

Brinnington Incredible Beginnings Programme

The Incredible Beginnings Programme (Carolyn Webster-Stratton, Incredible Years®) is a course for teachers and child care providers of children aged 1-5 years of age. The course aims to provide staff with the skills and strategies to provide an environment that supports children's optimal early development. Teaching methods include:

- social and emotion coaching
- nurturing child-directed play interactions using narrative descriptive commenting
- proactive teaching with predictable routines
- consistent positive behaviour management strategies

All of the approaches rely on building positive relationships with children using sensitive and responsive approaches.

The Incredible Beginnings programme was trialled across two settings in Brinnington and involved a 6 day training course (one day per month for six months) to the team of 12 staff in total. The training began on 7th September 2016 and the final day was 15th February 2017. An observation of the participants in their settings with the children also took place on 24th March 2017. The course was delivered by two experienced Incredible Years® group leaders (trainer and mentor-in-training) and each training day followed a manualised programme and protocol using video clips, group discussion and role play and rehearsal to maximise participants' learning. Each day began with group discussion and review of the strategies they had been using in their settings to share good practice and problem solve any difficulties. Staff also used team meetings in their settings to review progress and reinforce the learning.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the course participants were asked to complete standardised questionnaires on the children's behaviour and also on their own professional practice at the beginning of the course and also after its completion. The following measures were used:

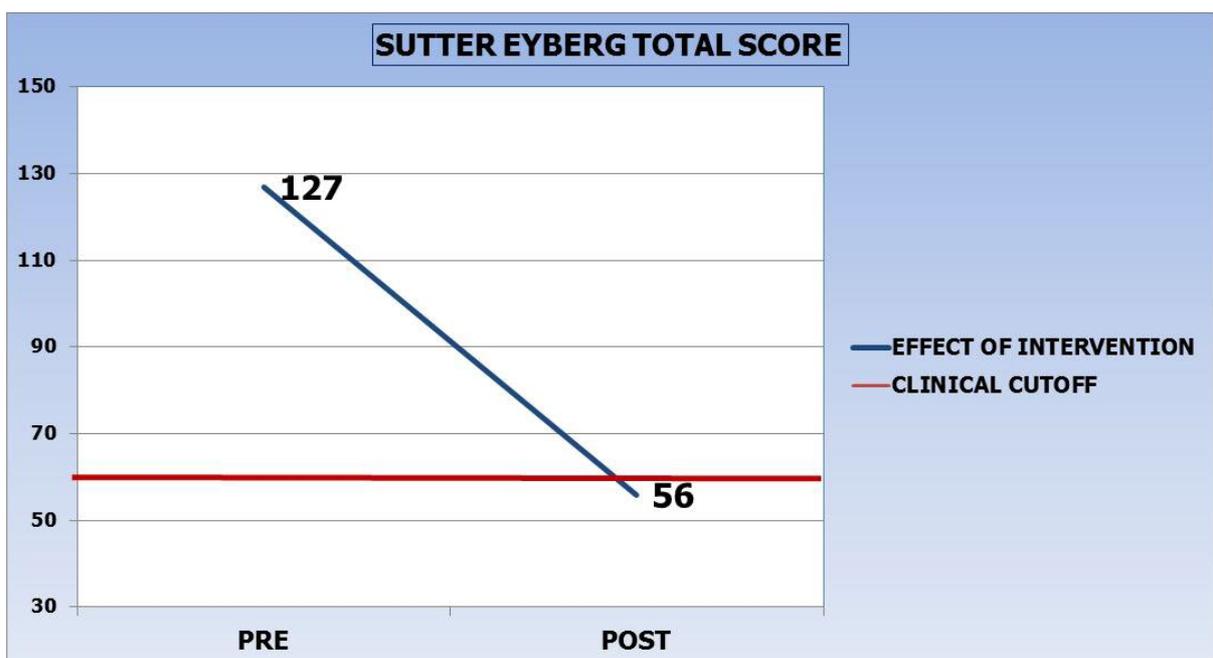
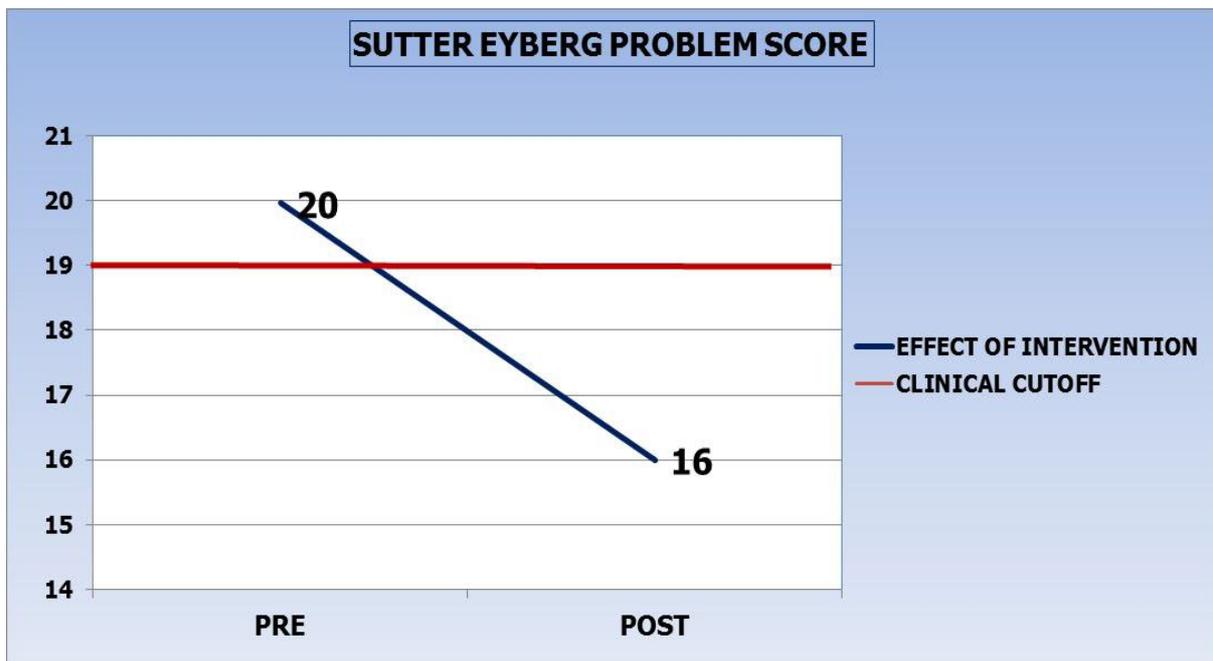
- Sutter-Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory (measures child behaviour difficulties)
- Incredible Years Teacher Questionnaire (measures teacher strategies)

In summary, the feedback on impact from the participants was:

- that the settings were much calmer overall
- that children were on task more
- that children's language development had improved faster
- they had less challenging behaviour to deal with
- they felt more confident in dealing with challenging behaviour
- that their most recent intake of children was much easier to settle and that these children settled much faster using their new skills

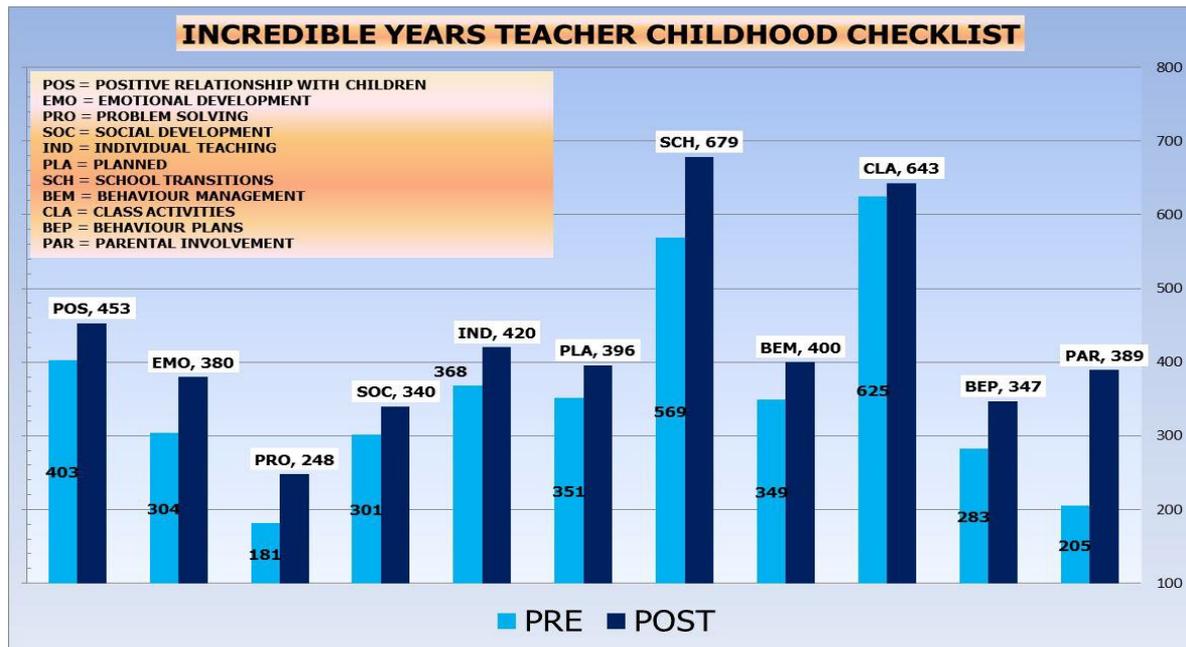
Outcomes:

The Sutter-Eyberg is a standardised, valid and reliable measure of children’s behaviour in classroom settings. It was completed by all keyworkers on the children in their settings and the questionnaire gives two scores relating to frequency of behaviour problems (total score) and intensity/impact of behaviour problems (problem score). Both scores showed significant improvements with children moving from clinical ranges of problem behaviour to normal ranges for behaviour in their settings.



The Incredible Years Teacher Childhood Checklist is a questionnaire designed to measure changes in practice in classroom settings. The results demonstrated significant changes in participants' practice which included increases in strategies to:

- improve children's social and emotional development
- improve relationships with parents and children
- improve classroom transitions
- improve management of challenging behaviour



Quotes from participants:

“I’ve noticed that the children’s language development is coming on much faster now”

“The settings are so much calmer”

“We had visitors who asked us what had happened. They couldn’t believe how calm and quiet the setting was with so many two year olds”

“It’s been much easier to settle the last group of new children into nursery”

“Transitions from one activity to the other are so much easier now”

“We’re not handling challenging behaviour as much any more”

Summary

The impact of the training was impressive with changes in participants' practice and significant impact on children's development and behaviour. It is worth noting that the implementation of the learning benefitted hugely from the excellent management and strategic commitment dedicated to this process. Time was protected for all participants to attend the training with the appropriate resources in place. In addition, the whole team embraced the opportunity for new learning and integrated this learning into their existing structures openly and effectively.

Dr Caroline White

Accredited Incredible Years Trainer