

Articles

The Incredible Years - The Norwegian Webster-Stratton Programme 1998-2004

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Abstract

This report has been prepared to provide an account of the Norwegian The Incredible Years programme, in accessible form. Beside a description of the programme, it concentrates on the results of clinical trials carried out in Trondheim and Tromsø in 2001-2003, and presents material from a user evaluation carried out in 2003-2004. A brief examination of implementation issues is also included. Important project components in the programme seen as a whole have had to be omitted here, either because they are not yet complete or because space did not allow their inclusion. The treatment trial material presented here is based on work carried out by Bo Larsson, Willy-Tore Mørch, May Britt Drugli and Sturla Fossum. The user evaluation material is based on work carried out by Jim Lurie and the undersigned. Charlotte Reedtz, Jim Lurie and the undersigned have worked on collection of material to standardise instruments used in the research.



Geographical Map

[Presence of the Incredible Years Programs in Norway \(PDF\)](#)

Background: Controlled evaluations of psychosocial interventions for young children with behavioural problems are sparse. However, in a series of experimental studies, professor Webster-Stratton and her collaborators in Seattle have examined the effects of various forms of parent and child therapy for 4-8 year-old children with aggressive and noncompliant behaviours. In the studies various forms of basic parent and child training have been compared to waiting-list controls, a more comprehensive parent training program, and in addition to a school-based (teacher) intervention. No previous replications have been made in Scandinavia, but two such studies have been conducted in Canada and one recently in England, both with positive outcomes.

Aims and study design: To replicate one of Webster-Stratton's studies comparing the basic training program for parents (12 sessions) with parent training and child therapy ("The Dinosaur School")(18 sessions) and waiting-list controls in an experimental study including a total of 150 Norwegian children aged 4-8 years; 60 families will be randomized into each of the active treatment groups and 30 families to the waiting-list. To examine the maintenance of treatment effects one year after treatment, in addition to generalisation of treatment effects from home to school settings.

Measures: After screening for children's noncompliant and aggressive behaviours as rated by parents and teachers (Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory-EBCI), parents of children with high scores are interviewed to obtain psychiatric diagnoses of either oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) or conduct disorder (CD). Parents rate their practices, involvement in child care and rearing disagreement, in addition to their own anger, depression and stress. Observations of child and parent interaction are made at home and in the clinic. In the school and preschool the children's behavioural problems are observed and compared with children with no such problems. The child reports on its feelings of loneliness and takes a problem-solving test. School and day care teachers assess the children's behaviour and social competence, in addition to their own home involvement.

Implementation and intervention: The planning of the project started 1998 and has been subjected to an evaluation by the Norwegian Research Council before implementation. Extensive contacts were established with professor Carolyn Webster-Stratton, who helped training of therapists and the mentor. Because no normative data existed for the screening measure (EBCI), it was first standardised in a survey including about 640 children aged 4-8 years from Trondheim and Tromsø. Many of the assessment instruments and the video vignettes were translated into Norwegian.

Since the fall of 2001 recruitment of children and families has taken place. Today, about half of the final sample (N=78) has been recruited in the project, which will continue until summer 2003. Treatment is administered to parents and children in groups over a 3-4 month period. Two therapists conduct the group treatment, which is highly structured and manual.