people and their communities. Central to PEINs work is that services and resources concerned with promoting the welfare of children and young people should be based on need, evidence and the development of a continuum of services, from universal to targeted, which are underpinned by the rights of the child.

1. Benefits of prevention, early intervention programmes: international			
Young children	Older children	Parents	Society
<p>Higher birth weight</p> <p>Improved physical and mental health, fitness, less obesity</p> <p>Affectionate relationships with parents, bonding, attachment</p> <p>Reduced accidents and injuries (childhood to working age)</p> <p>Less likely to be in care</p> <p>Less maltreatment (injury, neglect, abuse)</p> <p>Improved conduct, reduced hyperactivity, attention seeking</p> <p>Improved school completion</p> <p>Improved test scores, (English, Maths)</p>	<p>Less likely to use toxins (alcohol, tobacco, drugs)</p> <p>Less teenage pregnancy</p> <p>Less likely to offend</p> <p>Higher school grades</p> <p>Probability of remaining at school</p> <p>Higher graduation rates, resulting in higher earnings</p> <p>Reduced likelihood of repeating grades</p>	<p>Improved mental health, self-esteem</p> <p>More stable lifestyles, fewer behavioural issues, offending, reduced domestic abuse</p> <p>Higher participation in workforce, return to work</p> <p>More effective family planning</p> <p>Better parenting, limit setting, anger management, less physical chastisement</p>	<p>Reduced health costs</p> <p>Reduced anti-social behaviour, youth and adult crime (especially violent crime)</p> <p>Less use of probation, correctional services</p> <p>Reduced health services (GP, hospital, emergency, general, mental health, specialised, drugs)</p> <p>Reduced care services (e.g. children in care)</p> <p>Reduced need for special educational services</p>

Figure 1: Prevention and Early Intervention Network 2016



1.4 Early Intervention and Prevention - The Incredible Years

The Incredible Years suite of programmes developed by Carolyn Webster-Stratton are strongly influenced by the school of developmental psychology. The work of Bowlby, Patterson and Bandura are evident throughout all strands.

The goal of the Incredible Years is to deliver evidence-based programmes and materials that develop positive parent-teacher-child relationships and assist in preventing and treating behaviour problems and promoting social, emotional, and academic competence prior to adolescence.

These preventative programmes have been subjected to rigorous research by independent scientists testing the impact over a period of more than 30 years. Research has shown that early investment in the lives of children has both positive implications for child wellbeing, development and society as a whole. By implementing the Incredible Years suite of programmes we are essentially building our children's bank account for the future.

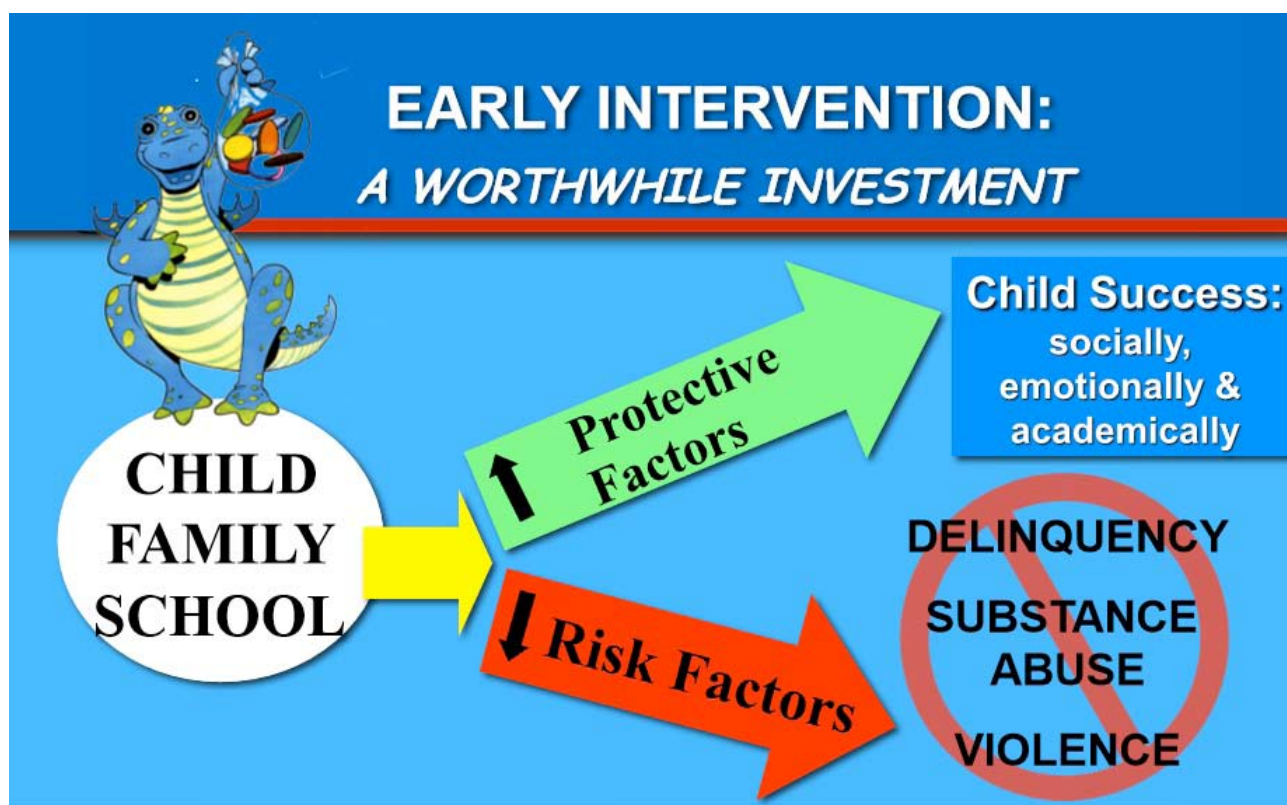


Figure 2. Early Intervention: A Worthwhile Investment. *The Incredible Years* ©2018



SECTION TWO

The Link between Social and Emotional Learning and Academic Success



2.1 Overview of Social and Emotional Learning

‘Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process of acquiring core competencies to enable children to recognise and manage their emotions, to appreciate the perspective of others, to handle interpersonal issues, to set and achieve positive goals and to make responsible decisions’ (Elias et al, 2003). Social-emotional development in young children has become accepted as critical to school readiness and children’s long term success in school and in life.

Along with this recognition has come an increased focus on ways of promoting healthy social-emotional development, preventing the development of social, emotional and behaviour problems, and intervening early when young children are displaying challenging behaviour or delays in social emotional development. As highlighted in the Well Being in Primary Schools Guidelines 2015 *‘Schools have an important role to play in raising healthy children by fostering not only their cognitive development but also their social and emotional development’*. There has been a fundamental shift away from reactive standalone interventions to more coordinated holistic interventions.

Looking at Our School 2016: A Quality Framework for Primary Schools and the *School Self-Evaluation Guidelines 2016-2020* recognises the importance of pupil’s well-being as intrinsic to the holistic view of learning, both as an outcome of learning and as an enabler of learning.





2.2 The Role of Social and Emotional Learning in Academic Achievement

Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies



Figure 3: (Adapted from CASEL 2003) The Role of Social and Emotional Learning in Academic Achievement



2.3 The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) illustrates the connection between social and emotional learning and improved academic performance (see Figure 3). Based on a review of the evidence, CASEL contends that SEL interventions and skill development should be taught within a supportive learning environment and should also contribute to the enhancement of such a climate. These enablers in turn lead to positive child development and greater attachment and engagement in school. The final outcome is improved academic performance and school success (Zins et al, 2004).

2.4 Key Components of Effective SEL

As outlined in the figure above five key competencies are taught, practiced, and reinforced through SEL programming (CASEL, 2003):

- Self-Awareness: Identification and recognition of one's own emotions, recognition of strengths in self and others, sense of self-efficacy and self-confidence
- Social Awareness: Empathy, respect for others, and perspective taking
- Responsible decision making: Evaluation, reflection, personal and ethical responsibility
- Self-Management: Impulse control, stress management, persistence, goal setting and motivation
- Relationship Skills: Cooperation, communication, help seeking and providing



2.5 The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning in an Incredible Years Context

In schools, social and emotional learning, involves the integration of two interrelated strands to promote successful school performance and youth development:

Skills Development

Through evidence based classroom programmes such as the Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme, social and emotional skills are explicitly taught, practised and applied to diverse situations so that students internalise them as part of their repertoire of behaviours. These skills and attitudes help children to problem solve, communicate and express their feeling in an appropriately and to overcome obstacles.

Supportive Environments

The second component is the development and maintenance of a safe, supportive learning environment where children feel cared for and respected, and adults model and provide opportunities for them to practice and apply SEL skills both in class and throughout the school. Communication styles, high performance expectations, classroom structures and rules, school organisational climate, commitment to the academic success of all students, and openness to parental and community involvement are all necessary for the successful creation of a supportive learning environment (Greenberg et al., 2003). The Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management (TCM) Programme provides a framework for the creation of this safe and supportive learning environment. TCM aims to strengthen teacher classroom management strategies and promote children's pro-social behaviour by focusing on these key components.



2.6 The Reflective Teacher

The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) was established in September 2010. The role of the PDST is to contribute to school improvement by fostering reflective practice through the school self-evaluation process and through the ongoing development of teachers and school leaders through the provision of a range of continuing professional development models. The School Self-Evaluation Guidelines 2016-2020 provide a framework for reflective practice that is actively promoted throughout the Incredible Years TCM programme. According to the School Self Evaluation Guidelines, *'School self-evaluation empowers a school community to identify and affirm good practice and to identify and take action on areas that merit improvement'*.

One of the underlying principles of the TCM programme is that of Self Reflection. Throughout the course teachers are encouraged to reflect not upon what they are teaching but how they are teaching. According to The My World Survey (Dooley and Fitzgerald, 2012) the presence of one supportive adult in a young person's life is critically important to their wellbeing, sense of connectedness, self-confidence and ability to cope with difficulties. Over 70% reported that they receive support from one adult in their lives. Numerous research studies have shown quite often teachers to be that one good adult acting as a powerful protective force in a child's life and also the single most important in-school factor in producing improved student achievement (Kane & Staiger, 2012). Beyond direct instruction, teachers influence social and emotional development of students in a number of ways. For example, when students perceive a caring, enthusiastic, supportive, and available teacher, their sense of belonging in school improves (Allen et al., 2016; Wang & Holcombe, 2010; Demanet & Van Houtte, 2012).

“
Numerous research studies have shown quite often teachers to be that one good adult acting as a powerful protective force in a child's life
”

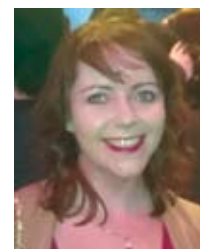


2.7 Teachers Perspective on the Impact of TCM and Reflective Practice

At the heart of the proactive teacher is the ability to see each individual student in a wider context of his/her community/family and connect with the child on a deeper level. According to Webster Stratton 'When teachers are taught to work with parents, use positive classroom management techniques, and actively promote emotional literacy and social competence, they help not only the children who are at risk, but all children in the classroom (Webster-Stratton et al., 2000a; Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Hammond, 2000b). The conscious application of TCM strategies has contributed to an overall culture change towards a positive learning environment across a number of participating schools. This positive learning environment supports the learning process and enables teachers to get the best out of children. See Appendix 2.

The Impact of TCM on the Classroom

Céire Cudden - Trained Incredible Years Peer Coach & Teacher
Marymount NS, Ballsgrove, Drogheda



The Incredible Years TCM programme permeates throughout Marymount NS and has resulted in a change in culture both within and outside of the classroom. A whole school approach towards classroom management has been adopted which has led to a level of consistency across the board where all teachers are on the same page when it comes to the application of strategies. Teachers, SNAs and other school staff are now speaking a common Incredible Years language.

The Changing Culture of an Incredible Years School

Dympna MacKenna, Principal, St John's JNS, Rathmullen, Drogheda



The impact of The Incredible Years suite of programmes on the school and how we as professionals working with children think has been a catalyst for change. Children are adaptable and learn vicariously through the actions of others. The impact of The Incredible Years upon how we as SNAs, teachers and parents think and behave has been immense. The parenting aspect of The Incredible Years combined with TCM has largely influenced the changing culture. Positive behaviour management now pervades the whole school community. Teachers now feel more equipped and empowered due to the classroom management strategies. There has been a shift away from punitive discipline and *'there are no longer situations whereby children are sent to the principal's office for discipline reasons'*.

2.8 The Health Promoting School

The Health Promoting School process is both complementary to, and supportive of, the school self-evaluation process. The HPS process is a developing concept within education systems and is actively promoted by the Department of Health, Health Promotion and Improvement, Health and Well Being Division and is underpinned by an evidenced based *Schools for Health in Ireland Framework* (2013).

In a health promoting school, health is defined in its broadest sense and refers to social, emotional, mental, spiritual, cognitive and physical health. Implementation of the HPS strengthens the development of partnership and encourages home school and community links. (DES, HSE and DOH, 2013).

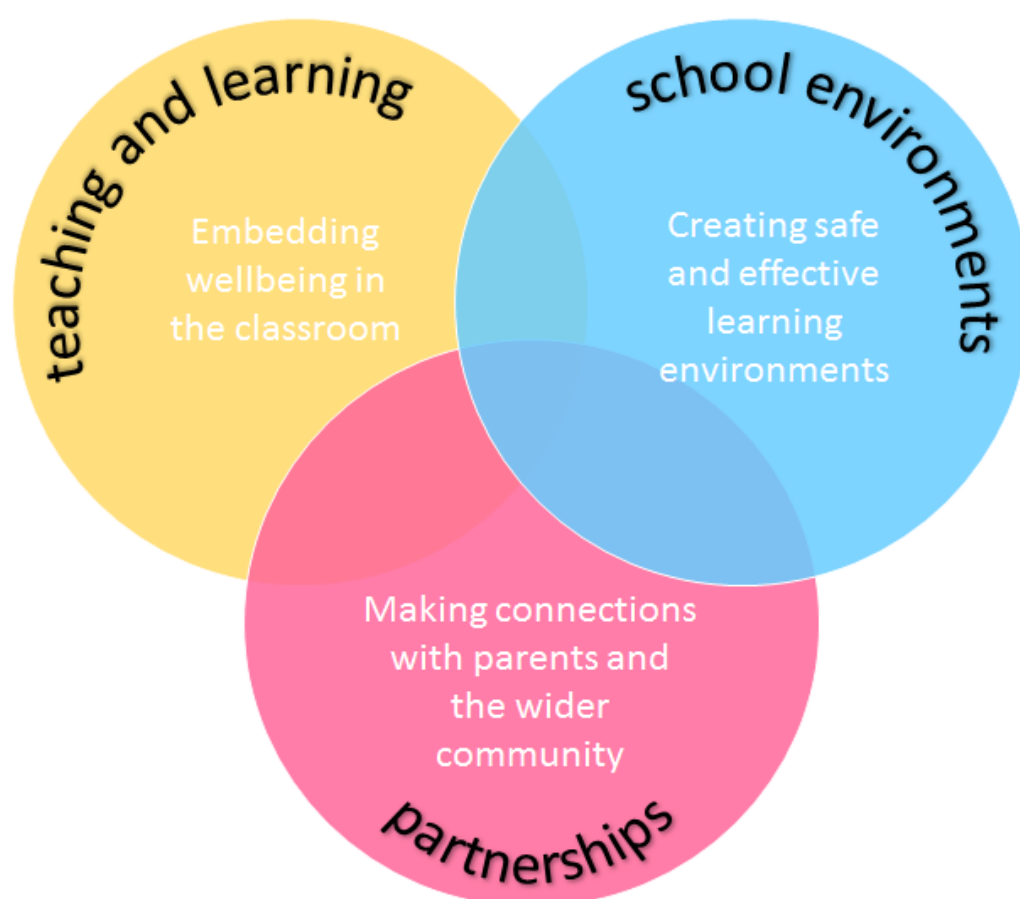


Figure 4: The Health Promotion Framework, adapted from Health Service Executive 2013 *Schools for Health in Ireland, Framework for Developing a Health Promoting School*

The three key areas that underpin a health promoting school are as follows:

- Environment (Social)
- Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
- Partnerships

We will now look at these three individual areas and examine how the Incredible Years Schools programme suite fits in to each area.

Environment (Social)

Creates a Social Environment that looks after the social and emotional needs of those who work, learn and visit through the following:

- Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour Management
- Promotes a Positive School Culture based on Mutual Respect and Openness
- Promotes Friendship and Connectedness between Students
- Promotes Collaboration between School Staff in relation to Positive Behaviour Management
- Promotes Parent Involvement and Empowerment
- Promotes Collaboration between Teachers and Parents
- Promotes the Effective Management of Teacher Stress

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

Clear linkages exist in relation to the following curriculum areas:

- SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education)
- Oral language Development
- Aistear

Partnerships

Working in partnership with both voluntary and statutory agencies concerned with improving outcomes for children and their families:

- Health Service Executive (HSE)
- Community and Voluntary Sector
- Tusla
- Louth Children's & Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC)
- Louth County Childcare Committee
- Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT)
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- Department of Social Protection



SECTION THREE

An Exploration into the Correlation between the Learning Goals of the Irish SPHE Curriculum and The Incredible Years School Based Programmes



⚠ CAUTION:
ELECTRICALLY
OPERATED

NOT RECOMMENDED

⚠ ATTENTION:
PRODUIT
À L'ÉLECTRICITÉ

N'EST PAS
MOINS DANGEREUX

⚠ PRÉCAUTION:
ARTICLE D'ÉLECTRICITÉ

NE SE PAS
DE L'ÉLECTRICITÉ

ST. JOHN'S & ST. PAUL'S
RATHMULLEN

3.1 Social Personal and Health Education in an Irish Context

According to the *Well-Being in Primary Schools DES 2015* guidelines, SPHE is central to pupil development in its broadest sense and is an essential part of school curricula. The SPHE curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to learn personal and social skills while helping them to create and maintain supportive relationships and to become active and responsible citizens.

The SPHE Curriculum

- Fosters children's well-being, self-confidence and sense of belonging
- Develops children's sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions
- Promotes children's self-awareness and understanding by helping them to manage their own feelings, to recognise and appreciate individual abilities, and to cope with change of various kinds
- Supports children to become active and responsible citizens.

The curriculum consists of three strands:

Myself

Myself and Others

Myself and the Wider World



3.2 Correlation between The Incredible Years Classroom Dina Programme and the SPHE Curriculum Framework

SPHE: Learning Goals	Incredible Years Classroom Dina Content
<p>Strand: Myself</p> <p>Unit: Self Identity</p> <p>Topic: Self Awareness</p> <p>Discuss and appreciate all the features that make a person special and unique</p> <p>Begin to understand, appreciate and respect personal abilities, skills and talents</p> <p>Recognise and record personal preferences</p>	<p>Unit 6: Allosaurus Molly Manners Teaches How to be Friendly</p> <p>Activity 1 - 56</p> <p>Unit 7: Brachiosaurus Molly Explains How to Talk with Friends</p> <p>Activity 1 - 30</p> <p><i>Unit 6 and 7 focus on friendship, what makes people special and unique and respecting both each other and oneself</i></p>
<p>Strand: Myself</p> <p>Unit: Self Identity</p> <p>Topic: Developing Self Confidence</p> <p>Express own views, opinions and preferences</p> <p>Become more self-reliant and independent</p> <p>Begin to learn how to cope with various changes as they occur</p>	<p>Unit 3: Triceratops Wally Teaches About Understanding and Detecting Feelings</p> <p>Activity 1 – 63</p> <p><i>Focuses on defining feelings and how to feel good about oneself</i></p> <p>Unit 4: Stegosaurus Wally Teaches How to Problem Solve</p> <p>Activity 1 - 40</p> <p><i>Focuses on improving children's problem solving skills and expressing themselves in an appropriate manner</i></p>

SPHE: Learning Goals	Incredible Years Classroom Dina Content
<p>Strand: Myself</p> <p>Unit: Self Identity</p> <p>Topic: Making Decisions</p> <p>Identify some everyday choices made by himself/ herself and those that are made by others</p> <p>Begin to develop some awareness of factors that may influence decisions or choices taken</p>	<p>Unit 2: Iguanadon</p> <p>Dina Teaches How to be Successful at School</p> <p>Activity 1-15</p> <p><i>Focuses on developing an awareness of the factors influencing and consequences of making certain decisions</i></p> <p>Unit 4: Stegosaurus</p> <p>Wally Teaches How to Problem Solve</p> <p>Activity 1- 40</p> <p><i>Focuses on improving children's problem solving skills and expressing themselves in an appropriate manner</i></p>
<p>Strand: Myself</p> <p>Unit: Taking Care of my Body</p> <p>Topic: Knowing about my Body</p> <p>Appreciate the need to understand how to care for his/her own body in order to keep it healthy and well</p> <p>Respect his/her own body and that of others</p> <p>Explore and discuss things the body can do</p> <p>Recognise and practice basic hygiene skills and realise that each individual has some responsibility for taking care of himself/herself</p>	<p>Unit 3: Triceratops</p> <p>Wally Teaches about Understanding and Detecting Feelings</p> <p>Activity 1- 34</p> <p><i>Please note that teachers can tailor the problems presented in scenarios to match common issues that students have in their own classrooms and can address</i></p>

SPHE: Learning Goals	Incredible Years Classroom Dina Content
<p>Strand : Myself</p> <p>Unit: Growing and Changing</p> <p>Topic: As I Grow I Change</p> <p>Identify some of the factors that promote growth</p> <p>Realise that growth and change are part of the process of life and are unique to each individual</p> <p>Recognise that the ability to take responsibility for himself/ herself and others increases as he/she grows older</p>	<p>Unit 2: Iguanadon</p> <p>Dina Teaches How to be Successful at School</p> <p>Activity 1-15</p> <p><i>Focuses on developing an awareness of the factors influencing and consequences of making certain decisions</i></p> <p>Unit 3: Triceratops</p> <p>Wally Teaches About Understanding and Detecting Feelings</p> <p>Activity 1 – 63</p> <p><i>Focuses on defining feelings and how to feel good about oneself</i></p>
<p>Strand : Myself</p> <p>Unit: Growing and Changing</p> <p>Topic: New Life</p> <p>Become aware of new life and birth in the world</p> <p>Develop an awareness of human birth</p> <p>Identify what babies need to help them to grow and develop</p>	<p>Unit 7: Brachiosaurus</p> <p>Molly Explains How to Talk With Friends</p> <p>Activities VII-25- Baby Dina Puppets / V1-40 Family Book/Family Project</p> <p><i>Please note that teachers can tailor the problems presented in scenarios to match common issues that students have in their own classrooms and can address them through role-play</i></p>

SPHE: Learning Goals	Incredible Years Classroom Dina Content
<p>Strand : Myself</p> <p>Unit: Growing and Changing</p> <p>Topic: Feelings and Emotions</p> <p>Name a variety of feelings and talk about situations where these may be experienced</p> <p>Explore the variety of ways in which feelings are expressed and coped with</p> <p>Begin to be sensitive to the feelings of others and to realise that the actions of one individual can affect the feelings of another</p> <p>Explore and discuss occasions that can promote positive feelings in himself herself</p>	<p>Unit 3: Triceratops</p> <p>Wally Teaches About Understanding and Detecting Feelings</p> <p>Activity 1 – 63</p> <p><i>Focuses on defining feelings and how to feel good about oneself</i></p> <p>Unit 5: Tyrannosaurus Rex</p> <p>Tiny Turtle Teaches Anger Management</p> <p>Activity 1-29</p>
<p>Strand: Myself & Others</p> <p>Unit: Myself & Others</p> <p>Topic- Myself and My Family</p> <p>Identify and name the people who constitute a family and appreciate that all family units are not the same</p> <p>Realise that he/she belongs to a family and that each person has a place and a role within a family</p> <p>Explore the things that families do together</p> <p>Realise how families take care of, support and love each other</p> <p>Explore and acknowledge many of the things that can be learned in the home</p>	<p>Activities as follows:</p> <p>Detective Interviews/1-2 Family Pictures/</p> <p>1.3 Acquaintance Activities</p> <p>Wally's Detective Books for Solving Problems at Home</p> <p>VII-25- Baby Dina Puppets/ V1-40 Family Book/Family Project</p>

SPHE: Learning Goals	Incredible Years Classroom Dina Content
<p>Strand: Myself & Others</p> <p>Unit: Myself & Others</p> <p>Topic: My Friends and Other People</p> <p>Identify, discuss and appreciate his/her own friends</p> <p>Discuss and examine the different aspects of friendship</p> <p>Identify and appreciate friends at school and how they can help and care for each other</p> <p>Discuss and appreciate all those considered special, both within and outside the family circle</p> <p>Recognise and appreciate differences in people and know how to treat others with dignity and respect</p> <p>Recognise and explore bullying behaviour, who is involved and the effects on different people</p> <p>Know that bullying is always wrong and know what should be done if one is being bullied or sees it happening to someone else</p>	<p>Unit 6: Allosaurus</p> <p>Molly Teaches How to be Friendly</p> <p>Activity 1 - 56</p> <p>Unit 7: Brachiosaurus</p> <p>Molly Explains How to Talk with Friends</p> <p>Activity 1 - 30</p> <p><i>Unit 6 and 7 focus on friendship, what makes people special and unique and respecting both oneself and others</i></p>



SPHE: Learning Goals	Incredible Years Classroom Dina Content
<p>Strand: Myself and Others</p> <p>Unit: Myself and Others</p> <p>Topic: Relating to Others</p> <p>Listen and respond to the opinions and views of others</p> <p>Use verbal and non-verbal behaviour to perform social functions</p> <p>Practise care and consideration, courtesy and good manners when interacting with others</p> <p>Resolve conflicts with others</p>	<p>Unit 2: Iguanadon Dina Teaches How to be Successful at School Activity 1-15 <i>Focuses on developing an awareness of the factors influencing and consequences of making certain decisions</i></p> <p>Unit 5: Tyrannosaurus Rex Tiny Turtle Teaches Anger Management Activity 1-29 <i>Unit 5 focuses on ways in which children can learn to control their anger and express their emotions in an appropriate manner.</i></p> <p>Unit 6: Allosaurus Molly Teaches How to be Friendly Activity 1 - 56</p> <p>Unit 7: Brachiosaurus Molly Explains How to Talk with Friends Activity 1- 30 <i>Unit 6 and 7 focus on friendship, what makes people special and unique and respecting both oneself and others</i></p>
<p>Strand: Myself and The Wider World</p> <p>Unit: Developing Citizenship</p> <p>Topic: My School Community</p> <p>Explore and respect the diversity of children in the class and school and Realise that each person is important and has a unique and valuable contribution to make to the class.</p>	<p>There is direct correlation between units 1-7 of the Classroom Dina Programme and My School Community SPHE topic. In terms of cultural diversity the use of ethnic Wally and Molly puppets is an important element of the Incredible Years Programme.</p>



SECTION FOUR

How the Incredible Years School Based Programmes Support Oral Language Instruction



4.1 Oral Language Development

It is recognised that language development is a complex interaction between the intrinsic capacities of the child and the environment in which s/he develops.

“Oral Language is the child’s first, most important, and most frequently used structured medium of communication. It is the primary means through which each individual child will be enabled to structure, to evaluate, to describe and to control his/her experience. In addition, and most significantly, oral language is the primary mediator of culture, the way in which children locate themselves in the world, and define themselves with it and within it” (Cregan, 1998, as cited in Archer, Cregan, McGough, Shiel, 2012)

The increased risk of early language problems for children growing up in socioeconomically disadvantaged families is well documented. For example, the effects of oral language difficulties can be all encompassing, negatively impacting upon literacy development, academic achievement and associated with social, emotional and behavioural problems that are far reaching.

Given the key role of Oral Language in acquiring literacy and accessing the school curriculum, early identification of deficits and appropriate, targeted and timely intervention are crucial.

“

Oral Language is the primary mediator of culture, the way in which children locate themselves in the world, and define themselves with it and within it”

(Cregan, 1998)

”



4.2 Components of Effective Oral Language Instruction

The development of Oral Language should be afforded equal importance to that of reading and writing, at every level, in the curriculum. Oral Language development permeates every facet of the Incredible Years, from the Parent Baby Programme through to the Classroom Dina Programme and beyond into the School Age Programme for parents of children 6-12. The Incredible Years aims to give teachers, parents and children a different type of language that aids them to problem solve and build relationships together and with others. Both teachers and parents are given the tools necessary to coach children's academic, social and emotional skills through what is referred to as Descriptive Commenting. According to Webster Stratton 1999 'teachers can show interest in students play by simply describing and providing supportive comments about what they are doing. This approach actively encourages language development'. The Classroom Dina Programme in particular provides learning for children in each area of oral language instruction. Depicted below are the 5 components deemed to be necessary for effective Oral Language instruction.



Figure 5:

Adapted from Eisenhart C. 1990, 5 Components of Effective Oral Language Instruction



4.3 Development of Listening and Speaking Skills

A central aspect of the Incredible Years suite of programmes is the development of listening and speaking skills. This applies to the teacher, the parent and the child.

According to the PDST, there are certain elements that need to be explicitly taught before embarking on formal instruction of oral language - all of which are covered in both The Classroom Dina and The Small Group Dina Programmes. *The explicit teaching of Show Me Five focuses on all 4 elements.*

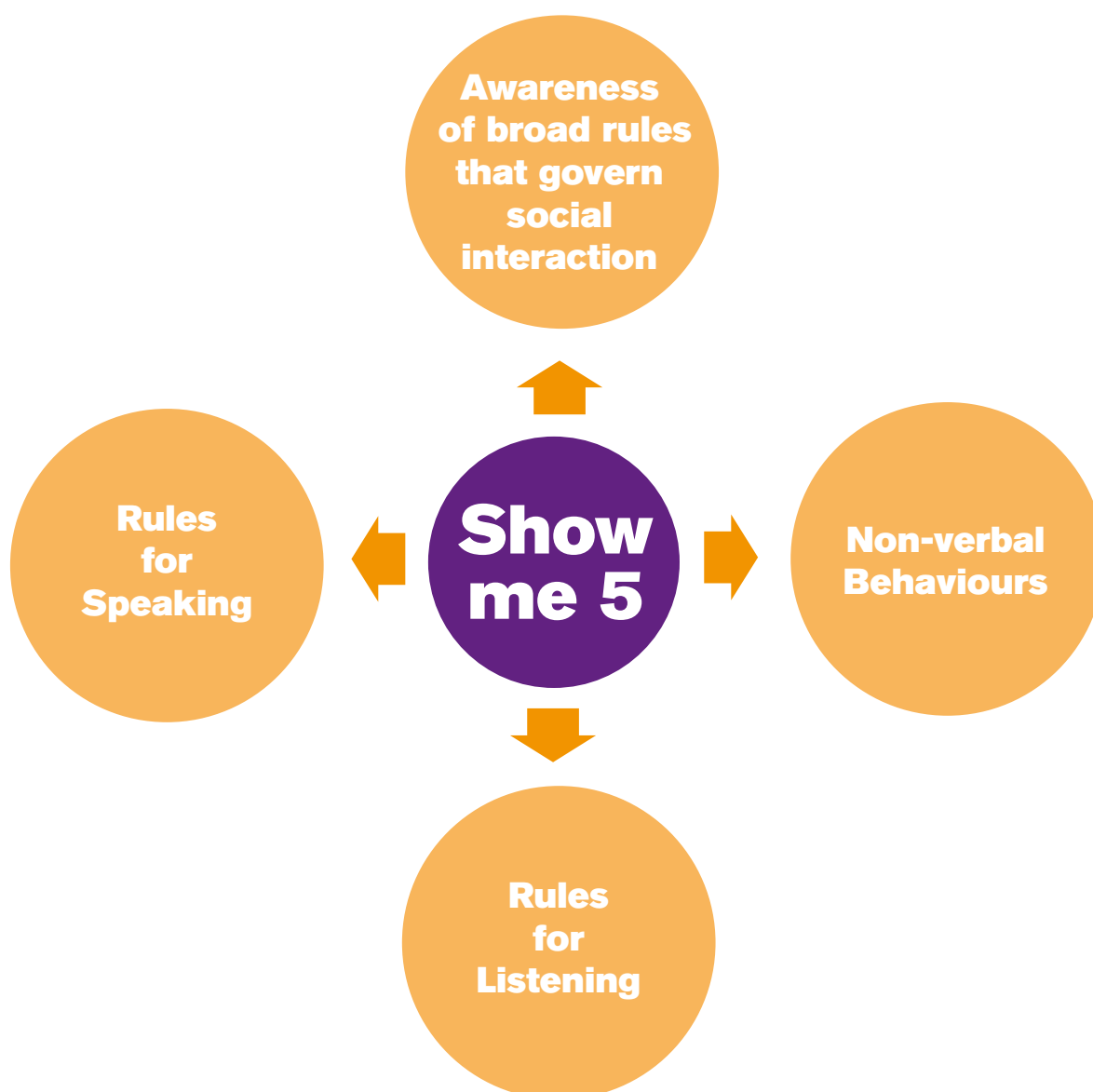


Figure 6: Show me Five



4.4 The Role of Puppets in Oral Language Development

According to Otto 2006 'Attentive body language, expanding children's responses, asking and clarifying questions, and using reflective listening techniques are ways to support children's continued participation in current and future dialogues'. Through both The Classroom Dina Programme and Small Group Dina Programmes children are encouraged to problem solve and explore different solutions through role play scenarios with the help of puppet friends. The past decade has seen a marked increase in educators using puppets to instil learning in young children. Ninio and Snow (1999) as well as Weiss (2004) assert that how well children develop conversational skills can influence how well they interact with others (as cited in Otto, 2006).

Puppet play helps young children develop creative skills by forcing them to use their imaginations. Research has shown that the real world becomes more real to children who have opportunities to pretend. Puppetry, or dramatics, can help students internalise language patterns, enhance listening skills, develop risk-taking skills and student confidence, and provide opportunities for students to work cooperatively as a group. It has also been observed that dramatics allows students to develop a greater understanding of themselves and their world. Pretend play allows the expression of both positive and negative feelings, and the modulation of affect, the ability to integrate emotion with cognition (Jent, Niec, & Baker, 2011; Seja, & Russ, 1999; Slade and Wolf, 1999). Taking on different roles allows children the unique opportunity to learn social skills such as communication, problem solving, and empathy (Hughes, 1999). The use of puppets such as Molly, Wally, Dina and Tiny provides children with a safe medium through which shy or withdrawn children can communicate.

“

Research has shown that the real world becomes more real to children who have opportunities to pretend

”



4.5 The Impact of the Incredible Years Small Group Dina Treatment Programme on Effective Communication – A Case Study

Adam was a very shy child who spoke little and spent two years in the Speech and Language Class in St. Joseph's NS. He joined 1st class in September 2016. However, it was clear early on that he was struggling to make friends in his new class. Having consulted with his class teacher it was decided that Adam would be a perfect candidate for Dina School.

During the first few weeks of Dina School Adam was observed as being withdrawn, not interacting with his peers and not answering any questions unless prompted. He participated in the activities of Dina School, but he was always very quiet and did not speak up or ask questions. As the weeks went by Adam began to change. He began putting his quiet hand up, volunteering to participate in role play and interact with others. He started to bond with the other children in the group. Other teachers observed that in the playground he began to chat with the other children from Dina School.

I feel Adam really benefited greatly from Dina School, improving his speech, his confidence and his ability to interact and bond with his peers. In particular, the units on 'how to be friendly' and 'how to talk to friends', enabled Adam to implement the friendship and conversational skills that he had learned in Dina School both in the classroom and the playground. What he learned within the Dina School Programme, he brought seamlessly into his daily school life, creating a better learning environment for himself and establishing peer interactions and friendships.



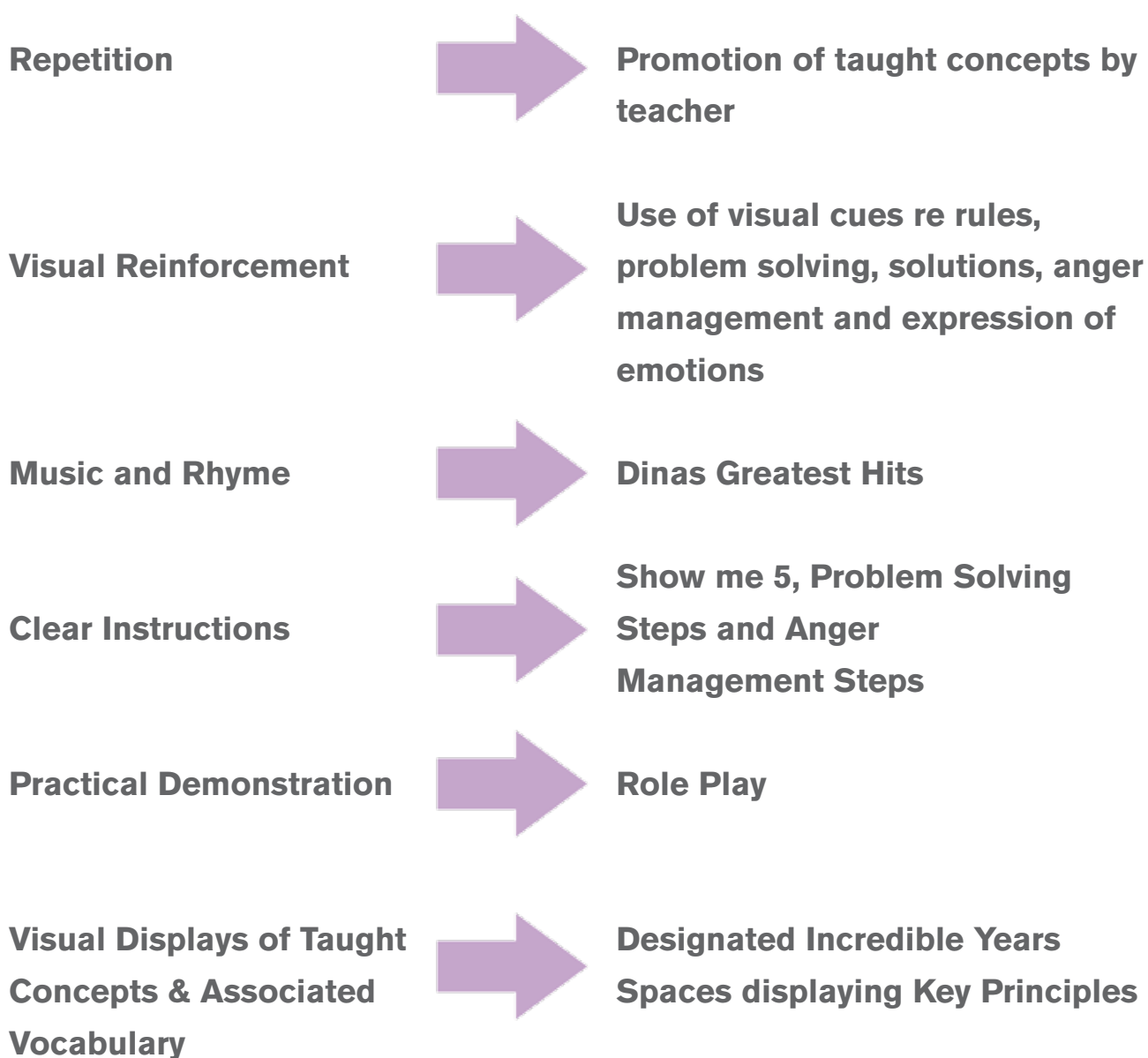
St Josephs' NS is a leading advocate of The Incredible Years

Account by - Bernie Lennon (SNA) and Niamh Curtis (Class Teacher), St Joseph's NS, Muirhevnamor, Dundalk.



4.6 Promotion of Auditory Memory

Auditory Memory is the ability to take in information that is presented orally (out loud), process it, retain it in one's mind, and then recall it (Bellis, 2003; Roeser & Downs, 2004; Stredler-Brown & Johnson, 2004). Central to effective programme delivery within the Incredible Years is the ongoing promotion of taught concepts. The promotion of concepts is carried out through the following strategies:





4.7 Creating a Language Learning Environment

According to the PDST it is important that the classroom environment is supportive and nurturing where a variety of communication styles are valued, accepted and accommodated. Teaching professionals constantly strive to create a classroom environment where children are exposed to high quality language in varying forms. Language acquisition goes to the core of education. Exposure to language should be meaningful, deliberate, repetitive and involve active engagement of students. A language-rich classroom has many different layers.

The Physical Environment

By enriching the physical environment of the classroom, multiple opportunities for engaging oral interaction and development will exist. Within an Incredible Years context attention is drawn to the importance of having organised classroom environments. Paying attention to seating plans and the physical structure of the classroom in order to create an environment conducive to effective learning is crucial.

It is highly recommended for every classroom to have designated Incredible Years areas where taught concepts such as rules, problem solving and anger management steps are displayed and promoted by the class teacher throughout the week. Teachers are encouraged to use puppets and role play relevant scenarios that may arise through the course of the school week. The Incredible Years designated area can also act as a quiet thinking area where children can practice their self-regulation and problem solving skills. The small group activity section of the programme allows children to be actively engage in developing classroom displays and art projects that reinforce the taught concepts. Molly and Wally's problem solving books are also stored in these areas and should be referred to by teachers when appropriate.

Classroom Culture

At the root of the Incredible Years is the creation of a positive and open classroom culture where children feel valued and secure with a strong sense of identity. The Incredible Years is culturally specific with the inclusion of a wide range of puppets of various ethnicities that reflect the changing demographic culture in our schools. The Incredible Years promotes a positive common language that is used by teachers, students and parents. It is this language that permeates the classroom resulting in a space where children can be open and respectful with their teachers and with each other.

Opportunities for Communication

The circle time element of both Small Group Dina and Classroom Dina allows children to speak openly with puppets about their feelings in relation to situations both home and school. Dina Dinosaur as the acting principal of Dina School along with the other puppets models appropriate language we use to our classmates and how we can solve conflict when it arises. This common language is promoted throughout the school in both the classroom and the yard.



4.8 Teach and Extend Vocabulary and Conceptual Knowledge

The Incredible Years focuses on improving children's emotional literacy. '*Circle Time*' which forms a central part of both the prevention and treatment programme affords the perfect opportunity for vocabulary development. Teachers are afforded a degree of flexibility to expand upon children's vocabulary base. Concepts such as Friendship, Anger Management, Complimenting, Solutions and Problem Solving are introduced and time is given to solidify these concepts through the teaching of related vocabulary.

The Incredible Years recognises the importance of early intervention in terms of oral language development. As stated earlier some of the key principles upon which the Incredible Years is based are those of Social, Emotional and Academic Coaching. These involve scaffolding children's learning interactions with peers and teachers with coaching methods that support their school readiness growth, academic success, and social emotional development. Descriptive commenting is defined as a form of commentary where the teacher enters a student's internal and imaginary world, narrates his ideas, thoughts, feelings and interests, helps him feel confident by being an "appreciative audience" and providing focused attention on his learning process (Webster Stratton 99). Teachers who use the descriptive coaching methods consistently find that their students come to love this kind of attention, feel more strongly attached to their teachers, persist at the activity despite feeling frustrated and ultimately develop a strong sense of self-esteem. Children then model this behaviour to others which permeates a sense of independence and 'can do' attitude throughout the classroom.

4.9 Teach a Variety of Spoken Texts

Good language teaching goes beyond words. Through the Incredible Years children are exposed to a wide variety of spoken texts.

Spoken texts within Classroom Dina and Small Group Dina include the following: Oral stories, song and rhymes, dialogues, monologues, discussions and role plays.

Again the teacher is afforded a level of flexibility when it comes to the adding to the quality of the dialogue as they lead the interaction between the students and the puppets. Students are encouraged to recount to the puppets and teacher, events that have occurred both at home and in their community. Similarly, the puppets share with the children their own experiences and it is through this back to forth exchange of information that Oral Language develops.



APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Teacher Classroom Management Self Reflection Inventory for Teachers



The Incredible Years® Teacher Classroom Management Self-Reflection Inventory Proactive Teacher Strategies

Date: _____ Teacher Name: _____

Teachers learn extensively from self-reflection regarding their classroom management and the teaching strategies they are using that are working or not working. From these reflections teachers determine personal goals for making changes in their approaches to bring about the most positive learning climate they can. Use this Inventory to think about your strengths and limitations and determine your goals.

1 – Never 3 – Occasionally 5 - Consistently

Proactive Teacher – Rules	
1. I state rules positively and clearly and they are posted on the wall. They are reviewed and practiced as needed.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I use nonverbal cues and signals to communicate rules as well as words (e.g., pictures of rules such as raise quiet hands, quiet voice, five on the floor, ears open).	1 2 3 4 5
3. I have taught children the “show me five” signal and use it.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I state requests or give directions respectfully using brief descriptions of positive behaviors desired (e.g., “please keep your hands to your own body”) .	1 2 3 4 5
5. I use “when-then” commands.	1 2 3 4 5
6. I give students choices and redirections when possible.	1 2 3 4 5
7. I avoid negative commands, corrections, demands, and yelling at children.	1 2 3 4 5
8. I get children’s attention before giving instructions.	1 2 3 4 5
9. I redirect disengaged children by calling out their name with a question, standing next to them, making up interesting games, and nonverbal signals.	1 2 3 4 5
10. I give frequent attention, praise and encouragement to children who are engaged and following directions.	1 2 3 4 5



11. I communicate with parents about classroom rules and schedules and send home the Teacher-to-Parent Communication forms.	1	2	3	4	5
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Future Goals About Rules:

Proactive Teacher - Schedules	
1. My classroom routines and schedules are consistent, predictable and allow for flexibility.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I post classroom schedules on the wall in a visible place for children, parents and visitors.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Visual pictures/cues are used to indicate different activities on schedule (e.g., small group circle time, unstructured play time, teeth brushing or hand washing, outside play, lunch).	1 2 3 4 5
4. My classroom schedule alternates active and vigorous activities (outside activities or free choice) with less active activities (story time).	1 2 3 4 5
5. I provide a balance between teacher-directed and child-directed activities.	1 2 3 4 5
6. I have a system in place for students to choose between play areas during unstructured times (center cards for activity areas such as block center, dress up and kitchen pretend play area, book area).	1 2 3 4 5



7. My large group circle time is scheduled for no longer than 20 minutes.	1 2 3 4 5
8. My large group circle time includes many active responses from children (e.g., singing and movement, stretch breaks, holding cue cards, acting out responses, answering verbally as group, puppet play) to encourage high rates of engagement.	1 2 3 4 5
9. Free play or center time in my classroom is the longest activity during the unstructured play period. This allows children time to choose materials, play and clean up.	1 2 3 4 5
Future Goals About Schedules:	



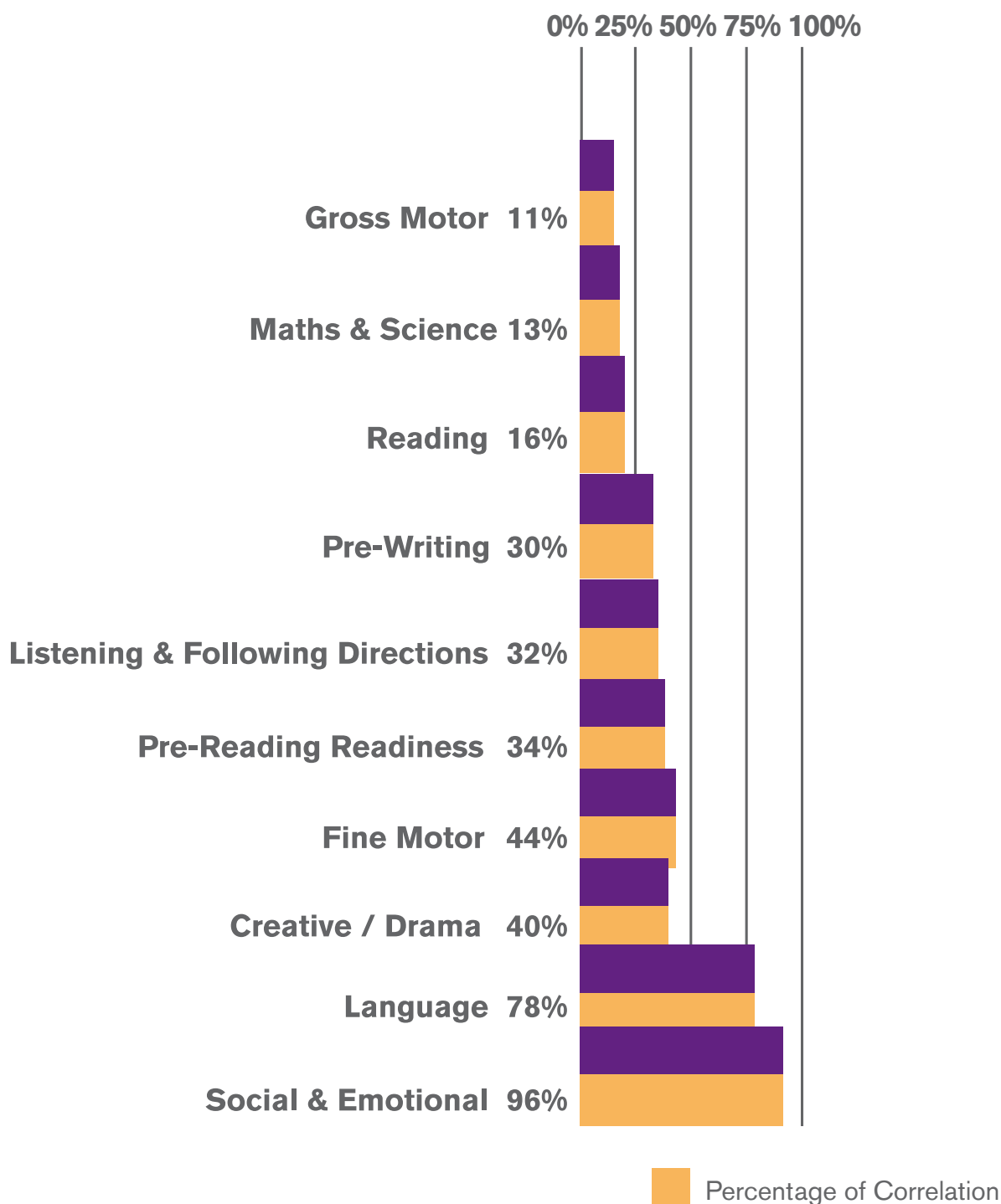
Proactive Teacher - Transitions	
1. I avoid unnecessary transitions and keep waiting time minimal.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I systematically teach students the expectations for transitions.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I warn students before a transition begins and transitions are not rushed.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I use a consistent cue to signal a transition (e.g., bells, song, clap, lights turned on and off).	1 2 3 4 5
5. I use visual pictures/cues and auditory sounds to depict transitions (e.g., schedule changes, transition cards, tape on floor for line up, quiet time, pictures for daily jobs).	1 2 3 4 5
6. I start circle time activity when a few children are ready to begin and do not wait for everyone.	1 2 3 4 5
Future Goals About Transitions:	
Proactive Teacher - Classroom Environment and Organization	
1. My classroom is well equipped with a variety of toys and materials so that children of all skill levels have something to play with during the day.	1 2 3 4 5
2. My classroom is organized by learning centers and number of children allowed in a center is limited with visual reminders of how many children are allowed (e.g., hooks with names, clothespins etc.).	1 2 3 4 5
3. I have put picture labels on low shelves to help children find and return materials.	1 2 3 4 5



4. I have provided toys that promote social interaction in all learning centers (e.g., puppets, wagons, large floor puzzles, turn-taking games, etc.).	1 2 3 4 5
5. I have a systematic rotation plan in effect to increase novelty and curiosity (e.g., sand or bubble table open at certain times).	1 2 3 4 5
6. My classroom provides visual cues to children to signal whether an area or activity is open or closed (e.g., stop sign, sheet covering sand table or computer).	1 2 3 4 5
7. Materials are enlarged in my classroom for children with visible motor impairments (e.g., larger crayons, paper, etc.) and stabilized for better manipulation (taped to table, Velcro board, trays).	1 2 3 4 5
8. I provide visual cues throughout classroom to remind child of target skill (e.g., sharing, helping, teamwork).	1 2 3 4 5
9. A large physical structure is provided in my classroom for circle time and children sit on carpet squares or mats.	1 2 3 4 5
10. I prepare materials for small group activities so they are ready to go before children arrive for the day.	1 2 3 4 5
11. I plan cooperative activities on a daily basis (e.g., large collages, class books, cooking activities etc.).	1 2 3 4 5
12. Children are visible at all times. Shelving is no higher than 4 feet tall.	1 2 3 4 5
13. I place inattentive or easily distractible children close by me.	1 2 3 4 5
Future Goals for Environmental Structure and Planning:	

Coach Name: _____

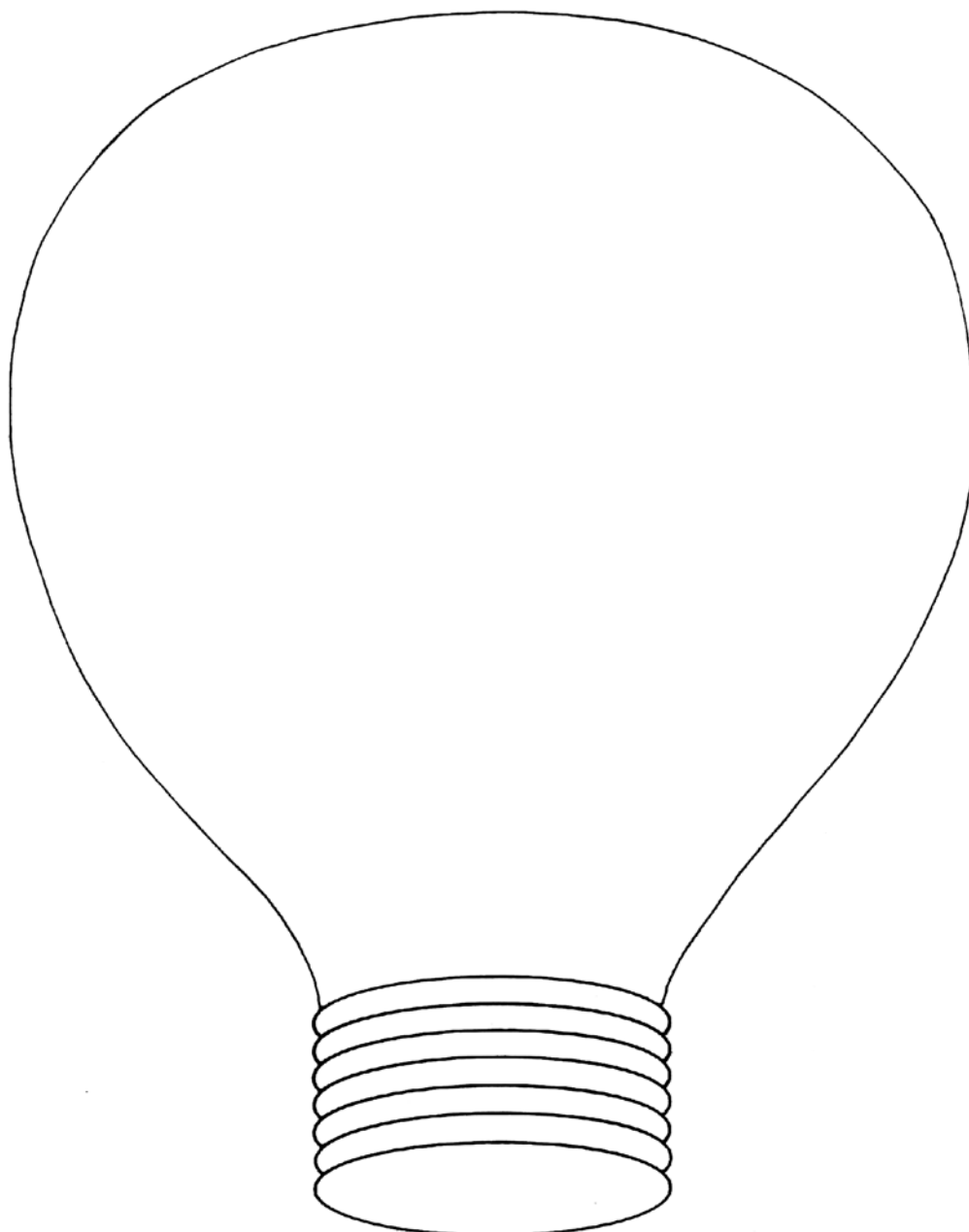
Appendix 2: Percentage of Correlation between Classroom Dina Programme Small Group Activities and Areas of Learning



Appendix 3: Wallys Problem Solving Sheet



3. Draw a picture of your solution



4. Is this a thumbs up solution?

WALLY'S PROBLEM SOLVING DETECTIVE REPORT



Name: _____

Date: _____



1. What is the problem?

How do you feel?



Afraid



Angry



Excited



Embarrassed



Sad



Other



2. What solution can you use?



Appendix 4: Classroom Dina Best Practice Guidelines



Benefits of Video-Taping Your Incredible Years Sessions

One of the key components of implementing The Incredible Years Suite of Programmes is to ensure that the programmes are being implemented with fidelity.

When a programme is being implemented with fidelity, it ensures that we are able to achieve the same outcomes for children that the original programme was designed to achieve.

One of the most effective ways of doing this is for the Group Leader to video tape their sessions with the children and parents. Not only does this help ensure fidelity but it also provides for reflective practice, whereby the Group Leader can review how the session went, what went well and what areas could be improved.

Best Practice Guidelines

- It is recommended that 2 trained Group Leaders deliver the Classroom Dina Programme to the group of children. This is in line with recommended children/staff current rate
- Only those Group Leaders delivering the programme should be in the room whilst the Classroom Dina Programme is being implemented
- The Classroom Dina Programme is aimed at children aged 3-8 years
- It is recommended that Group Leaders give sufficient time to prepare, plan and deliver the required number of sessions. A session can be broken down and delivered over 3 periods in the week for younger children. *It is better to cover less material in a particular lesson, and do it well, than to rush through new content and lose the attention and understanding of the class. For some classes, breaking a single lesson plan into several shorter lessons offered more frequently may be necessary to teach the material well*
- Tailor lesson plans according to children's interests, attention span and developmental abilities. Each lesson plan provides a content theme (e.g., feeling proud and frustrated) to be discussed in large group circle time, as well as suggested scripts using the puppets, role plays and 3-4 videotape vignettes. Each lesson plan also includes 3-4 ideas for small group practice activities and suggestions for ways to promote the theme throughout the day and week
- For preschool children the emphasis of the content should be on the feelings unit and friendship skills with some beginning work with problem solving and basic school rules such as "keeping hands to own body" and using "walking feet"
- The programme curriculum sessions are delivered by the Teacher/SNA twice weekly and sustained over consecutive years in schools
- It is recommended that the same Group Leader uses the same puppet for the entire programme
- It is highly recommended that all Group Leaders video tape their sessions from the introduction of the Classroom Dina Programme to completion of same
- It is highly recommended that all Group Leaders participate in Peer Coaching

Benefits to Video Taping

- In order to achieve accreditation in the Incredible Years Suite of Programmes, you must submit a video tape of one complete session.
- When video-taping is introduced from Session One, it becomes a normalized way of working and therefore, submitting the video tape for your accreditation is made easier
- Video-taping helps to ensure that you as a Group Leader can review your sessions, which in turn supports your ability to implement the programme with fidelity and increases the quality of the programme being delivered to the children and parents
- It is also a recognised method which helps improve your skills and gives you time to reflect on your practice
- Video-taping of your sessions is carried out in a confidential manner. The only people who will see your video tapes are yourself, your co-facilitator and your Peer Coach. You choose what clips to show at your Peer Coaching sessions
- Video-taping and reviewing your tape helps you to identify your strengths as a Group Leader and builds on them

Appendix 5: Tips on Effective Use of Puppets

Tips for Using Puppets to Promote Preschool Children's Social and Emotional Development

Carolyn Webster-Stratton Ph.D.



Preschool children are working to accomplish the important developmental milestones of learning social and friendship skills including beginning to share, help others, initiate social interactions, listen, and cooperate with peers. They are also working on emotional regulation skills including emotional literacy, self-control over aggressive behaviors, ability to wait and accept limits, and beginning problem solving skills.

One of the ways to promote your preschool child's social and emotional skills is through the use of puppet play. Puppet play is effective because it helps the parent/teacher enter into the child's imaginary world and allows children to experience the feelings of other characters (early empathy development) and learn important social behaviors and conversation skills.

One of the ways to promote your preschool child's social and emotional skills is through the use of puppet play. Puppet play is effective because it helps the parent/teacher enter into the child's imaginary world and allows children to experience the feelings of other characters (early empathy development) and learn important social behaviors and conversation skills.

With puppets, dolls, or action figures you can act out stories you are reading with children, make up fantasies, and explore solutions to pretend problems. You may be nervous at first using puppets, but try it out and before long you will experience the joy of entering into your child's thoughts, feelings and imagination, one of the most intimate places you can be at this age.



The Incredible Years® • www.incredibleyears.com • incredibleyears@incredibleyears.com

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