

Last reviewed: February 2023

Intervention website: <https://www.incredibleyears.com/early-intervention-programs/parents/preschoolers>

GUIDEBOOK INTERVENTION INFORMATION SHEET

Incredible Years – Attentive Parenting

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	Incredible Years – Attentive Parenting (IY Attentive Parenting) is for all parents with a child between the ages of 3 and 6 years old. It is delivered by two IY practitioners to groups of up to 14 parents through six to nine weekly sessions lasting 2.5 hours each. During these sessions, parents learn strategies for encouraging positive child behaviour and managing challenging child behaviour through age-appropriate discipline.
Evidence rating	2
Cost rating	2
Child outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting children’s mental health and wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved prosocial behaviour. • Preventing crime, violence and antisocial behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved behaviour.
Child age (population characteristic)	3 to 6 years old
Level of need (population characteristic)	Universal

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Intervention summary	
Race and ethnicities (population characteristic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asian-American• Black• Latino• Mixed racial background• White.
Type (model characteristic)	Group
Setting (model characteristic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early Years Setting• Community setting• Primary School.
Workforce (model characteristic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental health practitioners• Psychologists• Nurses• Teachers• Social workers.
UK available?	Yes
UK tested?	No

Model description

Incredible Years Attentive Parenting (IY Attentive Parenting) is part of the Incredible Years series of interventions for children, parents, and teachers. IY Attentive Parenting is specifically for all parents with a child between 3 and 6 years old. It is delivered in community centres or out-patient health settings and aims to prevent children's socioemotional and behavioural problems. It can be used for prevention purposes within a general population or as booster sessions for parents who have completed the IY BASIC parenting intervention.

IY Attentive Parenting is delivered by two practitioners to groups of up to 14 parents through six to nine weekly sessions lasting 2.5 hours each. During these sessions, parents learn how to use child-directed play to build a positive relationship with their child and support the development of early competencies critical to children's wellbeing and success at school.

A key aim of the intervention is to help parents apply key 'attentive' behaviours to support the development of important competencies. Examples of these skills include:

- Child-directed play to promote positive relationships and children's confidence
- Academic and persistence coaching to promote children's language and school readiness

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- Emotion coaching to strengthen children’s emotional literacy and empathy
- Social coaching to promote children’s cooperative friendships
- Imaginative parenting to promote children’s emotional regulation skills
- Creative play promotes children’s problem-solving and empathy.

Parent learning is supported through homework, watching and discussing vignettes, and role-plays. Parents are also supported to increase their networks with community resources and other parents. Depending on the context, IY Attentive Parenting may include an introductory component where parents are asked to share their own upbringing and discuss their parenting motivations within the context of their culture.

Target population

Age of child	3 to 6 years old
Target population	Universal intervention – all families with a child aged between 3 and 6 years old.

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
Core competencies in the early years, including children's vocabulary, prosocial skills and behaviour, and emotional self-regulation, are strongly associated with later success in primary and secondary school.	Parental sensitivity, communicated to the child through fun, non-directive play activities, supports the development of important early years competencies and other school readiness skills.	All parents have an interest in advice on supporting their child's early development and school readiness.	<p>Parents learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively implement non-directive play to support early child confidence • Coach their child to support vocabulary development and preliteracy skills • Use emotion coaching to strengthen early emotion regulation • Use social coaching to support child friendships • Imaginative parenting to promote early self-regulation • Creative play to promote empathy and problem-solving • Develop better connections with other parents and the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are better able to support their child's school readiness • Parents are better able to understand their child's early developmental and learning needs • Parents are better able to help their children regulate their behaviour and emotions • Parents build better connections with other parents and the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have improved school readiness skills • Children are better able to regulate their behaviour and emotions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved school achievement in secondary and primary school • Reduced risk of behavioural and mental health problems as children develop.



Implementation requirements

Who is eligible?	Families with a child between 3 and 6 years old.
How is it delivered?	Two practitioners deliver IY Attentive Parenting to groups of up to 14 parents through six to nine weekly sessions lasting 2.5 hours each.
What happens during the intervention?	<p>The intervention teaches parents various core parenting concepts and their value for children's development.</p> <p>Sessions include: Parent goal setting; collaborative group discussion to brainstorm potential benefits of positive parenting skills; use of video vignettes highlighting parenting skills to inspire discussion and role-play practices; use of role-plays to practise new skills and anticipate potential barriers; homework assignments to practise new parenting skills each week.</p> <p>The intervention, as evaluated by Zhou et al. (2021), also included an additional introductory component where parents were asked to share their own upbringing and discuss their parenting motivations, based upon findings from previous cultural adaption work.</p>
Who can deliver it?	Practitioners with training in the Incredible Years model, typically with a qualification and or experience in a helping profession, such as social work or psychology.
What are the training requirements?	The practitioners have 15 hours of intervention training.
How are practitioners supervised?	It is recommended that practitioners are supervised through online consultation. Supervisors are accredited as IY group leaders, peer coaches and mentors. Practitioners have access to self-assessment tools that support fidelity.
What are the systems for maintaining fidelity?	<p>Intervention fidelity is maintained through the following processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training manual • Face-to-face training • Fidelity monitoring.
Is there a licensing requirement?	No



Implementation requirements (cont.)

*Contact details	<p>Contact person: Lisa Wallace-Gloria</p> <p>Organisation: Incredible Years</p> <p>Email address: lisawg@incredibleyears.com incredibleyears@incredibleyears.com</p> <p>Website: https://www.incredibleyears.com/early-intervention-programs/parents/preschoolers</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>
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Evidence summary

IY Attentive Parenting's most rigorous evidence comes from a pre–post study conducted in the United States, consistent with Foundations' Level 2 evidence strength criteria.

This study observed statistically significant improvements in IY Attentive Parenting parents' reports of their children's conduct and prosocial behaviour. There was no comparison group, however.

IY Attentive Parenting has preliminary evidence of improving a child outcome, but we cannot be confident that the intervention caused the improvement.

Search and review

	Number of studies
Identified in search	2
Studies reviewed	1
Meeting the L2 threshold	1
Meeting the L3 threshold	0
Contributing to the L4 threshold	0
Ineligible	1



Individual study summary: Study 1

Study 1	
Study design	Pre–post study
Country	United States
Sample characteristics	152 parents of children between 3 and 6 years old, recruited by a community mental health agency
Race, ethnicities, and nationalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black – 40% • Asian American – 30% • White – 18% • Latino – 5% • Mixed racial background – 3%.
Population risk factors	Families living in a disadvantaged community
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline • Post-intervention (six to nine weeks after baseline).
Child outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced conduct problems (parent report) • Improved prosocial behaviours (parent report).
Other outcomes	Reduced parenting stress (parent report)
Study Rating	2
Citation/s	Zhou, X., Lee, R. M. & Ohm, J. (2021) Evaluating the feasibility of the Incredible Years Attentive Parenting Program as universal prevention for racially diverse populations. <i>Journal of Prevention and Health Promotion</i> . 2 (1), 32–56.



Brief summary

Population characteristics

This study involved 152 parents living in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul area, USA, with a child aged 3 to 6 years. 56% of children were boys. Parents who requested specific resources for preexisting mental health concerns were excluded.

For parents who reported their education ($n = 92$), 12 % (11) had no schooling experiences, 43% (40) graduated from high school, 13% (14) had associate degrees, and 32% (29) had bachelor's degrees or above.

For parents who reported their annual income ($n = 42$), 55% (23) were below US\$25,000 annual income, 36% (15) were between US\$25,000 and US\$50,000, and 10 % (4) were above US\$50,000. For parents who reported their relationship status ($n = 96$), 63% (60) identified as being a single parent.

Study design

In this pre–post study, 133 parents were recruited to receive the IY Attentive Parenting Program over a three-year period between September 2013 and October 2016.

Measurement

Assessments took place at baseline and directly after the intervention finished, between six and nine weeks after baseline.

- **Parent report** measures included the Parenting Stress Index-Short Form, and the 25-item Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.

Study retention

Post-intervention

94 families participated in post-intervention assessment, representing 62% of the sample (although retention was higher for some measures).

Parents who did not fill out the post-treatment survey ($n = 58$) were compared with those who did ($n = 94$) on parent and child gender, race, PSI, and SDQ subscale scores. Parents who did not fill out the post-treatment surveys endorsed higher conduct problems scores in the pre-treatment survey, compared with those who did.

Results

Data-analytic plan

T-tests were used to compare pre- and post-intervention scores for each measure.

For missing data at baseline (2.7%-4%, depending on the measure), full information maximum likelihood estimation (FIML) was used, assuming missing at random. For missing data at post-intervention (32%-39%, depending on the measure), listwise deletion was used.



Findings

The study identified a statistically significant positive impact on a number of child outcomes, including reduced conduct problems, and improved prosocial behaviour.

There was no change in parenting stress over the intervention.

Limitations

The conclusions which can be drawn from this study are limited by the pre–post design (it is lacking a comparison group).

Study 1: Outcomes table

Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Child outcomes					
Emotional problems	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	Not reported	No	94	Post-intervention
Conduct problems	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	D = 0.23	Yes	94	Post-intervention
Hyperactivity	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	Not reported	No	94	Post-intervention
Peer problems	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	Not reported	No	94	Post-intervention
Prosocial behaviours	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	D = 0.23	Yes	94	Post-intervention
Parent outcomes					



Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Parenting stress	Parenting Stress Index – Short Form	Not reported	No	94	Post-intervention

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.

Fields, J., Harty, C. & Desjardins, C. D. (2016) *An evaluation of the cultural contextualization of the Incredible Years parenting program for African American and Hmong cultural groups*. Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement.

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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.