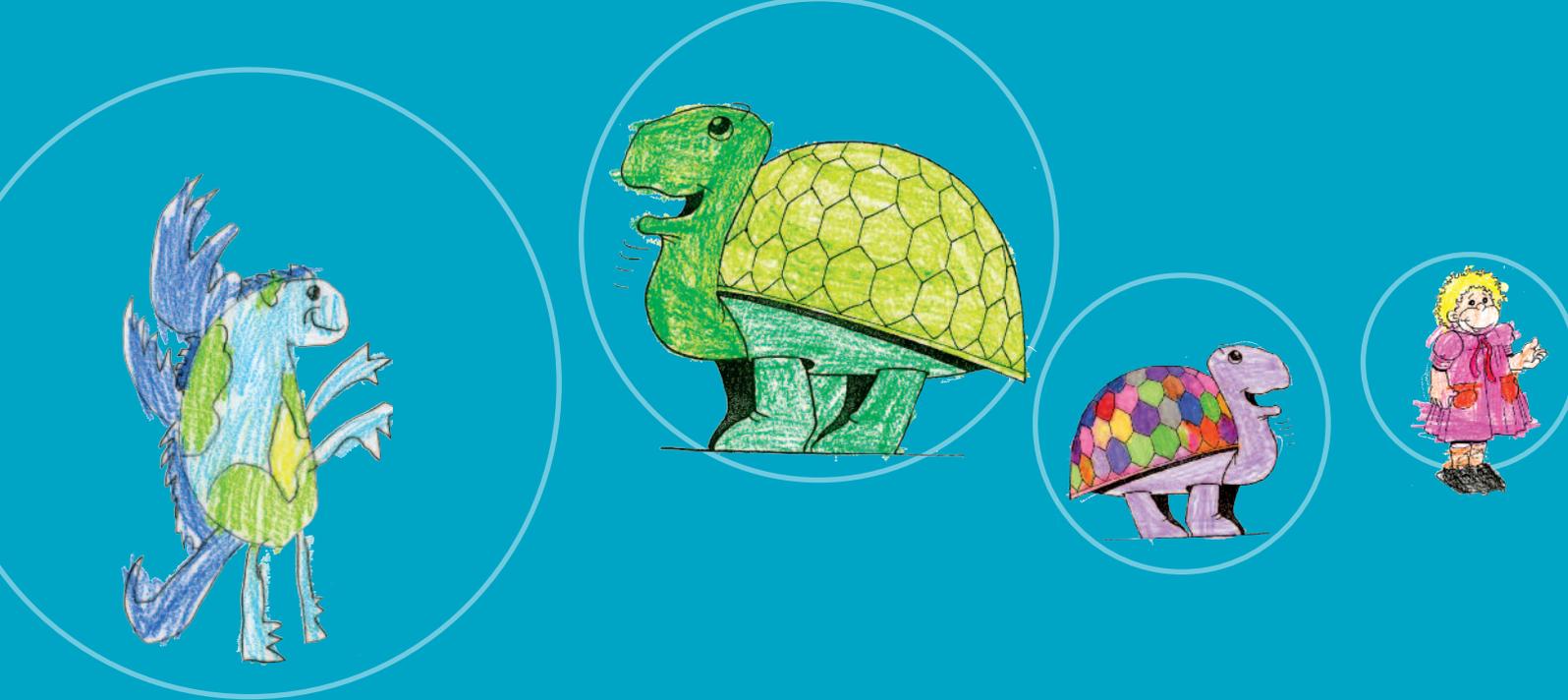


Making a Difference

An Independent Evaluation of the Incredible Years Programme in Pre-Schools in Galway City

SUMMARY REPORT



This summary report has been extracted from
***'Making a Difference - An Independent Evaluation
of the Incredible Years Programme in Pre-Schools
in Galway City'***

Written by

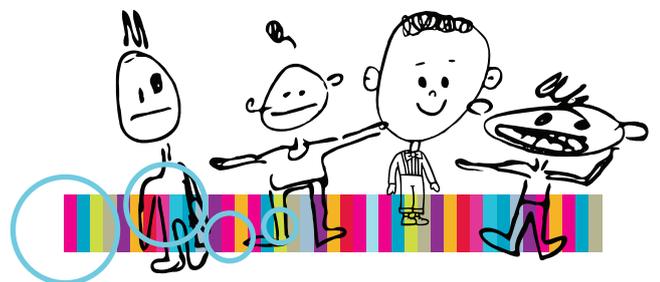
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2011

Drawings provided by Children from Holy Trinity N.S., Mervue
and St. Michael's Boys N.S., Mervue.

The full report is available to download at
www.gcp.ie

Contents

Foreword	2
Introduction	3
Overview of the Incredible Years Programme	5
Overview of the Incredible Years Programme in Galway City	6
Incredible Years Programme in Galway City Pre-Schools	7
Study Methodology	10
Study Findings	11
Analysis of Findings	17
Recommendations	20





Foreword

On behalf of St. Augustine's Conference of St. Vincent de Paul, I welcome the publication of this independent evaluation of the Incredible Years Programme in Pre-Schools in Galway City. St. Augustine's Conference was set up to manage the disbursement of monies from the legacy of the late Maureen O'Connell, which she had specifically requested to be used to help alleviate poverty and the causes of poverty in Galway City and County. Education has been universally recognised as one of the most powerful tools in breaking the cycle of poverty and deprivation and research has shown clearly that the earliest possible intervention, particularly, if it involves parents and teachers, as well as children, is most effective.

Galway City Partnership has had a record of trying to combat educational disadvantage and for this reason St. Augustine's Conference was happy to provide substantial funding to help GCP, in conjunction with the Galway City and County Child Care Committee, to develop the IYP in six Galway City pre-schools and subsequently for its evaluation by the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway. It is clear from the evaluation of the IYP that it certainly appears to have been very beneficial for the children, in that, their social competencies improved, in some cases very significantly, as a result. There were also very positive outcomes for their parents, their teachers and pre-school workers. St. Augustine's Conference is very happy to have been involved in this initiative and would like to express the hope that it will lead to the Government recognising that money spent on evidence based pre-school projects such as this will not only improve the life chances of disadvantaged children but, in all probability, have major cost benefits in the longer term.

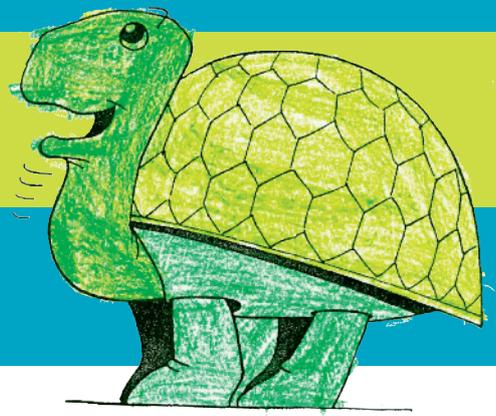
I would like to thank Seamus Morrissey and Siobhán Fox of the GCP for their hard work and sheer dedication to the programme. Thanks too, to my colleagues in St. Augustine's Conference, for having the vision to run with the project and a particular word of thanks to our Project Manager Annalisa Murphy for her unflinching support and her expertise. Finally I would like to compliment Dr. Michelle Millar for her professionalism in completing this evaluation and report.



Michael McCann
St. Augustine's Conference



“Creating a foundation of emotional well-being from an early age allows children to use their stored experiences, skills and knowledge to make informed decisions as they journey through life”



Introduction

Galway City Partnership commissioned the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway to complete an Independent Evaluation of the development of the Incredible Years Programme (IYP) in Galway City with a particular focus on the evaluation of the implementation and outcomes of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme. This report summarises the full report produced by the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway.



The summary report is presented under the following headings:

- Overview of the Incredible Years Programme
- Overview of the Incredible Years Programme in Galway City
- Incredible Years Programme in Galway City Pre-Schools
- Study Methodology
- Study Findings
- Analysis of Findings
- Recommendations





“The children’s programmes strengthen children’s social, emotional and academic competencies such as understanding and communicating feelings, using effective problem solving strategies, managing anger, practising friendship and conversational skills, as well as appropriate classroom behaviours”

Overview of the Incredible Years Programme

The IYP is designed to promote social and emotional competencies in children aged 3-10 years. The IYP, which was developed in the University of Washington, Seattle by Professor Carolyn Webster-Stratton, contains three separate training programmes for parents, teachers and children. The IYP three programmes are:

Children's Programmes: The children's programmes strengthen children's social, emotional and academic competencies such as understanding and communicating feelings, using effective problem solving strategies, managing anger, practising friendship and conversational skills, as well as appropriate classroom behaviours. There are two IYP programmes being implemented in Galway City which support children:

- *Small Group Dina Programme* - This programme works with 6 children between the ages of 5 and 8. The children are withdrawn from the mainstream classroom for 2 hours per week for up to 20 weeks.
- *Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme* - This curriculum is delivered 2-3 times a week by pre-school workers in the classroom. It consists of 20-30 minute circle time lessons, followed by small group practice activities and promotion of skills throughout the school day.

Parent Programme: The IYP parent training intervention is a series of inputs focused on strengthening parenting competencies (relationship building, positive discipline, confidence and calmness) and fostering parents' involvement in children's school and life experiences in order to promote children's academic, social and emotional competencies and reduce conduct problems. The basic parent programme is 12 sessions. There is also a 4 session School Readiness Programme.

Teacher Classroom Management Programme: The teacher programme focuses on evidence-based practices and strategies that have been shown to reduce problem behaviour in the classroom through strengthening children's social, emotional and academic competencies. It is delivered over five days, ideally one month apart. Between sessions, teachers undertake classroom assignments and receive verbal feedback on their efforts. The teacher programme is linked to the IY parent and child programmes, all of which promote positive and effective strategies to improve children's social competencies at school and home.





Overview of the Incredible Years Programme in Galway City

The IYP was introduced to Galway City through Galway City Partnership (GCP) in 2005. Galway City Partnership tackles disadvantage and social exclusion, with a particular focus on the long term unemployed. From the perspective of GCP their involvement in the IYP stemmed from two primary motivations, the need to be involved in programmes which would allow robust evaluation and the need to tackle early school leaving in Galway City.



In 2006, the Small Group Dina and Parent Programmes elements of IYP began being implemented in Galway City. The schools involved were all part of the Department of Education and Skills Scheme - Delivering Equality of Opportunities in School (DEIS). As of November 2011, there have been 12 Small Group Dina Programmes delivered involving 72 children and 12 Parent Programmes have been delivered in numerous locations across Galway City involving 217 parents.

In 2007, the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme was initiated and led to six pre-schools in Galway City becoming involved. In 2009, feedback from schools and pre-schools involved in the IYP encouraged Galway City Partnership to focus attention on implementing a Classroom Based/Whole School Approach in Holy Trinity School, Mervue. In 2010, Galway City Partnership began the delivery of the Incredible Years Programme School Readiness Programme and the Teacher Classroom Management Programme.

“The Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) programme curriculum is designed to be offered to all the students in the classroom”

The Incredible Years Programme in Galway City Pre-Schools

In 2007, St. Augustine’s Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Galway City released funding from the Maureen O’Connell Fund for educational work with young children. One of the main aims of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is to deal with the causes of poverty as well as alleviating poverty itself. The Conference was most interested in funding work with pre-school children in Galway City. Galway City Partnership saw this as an opportunity to expand their activities and decided to add a pre-school programme to its IYP activities, which was at the time the first of its kind in Ireland and the UK.

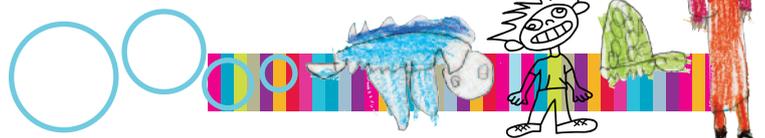
Introduction to Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme

The *Dina Dinosaur’s Social Skills Problem Solving in the Classroom Programme*, referred to within this evaluation as the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme, was developed by Carolyn Webster-Stratton in 2004. This programme is a comprehensive video and theme based social skills and problem solving course for use by teachers in Junior classes in Primary Schools and pre-schools workers. The purpose of the curriculum is to teach children positive social skills, conflict and anger management skills, emotional literacy, appropriate school behaviours, reading, writing and communication skills in order to promote their positive self-esteem and general social, emotional, and academic competence.

The Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) programme curriculum is designed to be offered to all the students in the classroom. Classroom wide interventions also provide the opportunity for more pro social children to model appropriate social skills for less socially competent children and provides the classroom with a common vocabulary and problem solving steps to use in resolving everyday conflicts. Thus, social competence is strengthened for the low risk as well as the aggressive children and the classroom environment generally fosters appropriate skills on an on-going basis.

The pre-schools implementing the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme in Galway City use the following evidence based classroom management strategies:

- High levels of praise and encouragement: Labelling and specific praise for positive behaviours,
- Incentives and rewards: Tangible rewards such as stickers, special rewards and celebrations give children concrete evidence of their progress,
- Predictable rules and schedules: ‘Show me five’ and Visual Timetables,
- Effective limit setting and developmentally appropriate discipline systems.



Delivery of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme

The Wally, Molly, Dina Dinosaur and Tiny Turtle puppets help the pre-school workers to teach the concepts. The lesson of the day is introduced by the puppets and then a DVD is shown. The DVD can be used to review and reinforce concepts that have been discussed in circle time as well as to vary the presentation and redirect children's attention. They are also useful to trigger role plays and re-enactment of the scenes with appropriate behaviours. Wally and Molly can also role play everyday problem situations and the children give suggestions as to how they can solve their problem. During the circle time the pre-school workers pause frequently to praise and encourage children for their ideas and participation. In the beginning behaviours such as listening, putting up a quiet hand and paying attention are commented on but as the year progresses there is more emphasis on thinking and creative answers.

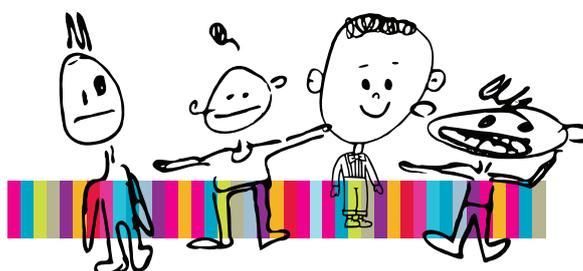
Pre-Schools Involved in the Incredible Years Programme in Galway City

The pre-school workers involved in this project have implemented this programme with fidelity which is reflected in the fact that 9 pre-school workers have received official accreditation.

Table 1 Number of Pre-School Children involved in the Incredible Years Programme in Galway City

	June 2008	June 2009	June 2010	June 2011	Total
Sunflowers Crèche and Pre-school, Westside	36	36	38	38	148
Rainbow Childcare Centre, Ballybane	30	26	31	37	127
Bohermore Community Pre-School	-	14	15	17	46
Slí Búrca Childcare, Knocknacarra	-	22	21	22	65
Teach Athais, Ballybane	-	-	24	-	24
Presentation Pre-School, Newcastle	-	-	19	15	34
Total	-	-	-	-	444

The Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme is being delivered in six pre-schools in Galway City – Sunflowers Crèche and Pre-school Westside, Rainbow Childcare Centre Ballybane, Bohermore Community Pre-School, Slí Burca Childcare Knocknacarra, Teach Athais Ballybane and Presentation Pre-School Newcastle. As outlined in Table One, since June 2008 a total of 444 children have completed the programme.





“In relation to child social competence and conduct disorder problems at home, there was an improvement in the children’s social competence and a decrease in their conduct problems.”



Study Methodology

The methodology of the study focused on both the process and the outcomes.

Process Study

The aim of the process study was to evaluate the initial experience of the establishment and early implementation of the Incredible Years Programme in the context of Galway City Partnership's Local Community Development Programme (LCDP). The process study focuses on the implementation of the programme from 2005 to 2011. Twenty-nine stakeholder interviews were carried out in order to ascertain the views of those involved in the implementation of the IYP in Galway City. This included staff or members of Galway City Partnership, Pre-Schools participating in the IYP, St. Augustine's Conference, Galway City East School Completion Programme, National Education Psychological Service (NEPS), Foroige, HSE West Family Support Services, Galway City and County Childcare Committee, Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinators and School Principals. Furthermore, facilitators of the Parent Programme and the Small Group Dina Programme were interviewed. Additionally, internal documents held by Galway City Partnership including reports, correspondence and minutes of meetings were reviewed as part of this evaluation.

Outcome Study

Particular emphasis in the outcome evaluation is on the operation of the IYP in the pre-school setting, the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme and on generating learning for the partnership on the introduction of standardised evidence-based programmes in the context of the community development approach to its work. Data was collected in four pre-schools in Galway City, where Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme is being delivered:

- Time 1 (T1) September 2009 - Pre Intervention Baseline prior to school year data was collected from the parents and pre-school workers
- Time 2 (T2) Summer 2010 - Post Intervention data at the end of the pre-school year data was collected from the parents and pre-school workers
- Time 3 (T3) Summer 2011 - Follow up data towards the end of the 1st year in primary school data was collected from the parents

The data collected from the parents included:

- demographic and family risk factors
- the depression levels of the parents
- child social competence and conduct disorder problems at home
- parental competencies



“The fact that the IYP is an evidence based programme was viewed as a key reason for becoming involved in the programme”

Study Findings

The findings from the study are presented under the following headings: Process Study Findings and Outcome Study Findings.

Process Study Findings

The strengths identified in relation to the work of Galway City Partnership included; their partnership approach, the expansion of their activities to date, the calibre of the facilitators and the expansive effect the programme is having in the wider community. Stakeholders believe that the programme works and that in itself is regarded as one of the core strengths. The fact that the IYP is an **evidence based programme** was viewed as a key reason for becoming involved in the programme. The strengths identified included the fact that the IYP is evidence based, the accreditation process for facilitators, the nature of the skills taught and learned, the structure of the programme, the inclusion of the home, improved relationships, the lifelong benefits and the fun element of the IYP.



In relation to the **Small Group Dina (Primary School Based) Programme**, the strengths identified by the stakeholders include the positive and enjoyable experience for the children as they engage with the puppets and the programme. For those children with behavioural difficulties and low self-esteem Small Group Dina brings a better understanding to the children of how they should behave in school. The interaction of the children with one another has also improved in relation to problem solving and turn taking. Primary school teachers also spoke of the expansive effect the IYP can have on families. The weaknesses identified include the fact that the Department of Education





and Skills has not adopted the IYP approach nationally. Also, not all of the teachers in the schools involved are trained in the IYP. Consequently, children may be exposed to one set of practices and behaviours in Dina School and another set in the classroom. For facilitators the programme can be challenging initially as it is prescriptive and the use of the puppets in the children's programmes is a new departure for most and the filming of the sessions can take time to adjust to.

In relation to the **Parent Programme**, the strengths identified by the stakeholders include the view that it empowers the parents to view themselves as experts of their own situation and the aim of the intervention is to improve what they are already doing as parents. The sessions are held locally as opposed to a city centre location and as such are easily accessible on foot for the target population. It is ideal for those families who do not require intensive family support but could benefit from help in parenting. A weakness identified by some of the stakeholders was the cultural differences involved in implementing an American programme, which requires high levels of fidelity, in an Irish context. Another potential weakness identified was the lack of involvement of parents in the Parent Programme particularly where there was an identifiable need for their child to be involved in the children's programme. The amount of commitment required by the parents can be challenging. Given the profile of the target group, it can be difficult for them to commit to a programme for 12 weeks. This is not however unique to the IYP Parent Programme.

In relation to the **Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme**, the strengths identified by the stakeholders include the view that IYP as an early intervention programme teaches children numerous life skills which are important in the child's progression to primary school. Pre-school staff stated that their work practices have changed for the better due to the implementation of the IYP in their pre-schools. This has occurred due to the new skills, techniques and knowledge they have acquired from implementing the IYP. The most frequently cited change has been the management of negative behaviour in the classroom coupled with the praise of positive behaviour. The inclusivity of the pre-school programme whereby all the children in the class are involved is seen as beneficial and non-stigmatising. Weaknesses of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme include the difficulty in using American materials and the risk in relation to the sustainability of the skills for the children if the programme is not extended into primary schools. However, the outcomes study observed that the skills developed by children involved in the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme remained with them throughout this evaluation.



“There were statistically significant improvements in children’s behaviour during the period of the evaluation”

Outcome Study Findings

A total of 61 pre-school children who participated in the IYP in four community pre-schools in Galway City had their behaviours tracked from the summer of 2009, the summer of 2010 and the early summer of 2011. In line with the target groups of both Galway City Partnership and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, 90% of the children were living in mild to moderate levels of disadvantage and there was evidence that the children were living in homes with a very high level of dependence on state benefits, and as such, were at a significant risk of living in poverty. Indeed, there were also very low levels of home ownership and high levels of living in rental accommodation. The profile data also shows significant levels of family stressors particularly in relation to work and money and this is a reflection of what is happening in the wider economy at present.

There were statistically significant improvements in children’s behaviour during the period of the evaluation. Across each of the measures - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), Eyberg Child Behaviour Index (ECBI) and Social Competence Scale - there was an improvement in the children’s behaviour.

Outcomes for Parents - Data Gathered from Parents

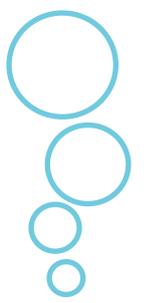
Table 2 Parenting Scale Scores for T1, T2 and T3 for all parents (n = 56)

	Mean T1	Mean T2	Mean T3	T1-T2 p	T1-T3 p	T1 to T3 Effect Size Cohen’s d**
Parenting Scale Mean	2.81	2.65	2.61	.127	.027*	.26
Laxness	2.71	2.55	2.43	.265	.006*	.24
Over reactivity	2.22	2.11	2.13	.257	.260	.15
Verbosity	4.16	3.64	3.72	.005*	.006*	.38

*Significance at $p < 0.05$

** When using t-tests, effect sizes are represented as Cohen’s d values, and the convention is that a value of .2 is small, .5 is medium and .8 is large

- There was an improvement in the parental competencies from T1 to T3 (see Table 2).
- There was a statistically significant improvement in parenting practices from T1 to T3 for all parents in relation to the overall parenting scale, laxness and verbosity (see Table 2).





Outcomes for Children - Data Gathered from Parents

Table 3 Strengths and Difficulties Measures Parent Version Norms T1, T2 and T3 for Outcome Study Children (n = 61)

	Norm	Mean T1	Mean T2	Mean T3	T1-T2 p	T1-T3 p	T1 to T3 Effect Size Cohen's d
Conduct Problems Score	1.6	3.72	1.86	1.22	.000*	.009*	1.08
Hyperactivity Problems Score	3.6	3.59	3.12	3.45	.093	.649	.05
Emotional Symptoms	1.9	2.18	1.90	1.77	.250	.139	.23
Pro Social behaviour score	8.6	8.32	8.38	9.15	.704	.000*	.54
Peer Problems Score	1.4	1.78	1.55	1.19	.241	.011*	.41
Total Difficulties Score	8.6	9.42	8.43	7.65	.098	.009*	.39

*Significance at $p < 0.05$

- At T1, 79% of the children fell in the normal range of strengths and difficulties; this rose to 90% by T3 with a corresponding decrease in the number of children in the borderline and abnormal ranges.
- At T1, the strengths and difficulties scores of the outcome study children were higher than the population norms indicating that, at T1, the study children had higher levels of difficulties and lower levels of strengths than those found in the population (see Table 3).



- By T3, the strengths and difficulties scores of the outcome study children were lower than the population norm suggesting that, at T3, the children had lower levels of difficulties and higher level of strengths than those found in the population.
- From T1 to T3 the changes in all but two of the sub-scales were statistically significant, and while there was an improvement in the Hyperactivity and Emotional Symptoms scores they were not statistically significant (see Table 3).

“The total level of child behavioural problems also decreased”

Table 4 Social Competence Changes T1, T2 and T3 (n=61)

	Mean T1	Mean T2	Mean T3	T1-T2 p	T1-T3 p	T1 to T3 Effect Size Cohen's d
Social Competence Score	28.73	29.44	30.67	.520	.065	.23
Emotional Regulation Score	12.27	12.65	13.72	.589	.041*	.30
Pro social score	16.45	16.78	16.95	.338	.582	.11

*Significance at $p < 0.05$

- The Social Competence Scale shows an increase in the number of children in the normal range from T1 to T2 to T3 and a corresponding reduction in the number of children in the borderline and clinical intervention categories.
- There was an improvement in scores on the Social Competence, Emotional Regulation and Pro-social scales from T1 to T3 with a statistically significant difference in the change in scores for Emotional Regulation between T1 and T3 (see Table 4).

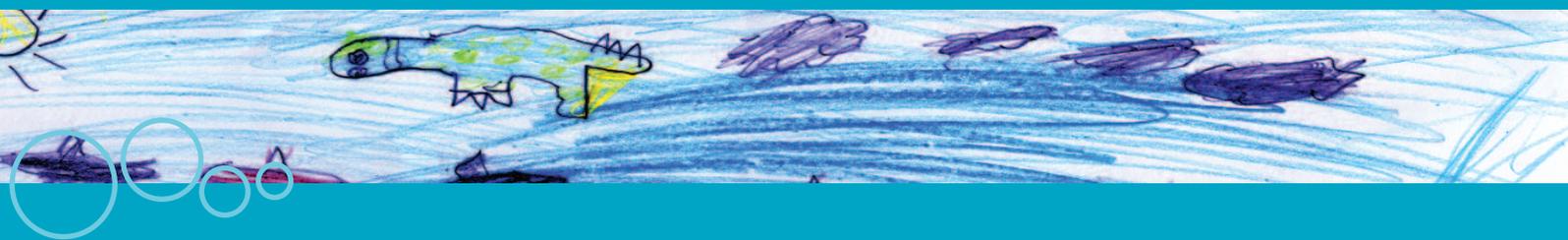
Table 5 ECBI Means T1, T2 and T3 (n = 58)

	Mean T1	Mean T2	Mean T3	T1-T2 T2 p	T1- T3 T3 p
ECBI Intensity Score	70.40	71.52	65.92	.775	.163
ECBI Problem Scale	4.28	4.14	2.89	.867	.035*

*Significance at $p < 0.05$

- The intensity of children's problems, as measured by the Eyberg Child Behaviour index, decreased from T1 to T3 (see Table 5).
- The total level of child behavioural problems also decreased from T1 to T3.





Outcomes for Children - Data Gathered from Pre-School Workers

Table 6 Strengths and Difficulties Scores Pre-School Workers A T1 and T2 for all preschool children (n = 89)

Score	Mean T1	Mean T2	DF	T	P	T1 to T3 Effect Size Cohen's d
Conduct Problems	1.61	1.50	88	.85	.398	.06
Hyperactivity Problems	4.24	4.02	88	1.36	.177	.11
Emotional Symptoms	1.91	1.59	88	2.01	.047*	.16
Pro social behaviour	6.51	7.10	88	3.01	.003*	.30
Peer Problems	1.94	.78	88	8.15	.000*	.80
Total Difficulties	9.71	7.91	88	5.30	.000*	.70

*Significance at $p < 0.05$

Table 7 Strengths and Difficulties Scores Pre-School Workers B T1 and T2 for all preschool children (n = 89)

Score	Mean T1	Mean T2	DF	T	P	T1 to T3 Effect Size Cohen's d
Conduct Problems	1.35	.96	88	3.03	.003*	.26
Hyperactivity Problems	3.85	3.73	88	.70	.485	.07
Emotional Symptoms	1.59	1.80	88	-1.17	.242	-0.13
Pro social behaviour	6.14	7.48	88	7.23	.000*	.40
Peer Problems	1.71	1.05	88	4.58	.000*	.65
Total Difficulties	8.43	7.55	88	5.30	.000*	.20

*Significance at $p < 0.05$

- Data collected from two pre-school workers in each of the four pre-schools highlighted an improvement in the children's strengths and a decrease in their difficulties from T1 to T2
- Both sets of pre-school workers' scores showed statistically significant gains in relation to the Pro Social behaviour score and the Peer Problems score as well as the Total Difficulties Score (See Tables 6 & 7).

“The children therefore became better equipped to express themselves, solve problems and make decisions”

Analysis of Findings

The following section provides an analysis of the findings from the process and outcome studies.

Changes to Competencies Level

The outcome study observed improvements in the children’s social competence and a decrease in their conduct disorder problems combined with an improvement in parental competencies. The presence of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme combined with the absence of any observed changes in the objective circumstances of the parents and/or the children is strongly suggestive that the programme had a positive impact in key areas. The children therefore became better equipped to express themselves, solve problems and make decisions. The process study highlights the positive changes to competencies of those involved in delivering the Incredible Years Programme to children and parents.



Image Copyright: Wally & Molly©2012 Rigadoon, Inc.

Fidelity to the Programme

When addressing the effectiveness of any programme the preparation and organisation for the implementation of the programme requires examination. There has been a strong degree of fidelity in the programme in relation to training, facilitation, implementation of the programme and accreditation of facilitators. The accreditation process, which 18 facilitators in Galway City completed, reinforces the training received by facilitators as it examines the quality of the implementation of the programme as carried out by the individual facilitator. This accreditation is an advantage to the pre-school workers as the agencies involved recognise their efforts and achievements. Overall, there is strong evidence that the programme has been extremely well implemented.



The IYP as an effective Community Development Based Approach

The stakeholder interviews highlight compelling evidence and support of a community development based approach practised by Galway City Partnership in the implementation of IYP. There is clear evidence of the employment of a partnership approach since the inception of the programme. Unlike many other early intervention or behavioural programmes, Galway City Partnership has employed a voluntary opt-in approach to IYP in relation to the organisations, the schools, the parents and the children. This voluntary commitment to IYP in Galway City by organisations and individuals constitutes a true form of a community-based approach to a community need. A community-based approach is underpinned by a process, which recognises a need and works collectively towards meeting that need. The evidence from the stakeholder interviews indicates that Galway City Partnership has employed such an approach. It was acknowledged by participants that the broad encompassing nature of the programme to include the parents, teachers and children facilitates the child's overall development. Underlying all of the work that Galway City Partnership has conducted with all members of the community has been a respect of the individuals and organisations that they have encountered as well as the ideas and concerns they may have. This way of working has been pivotal in keeping staff, parents, schools and organisations involved in the delivery of IYP and the success of the programme to date. The ability of this programme to be replicated in other locations is dependent on the establishment of a focal organisation which demonstrates similar professionalism, enthusiasm and ability to work in partnership as Galway City Partnership.

Emerging Theme – Resources to respond to Local Issues

In a society in which there are multiple demands on the resources of the state and at a time of government austerity, the importance of funding social interventions by not for profit organisations is crucial. Indeed, in Ireland there has been a long tradition of voluntary organisations providing for unmet social need. Without the belief and confidence of St Augustine's Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Galway City and the financial support of the Maureen O'Connell Fund, the delivery of IYP to the pre-schools would not have been possible. However, this raises a significant issue as to whether it is the role of charitable organisations to fund this type of community intervention.

Emerging Theme – Evaluating Community Based Initiatives

To date there has not been a strong tradition of evaluating community interventions such as this. However, this evaluation highlights the willingness of stakeholders and users to become involved in the approach. The relationship Galway City Partnership has fostered with parents involved with the IYP has been based on partnership approach, parents are encouraged rather than coerced into participating. In this sense, stakeholders have identified the IYP as a form of family support within the community as the wider network of the pre-school staff, teachers, schools and Galway City Partnership are incorporated into the development of the child with the parents. Supporting the implementation of the IYP in Galway City is one of the main objectives of Galway City Partnership. The findings highlight high levels of frequent support, which is available when needed.

“the programme is providing a unique, worthwhile and empowering service for children and their families in Galway City”

Emerging Theme – Empowering Professionals, Parents and Children

Whilst empowerment was not a stated aim of the work of Galway City Partnership evidence of its achievement through the implementation of the IYP can be seen in the pre-school workers, teachers, parents and children. It is evident that the children, parents and professionals involved in IYP have become empowered. Stakeholders regard this as beneficial to the wider community in the long run as the children have acquired lifelong skills. Creating a foundation of emotional well-being from an early age allows children to use their stored experiences, skills and knowledge to make informed decisions as they journey through life. The Parent Programme is viewed as empowering and aimed at improving what parents are already doing; furthermore, participants are not coerced into involvement. Practically, Galway City Partnership has made the programme accessible to parents by running the sessions in local community locations without charge.

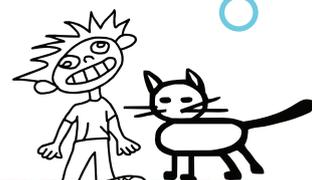
Emerging Theme – Responding to and Managing Expanding Needs

The expansion of IYP in the Galway primary schools from Small Group Dina to the Whole School Approach is regarded as extremely positive for the children and staff that have been involved. The Whole School Approach is viewed as an appropriate approach to promote social and emotional competencies amongst all children in the school in a consistent, fun and evidence based way. The introduction, implementation and expansion of IYP in Galway City is based on the reputation of Galway City Partnership and also the desire within schools to introduce a ‘positive’ approach to discipline. Currently, there are limited programmes available to schools like IYP. The Whole School Approach in primary schools emerged as an aspiration for Galway City Partnership and was informed by the success of Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme in the pre-schools.

Overall Conclusion

By working in partnership with state and voluntary agencies, schools and pre-schools, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and children and parents the IYP has been rolled out successfully by Galway City Partnership. The programme has expanded significantly since its introduction to Galway City in 2005. The overall view of the stakeholders is there is a commitment to and approval of the Incredible Years Programme in Galway City. Furthermore, there is an overwhelming belief that the programme is providing a unique, worthwhile and empowering service for children and their families in Galway City. The data collected from children involved in the outcome study demonstrates that, through fidelity to the programme, there has been an improvement in the children’s social competence and a decrease in their conduct problems during the period in which they partook in Dina in the Classroom. The presence of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme combined with the absence of any observed changes in the objective circumstances of the parents and/or the children is strongly suggestive that the programme had a positive impact in key areas.

Overall, the findings of the Process and Outcome Studies strongly emphasises the positive impact the Incredible Years Programme has delivered for children, parents and professionals in Galway City.



“Evidence-based programmes must be prioritised within national funding and policy”



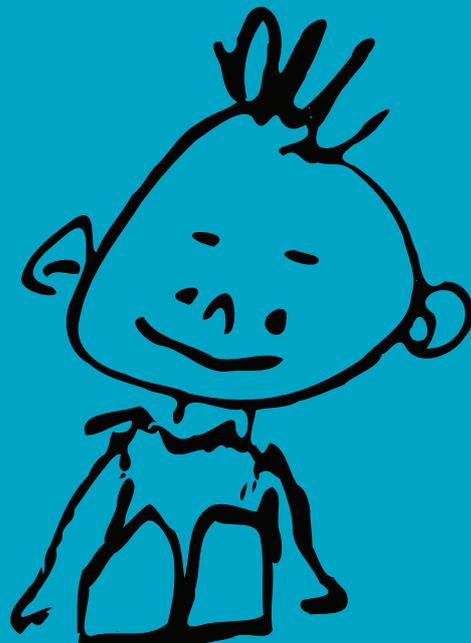
Recommendations

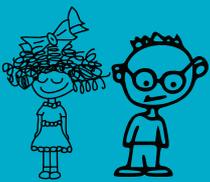
Specific recommendations for the future include:

FOCUS OF RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION
Evidence Based Programmes and National Policy	Evidence-based programmes must be prioritised within national funding and policy. As supported by this evaluation, programmes such as the IYP can work. The implementation of evidence-based programmes within local and national policy will provide far greater levels of predictable outcomes for individuals, communities and funders.
The Incredible Years Programme and Pre-School Curriculum	At the pre-school level, recognition of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme as a curriculum, which meets national standards, would encourage more pre- schools and staff to become involved in IYP. Galway City Partnership and its partner agencies should liaise with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in relation to this matter.
The Incredible Years Programme and Primary School Education	The IYP approach needs to be developed further within primary schools to ensure all the children who have become ‘active participants’ in their pre-school can continue to be ‘active participants’ with school and throughout their educational journey.
Community Based Approaches to Evidence Based Programmes	The tripartite nature of IYP is unique. As such, IYP should continue to be supported and expand to those communities who seek to engage in the programme. Galway City Partnership has expanded its remit and is continuously evolving. However, further expansion will require further funding. In order to ensure continued success Galway City Partnership should internally review its long-term strategy, funding, resourcing and organisational structure.
The Incredible Years Programme & Worker Skills Development	Galway City Partnership should endeavour to work with partner agencies to influence relevant national policy makers to acknowledge IYP within relevant training courses i.e. FETAC Courses, Training for Pre-School workers and Teacher Training Courses.
Evaluation of Community Based Projects	The need for and benefit of evaluation of community-based projects are highlighted through this research process. Greater links must be developed by agencies/ organisations involved in delivery of programmes in the community and academic/ research institutions with research expertise.
The Incredible Years Programme and Galway City	From the initial implementation of IYP in Galway City evaluation of the programme has been advocated. Galway City Partnership should endeavour to work with partner agencies, involved in practice and research/ evaluation, to explore how data generated locally can be appropriately analysed and disseminated.



“Overall, the findings of the process and outcomes study strongly emphasises the positive impact the Incredible Years Programme has delivered for children, parents and professionals in Galway City”





The full report is available
to download at

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