

Incredible Years®

*A suite of programs to help with child behaviour
and emotional difficulties*

Aims and Objectives

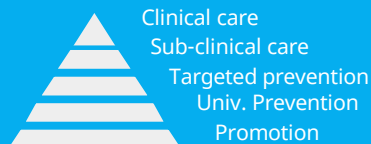
The Incredible Years® (IY) programs are a suite complementary evidence-based programs designed for parents, teachers, and children. Together, they aim to prevent and address early child behavioural and emotional difficulties and to foster social, emotional and academic success across home and school contexts.

Implementation highlights

IY programs center on:

- **Collaborative and experiential learning:** helping participants identify core social learning principles and using role-play to practice skills.
- **Continuous support:** weekly leader phone calls and "buddy calls" to establish a robust support network, plus homework assignments for skills practice, reinforcement and real-life behavior change.
- **Reflective growth:** individual goal-setting, values-based exercise and cognitive training to promote long-term self-reflection and problem-solving. Emotional self-regulation: helping parents, teachers and children learn emotional self-regulation strategies

At a glance



Target audience

- Children/adolescents (2 months-12 years)
- Parents /caregivers
- Teachers and professionals, education and childcare providers



Costs

- Purchase: \$440-\$790 per curriculum kit
- Initial training: \$710-\$1070 per trainee/group leader



Professionals involved:

- Mental health professionals
- Educators, teachers
- Doctors, nurses



Delivery settings

- Schools
- Community centers
- Home environments
- Prisons
- Healthcare centers



Leading organization:
The Incredible Years®, Inc.



Objectives

- Support parenting
- Promote child social and emotional competence
- Improve teacher classroom management skills and social-emotional education



Countries

Implemented in 20+ countries worldwide (11 European countries)

How can this practice be implemented?

A comprehensive framework is reported in *Bringing The Incredible Years® programs to scale* (1) and the [website](#). Key steps are:

- Using the “Launching IY Programs” questionnaire to assess if the host agency has the resources to support long-term delivery.
- Implement high-quality training by IY accredited mentors/trainers for a core team (minimum 2–3 clinicians)
- Establish a system for ongoing feedback and consultation
- Prioritize the program accreditation
- Build Peer Support Networks

Get started

- Visit the Incredible Years [website](#)
- Find evidence from Incredible Years [research](#)
- Read about global implementation [examples](#)
- Find more resources on [how to start](#)

Key takeaways



- Suite of effective programs for children, parents and professionals
- Implemented across 20+ countries
Delivered across different settings

Supporting policies



- England – [Best Start in Life Initiative](#): national funding for parenting hubs currently available through this initiative.
- Lithuania – [European Economic Area Health Grant 2014–2021](#): financed the implementation of the Incredible Years Preschool Basic Parenting Programme, led by the Lithuanian Institute of Hygiene (Ministry of Health).
- Norway – Norwegian Ministry of Health funded a nationwide Incredible Years implementation initiative from 1999 to 2009; implementation is currently funded through regional centres.
- [Slovenia](#) – initially implemented IY with Norwegian Financial Mechanism support (2015–2016); funded by the Slovenian Ministry of Health since 2017.

What makes this a good practice?

Key features

- 40+ years of experience
- Supported by 30+ RCTs
- Programs for children, parents and teachers

Impact: does it work?

Effectiveness

The IY programs have shown to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors. Specifically: for **parents**, IY strengthens nurturing parent-child relationships and positive parenting; for **teachers**, IY supports positive classroom management interactions, strengthen parent-teacher-child relationships, and promote social-emotional teaching, friendship and academic success; for **children**, IY builds language, cognitive, and social-emotional competence and early problem-solving skills.

Efficiency

IY programs have been found to be cost-effective. A study in Ireland (2) find that the IY programme was cost-effective in reducing conduct problems (with an Incremental Cost-Effectiveness Ratio less than €90).

Evidence base

In over 40 years, 30+ randomized control group studies have been conducted on the programs by the developer, by independent researchers in more than 7 different countries and other independent program validator organizations. These studies can be viewed in IY's Research Library (3).

Reach: who can benefit?

Equity and access

IY programs are designed to be flexibly delivered: group-based or in-home, in-person or online. IY programs are used extensively with high-need, low socioeconomic status families, families involved in child welfare, with families of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder, conduct disorder, and autism. It also explicitly targets vulnerable groups, ensuring that interventions are adapted to reach populations with greater needs and reduce inequities in access to care.

Transferability and scalability

IY is a fully manualized, standardized program with clearly defined curricula that can be implemented consistently across settings. It has been successfully adapted and implemented in over 20 countries worldwide, demonstrating its applicability in diverse cultural and service contexts.

Integration: keeping it going and working across sectors

Sustainability

Group leader fidelity program delivery is assured with accreditation and ongoing peer coaching, consultations from accredited coaches and mentors.

Intersectorality

IY programs can be offered in schools, hospitals, mental health centers, primary care practices and prisons. These programs are tailored to the culture and mental health of each participant.

Engagement and innovation: Listening to young people and adapting over time

Intergenerational / life-course approach

IY takes an intergenerational approach, offering developmentally tailored programmes spanning from infancy through school age — covering babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children. Complementary programmes for parents address parental mental health and the quality of the parent-child relationship, while dedicated teacher programmes support early childhood educators. By simultaneously targeting children, parents, and teachers across developmental stages, IY addresses risk and protective factors across multiple generations and contexts.

Research priorities and innovation

The implementation model enables delivery by trained group leaders with a background in child development, cognitive social learning theory & attachment, who can deliver IY across different levels of population risk (universal, high-risk, and clinical).

References and additional tools to favour translation

1. Webster-Stratton, C., & McCoy, K. P. (2015). Bringing The Incredible Years® programs to scale. In K. P. McCoy & A. Diana (Eds.), The science, and art, of program dissemination: Strategies, successes, and challenges. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 149, 81–95.
2. O'Neill, D., et al. (2011). A Cost-Effectiveness Analysis of the Incredible Years Parenting Program in Reducing Childhood Health Inequities. *European Journal of Health Economics* 14(1). DOI: 10.1007/s10198-011-0342-y
3. Find the full list of studies at <https://www.incredibleyears.com/research/library>
4. Webster-Stratton, C., & McCoy, K. P. (2015). Bringing The Incredible Years® programs to scale. In K. P. McCoy & A. Diana (Eds.), The science, and art, of program dissemination: Strategies, successes, and challenges. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 149, 81–95.