

Last reviewed: February 2019

Intervention website: <https://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk/what-we-do/programmes-for-schools/zippys-friends/>

GUIDEBOOK INTERVENTION INFORMATION SHEET

Zippy’s Friends

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	Zippy’s Friends is a universal school-based intervention for children between the ages of 5 and 7 years old. The intervention is designed to promote the mental health and emotional wellbeing of all young children by increasing their repertoire of coping skills and by stimulating varied and flexible ways of coping with problems in day-to-day life. Zippy’s friends is 24 sessions each 45 minutes long, split into six modules, each covering a different theme. Children develop their own positive strategies to deal with problems through engaging activities: listening to stories, discussion, games, role-play, and drawing.
Evidence rating	2+
Cost rating	1
Child outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting children’s mental health and wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved social and emotional development - Improved school bond - Reduced bullying victimisation. • Enhancing school achievement and employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher academic achievement - Improved self-regulatory behaviour. • Preventing crime, violence and antisocial behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved behaviour.
Child age (population characteristic)	6 to 8 years old

Foundations Guidebook – Intervention information sheet

Visit the Foundations Guidebook | www.foundations.org.uk/guidebook

Intervention summary	
Level of need (population characteristic)	Universal
Race and ethnicities (population characteristic)	White
Type (model characteristic)	Group
Setting (model characteristic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary school• Children’s centre or early years setting.
Workforce (model characteristic)	Teacher
UK available?	Yes
UK tested?	Yes

Model description

Zippy’s Friends is a universal school-based group intervention targeting child between 5 to 7 years of age. The intervention is designed to promote the mental health and emotional wellbeing of all young children through developing children’s coping skills. Children develop their own positive strategies to deal with problems through engaging activities: listening to stories, discussion, games, role-play, and drawing. Zippy’s friends is a 24-week course, split into six modules (one module is made up of four sessions, each 45 minutes). Each module covers a different theme, including:

1. Feelings
2. Communication
3. Making and breaking relationships
4. Bullying and conflict
5. Change and loss
6. Moving forward.

Foundations Guidebook – Intervention information sheet

Visit the Foundations Guidebook | www.foundations.org.uk/guidebook

Zippy’s Friends is based on six stories about three cartoon characters, their families, and friends, and the pet stick insect Zippy.

At the beginning of each module, teachers will read out a story about Zippy and his friends and pause at several points to ask the children questions about how the characters are feeling. Selected extracts are read in each of the following sessions.

Children then engage in a variety of games, activities, role playing, and discussion to further reflect on what has been learned.

Over the course of 24 weekly lessons, children explore themes related to emotions, communication, relations, and conflict resolution through the many day-to-day problems, sorrows, and joys experienced by Zippy and his friends.

There is an additional parenting component to the intervention. Parents can attend information sessions and receive a guide to the intervention which allows them to be aware of what the intervention is covering, and what their children are learning. Home activities are sent home after each module.

Target population

Age of child	5 to 7 years old
Target population	Children aged 5 to 7 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
Children with a wider range of coping mechanisms have fewer mental health problems, and increased academic attainment.	All children and adults face difficulties and stressful situations, the impact of which are exacerbated without effective coping mechanisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young children need to learn varied coping mechanisms to be able to choose what to apply to situations as they grow and develop • School-based mental health interventions can support children’s social and emotional functioning and attainment. 	The intervention teaches children to come up with different ways of dealing with various situations and to judge for themselves what may happen if they cope in certain ways.	<p>Enhanced coping skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can think of a larger number of coping skills and are better equipped to use them more often in ‘real’ daily situations. • Increase in use of coping strategies such as asking for and accepting help. • Reduced stress symptoms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved relationships and experiences • Increased child wellbeing • Increased child social skills • Improved school environment – reductions in bullying • Improved behaviours to support educational attainment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved mental health and wellbeing in adolescence and adulthood • Improved academic attainment.



Implementation requirements

Who is eligible?	Children aged 5 to 7 years old.
How is it delivered?	Zippy’s Friends is delivered in 24 sessions of 45 to 60 minutes’ duration each by one teacher practitioner, to groups of children.
What happens during the intervention?	<p>Zippy’s Friends is based on six stories about three cartoon characters, their families, and friends, and the pet stick insect Zippy.</p> <p>At the beginning of each module, teachers will read out a story about Zippy and his friends and pause at several points to ask the children questions about how the characters are feeling. Selected extracts are read in each of the following sessions.</p> <p>Children then engage in a variety of games, activities, role playing, and discussion to further reflect on what has been learned.</p> <p>Over the course of 24 weekly lessons, children explore themes related to emotions, communication, relations, and conflict resolution through the many day-to-day problems, sorrows, and joys experienced by Zippy and his friends.</p> <p>There is an additional parenting component to the intervention. Parents can attend information sessions and receive a guide to the intervention which allows them to be aware of what the intervention is covering, and what their children are learning. Home activities are sent home after each module.</p>
Who can deliver it?	Teacher
What are the training requirements?	The teachers have six hours of intervention training. Booster training of practitioners is not required.
How are practitioners supervised?	It is recommended that practitioners are supervised by one external supervisor with 7 to 12 hours of intervention training.
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 • Other printed material • Other online material • Fidelity monitoring • International workshop for external supervisors.
Is there a licensing requirement?	No



Implementation requirements (Cont.)

*Contact details	Contact person: Hannah Baker Organisation: Partnership for Children Email address: info@partnershipforchildren.org.uk Website/s: https://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk/what-we-do/programmes-for-schools/zippys-friends/ *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.
-------------------------	---

Evidence summary

Zippy’s Friends’ most rigorous evidence comes from three cluster RCTs which were conducted in the UK, Ireland, and Norway consistent with Foundations’ Level 2+ evidence strength threshold. The intervention has preliminary evidence of improving a child outcome, but we cannot be confident that the intervention caused the improvement.

These studies identified statistically significant positive impact on teacher reported child outcomes, including supporting children’s mental health and wellbeing, their academic skills and self-regulated learning, and class-level reductions in bullying. Children and parents also reported improvements in coping strategies.

Search and review

	Number of studies
Identified in search	12
Studies reviewed	3
Meeting the L2 threshold	3
Meeting the L3 threshold	0
Contributing to the L4 threshold	0
Ineligible	9



Individual study summary: Study 1

Study 1	
Study design	Cluster RCT
Country	Ireland
Sample characteristics	766 children (aged 7 to 8 years old) across 52 classes, in 44 disadvantaged schools
Race, ethnicities, and nationalities	Not reported
Population risk factors	Disadvantaged schools (disadvantaged status by the Department of Education and Skills)
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-intervention • Post-intervention • 12-month follow-up.
Child outcomes	Improved emotional literacy, including improved self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and social skills (teacher report)
Other outcomes	None
Study Rating	2+
Citation	Clarke, A. M., Bunting, B. & Barry, M. M. (2014) Evaluating the implementation of a school-based emotional well-being intervention: A cluster randomized controlled trial of Zippy’s Friends for children in disadvantaged primary schools. <i>Health Education Research</i> . 29 (5), 786–798.

Brief summary

Population characteristics

This cluster randomised controlled trial involved 766 children living in Ireland, with a child aged 7 to 8 years old from disadvantaged schools (mean age = 7 years 3 months). 48% were boys. 67% studied in a school located in a rural area. To qualify for selection schools had to be mixed gender school and assigned the designated disadvantaged status by the Department of Education and Skills and classes had to contain 10 or more children.



Study design

The study utilised a cluster randomised controlled trial design. Schools were randomly assigned to either one of three conditions:

1. 15 schools, 18 classes, 267 children were randomly assigned to intervention group 1 – intervention with high fidelity
2. 15 schools, 18 classes, 277 children were randomly assigned to intervention group 2 – intervention with no requirement to implement with fidelity
3. 14 schools, 18 classes, 222 children were randomly assigned to a control.

The control group children received the mandatory Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum. No significant differences were found for gender, mean age of child, school size, or location.

Measurement

Assessment took place at pre-intervention, post-intervention, and at 12-month follow-up.

- **Teacher report** measures included the Emotional Literacy Checklist and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.

Study retention

Pre-intervention

95.3% (730) children were included in pre-intervention assessments, representing 100% (267) of intervention group 1, 90.6% (251) of intervention group 2, and 95.5% (212) of control group.

Post-intervention

83% (636) children were included in post-intervention assessments, representing 82% (219) of intervention group 1, 82.3% (228) of intervention group 2 and 85.1% (189) of control group.

12-month follow-up

79.9% (612) children were included in 12-month follow-up assessments, representing 76.8% (205) of intervention group 1, 80.1% (222) of intervention group 2 and 83.3% (185) of control group.

Results

Data-analytic strategy

Path analyses using structural equation modelling were conducted controlling for the nested data structure (pupils nested in classes). The analyses considered individual pupil-level effects over time. The models included analyses of covariance to adjust for imbalances at baseline between intervention and control groups. As no significant differences in intervention fidelity was found between intervention groups the study compared a combined intervention group against control group. Models assessed the direct effects of the intervention at post-intervention and indirect effects at 12-month follow-up. 719 children were included in analyses.



Findings

The study found significant positive outcomes for children’s emotional literacy at post-intervention and at 12-month follow-up. Findings at post-test and 12-month follow-up indicated significant direct effects and indirect effects on the subscales of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and social skills. There were no significant findings for the subscale of empathy at either timepoint.

On the SDQ findings at post-test and 12-month follow-up indicated no significant effects on the subscales of emotional symptoms; hyperactivity; peer relationship problems; or prosocial behaviour. With regards to the subscale of conduct problems, children in the control group decreased significantly in comparison to the treatment group at post-intervention but this effect was not maintained at the 12-month follow-up.

Study 1: Outcomes table

Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Child outcomes					
Self-awareness	Emotional Literacy Checklist Teacher Report	Std Est =0.351	Yes	719	Post-intervention
Self-awareness	Emotional Literacy Checklist Teacher Report	Std Est = 0.142	Yes	719	12-month follow-up
Self-regulation	Emotional Literacy Checklist Teacher Report	Std Est = 0.122	Yes	719	Post-intervention
Self-regulation	Emotional Literacy Checklist Teacher Report	Std Est = 0.059	Yes	719	12-month follow-up
Motivation	Emotional Literacy Checklist Teacher Report	Std Est = 0.133	Yes	719	Post-intervention



Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Motivation	Emotional Literacy Checklist Teacher Report	Std Est = 0.054	Yes	719	12-month follow-up
Empathy	Emotional Literacy Checklist Teacher Report	Std Est = 0.065	No	719	Post-intervention
Empathy	Emotional Literacy Checklist Teacher Report	Std Est = 0.028	No	719	12-month follow-up
Social Skills	Emotional Literacy Checklist Teacher Report	Std Est = 0.124	Yes	719	Post-intervention
Social Skills	Emotional Literacy Checklist Teacher Report	Std Est = 0.05	Yes	719	12-month follow-up
Emotional symptoms	SDQ Teacher report	Std Est = -0.109	No	719	Post-intervention
Emotional symptoms	SDQ Teacher report	Std Est = -0.061	No	719	12-month follow-up
Hyperactivity	SDQ Teacher report	Std Est = -0.037	No	719	Post-intervention
Hyperactivity	SDQ Teacher report	Std Est = -0.06	No	719	12-month follow-up



Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Conduct problems	SDQ Teacher report	Std Est = - 0.141	Yes*	719	Post-intervention
Conduct problems	SDQ Teacher report	Std Est = - 0.078	No	719	12-month follow-up
Peer relationship problems	SDQ Teacher report	Std Est = - 0.037	No	719	Post-intervention
Peer relationship problems	SDQ Teacher report	Std Est = - 0.035	No	719	12-month follow-up
Prosocial behaviour	SDQ Teacher report	Std Est = 0.076	No	719	Post-intervention
Prosocial behaviour	SDQ Teacher report	Std Est = 0.075	No	719	12-month follow-up

*Children in the control group improved in comparison to the treatment group.

Individual study summary: Study 2

Study 2	
Study design	Cluster RCT
Country	Norway
Sample characteristics	1,483 children (aged 7 to 8 years old) from 91 2nd-Grade classes in 35 schools



Study 2	
Race, ethnicities, and nationalities	97% Caucasian
Population risk factors	None reported
Timing	Pre-intervention and post-intervention
Child outcomes	<p><i>Post-intervention</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced impact of the child’s difficulties on their functioning and lives of their carers and family (teacher report) • Reduction in bullying at class level (teacher report) • Improved social integration at class level (teacher report) • Improved academic skills at class level (teacher report).
Other outcomes	None
Study Rating	2+
Citations	<p>Study 2a: Holen, S. et al. (2012) The effectiveness of a universal school-based intervention on coping and mental health: A randomised, controlled study of Zippy’s Friends. <i>Educational Psychology</i>. 32 (5), 657–677.</p> <p>Study 2b: Holen, S. et al. (2012) Implementing a universal stress management program for young school children: Are there classroom climate or academic effects? <i>Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research</i>. 57 (4), 420–444.</p>

Brief summary

Population characteristics

The study involved a matched-pair cluster randomised controlled trial of 1,483 children aged 7 to 8 years old, living in three regions of Norway (Trondheim, Bodø, and Østfold). Children were from 91 2nd Grade classes within 35 schools. Average age of the child was 7.3 years, 49.3% of children were female and 75.9% of the children lived with both parents.

82.5% of children’s parents were born in Norway. 97% of participants were Caucasian. 3% of children had at least one parent who was born in Africa or Asia.



Study design

The 35 schools were matched in pairs and randomly assigned to the control or intervention group. The schools were matched in pairs using available variables considered important for the outcome:

- School socioeconomic profile (provided by the local authorities)
- Percentage of special teaching
- Ethnic minority backgrounds (data on relevant matching variables were provided by Norwegian School Statistics).

18 schools (745 children from 47 classes) were assigned to the intervention group, while 17 schools (738 children from 44 classes) were assigned to the control group. Control schools received no instruction from the project and therefore continued business as usual.

Measurement

Assessments took place at pre-intervention and post-intervention.

- **Child report** measures included Norwegian (Bokmål) version of the Kidcope Questionnaire (Spirito et al. 1988) young child version; as well as an adapted version of the Social Integration, Classroom Climate and Self-concept of School Readiness questionnaire (SIKS: Rauer & Schuck, 2003) from the Questionnaires on emotional and social experiences of primary school children, 1st and 2nd Grades (Fragebogen zur Erfassung emotionaler und sozialer Schulerfahrungen von Grundschulkindern erster und zweiter Klassen, FEES 1–2 grades).
- **Parent report** measures included Norwegian (Bokmål) version of the adapted Kidcope Questionnaire (Spirito et al. 1988) and the extended Norwegian version of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ: Goodman, 1999).
- **Teacher report** measures included the extended Norwegian version of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and an adapted version of the SIKS from FEES 1-2 (Teacher version).



Study retention

Of the 1,483 children included in the study, 745 were allocated to the intervention and 738 to the control group.

Pre-intervention

89.3% (1,324) children participated at pre-intervention – representing 92.1% (686) of the intervention group and 86.4% (638) of the control group.

Post-intervention

85.7% (1,271) children participated at post-intervention – representing 85.9% (640) of the intervention group and 85.5% (631) of the control group.

Results

Data-analytic strategy

Structural equation models assessed for intervention effect at post-intervention using latent variables. The hierarchical structure of the data was included in the models (individual and class levels). The analyses investigated whether the intervention had any effects on coping or mental health outcomes as reported by multiple informants. Subgroup effects were assessed for child sex (male/female) and socioeconomic status (high/low – based on parent education level).

Missing data were identified and estimated using limited information weighted least square estimations. Effect sizes are reported using standardised values, interpreted similarly to Cohen's *d*.

Findings

Study 2a identified a significant positive child outcome on impact score for teacher's reports on the SDQ. The impact score is a continuous measure based on whether the respondent thought the child had any problems, and ratings of the chronicity, distress, social impairment, and burden to others.

No significant differences were evident for the intervention and control groups in parent reports on the SDQ.

For the Kidcope measures, statistically significant positive outcomes were indicated for the intervention group. Children reported improved oppositional behaviour and parents reported increased active strategies.

Subgroup analyses suggested that coping was improved in girls and children from the low socioeconomic subgroup, whereas the impact of mental health difficulties was reduced in boys.

On the other hand, study 2b discovered a statistically significant reduction in bullying, improved social climate, improved social integration, and improved academic skills at a class level. Children's assessments of social climate, social integration, or academic skills did not indicate any significant findings at class level.

No subgroup differences were found.



Study 2: Outcomes table

Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Child outcomes					
Active /Emotional Regulation	Latent variable construct of Kidcope Child report	d= 0.084	No	1,328	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Withdrawal	Latent variable construct of Kidcope Child report	d= - 0.010	No	1,328	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Oppositional	Latent variable construct of Kidcope Child report	d= - 0.380	Yes	1,328	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Emotional regulation	Latent variable construct of Kidcope Parent report	d=-0.058	No	1,300	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Active	Latent variable construct of Kidcope Parent report	d= -0.186	Yes	1,300	Post-intervention (Study 2a)



Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Withdrawal /oppositional	Latent variable construct of Kidcope Parent report	d=0.144	No	1,300	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Prosocial behaviour	SDQ Parent report	d=-0.031	No	1,301	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Hyperactivity/inattention	SDQ Parent report	d=-0.032	No	1,301	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Emotional Symptoms	SDQ Parent report	d=0.025	No	1,301	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Conduct Problems	SDQ Parent report	d=-0.024	No	1,301	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Peer Relationship Problems	SDQ Parent report	d=-0.040	No	1,301	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Impact score	SDQ Parent report	d=-0.034	No	1,155	Post-intervention (Study 2a)



Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Prosocial behaviour	SDQ Teacher report	d=0.176	No	1,322	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Hyperactivity/inattention	SDQ Teacher report	d=-0.098	No	1,322	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Emotional Symptoms	SDQ Teacher report	d=0.117	No	1,322	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Conduct Problems	SDQ Teacher report	d=-0.057	No	1,322	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Peer Relationship Problems	SDQ Teacher report	d=-0.047	No	1,322	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Impact score	SDQ Teacher report	d=-0.146	Yes	1,211	Post-intervention (Study 2a)
Social integration Class level	SIKS Child report	d=-0.019	No	1,328	Post-intervention (Study 2b)
Academic skills Class level	SIKS Child report	d=-0.081	No	1,328	Post-intervention (Study 2b)



Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Class climate Class level	SIKS Child report	d=0.058	No	1,328	Post-intervention (Study 2b)
Social integration Class level	SIKS Teacher report	d=0.325	Yes	1,322	Post-intervention (Study 2b)
Academic skills Class level	SIKS Teacher report	d=0.415	Yes	1,322	Post-intervention (Study 2b)
Social climate Class level	SIKS Teacher report	d= 0.614	Yes	1,322	Post-intervention (Study 2b)
Bullying Class level	SIKS Teacher report	d= 0.550	Yes	1,322	Post-intervention (Study 2b)

Individual study summary: Study 3

Study 3	
Study design	Cluster RCT
Country	United Kingdom
Sample characteristics	3,904 children between the ages of 6 and 7
Race, ethnicities, and nationalities	Not reported



Study 3	
Population risk factors	Some participants were eligible for free school meals (17% in the intervention group, 13% in the control group), and some spoke English as an additional language (21% in the intervention group, 16% in control)
Timing	Pre-intervention and post-intervention
Child outcomes	Improved self-regulated learning
Other outcomes	None
Study Rating	2+
Citation	Sloan, S., Gildea, A., Miller, S. & Thurston, A. (2018) <i>Zippy's Friends: Evaluation report and executive summary</i> . Queens University Belfast.

Brief summary

Population characteristics

This study involved 3,904 children aged 6 to 7 years old, living in the United Kingdom. They were recruited from 83 state-funded schools from five English local authorities (Nottingham, Lincolnshire, Dudley, Croydon, and Cheshire).

50% (1,029) of children in the intervention group were male, 17% (350) were eligible for free school meals (FSM) and 21% (433) spoke English as an additional language. 52% (964) of children in the control group were male, 13% (245) were eligible for FSM and 16% (289) spoke English as an additional language.

Study design

The study adopted a cluster randomised controlled trial design. The unit of randomisation was the school. 83 schools, 3,904 children were randomly assigned to the intervention and control: 42 schools and 2,056 children to the intervention group and 41 schools and 1,848 children to the control group. A computer assisted minimisation method of allocation randomised schools into the intervention or control to create balance on pre specified characteristics – school-level attainment and local authority.

Baseline differences between intervention and control group were reported for school and pupil characteristics (size of school, FSM, EAL, and pupils with SEN or EHC plans) and pre-intervention scores of outcomes although none of these differences reached statistical significance. Imbalance of outcomes at baseline was adjusted for in the analysis.



The control group were not instructed during the study although they received access to the intervention after post-intervention data collection.

Measurement

Assessments took place at pre-intervention and post-intervention.

Pre-intervention only

- **Child report** measures included the Hodder Oral Reading Test (HORT; Vincent & Crumpler, 2006).
- **Teacher report** measures included the Emotional Literacy Checklist – self-regulation subscale (Faupel, 2003; GL Assessment) and the social skills subscale of the Social Skills Information System rating scale (SSIS; Gresham & Elliott, 2008).

Post-intervention only

- **Child report** measures included the Hodder Group Reading Test (HGRT; Vincent & Crumpler, 2007), the Children’s Anger Management Scale (CAMS; Zeman et al., 2002), and the social skills subscale of the Social Skills Information System rating scale (SSIS; Gresham & Elliott, 2008).

Pre- and post-intervention

- **Teacher report** measures included the attention/persistence and emotional control subscales of the Learning Behaviour Scale (McDermott et al., 2001).

Study retention

Post-intervention

For reading attainment attrition was measured at 15.2%, with 3,312 children and 82 schools included in the analysis. For the intervention group attrition was 15.6% (321), with 1,735 children and 42 schools included in the analysis. For the control group attrition was 14.7% (271), with 1,577 children, 40 schools included in the analysis. There was no evidence of differential attrition between the intervention and control for reading attainment.

For emotional self-regulation overall attrition was 28%, with 2,810 children 82 schools included in the analysis. For the intervention group attrition was 27.2% (559), with 1,497 children, 42 schools included in the analysis. For the control group attrition was 29% (535) attrition, with 1,313 children, 40 schools included in the analysis.

For self-regulated learning, the intervention group attrition was 21.2% (435), with 1,621 children include the analysis. For the control group attrition was 18.6% (382) attrition, with 1,466 children

For social skills, the intervention group attrition was 45.7% (940), with 1,116 children included in the analysis. For the control group attrition was 43.8% (809) attrition, with 1,039 children included in the analysis.



Results

Data-analytic strategy

The main effects of the intervention were assessed using multilevel modelling to account for the clustered nature of the data. Adjustments were made for baseline imbalance and intent-to-treat was used for the analyses. Models were fitted for post-intervention scores including intervention status and standardised pre-intervention scores as covariates. Effect sizes are reported as Hedges g . Subgroup analysis was conducted to assess for differential outcomes for children ever eligible for FSM. Imputations adjusted for missing data.

Findings

This study identified statistically significant positive impact on a teacher-reported child outcome, self-regulated learning. No other significant differences were found between control and intervention group in the outcomes. There was no evidence to suggest an effect of the intervention on the primary outcomes of reading attainment or emotional self-regulation or the secondary outcome of social skills. There was no evidence of differential effects for pupils ever eligible for free school meals (FSM).

Limitations

The conclusions that can be drawn from this study are limited by methodological issues pertaining to a lack of clarity around whether the treatment and control group have continued to be equivalent on baseline characteristics after attrition, and measurement of self-regulated learning (teacher report) not being blind to group assignment, hence why a higher rating is not achieved.

Study 3: Outcomes table

Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Child outcomes					
Reading attainment	Hodder Group Reading Test	$g = -0.02$	No	3,312	Post-intervention
Emotional self-regulation	Children's Anger Management Scale	$g = -0.02$	No	2,810	Post-intervention
Self-regulated learning	Learning Behaviour Scale	$g = 0.08$	Yes	3,087	Post-intervention



Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Social skills	Social skills information System	$g=-0.07$	No	2,155	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.

Clarke, A. M. (2011) *An evaluation of Zippy’s Friends, an emotional wellbeing programme for children in primary schools* (Doctoral thesis, University of Ireland, Galway).

Clarke, A. M. & Barry, M. M. (2010) *An evaluation of the Zippy’s Friends emotional wellbeing programme for primary schools in Ireland*. Health Promotion Research Centre, National University of Ireland, Galway.

Dufour, S., Denoncourt, J. & Mishara, B. L. (2011) Improving children’s adaptation: New evidence regarding the effectiveness of Zippy’s Friends, a school mental health promotion program. *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion*. 4 (3), 18–28.

Holmes, D. & Faupel, A. (2004) *Zippy’s friends: Southampton Evaluation Report year 1*. Southampton Psychology Service.

Holmes, D., & Faupel, A. (2005). *Zippy’s friends: Southampton Evaluation Report year 2*. Southampton Psychology Service

Mishara, B. L. & Ystgaard, M. (2006) Effectiveness of a mental health promotion program to improve coping skills in young children: Zippy’s Friends. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*. 21 (1), 110–123.

Monkevicienė, O., Mishara, B. L. & Dufour, S. (2006) Effects of the Zippy’s Friends Programme on children’s coping abilities during the transition from kindergarten to elementary school. *Early Childhood Education Journal*. 34 (1), 53–60.

Rodker, J. D. (2013). *Promoting social-emotional development of children during kindergarten: A Zippy’s Friends program evaluation*. Pace University

–

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.