

Last reviewed: February 2023

Intervention website: <http://www.tuningintokids.org.au>

GUIDEBOOK INTERVENTION INFORMATION SHEET

Tuning in to Kids

Please note that in the ‘Intervention Summary’ table below ‘child age’, ‘level of need’, and ‘race and ethnicities’ information is **as evaluated in studies**. Information in other fields describes the intervention as **offered/supported by the intervention provider**.

Intervention summary	
Description	Tuning in to Kids (TIK) is a parenting intervention for parents with concerns about the behaviour of a child between 3 to 10 years old. It is delivered by trained facilitators to families in either a group or individual format over six to eight sessions of two hours’ duration.
Evidence rating	2+
Cost rating	1
Child outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preventing crime, violence and antisocial behaviour<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Improved behaviour.• Supporting children’s mental health and wellbeing<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Social and emotional development.
Child age (population characteristic)	3 to 10 years
Level of need (population characteristic)	Targeted Indicated

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Intervention summary	
Race and ethnicities (population characteristic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asian• White.
Type (model characteristic)	Group
Setting (model characteristic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Centre• Schools.
Workforce (model characteristic)	Parenting professional
UK available?	Yes
UK tested?	No

Model description

Tuning in to Kids (TIK) is a parenting intervention for parents or carers with a child between the ages of 3 and 10 who may be at risk of emotional or behavioural challenges.

TIK is delivered by one or two TIK practitioners, in six sessions of two hours' duration each, with two additional booster sessions. The sessions can be delivered to groups of 6 to 14 families or to individual families. These sessions cover psychoeducation, role play, small group exercises, group discussions, video demonstrations, and homework activities.

The aim of TIK is to teach parents and carers emotion coaching skills, so they can support optimal emotion self-regulation in their child. Examples of these skills include parents' increased awareness of their own emotional needs and increased awareness and empathy for the needs of their child. Activities that support increased parental awareness include opportunities for parents to reflect on their own moods, advice on how to label and empathise with the child's emotions, strategies for managing difficult emotions, and emotion-regulation techniques such as slow breathing, relaxation, and the turtle technique.

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Target population

Age of child	3 to 10 years
Target population	Parents of children at risk of developing behavioural problems.

Please note that the information in this section on target population is as **offered/supported by the intervention provider**.



Theory of change

Why		Who	How	What		
Science-based assumption	Science-based assumption	Science-based assumption	Intervention	Short-term outcomes	Medium-term outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Emotional competence is core to children's prosocial development and behavioural self-regulation.	<p>Parents support their child's early emotional development through their own emotional regulation skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to manage their own emotions • Reactions to their child's emotions • Ability to empathise with their child's emotional needs. 	Families' disadvantage is associated with an increased risk of child behavioural and emotional regulation problems.	Parents learn strategies for managing their own emotions; and coaching the emotions of their child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased parental emotional awareness and regulation • Increased empathy for the child's emotions • Improved parental and emotion coaching capabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved child emotional competency • Improved child behaviour. 	Improved prosocial behaviour and emotion regulation as children develop.



Implementation requirements

Who is eligible?	Parents of children aged 3 to 10 who are interested in participating in parent education, and may have concerns about their children's behaviour.
How is it delivered?	TIK is delivered in six to eight sessions of two hours' duration each by one or two practitioners, to individual families or groups of 6 to 14 families.
What happens during the intervention?	Participants learn emotion coaching skills, including noticing and responding appropriately to their child's emotions. Participants also reflect on how they cope with their own emotions and learn how to manage and express their own emotions when parenting.
Who can deliver it?	A TIK-trained facilitator with training in caring profession, including psychologists, educators, counsellors, social workers, and family support workers. Peer support workers can also train to deliver the intervention.
What are the training requirements?	The practitioners have either 13 hours of in person intervention training across two days, or 13.5 hours of online intervention training across three sessions. Training can also be provided to organisations. Booster training of practitioners is not required.
How are practitioners supervised?	There are free, monthly online supervision sessions available for all trained facilitators as well as regular themed workshops. The providers offer 'Running Your First Group' sessions for new practitioners.
What are the systems for maintaining fidelity?	Not available
Is there a licensing requirement?	No
*Contact details	<p>Contact person: Sophie Havighurst</p> <p>Organisation: University of Melbourne</p> <p>Email address: sophie.h@unimelb.edu.au</p> <p>Website/s: www.tuningintokids.org.au</p> <p>*Please note that this information may not be up to date. In this case, please visit the listed intervention website for up to date contact details.</p>



Evidence summary

TIK's most rigorous evidence comes from two randomised controlled trials conducted in Australia that are consistent with Foundation's Level 2 or 2+ criteria. Both studies observed improvements in parent reports of their child's behaviour.

TIK has preliminary evidence of improving a child outcome, but we cannot be confident that the programme caused the improvement.

Search and review

	Number of studies
Identified in search	13
Studies reviewed	0
Meeting the L2 threshold	2
Meeting the L3 threshold	0
Contributing to the L4 threshold	0
Ineligible	11

Individual study summary: Study 1

Study 1	
Study design	Cluster RCT
Country	Australia
Sample characteristics	Participants were 216 parents (96.0% mothers) of children aged 4 and 5, living in lower to middle class communities in Melbourne



Study 1	
Race, ethnicities, and nationalities	Not reported
Population risk factors	Participants were recruited from lower- to middle-class socioeconomic communities
Timing	Baseline, post-intervention and six-month follow-up
Child outcomes	Improved child behaviour
Other outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved parent emotion regulation • Improved parent beliefs about children's emotions and emotion coaching • Improved parent empathy and emotional connection.
Study Rating	2+
Citation	Havighurst, S. S., Wilson, K. R., Harley, A. E., Prior, M. R. & Kehoe, C., (2010) Tuning in to Kids: Improving emotion socialization practices in parents of preschool children – findings from a community trial. <i>Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry</i> . 51 (12), 1342–1350.

Brief summary

Population characteristics

This study involved a sample of 216 parents (96.0% mothers) between the ages of 4 and 5 living in a culturally and linguistically diverse, lower- to middle-class community of Melbourne.

88.5% of parents were in intact families. 21.8% had not completed high school. 77.3% spoke English as their first language. 19.8% of families had gross annual incomes of less than AUD\$40,000 and 62.8% had gross annual incomes between AUD\$40,000 and AUD\$99,999.

Study design

Study 1 was a cluster randomised controlled trial involving children and parents recruited from 61 preschools. Preschools were grouped into 12 clusters according to proximity to intervention venues and randomly assigned to the intervention or control condition using a computer random-number generator. This resulted in 106 parents being allocated to the TIK intervention and 110 to the wait-list control group, receiving no intervention during their 10-month delayed start.



Measurement

Assessments were conducted at baseline (pre-intervention), post-intervention, and at a six-month follow-up.

Post-intervention

Parent report measures included the Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory, the Difficulties in Emotional Regulation Scale, the Maternal Emotional Style Questionnaire (MESQ), and the Parent Emotional Style Questionnaire (PESQ).

Six-month follow-up

- **Parent report** measures included the Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory, the Difficulties in Emotional Regulation Scale, the Maternal Emotional Style Questionnaire (MESQ), and the Parent Emotional Style Questionnaire (PESQ).
- **Teacher report** measures included the Sutter-Eyberg Student Behaviour Inventory.
- **Researcher-led** assessments included coded observations of parents and children engaging in a structured story-telling session and the administration of the Emotion Skills Task.

Study retention

Post-intervention

84% (181) of the study participants completed assessments at post-intervention. This included 80% (85) of the parents participating in TIK and 87% (96) of those assigned to the wait-list control group.

Six-month follow-up

88% (190) of the study participants completed the six-month follow-up assessment. This included 83% (88) parents in the TIK group and 93% (102) of parents in the wait-list control. Dropouts from both groups did not significantly differ from the retained sample on any measure.

75% (161) of the parents (72% from TIK, 77% from the wait-list control) participated in a videotaped structure storytelling session that was coded by researchers blind to group assignment.

Results

Data-analytic plan

A General Linear Modelling repeated measures design with cluster and marital status as covariates was used to analyse the findings.

Findings

The study observed significant reductions in the TIK parents' reports in child behaviour problems at post-intervention and six-month follow-up. Parents also demonstrated significantly improved emotion regulation, emotion coaching beliefs, and empathy and connection following the



intervention. A secondary analysis using missing participants' last available data found that, with the exception of child emotion knowledge, significant findings were maintained.

Limitations

The conclusions that can be drawn from this study are limited by methodological issues pertaining to a lack of clarity in terms of attrition hence why a higher rating is not achieved.

Study 1: Outcomes table

Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Child outcomes					
Child Emotional Knowledge	Emotion Skills Task – two sub-tests only (assessment)	$d = 1.00$	Yes	127	6-month follow-up
Child Behaviour	Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory (Parent report)	$d = 0.57$	Yes	173	6-month follow-up
Child Behaviour	Sutter-Eyberg Student Behaviour Inventory (Teacher report)	$d = 0.23$	Yes	154	6-month follow-up
Parent outcomes					
Emotion Awareness and Regulation	Difficulties in Emotional Regulation Scale (Parent report)	$d = 0.29$	Yes	171	6-month follow-up



Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Beliefs about children's emotions and emotion coaching	Parent Emotional Style Questionnaire [PESQ] (adapted from Maternal Emotional Style Questionnaire): Emotion dismissing (Parent report)	$d = 0.86$	Yes	172	6-month follow-up
Beliefs about children's emotions and emotion coaching	Parent Emotional Style Questionnaire [PESQ] (adapted from Maternal Emotional Style Questionnaire): Emotion coaching (Parent report)	$d = 0.64$	Yes	172	6-month follow-up
Empathy and emotional connection	Empathy/Connection scale – adapted from a subscale of PESQ (Parent report)	$d = 1.08$	Yes	172	6-month follow-up
Emotion-coaching	Videotaped structured story-telling task (independent measure) (Emotion labels)	$d = 0.57$	Yes	134	6-month follow-up
Parent Emotion-coaching	Videotaped structured task (independent measure) (Emotion exploration)	$d = 0.66$	Yes	134	6-month follow-up



Individual study summary: Study 2

Study 2	
Study design	RCT
Country	Australia
Sample characteristics	Participants were parents (93.0% mothers) of children aged 4 to 9.
Race, ethnicities, and nationalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 91.9% White • 1.9% Other Asian background • 1.5% Asian • 4.7% did not indicate.
Population risk factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27% were from single-parent households • 45% of the primary caregivers did not graduate from high school • 44% were unemployed or stay-at-home parents • 41% of families had a gross annual income of less than \$40,000.
Timing	Baseline and six-month follow-up
Child outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced intensity of problem behaviours • Reduced conduct problems • Reduced threatening/retaliatory behaviours.
Other outcomes	None
Study Rating	2+
Citation	Duncombe, M. E., Havighurst, S. S., Kehoe, C. E., Holland, K. A., Frankling, E. J. & Stargatt, R. (2016) Comparing an emotion-and a behavior-focused parenting program as part of a multisystemic intervention for child conduct problems. <i>Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology</i> . 45 (3), 320–334.

Brief summary

Population characteristics

This study involved a sample of 320 children aged 4 to 9 living in Australia. The children were predominantly male (74.0%), 55.0% of the sample lived in metropolitan areas, and 91.9% of families were White. 27% were from single-parent households, 45% of the primary caregivers did not graduate high school, 44% of parents were unemployed or stay-at-home parents, and 41% of families had a gross annual income of less than ASD\$40,000.



Children with a Z score greater than or equal to 1 on the Conduct Problems Risk Screen (CPRS) were eligible for the study.

Study design

Study 2 is a cluster randomised controlled trial. 48 preschools were randomised to three conditions; TIK with additional child group and school professional development, active control (Standard Group Triple P) with additional child group and school professional development, and an active wait-list control which also offered an additional child group and professional development.

91 parents to the TIK condition, 116 to the active control and 113 to the wait-list group via computer-generated numbers.

A comparison of baseline characteristics revealed that the children in the TIK and Triple P groups had statistically significant higher CPRS scores than those in the control group.

Measurement

Researchers conducted assessments in the home at baseline (pre-intervention) and at a six-months post-intervention completion.

- **Parent-report** measures included the Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory and the Depression Anxiety and Stress Scales short form (DASS-21).
- **Teacher report** measures included the Conduct Problems subscale of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire at baseline and six-month follow up.
- **Researcher-led** assessments included the Percent Threatening=Retaliatory Behaviours Score from the Home Interview with the Child (HIWC).

Study retention

98% (314) of the participants completed assessments at the six-month follow up; 100% (91) from the TIK group, 97% (113) from the Triple P group and 98% (111) from the wait-list control. There were no significant differences in characteristics of those who did and did not complete follow-up questionnaires.

Results

Data analytic plan

A repeated measures design, incorporating multilevel modelling and intent-to-treat was used to analyse the findings. Person-mean imputation was used to replace missing items.

The study observed that both TIK and Triple P both provided comparable benefits to children in comparison to those in the enhanced wait-list control group. Specifically, TIK and Group Triple P reported significant improvements in their children's behaviour. Similar improvements were observed in the home observations led by researchers and teacher reports at school.



Limitations

The conclusions that can be drawn from this study are limited by methodological issues pertaining to a lack of clarity in terms of attrition hence why a higher rating is not achieved.

Study 2: Outcomes table

Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Child outcomes					
Child behaviour intensity	Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory (Parent-rated)	d=0.4	Yes	204	6-month follow-up
Conduct problems	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire – Conduct Problems subscale (Teacher-rated)	d=0.4	Yes	204	6-month follow-up
Child conduct problems	Home Interview with Child – The Percent Threatening/Retaliatory Behaviours (Researcher assessment)	d=0.3	Yes	204	6-month follow-up
* Reported comparison are for the TIK and enhanced wait-list control groups only.					

Other studies

The following studies were identified for this intervention but did not count towards the intervention's overall evidence rating. An intervention receives the same rating as its most robust study or studies.

Aghaie Meybodi, F., Mohammadkhani, P., Pourshahbaz, A., Dolatshahi, B. & Havighurst, S. (2017) Reducing children behavior problems: A pilot study of Tuning in to Kids in Iran. *Iranian Rehabilitation Journal*. 15 (3), 269–276.



Aghaie Meybodi, F., Mohammadkhani, P., Pourshahbaz, A., Dolatshahi, B. & Havighurst, S. S. (2019) Improving parent emotion socialization practices: Piloting Tuning in to Kids in Iran for children with disruptive behavior problems. *Family Relations*. 68 (5), 596–607. **This reference refers to an RCT, conducted in Iran.**

Björk, R. F., Bølstad, E., Pons, F. & Havighurst, S. S. (2022) Testing TIK (Tuning in to Kids) with TEC (Test of Emotion Comprehension): Does enhanced emotion socialization improve child emotion understanding?. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*. 78, 101368.

Bølstad, E., Havighurst, S. S., Tamnes, C. K., Nygaard, E., Björk, R. F., Stavrinou, M. & Espeseth, T. (2021) A pilot study of a parent emotion socialization intervention: Impact on parent behavior, child self-regulation, and adjustment. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 12, 730278. **This reference refers to a quasi-experimental design, conducted in Norway.**

Edrissi, F., Havighurst, S. S., Aghebati, A., Habibi, M. & Arani, A. M. (2019) A pilot study of the tuning in to kids parenting program in Iran for reducing preschool children’s anxiety. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*. 28, 1695–1702. **This reference refers to an RCT, conducted in Iran.**

Eikeland, P. K. (2021) *Predictors of the implementation of Tuning in to Kids in Norwegian kindergartens* (Master’s thesis). **This reference refers to a quantitative study, conducted in Norway.**

Havighurst, S. S., Duncombe, M., Frankling, E., Holland, K., Kehoe, C. & Stargatt, R. (2015) An emotion-focused early intervention for children with emerging conduct problems. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*. 43, 749–760. **This reference refers to an RCT, conducted in Australia.**

Havighurst, S. S., Harley, A. & Prior, M. (2004) Building preschool children’s emotional competence: A parenting program. *Early Education & Development*. 15 (4), 423–448. **This reference refers to a pre-post study, conducted in Australia.**

Havighurst, S. S., Wilson, K. R., Harley, A. E., Kehoe, C., Efron, D. & Prior, M. R. (2013) ‘Tuning into kids’: Reducing young children’s behavior problems using an emotion coaching parenting program. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*. 44, 247–264. **This reference refers to an RCT, conducted in Australia.**

Husna, M. T. & Ambarini, T. K. (2022) Tuning into Kids training to improve emotion coaching’s skill of mother with early childhood children. *Al-Qalb: Jurnal Psikologi Islam*. 13 (1), 28–38. **This reference refers to an pre-post study, conducted in Indonesia.**

Isobel, S., Meehan, F. & Pretty, D. (2016) An emotional awareness based parenting group for parents with mental illness: A mixed methods feasibility study of community mental health nurse facilitation. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*. 30 (1), 35–40. **This reference refers to a feasibility study, conducted in Australia.**

Mastromanno, B. K., Kehoe, C. E., Wood, C. E. & Havighurst, S. S. (2021) A randomised-controlled pilot study of the one-to-one delivery of Tuning in to Kids: Impact on emotion socialisation, reflective functioning, and childhood behaviour problems. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*. 26 (4), 359–374. **This reference refers to an RCT, conducted in Australia.**



Otterpohl, N., Buchenau, K., Havighurst, S., Stiensmeier-Pelster, J. & Kehoe, C. (2019) Tuning in to Kids. *Kindheit und Entwicklung*. **This reference refers to an RCT, conducted in Germany.**

Omre, A. N. (2021) *Predictors of the implementation of Tuning in to Kids in Norwegian kindergartens* (Master's thesis).

Qiu, C. & Shum, K. K. M. (2022) Emotion coaching intervention for Chinese mothers of preschoolers: A randomized controlled trial. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*. 53 (1), 61–75. **This reference refers to an RCT, conducted in China.**

Skåland, V. R. (2021) *Qualitative evaluation of the implementation of 'Tuning in to Kids' in Norwegian kindergartens* (Master's thesis).

Wilson, K. R., Havighurst, S. S. & Harley, A. E. (2012) 'Tuning in to Kids: An effectiveness trial of a parenting program targeting emotion socialization of preschoolers. *Journal of Family Psychology*. 26 (1), 56

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Note on provider involvement: This provider has agreed to Foundations' terms of reference (or the Early Intervention Foundation's terms of reference), and the assessment has been conducted and published with the full cooperation of the intervention provider.