

**Adapting the Incredible Years Programs
According to the Developmental Needs of the Children**

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Summary

Adapting the Incredible Years Programs According to the Developmental Needs of the Children

Young children (ages 3–8 years) with Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and/or conduct problems are brought to mental health clinics by their parents because of their difficulties knowing how to manage their children’s aggressive behavior and their social and emotional problems. Approximately 50% of the children with ODD are co-morbid for Attention Deficit Disorder with hyperactivity (ADHD) (Campbell, Shaw et al. 2000). Many of these children are also co-morbid for depression and anxiety and are suffering from somatic complaints (Webster-Stratton and Hammond 1998). Frequently, internalizing symptoms are overlooked because of the immediacy of handling the children’s aggressive and oppositional defiant behavior. Moreover, since young children cannot easily communicate their feelings or worries and the reasons for their misbehavior, it is up to the therapists in collaboration with parents to look beyond the aggressive symptoms to the underlying reasons for the misbehavior. The skilled therapist will develop a working model for every child and their parents based on his or her knowledge of the child’s family background, parenting experiences, and the child’s biological make up. In all cases, parents and caretakers are struggling to make sense of their children’s misbehavior and lack confidence about the optimal way to parent them (Webster-Stratton and Herbert 1994).

The Incredible Years Parent Program is an evidence-based program that has been shown in over 9 randomized control group trials to significantly reduce ODD and internalizing problems and to strengthen positive parent-child relationships. (For review of these studies see (Webster-Stratton and Reid 2003). The Leader’s manual (Webster-Stratton 1984) provides recommended protocols for offering the BASIC Parenting Program in 12 to 14, 2-hour sessions with groups of 10 to 14 parents. These protocols are considered the “*minimal*” number of sessions, vignettes and content to be covered in order to achieve results similar to those in the published literature. However, the length of the program, the number of vignettes shown and the emphases given to certain components of the program will vary according to the particular needs of the children in each group.

The therapist begins in the first group session to help parents’ identify their goals for themselves and their children as well as to help them understand how to apply child development and behavior management principles when working on individual behavior plans for their children. While therapists collaborate with parents to formulate plans for each individual family according to their needs and the children’s temperament, at the same time, they highlight common themes, concerns and connections among all the parents in the group. In this way, the parents not only feel the program is tailored to their unique issues but find immense support from the other parents. Even with this individual tailoring within groups, most groups will complete the parent program in 12 to 14 weeks according to the protocols. However, in some cases it can be helpful to supplement the BASIC Program with other evidence-based Incredible Years Parent or Child or Teacher Programs. The following guidance is provided in making adaptations for specific groups of children or parents and for choosing supplemental programs.

***Children with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Problems,
And Emotional Regulation or Anger Management Difficulties***

Children with conduct problems are often difficult to parent because they are noncompliant and oppositional to their requests. When parents can't get their children to do what they want, they cannot socialize or teach them. Often parents respond to this defiant behavior by criticizing, yelling or hitting them to get them to do what they want, or they may give in to their demands. Many times parents are fighting with each other over how to discipline their children and are providing inconsistent responses. These responses can model aggressive behavior and give the children's oppositional behavior powerful emotional attention thereby reinforcing its occurrence. Children who are oppositional with adults are usually aggressive with peers and have few friends. Other children don't like to play with them because they are uncooperative, bossy and likely to criticize their ideas and suggestions. These negative responses on the part of peers, further compounds their problems because it promotes the children's negative reputation and the resulting isolation gives them fewer opportunities to learn how to make friends with peers.

Recommended IY Parent Programs

For parents of children with conduct problems, the BASIC Parent Programs (Early childhood or school age versions) and the ADVANCE Parent Programs 5-7 are recommended and take 22–24 weeks to complete.

Table 1

Recommended IY Programs For Children With Externalizing Problems

Child population	Play Program 1	Child-Directed Play & Interactive Reading	Praise and Incentives Program 2	Limit Setting Handling Misbehavior Programs 3 & 4	ADVANCE Programs 5-7	Dina Dinosaur Treatment Program Or, Teacher Training
Children Ages 3-5	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Play Program 1	Child-Directed Play	Promoting Positive Behaviors Program 9	Reducing Inappropriate Behaviors Program 10	Advance Programs 5-7	Dina Dinosaur Treatment Program Or, Teacher Training
Children Ages 6-8	X	X	X	X	X	X

Combine Parent Program with IY Child Dinosaur Treatment Program

While the parents are in the parent group, it is recommended that the small group child treatment group be offered to their children in order to promote their social, emotional and problem solving skills. This program takes 18-24 weeks to complete.

Alternative Teacher Training Program

Instead of offering the Dinosaur Program, the teacher classroom management training program may be offered instead. This program takes 28 hours to complete, preferably on four separate days spread over several months. As noted above, this approach promotes consistency in management approaches from home to school.

Objectives

Strengthen Parent-Child Relationships and Bonding

- Increase parents' understanding, empathy and acceptance of the needs of children with conduct problems.
- Increase parents' positive attributions of their child and decrease their negative attributions.
- Teach parents how to do social, emotional and academic coaching during child-directed play interactions with their children.
- Encourage parents to give more effective praise and encouragement for targeted prosocial behaviors.
- Strengthen positive parent-child relationships and attachment.

Promote Effective Limit Setting, Non-punitive Discipline and Systematic Behavior Plans

- Help parents set up behavior plans and develop salient rewards for targeted prosocial behaviors.
- Help parents use nonpunitive or less harsh discipline approaches for misbehavior.
- Teach parents how to do compliance training with their children.
- Teach parents how to help their children self-regulate and manage their anger.
- Help parents learn how to provide children with joyful and happy experiences and memories and reduce exposure to violent TV, computer games, and diet of fear or depression.

Strengthen Parents Interpersonal Skills and Supportive Networks

- Teach parents coping skills such as depression and anger management, effective communication skills and problem solving strategies.
- Teach parents ways to work with teachers to develop home-school behavior plans.
- Teach parents how to give and get support in order to enhance supportive networks.

Focus: Strengthening Parent-Child Relationship and Encouraging Child Cooperation (Parent (BASIC Program One (3–8 Years)

Regardless of whether the preschool or school age version of the BASIC parenting program is being used, the entire BASIC Play Program One should be shown first. This added emphasis teaching parents child-directed play concepts is important in order for parents to successfully help their children learn to be more compliant and encouraging of their social skills. Often parents of these children have responded to their defiance by becoming more controlling and oppositional themselves, thereby compounding the problem. Instead parents will learn how to coach their children's compliant and prosocial behaviors while ignoring their nonaggressive misbehaviors. During play, parents model compliance to their children's requests as long as the children are behaving appropriately. Parents learn the value of noncompetitive and child-directed play skills. This parent coaching helps the children learn basic social skills such as how to take turns, wait, share during play, accept a friend's ideas, and compliment a friend. Not only will this child-directed play help children to learn valuable social skills, but it will also promote a more positive attachment or relationship between the parents and child. Usually parents are feeling angry with their children because of their disruptive behavior and have

experienced very few positive times together. These play times will begin to build up the positive bank account between the parent and child.

Focus: Increasing Parents' Nurturing and Positive Parenting Skills (Parent BASIC Program Two, Ages 3–6 Years or BASIC Program Nine, Ages 6–8 Years)

Children with conduct problems usually get less praise and encouragement from adults than other children. However, when they do get praise, they are likely to reject the praise because of their oppositional responses. For some children, this oppositional response to praise and encouragement is actually a bid for more attention and to keep the adult focusing on them longer. Parents of these children will be helped to give the praise frequently and then to ignore the protests that follow. Over time with consistent encouragement, the children will become more comfortable with this more positive view of themselves.

Sticker charts and incentive programs to encourage compliance to requests and rules is the first priority because once compliance is increased then it is easier to teach other social behaviors as well. Therefore parents will set up behavior plans and charts for targeted positive behaviors that they would like to see more of.

Focus: Parents Learning Effective Limit Setting and Establishing Clear Household Rules (Parent BASIC Program Three, 3–6 Years and Program Ten, 6–8 Years)

Children with conduct problems refuse to do what they are asked to do by parents or teachers 70–100 percent of the time (whereas the normal child obeys approximately 65% of the time). This has occurred because the refusal has resulted in a lot of adult attention and power. Because parents have learned to expect this noncompliance and oppositional behavior, they may have responded by avoiding giving commands or making requests, by repeating the same command over and over (because they don't expect compliance), or by escalating to hostile responses because of anticipating of child's defiance. Therefore the first step in this program is to help the parents set clear limits and household rules. Parents will then learn to reduce excessive and unnecessary commands and to give necessary commands clearly, politely, and without fear of their children's response.

Once this has been accomplished, parents will be taught a compliance training procedure in which they will follow through with a brief Time-Out if children don't comply to commands.

Focus: Non-Violent Discipline Strategies (Parent BASIC Program Four, 3–6 Years and Program Ten, 6–8 Years)

Parents are taught to successfully ignore many of the annoying defiant behaviors that children with conduct problems exhibit such as tantruming, whining, arguing, sarcastic backtalk and so forth. They also are trained to use Time-Out as an immediate consequence for noncompliance and aggressive behavior. Other discipline strategies that work well for these children are consequences that are immediately tied to their misbehavior. In addition to discipline strategies, parents learn to help their children self-regulate and control anger as well as to teach them problem solving strategies. Parents learn how to help their children identify that they have a problem and then to use a self-regulation skill such as expressing their feelings with words, using a calm down strategy, taking a personal Time-Out or taking three breaths, thinking a happy thought or of their happy place and so forth. Once children have learned these calming strategies, then they can be prompted by parents to think of other prosocial solutions such as waiting, sharing, asking, trading and apologizing. It is important that these angry children be given the tools to calm down before engaging them in problem solving discussions. It is also important that the problem solving not be done at the very time they are behaving aggressively or the misbehavior will be reinforced with attention.

Focus: Parents Promoting Children's Academic Competence (Supporting Education Program 8)

Because children with conduct problems may have had less instruction and positive feedback at school from teachers, and they may have reading, learning and academic delays as well, it is recommended that Program Eight: Supporting Your Child at School be shown as a supplement to the BASIC Parent Program for children ages 6–8 years. In this program, parents are helped to set up predictable homework schedules, to coach children successfully in their academic skills, and to have productive parent–teacher conferences where behavior plans are shared. For the children ages 3-5 years the Interactive Reading Program is recommended as a supplement because it emphasizes how interactive reading skills can be used to promote children's social, emotional and academic competence. It will take 2-3 extra sessions to complete each of these programs, which are offered after the Play Program in the Basic Series.

Focus: Promoting Positive Family Communication and Support (ADVANCE Programs 5 & 6)

Families of children with conduct problems often experience parental depression, marital conflict, high levels of stress, anger management problems, sense of isolation or stigma because of their children's behavior problems and lack of family, school or community support. Therefore we consider the ADVANCE Parent Program to be an essential part of the therapy for the parents of children with conduct problems. This program focuses on helping the parents learn effective communication skills with partners and with teachers, ways to cope with discouraging and depressive thoughts, anger management strategies, ways to give and get support from family members and other parents, and effective problem solving strategies. The ADVANCE program is offered after the BASIC program is completed and takes another 8 sessions. It is especially important to include this program when working with multiply stressed families who have interpersonal issues.

Focus: Training Children in Anger Management and Social Skills (Dinosaur School)

The BASIC Parent Program focuses on helping parents coach peer play, which will help children learn social skills. However, it is also recommended that children with conduct problems attend Dinosaur Small Group Treatment Program where they will get specific practice with other children learning social and self-regulation skills. In this child training program, children practice behaviors needed to be successful at school, build a rich vocabulary for expressing emotions, learn how to identify their own and others' emotions, and practice anger management, problem solving and effective communication skills. Our studies indicate that combining this training with parent training enhances children's outcomes in terms of better peer relationships and classroom behavior with peers and teachers (Webster-Stratton and Hammond 1997; Webster-Stratton, Reid et al. 2004).

Children With ADHD

Children with ODD are difficult to parent but those who are co-morbid with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) with or without Hyperactivity (ADHD) are even more difficult to parent because they are impulsive, inattentive, distractible, and hyperactive. They have difficulty attending to, hearing, or remembering parental requests, and therefore don't seem to be cooperative. If this non-cooperation is given a lot of attention or criticism by parents, it may be inadvertently reinforced, especially if little parental attention is given for the child's prosocial behaviors. Children with attention difficulties also miss their parents' praise and may seem unresponsive to parental encouragement as well as their limit setting efforts.

Many children with ADD/ADHD have trouble making friends (Coie, Dodge et al. 1990). Because of their impulsivity, it is hard for them to wait for a turn when playing, or to concentrate long enough to complete a puzzle, or game. They are more likely to grab things away from other children, or disrupt a carefully built tower or puzzle because of their activity level and lack of patience. In fact, research has shown these children are delayed in their play and social skills (Barkley 1996) . For

example, a 6 year old with ADHD plays more like a 4 year old and will have difficulty with sharing, waiting, taking turns and focusing on a play activity for more than a few minutes, and is more likely to be engaged in solitary play. Because these children are annoying to play with, they have few friends and other children frequently reject them, they are usually the children who are not invited to birthday parties, or play dates—a problem that further compounds their social difficulties and affects their self-esteem.

About 40–50 percent of children with ODD also have ADD/ ADHD and other problems such as language delays and learning disabilities. Academic and developmental problems are intertwined with social and emotional problems. For example, poor attention, hyperactivity and language or reading difficulties limit children’s ability to engage in learning and result in less encouragement and instruction from teachers as well as parents. This negative feedback and lack of instruction makes these problems worse. Thus, a cycle is created whereby one problem exacerbates the other.

Recommended IY Parent Programs

For parents of children with ADD/ADHD, the BASIC Parent Programs (early childhood and school-age versions) and Supporting Your Child’s Education Program or Child Directed Play and Interactive Reading focused on helping parents to promote their children’s academic competence are recommended. For the parents of children (ages 3-5) the Advance Program 7 focused on problem-solving is also recommended. For parents of children (ages 6-8) the Advance Programs 5,6, and 7 focused on communication and family meetings are recommended. It will take 22–26 weeks to complete these programs.

Table 2

Recommended IY Programs For Children With ADHD

Child population	Play Program 1	Child-Directed Play & Interactive Reading	Praise and Incentives Program 2	Limit Setting Handling Misbehavior Programs 3 & 4	Advance Programs 5-7	Dina Dinosaur Treatment Program Or, Teacher Training
Children Ages 3-5	X	X	X	X	5-6 optional & program 7 recommended	X
Child population	Play Program 1	Supporting Your Child’s Education	Promoting Positive Behaviors Program 9	Reducing Inappropriate Behaviors Program 10	Advance Programs 5-7	Dina Dinosaur Treatment Program Or, Teacher Training
Children Ages 6-8	X	X	X	X	X	X

Combine Parent Program With IY Child Dinosaur Treatment Program Or Teacher Classroom Management Program

The child training program (Dinosaur School) will help children with ADHD learn play and social skills, make good friends, and practice problem solving and anger management strategies. Instead of offering the Dinosaur Program for the children, an optional approach is to provide the teacher classroom management training program for the teachers of these children. This program takes teachers 28 hours to complete, preferably on four separate days spread over several months. When teachers are trained, they are reinforcing the same behaviors as parents and there is more consistency from home to school in management approaches.

Additional Objectives for Parent Program

- Increase parents' understanding and knowledge about the parenting needs of children with ADD/ADHD.
- Teach parents how to do social and peer coaching.
- Encourage parents to give more effective praise and encouragement for targeted prosocial and academic behaviors.
- Help parents set up behavior plans and develop salient rewards for targeted prosocial and academic behaviors.
- Help parents use immediate consequences for misbehavior.
- Teach parents ways to work with teachers to co-ordinate home–school behavior plans.
- Help parents understand how they can support their children's academic learning at home.
- Enhance parents support networks.

Specific Objectives for Children

- Increase children's social skills, such as group entry skills, cooperative play skills, and friendship skills (e.g., teamwork, sharing, taking turns, complimenting).
- Increase children's emotional self-regulation skills, such as waiting, concentrating, ability to stop-think-check, and calming down using deep breathing, positive self-talk or happy images.
- Increase children's coping skills, such as problem solving and generating positive solutions for conflict situations.
- Decrease children's disruptive behaviors, such as blurting out, noncompliance.
- Increase children's academic skills, such as putting up a quiet hand, listening to teacher, and concentrating on work (e.g., stop, think, look, check).

Focus: Parents Learning How to Coach their Children's Friendship Skills and Help Sustain their Attention on Play Activities (Parent BASIC Program One, 3–8 Years)

Regardless of whether the preschool or school age version of the BASIC parenting program is being used, the entire BASIC Play Program (including all the vignettes) should be covered first. This program emphasizes parents learning child-directed play concepts so that they can help their children develop friendship skills. It is critical that parents of children with ODD +ADD/ADHD become highly skilled as social, emotional and academic coaches. With this ongoing coaching from parents at home, children will learn basic social skills such as how to take turns, wait, share during play, make a suggestion, follow a friend's ideas, enter a group and compliment a friend. Parents are encouraged to arrange play dates with other children at their home and to provide peer coaching during these visits in order to provide further learning experiences. The added child-directed peer play vignettes and extra practice coaching several children will result in not only enhancing children's play skills but will also help them sustain their attention and focus on an activity for longer periods of time. Moreover, the play

program gives group leaders an opportunity to help parents understand and accept developmental, temperament and biological differences in children such as variation in distractibility, impulsiveness, and hyperactivity.

Focus: Parents Learn to Increase the Saliency of their Praise and Tangible Rewards (Parent BASIC Program Two, Ages 3–6 Years or BASIC Program Nine, Ages 6–8 Years)

Children with ODD +ADHD get even less praise and encouragement from adults than less active or less disruptive children. However, when such children do get praise, they are less likely to notice or even comprehend that they were praised. In fact, frequently parents of these children remark that their children are unresponsive to their praise and encouragement. Because of their inattentiveness, distractibility and failure to read nonverbal facial cues, children with ADD/ADHD need praise that is highly pronounced and combined with visual and tactile cues. For example, before giving praise to a distractible child, the parent needs to move close and establish eye contact and a connection in order to capture his attention. Next, the parent must give the praise with a genuine smile, lots of emotional enthusiasm, a pat on the back or hug. Finally, the parent clearly describes the social behavior that is being encouraged. For these children, behaviors targeted for praise may include: concentrating hard on an activity, waiting a turn, problem solving, asking for something (rather than grabbing) and politely asking to be part of a game. Because it is not normal to praise in such an exaggerated way, parents of these children need extra training in these skills as well as extra encouragement to keep praising even when the children don't seem to be responsive to the praise.

It is also hard for children with ADD/ADHD to evaluate their own progress in the social arena since self-reflection is difficult for them. However, sticker charts and behavior plans with clearly established behavioral goals and incentives can help children remember the behaviors they are working on, and also serve as concrete markers depicting their success. Incentive systems provide more salient and immediate rewards as well as a visual reminder to the children of their accomplishments and a continual reminder of the positive consequences of working towards their goal. Behavior charts and incentive programs will be covered in detail when working with parents of children with ADHD and refined over time so that parents are able to continually motivate and challenge their children in novel ways. Charts also provide a kind of structure and positive scaffolding which provides a sense of safety and security for distractible children.

Focus: Parents Learn about Clear Limit Setting (Parent BASIC Program Three, 3–6 Years and Program Ten, 6–8 Years)

Just as children with ADD/ADHD frequently fail to hear vague praise statements, they also fail to focus upon or remember parental requests. They may not comprehend the parental request if it is unclear, negatively stated, embedded in a great deal of distracting verbal content and negative emotion, or if too many commands are strung together. Therefore, parents of such children need to learn how to make a positive request that is clear, calm and specific. As when giving praise, parents must get their child's attention before making the request. Moreover, because children with ADD/ADHD live in the present moment and have difficulty thinking ahead to future consequences (positive or negative), they are not motivated by delayed consequences. Therefore they need consequences that are immediate and as closely related to the misbehavior as possible. This means that child compliance to a parental request requires immediate praise and noncompliance needs immediate follow through.

Because these children are frequently disruptive and don't seem to respond to commands, adults are more likely to speak loudly and to give them a great many commands. Parents need help reducing their commands to those that are the most important, giving them in a positive and clear manner and then being prepared to follow through if the request is not obeyed. When this is achieved, children will learn that when their parents make a request they are expected to and helped to comply.

Focus: Parents Learn about Immediate Consequences (Parent BASIC Program Four, 3–6 Years and Program Ten (6–8 Years))

Children with ADD/ADHD need immediate consequences for their misbehavior. Having a child on medication, or with the diagnoses of ADD/ADHD should not be used as an excuse to avoid holding children accountable for their actions. However, it is important that parents have developmentally appropriate expectations for their children's behavior. Since children with ADD/ADHD are about 1/3 delayed in their social and emotional competence, the 5 year old with ADHD cannot be expected to wait easily for a turn, or sit still at a table for any extended period of time, or concentrate on a complex puzzle or Lego set. Parents will need to plan for activities that are developmentally appropriate for their child's abilities and learn to ignore distractible, hyperactive, fidgety and noisy behaviors as long as they are not hurtful to others. Parents also learn the value of redirecting distractible children to another task in order to keep them from losing their interest or from disrupting others. However, aggressive and oppositional behavior requires Time-Out so that the children do not get reinforced for the misbehavior. Parents learn the entire compliance training regime in order to help their children be more cooperative. However, before doing this training, several sessions in Program Three will be spent on reducing commands to those that are most necessary. Other discipline strategies that work well for children with ADD/ADHD are consequences that are immediately tied to the misbehavior. For example, scissors are removed for a brief period if the children are using them inappropriately, or, children must clean up the floor because they made a mess with the paint and so forth.

In addition to focusing on helping parents understand developmentally appropriate discipline strategies such as ignoring and redirecting, using logical and natural consequences and Time-Out for aggression, parents also learn how to teach their children problem solve strategies and to practice more appropriate solutions. The school-age version of BASIC Parent Program Ten, helps parents learn how to teach their children to identify a problem and how to stop and think about the best choice or solution to the problem. For young children, parents help them learn and practice a variety of prosocial and self-regulating solutions (e.g., trade, ask first, get parent, take a deep breath, share, help another, apologize, use words, tell yourself to calm down, ignore) using a children's problem solving book. For older children, parents teach them how to make the best choice and to evaluate the outcome of their solutions.

Focus: Parents Learn How to Coach Homework and Promote their Children's Reading Skills

Because children with ADD/ADHD often have reading, learning and academic delays we recommend that Program Eight: Supporting Your Child at School be shown as a supplement to the BASIC Parent Program. In this program, parents are helped to set up predictable homework schedules, to coach children successfully with their homework, learn how to have productive teacher conferences, and practice interactive reading skills with their children. It takes 2 extra sessions to complete this program, which is offered at the end of the BASIC Series. For children ages 3–5 years, the Interactive Reading Program is recommended.

Focus: Child Training in Friendship Skills, Problem Solving and Positive Peer Play Skills (Child Dinosaur Treatment Program)

The BASIC Parent Program focuses on helping parents coach peer play, which will help their children learn social and problem solving skills. However, it is also helpful if children attend Dinosaur Treatment Program where they get specific practice with other children learning social and self-regulation skills. In this child training program, children practice behaviors needed to be successful at school such as putting up a quiet hand, waiting a turn, ignoring distractions, staying focused on an activity and following teacher's directions. In addition they learn a vocabulary for expressing a range of positive and negative emotions, learn how to identify another's emotions, and are taught anger

management, problem solving and effective communication skills. The children learn how to play appropriated with other children through modeling and many guided practice experiences with one and then two children. Three studies have indicated that combining this child training with parent training enhances children's outcomes in terms of better peer relationships and classroom behavior (Webster-Stratton and Hammond 1997; Webster-Stratton, Reid et al. 2001; Webster-Stratton, Reid et al. 2004).

***Children With Academic Problems
Such as Language Delays and Reading Delays***

Approximately 30 percent of children with conduct problems and/or ADHD also have other developmental problems such as language or reading delays or learning disabilities (Sturge 1982). The protocols, which are set out above for children with these problems, can be supplemented with the academic skills training program and will take 3–4 more 2-hour sessions.

Recommended IY Parent Programs

For parents of children with language and reading delays, the following programs are recommended:

Table 3

Recommended IY Programs For Children With Reading, Language, and Developmental Delays

Child population	Play Program 1	Child-Directed Play & Interactive Reading	Praise and Incentives Program 2	Limit Setting Handling Misbehavior Programs 3 & 4	Advance Programs 5-7	Dina Dinosaur Treatment Program Or, Teacher Training
Children Ages 3-5	X	X	X			
Child population	Play Program 1	Supporting Your Child's Education	Promoting Positive Behaviors Program 9	Reducing Inappropriate Behaviors Program 10	Advance Programs 5-7	Dina Dinosaur Treatment Program Or, Teacher Training
Children Ages 6-8	X	X	X			

Children With Attachment Problems

Children with ODD may also have ambivalent or avoidant attachment patterns with their biological, foster or adoptive parents (Bakersman-Kranenburg, Van Ijzendoorn et al. 2003). Insecure attachment may develop because children have experienced abandonment, neglect, death of a parent, trauma, or physical abuse during their early childhood years. It may also occur because parents' or caregiver responses have been unpredictable, inconsistent, harsh and dismissive of children's emotional needs. Parents with these parenting difficulties may themselves have attachment difficulties due to their own childhood experiences. They may be preoccupied with their own feelings, needs and life stressors including the stress of poverty. Such parents may be only sporadically emotionally available to their children. They are often characterized as chaotic, neglectful, emotionally unavailable and disorganized. Children who have experienced such stressful and inconsistent parenting learn not to trust the world or their relationships with others. Their insecure attachment, in turn, affects how they process information, solve problems and behave with others. For example, some children with insecure attachment may be angry at adults and oppositional, suspicious or rejecting of caregiver attention or attempts to nurture them. On the other hand, other children may have an insatiable need for adult attention and be resentful and clingy whenever adult attention is given to someone other than themselves. These children may have difficulty separating from their parent or caregiver for fear of abandonment or sulk and cry whenever attention is given to another child. Still other children with insecure attachment may be frightened of adults and become emotionally absent or disassociated as a way of escaping their fears. They may appear independent and grown up when in fact, this is masking their intense needs for nurturing and support.

Children's attachment classifications are not permanent and may become more secure by parenting interactions and caregiver relationships that are predictable and consistent, sensitive to their cues, comforting when they are hurt or frightened, calming when they are distressed, and accepting of their emotions (Van Ijzendoorn, Juffer et al. 1998).

Recommended IY Parent Programs

For parents of children with attachment disorders, the BASIC Parent Program (early childhood and school age versions) is recommended and will take 16–18 weeks to complete. These programs may be offered to the biological parents, adoptive parents or foster parents of these children.

Table 4

Recommended IY Programs For Children With Attachment Disorders

Child population	Play Program 1	Child-Directed Play & Interactive Reading	Praise and Incentives Program 2	Limit Setting Handling Misbehavior Programs 3 & 4	Advance Programs 5-7	Dina Dinosaur Treatment Program Or, Teacher Training
Children Ages 3-5	X	X	X	X		X

	Play Program 1	Supporting Your Child's Education	Promoting Positive Behaviors Program 9	Reducing Inappropriate Behaviors Program 10	Advance Programs 5-7	Dina Dinosaur Treatment Program Or, Teacher Training
Children Ages 6-8	X	X	X	X		X

Combine Parent Program With IY Child Dinosaur Treatment Program

While the parents are in the parent group, it is recommended that the small group child treatment group (18–22 sessions) be offered to their children. This program will help these children learn to make friends, to build their self-esteem, to express their emotions in more appropriate ways and to learn ways to solve some of their problems.

Objectives for Biological, Foster, or Adoptive Parents

- Increase parents' empathy for the child and understanding of why insecure attachment is affecting their child's behavior and relationships.
- Encourage parents to understand ways to promote a secure attachment.
- Encourage parents' to participate in pretend and fantasy play with their children.
- Teach parents how to do social and emotional coaching during child-directed play interactions with children.
- Encourage parents to provide consistent and calm comforting for children when they are hurt, frightened, ill, or lonely.
- Encourage parents to give love, attention, praise, and encouragement whenever possible for prosocial behaviors.
- Encourage parents to have consistent rules and clear limit setting, to be honest about where they are going and when they will be back, and to provide predictable, nonpunitive and nonrejecting responses for misbehavior.
- Help parents learn ways to give their children a sense of trust in the world and people in it.
- Encourage parents to focus on joyful memories and positive emotions, as well as family traditions.

Objectives for Children

- Promote secure attachment with parents or caregivers.
- Promote children's positive self-esteem, self-confidence and sense of security.
- Decrease children's misbehaviors with adults and peers.
- Increase children's close friendships.
- Increase children's ability to regulate their emotional responses.
- Increase children's ability to identify and talk about their own feelings (positive and negative).

Focus: Parents Learning Emotional Coaching and Ways to Strengthen Attachment (Parent BASIC Program One, 3–8 Years and Promoting Children’s Social, Emotional, Problem-Solving, and Academic Skills Through Child-Directed Play)

All the vignettes from the two programs focused on child-directed play are shown to parents and parents are provided with many practice experiences. These programs teach parents how to provide emotion and social coaching during their playtimes with their children in order to strengthen their attachment and positive relationships. Parents learn to provide consistent, positive attention for prosocial behaviors. They learn to see the world from the perspective of their child in order to promote feelings of empathy for their children’s needs. They learn about their children’s developmental needs for contingent attention, predictable responses, and positive emotional experiences. Moreover this undivided parental attention results in children feeling valued and respected and leads to increased self-esteem.

Parents are taught to be “emotional coaches” for their children. They are asked to play at home and to participate in pretend play so as to encourage their children’s imaginary worlds. When parents encourage fantasy during play, children are given opportunities to express their anxious feelings, frustration and anger in legitimate and non-hurtful ways. Some children may explore aggressive themes in their play such as, smacking the baby or enacting car crashes. Other children may regress to more baby roles and want to be fed and cuddled. Often they will enact the same play theme repeatedly. When children act out these upsetting or fearful emotions through fantasy play, symbolically they are gaining mastery and control over the emotional situation. These opportunities are especially important for children who have been neglected, abandoned and abused.

In addition to encouraging fantasy play, emotion coaching also involves parents naming the children’s feelings and providing support for expression of positive emotions such as joy, love, happiness, curiosity and calmness as well as negative emotions. This emotion coaching will help children recognize and express a wide range of emotions and begin to understand other’s emotions. Parent–child play interactions increase secure attachment and also help parents become more sensitive and understanding when reacting to their child.

Focus: Parents Promoting Children’s Self-Confidence and Joyful times through Praise and Consistent Love (Parent BASIC Program Two, Children Ages 3–6 Years or BASIC Program Nine Children Ages 6–8 Years)

Children with attachment problems who have been blamed or abused in the past may be suspicious of praise and uncomfortable with physical touch. They may respond by rejecting it, getting over excited or misbehaving. For example, the child who tears up his math report when his parent praises him, or the child who goes out of his way to be disruptive after his teacher praised her for being helpful. These children are uncomfortable with this positive image of themselves and seem to want to convince the adult they are not really worthy of this praise. In other words, their self-concept is that they are bad, and they are more comfortable with this negative image than with the new positive image being presented to them. This rejection of praise or parents’ attempts to encourage them could cause parents or caregivers to stop giving praise or hugs in order to avoid the negative response. In fact, these children need *much more* praise and encouragement than typical children. In this program parents and caregivers are helped to understand why children might reject praise and are encouraged to keep up with the praise and physical comfort so that the child will accept a more positive self-image. Instead of exuberant praise, the praise may be given by parents in quiet, personal moments and any rejection or arguments from the child are ignored. Instead of big hugs, caregivers may start with small pats on the arm combined with a smile, thumbs up, or high five and gradually increase the length of time the physical contact lasts. Some of the targeted behaviors that may get praise include: staying calm when the parent leaves, doing independent work, appearing confident about an activity, verbalizing feelings or recognizing another’s feelings and being friendly to someone else.

Children who have experienced many negative and traumatizing events will also be helped by their caregivers to develop their happy thoughts and positive emotional memory banks. Parents or caregivers are encouraged to talk with their children about, or draw a favorite place they lived, or experience, or person they spent time with. Likewise parents share with them their positive memories of when they were born, or special events. Overtime these joyful memories can be referred to and recounted until they become alive as family traditions.

Sticker charts and behavior plans with clearly established behavioral goals and incentives can be very helpful for these children. In fact, sometimes children with attachment problems respond more readily in the beginning to tangible incentives and sticker charts than to parent or caregiver praise and encouragement, which is more frightening to them. Setting up a sticker and reward program helps the children to experience its predictability and see that they can safely trust the plan. It can serve as a structure to help them with their behaviors while the parents and caregivers are working on strengthening their emotional relationship and their child's attachment status and self-esteem through praise and encouragement.

In addition, to praise, encouragement and incentive programs, parents are encouraged to show unconditional love and commitment to their children. The message behind this love is that no matter what happens or how the child behaves, the parent or caregiver is there for the child. Communication such as, "I'm going to send you to another foster home," or, "I should never have had you. You ruined my life and caused my divorce," or, "You are just like your delinquent father," are harmful to the child. Instead, messages that recognize their children's positive behaviors and unique qualities and share expression of concern, as well as loving and caring feelings are important. The positive messages include, "I care about you, and will help you learn to make better choices," or, "You will be able to do it next time," or, "I am sure you can succeed," or, "I will always care about you," and "I am frustrated about this, but I still care about you, and we will work this out together."

Focus: Parents Learn How to Help their Children Feel Safe through Predictable Schedules, Limits and Separation and Reunion Rituals (Parent BASIC Program Three, 3–6 Years and Program Ten, 6–8 Years)

Children with insecure attachment classifications need to learn what the family household rules are and experience their predictability. Knowledge of rules and expectations for their behavior will help them to feel safe and more secure in their relationship. Parents are encouraged to be aware of and set limits on exposure to aggressive and tragic events on television, aggression computer games, and exposure to parental conflict.

Parents learn the importance of being honest with their children about where they are going and when they will be back—even though the children may tantrum and cling when they tell them they are leaving. Good-bye rituals are rehearsed and parents are prepared for how to respond if their child tantrums upon separations. They learn about the destructive effect of leaving in secretive ways or threatening to leave if their children don't comply with their requests. They are helped to understand and rehearse the importance of a joyful reunion when they are reunited. Other separation rituals are such as bedtime rituals are also planned for. Once children experience the repeated predictability of their parents' responses and experience that they always return when they said they would, their children's fears will eventually subside.

During the limit setting program, parents learn how to give clear, positive commands and to follow through with their limits. Parents are taught the importance of providing a home environment that is as predictable and consistent as possible. For example, setting up a routine for mealtimes, TV watching, getting up in the morning. For some parents, it will be helpful to map out the day and determine the sequence of events.

Focus: Strengthening Parents Positive Discipline Strategies (Parent BASIC Program Four, 3–6 Years and Program Ten, 6–8 Years)

Parents or caregivers will have worked hard over many sessions to establish a positive relationship and more secure attachment status with their child before starting the discipline program. Because children with attachment problems send out distorted signals to their parents, it can be hard for parents to read their cues. Parents may need extra child-directed play sessions and more focus on incentive programs before starting this program. It is important that the positive replacement behaviors (e.g., sharing, helping, cooperating with rules) have been taught to children and that children are receiving a great deal of positive parental attention for these behaviors. Also key is that children have learned some vocabulary for expressing their emotions when parents begin the discipline program.

Parents are taught to briefly ignore (with no eye contact or verbal or physical contact) the particular target negative behavior that they have identified as problematic or attention getting (e.g., whining, swearing, pouting, pestering, sulking). Parents are prepared for the worsening of misbehavior for a while as children test their parents' consistency. However, this ignoring is very brief and parents must be ready to give back their attention as soon as the child calms down, or is behaving appropriately. Children with insecure attachment status will want their parents' positive attention so desperately that they usually stop the misbehavior pretty quickly. For children with a history of neglect, it is particularly important that the ignoring strategy be used briefly for the target negative behavior and that parents consistently give heavy doses of positive attention whenever the children are prosocial. In this program, parents learn about the value of combining ignoring with a redirect or distraction, which often work well to avoid giving attention to the misbehavior while diverting the child's attention to something else. This helps these children not to feel abandoned.

Time-Out is taught as a way of helping children self-regulate and so that parents avoid giving attention to aggressive behavior. Because parents or caregivers feel badly about the child's prior traumas, they may be inclined to give in to their aggression and inadvertently reinforce it by holding their children when they have been aggressive. Parents are helped to understand that Time-Out is not used to humiliate children or threaten loss of their love but rather to help them learn to self-regulate and become more independent. They are taught to use this procedure only for aggressive or destructive behavior or, for compliance training for the very oppositional and defiant child. Parents decide what behavior (primarily aggressive behavior toward another person) will result in Time-Out. At a time when children are calm, parents explain what behaviors will get a Time-Out, where Time-Out will take place, how long Time-Out will last, and how to calm down while in Time-Out. This is a little like teaching a child what to do if there is a fire. Parents practice and are prepared for all possible responses so that they can be calm and predictable.

Children in the Dinosaur School program will also have direct practice going to Time-Out and learn the breathing and self-talk strategies to help them calm down.

Focus: Supporting Children's Academic Skills (Program Eight, Supporting Your Child's Education, 6–8 Years or Interactive Reading Program, 3–6 Years)

Sometimes these children have experienced many moves and missed quite a bit of school. They may not have had much experience with adults reading to them or providing academic stimulation in the home. If this is true, parents or caregivers may need more information about working with teachers, setting up predictable homework routines and interactive reading experiences together. These two programs will be helpful to parents in providing this academic coaching at home and coordinating with teachers.

Focus: Child Training in Friendship Skills, Problem Solving and Emotion Language (Incredible Years Dinosaur Treatment Program)

While the parents or caregivers are receiving the parent program, the children may be enrolled in the small group child treatment program. This program will augment what the parents learning by providing the children with direct coaching and small group experiences with building feelings literacy, learning anger management and problem solving skills, and practicing friendship and communication skills. Through out this training, children will receive heavy doses of adult attention, praise and acceptance in order to promote their self-esteem and self-confidence in their abilities as well as their trust in adults who care about them.

Children With Divorcing Parents

Children react to divorce in a variety of ways. Some children become aggressive and angry about the family disruption in routine and households, others become sad and anxious about being abandoned by one parent, others confused about who to be loyal to, others feel lonely and different because of their family circumstances, and still others seem to show no feelings at all and act as if nothing has changed. Because children ages 3–8 years are still vacillating between fantasy and reality, most will have fantasies about their parents getting back together again and will have difficulty accepting the permanency of the divorce. Many children will worry about whether they are partially to blame for the divorce. They may remember arguments concerning them that may lead them to think that they caused their parents' divorce. In addition to these worries, they may also fear that their parents will abandon them. If it is possible for one parent to leave another parent, why not their child? Therefore, most children will feel insecure in their relationship with their parents, worried that their parent might not return and concerned about when they will see him or her. If the divorcing parent moves away or lives with someone else, this can add to the complexity of the fears of abandonment or reasons for anger.

Recommended IY Parent Programs

For parents who are divorcing, the BASIC Parent Programs (Early childhood or school age versions) is recommended as well as the Advance Parent program. In addition it is recommended that the children attend the Dinosaur small group treatment program while the parents are in the parenting program. It will take 22–26 weeks to complete these programs.

Table 5

Recommended IY Programs For Children With Divorcing Parents

Child population	Play Program 1	Child-Directed Play & Interactive Reading	Praise and Incentives Program 2	Limit Setting Handling Misbehavior Programs 3 & 4	Advance Programs 5-7	Dina Dinosaur Treatment Program
Children Ages 3-5	X	X	X	X	X	X
Child population	Play Program 1	Supporting Your Child's Education	Promoting Positive Behaviors Program 9	Reducing Inappropriate Behaviors Program 10	Advance Programs 5-7	Dina Dinosaur Treatment Program
Children Ages 6-8	X	X	X	X	X	X

Objectives for Parents

- Increase parents' understanding and awareness of their children's feelings concerning their divorce and to encourage their appropriate expression.
- Teach parents how to provide emotional support, reassurance and extra time through child-directed play interactions.
- Help parents to reassure their children that they are not responsible for the divorce and will not be abandoned.
- Encourage parents to give added praise and encouragement to increase their children self-esteem and sense of security in their relationship.
- Help parents set up behavior plans and develop salient rewards for targeted prosocial behaviors.
- Help parents to provide consistent limit setting and predictable routines visitation schedules in order to help children feel more secure.
- Help parents understand the importance of following through with promises and visit dates and times.
- Help parents set up consistent and regular communication and visits with their children.
- Help parents understand the importance of keeping their children out of the conflict between them.

Objectives for Children

- Increase children's accurate attributions for divorce.
- Increase self-esteem.
- Increase adjustment to family changes.
- Decrease anxiety and divorce-related concerns.
- Decrease problem behaviors.
- Increase problem-solving skills.
- Increase ability to talk about feelings, self-regulate, and cope with anger.
- Increase friendships and support.

Focus: Parents Strengthening their Relationship with their Children (Child-Directed Play Skills, Parent BASIC Program One, 3–8 Years)

Teaching parents child directed play skills is a central component to parents being able to help their children cope with their divorce because it helps children know that they are still cared for and important to their parents. Because divorcing parents are preoccupied with the stress of the divorce, financial changes, legal issues and new housing needs, they may be giving their children less attention than usual. Children may mistakenly attribute this lack of attention to their parents not loving them. Therefore taking the time to engage in *daily* play can be one of the most reassuring things parents can do for their children because it lets them know how important they are in their lives. By using the child-directed play principles taught in this program, parents will provide emotional coaching, enter into their child's fantasy world and discover what their children are thinking and feeling about their divorce. For example, a child may act out her parents' fights with puppets, or indicate that the baby in their make-believe family is worried his parent won't ever come back. Other themes of fear of abandonment, or feelings of guilt or blame because the parents are divorcing, or lack of power may be symbolically revealed in parent-child play interactions. When this happens, parents can work to correct inaccurate attributions and to gently reassure their children that they will be cared for and loved no matter what happens. Also by using the emotion coaching principles taught in this program, parents will provide their children with ways to talk with them about their feelings.

In addition to helping children talk about their unhappy feelings during play, this is also a time when parents need to focus on positive feelings, such as being excited, pleased, confident, happy, calm, curious, and joyful. Parents can share their own feelings of happiness being with their child playing together as well as comment on their children appearing happy. It is important for parents to understand that a range of feelings should be discussed with their children. During a time when children feel stressed and powerless and parents seem preoccupied, these intimate play times together can be the medicine that will help children cope successfully with their parents' divorce.

Focus: Parents giving Extra Encouragement and Assuring they are Wanted (Parent BASIC Program Two, Ages 3–6 Years or BASIC Program Nine, Ages 6–8 Years)

Giving extra encouragement and planning some fun family outings during these stressful times can be immensely reassuring to children. Divorce is naturally stressful to parents and results in parents' feelings of anger as well as depression and fear about the future. Children worry about their parents' unhappiness and emotional distance. Sometimes parents' anger and stress spills over into their parenting causing them to be more critical, impatient, and hostile towards their children. Therefore, in this program parents will be encouraged to make an effort to notice their children's helpful behaviors and to praise their cooperativeness with changing routines. For children who are acting out with misbehavior, parents will set up behavior plans with stickers and incentives for targeted positive behaviors.

On the other hand, sometimes parents' guilt about their divorce leads them to give their children gifts and to comply with all their requests and to avoid limit setting, perhaps as a way to get their children to like them better. This kind of incentive is not encouraged and can lead children becoming manipulative and oppositional in order to get a payoff.

For some children, one parent is less available or involved in their children's lives. When children have infrequent and unpredictable contact with a parent, they tend to internalize a belief that they are bad or not loveable. Therefore, the primary parent needs to help the child know that the problem is not with the child's loveableness but rather the parent's own issues. Here the goals will be for the parent to provide praise, love and nurturing in order to build the child's self-esteem.

Focus: Parents Learn the Importance of Consistent Limit Setting, Monitoring and Predictable Routines (Parent BASIC Program Three, 3–6 Years and Program Ten, 6–8 Years)

Because divorce results in changing routines, and perhaps children changing households each week, it is important that the custody plan be set up for young children in as predictable a routine as possible. It will be important that parents agree on a visitation or shared custody plan and then set limits with the children when necessary to follow through with the plan. For example, a child may resist going to one parent's house on the night that he is supposed to move homes. The parent should be sure to avoid giving in to this noncompliance and calmly follow through with the plan letting the child know that it is the parents who are in charge of the schedule and not the child.

Sometimes, because parents feel guilty about their divorce and the distress it is causing their children, they don't follow through with household rules. Or, because they are stressed and depressed they are inconsistent about enforcing the consequences for misbehavior. Thus children learn they can manipulate the rules or get away with noncompliance. In this program, parents are helped to understand the long-term consequences of this inconsistency or failure to monitor rules. Moreover, they learn that by providing consistency in rules and limit setting, they are actually helping their children feel safer because the rules are consistent and predictable.

Focus: Consistent Discipline (Parent BASIC Program Four, 3–6 Years and Program Ten, 6–8 Years)

For children who are reacting to divorce with misbehavior, it will be important for both parents to agree on a behavior management plan and decide which negative behaviors to target and the appropriate discipline strategy. This can be especially important if there is shared custody and children are changing homes frequently. For example, an 8-year-old child may have lost his TV privileges that evening because he did not do his homework, but because he is going to the other parent's house that evening, it will be necessary for the second parent to carry out this consequence. When possible, coordination between parents on a behavior plan will help the child improve his misbehaviors more quickly.

It is ideal if both parents can attend the parenting program so that there is consistency in responses to misbehavior from one home to another. In this part of the training program, parents are reminded of the importance of not fighting in front of the children and not saying disparaging remarks about the other parents.

Focus: Helping Divorced Parents to Learn Positive Communication and Effective Problem Solving Skills (Advance Parent Program, 4-8 years)

For divorcing parents it can be immensely helpful to include the Advance program after the BASIC program. For although the parents are divorcing each other, they are not divorcing the child and will still need to communicate and negotiate with each other regarding such things as school teacher meetings, parent care during holidays or work trips, changes in pick up and drop off at houses, medical issues, sports events, and so forth. The Advance program focuses on effective communication and problem-solving skills for adults as well as anger and depression management. This program can help divorcing couples have a structured format for discussing issues and making plans regarding their children.

Focus: Child Training to Promote Peer Support, Communication and Problem Solving (Child Dinosaur Treatment Program)

It can also be helpful, while divorcing parents are in a parent group, to offer their children the small group Dinosaur Treatment Program. Children make friends with other children who have similar experiences and are provided with the opportunities to share their feelings with each other. This group support can help normalize the divorce experience, provide them with friends who can help them talk about their problems, and to feel less lonely. During the first components of this program, the children

learn the “emotional vocabulary” to express a variety of feelings and are given opportunities to talk about how the divorce is impacting them. Puppets, games and books are used to engage the children and enable them to safely express feelings. The children, puppet and group leaders play the feeling spinning game, and when wherever the arrow stops, they name the feeling and tell a time they felt that way. These games and group discussions can help children understand that all feelings are acceptable as well as to clarify common misconceptions and loyalty conflicts. For example, the child who fears deep down that he is responsible for his parents’ break up will find comfort and relief from another child who expresses exactly the same feelings.

Another component of the program focuses on teaching the children problem solving skills. These skills will help them learn how to cope with some of the issues that their parents’ divorce is presenting them. For example, who will they spend their birthday with, what will they do when one of their parents doesn’t call at the agreed upon time, which house do they keep their bike or Nintendo at, how can I behave better so my parents will get back together, what do I do when I ‘m lonely and miss my parent, or, what do I do when my parents fight? These discussions of problems often reveal children’s fears, or self-blame and magical thinking. An important aspect of solving these problems is for the therapist to clarify misconceptions about the cause of divorce (“divorce is a grown up problem”) and to increase the child’s ability to separate adult responsibilities from child concerns. When discussions reveal that children have witnessed domestic violence, the group will focus on how to keep themselves safe and where to go for help if this should happen again. For many children, explaining a parent’s absence, and lack of involvement in their lives is a central issue. When children have infrequent contact with a parent, they may internalize that they are not loveable. Therapists will help these children understand that their parent’s absence has nothing to do with their own fantasized unloveability but rather the parent’s problems or guilt. The goal here will be to promote the self-esteem of these children.

The anger management component of this program helps the children learn how to calm down when they are frustrated, disappointed, or angry with their parent or family situation, so that they can think about possible ways they can solve the problem. Because feeling powerless can lead to escalating anger, these calming strategies can help children with their capacity to cope. They are also helped to sort out green light problems that they can try to solve and red light problems that they cannot solve. This distinction is important in helping them disengage from interparental conflicts and from issues that they cannot resolve. Puppets are used to present some of these common divorce-related scenarios and the children participate in helping teach the puppet how to solve the problem. For example, Wally the puppet tells the children he is lonely with his dad gone and asks them to help him with two things that will help him feel better.

Many children are embarrassed when they learn their parents are getting divorced and don’t know how to talk about it to their friends. By the time the children participate in the friendship and communication components of this program, they will have the communication and language skills to talk about their feelings and problems not only with other children but with their parents as well. The group format includes a great deal of role-playing and practice activities in friendly talk and asking for help so that children are provided with opportunities for practicing important coping skills.

Children With Internalizing Problems Such as Fears and Depression

In our studies of young children with conduct problems, we find over 60 percent of the children are also comorbid for internalizing problems (Beauchaine, Webster-Stratton et al. under review). Internalizing problems encompass a wide variety of conditions such as fears, social or school phobia, separation anxiety, and depression. Young children may not recognize these feelings or be able to talk about them with others. Consequently their anxieties may be expressed in a variety of symptoms including crying, clinging behavior, stomachaches, headaches, irritability, and withdrawal. Depressed children may misbehave or even express their sadness in the form of aggressive and anger in their

interactions with others. The goal of the treatment is help the parents understand how they can help their children manage their distress by teaching them social skills, problem solving and emotional vocabulary so that their children can recognize and cope successfully with their uncomfortable feelings.

Recommended IY Parent Programs

For parents of children with internalizing problems, the BASIC Parent Program (early childhood and school age versions) is recommended and will take 16–18 weeks to complete.

Table 6

Recommended IY Programs For Children With Internalizing Problems

Child population	Play Program 1	Child-Directed Play & Interactive Reading	Praise and Incentives Program 2	Limit Setting Handling Misbehavior Programs 3 & 4	Advance Programs 5-7	Dina Dinosaur Treatment Program
Children Ages 3-5	X	X	X	X	x	X
Child population	Play Program 1	Supporting Your Child's Education	Promoting Positive Behaviors Program 9	Reducing Inappropriate Behaviors Program 10	Advance Programs 5-7	Dina Dinosaur Treatment Program
Children Ages 6-8	X	X	X	X	x	X

Combine Parent Program With IY Child Dinosaur Treatment Program

While the parents are in the parent group, it is recommended that the small group child treatment group be offered to their children, which takes 18–22 weeks to complete. This program will help these children learn to make friends, to build their self-esteem, to express their emotions and to learn ways to solve some of their problems.

Objectives for Parents

- Educate parents of the nature and causes of social fears and anxieties.
- Encourage parents to understand ways to respond to children's expression of fear or depression.
- Teach parents how to do social and emotional coaching during child-directed play interactions with children so that children can express their emotions.
- Encourage parents to provide consistent and calm comforting for children but not to reinforce fears through modeling or undue attention.
- Encourage parents to give love, attention, praise and encouragement whenever possible for prosocial behaviors

- Encourage parents to have consistent rules and clear limit setting and to provide predictable, nonpunitive responses for misbehavior.
- Encourage parents to focus on joyful memories and positive emotions as well as family traditions.

Objectives for Children

- Promote children's positive self-esteem, self-confidence and sense of security.
- Increase children's social competence.
- Increase children's ability to cope with their emotional responses by being able to problem solve.
- Increase children's ability to identify and talk about their own feelings (positive and negative).

Focus: Parents Learn How to Promote their Children's Self-Confidence and Expression of Emotions (Child-Directed Play Skills, Parent BASIC Program One, 3–8 Years and Promoting Children's Social, Emotional, Problem Solving, and Academic Skills Through Child-Directed Play)

These programs teach parents how to provide emotion and social coaching during their playtimes with their children in order to strengthen their positive relationships and teach children the emotion language they need to express their feelings. Parents learn to provide consistent, positive attention for prosocial behaviors and to strengthen their children's self-esteem and confidence in making friends and coping with peer problems. They are encouraged to set up play dates for their children and to coach these peer interactions when friends visit. This experience gives the children added practice in social interactions and builds their confidence in their friendship skills. In so doing their social phobia decreases.

Parents are encouraged to challenge their children's expression of negative emotions especially when they are unrealistic. For example, parents help their children understand that is normal sometimes for them not to be asked to join in a game, or be told they can't play with them. They can help their children understand how to respond to this perceived rejection and encourage them to try again either with the same group or a different friend. It is important that parents not encourage children's withdrawal from social activities or their avoidant strategies. Instead, parents might say, "Those kids didn't mean to leave you out, they were already half way through the game and it was difficult to have another player. You need to stay calm, wait, watch and try again when they start the next game." This approach helps the parents to challenge the child's negative thinking that she has no friends or is not liked. Parents make lists of the kinds of things their children worry about and talk about ways to help their children challenge those negative thoughts. In addition, they are encouraged to provide discussions of positive emotions by pointing out times when their friends seem to enjoy playing with them or they seem happy or successfully stayed calm in a frustrating situation.

Research has indicated that rates of anxiety and depression are high in parents of anxious and depressed children. Therefore, parents learn about the "modeling principle" and how their own anxieties, sadness and fears can be modeled for children. They are cautioned to keep control of their own anxious talk or negative expression of affect with their children. They are also helped to avoid giving undue attention to their children's expression of negative emotion, so that they are not inadvertently reinforcing this expression. (See ADVANCE portion of Parent Curriculum where parents themselves learn how to manage their depression and anger with relaxation, self-talk, and problem-solving approaches.)

Focus: Parents Encourage their Children's Independence through Praise and Tangible Rewards (Parent BASIC Program Two, Ages 3–6 years or BASIC Program Nine, Ages 6–8 years)

Children who are anxious or depressed are praised for their efforts to handle their problems and to work out peer relationship problems. In the first parent group session, parents make a list of target goals for themselves and for their children. They identify the target child behaviors they want to decrease (e.g., clinging to them when they leave or resisting going to bed) and the positive replacement behaviors (e.g., separating easily). They work on ways to give labeled praise and providing incentives for the identified replacement behaviors. For example, "I'm so proud of you for staying overnight at your friend's house, you are really growing up." Or, "You were scared to present your show and share toy at school but you were brave and really showed how strong you are." Incentive plans are set up for children facing feared situations, such as sticker charts for staying in their bed all night. These behavior plans become the focus of group sessions and home assignments.

Focus: Establishing Clear Limits (Parent BASIC Program Three, 3–6 Years and Program Ten, 6–8 Years)

If parents are anxious or depressed, they may lack the confidence or energy to set effective limits or to follow through with consequences for their children's misbehavior. Moreover, they may be more likely to find fault with their children and to respond negatively to misbehaviors than to their positive behaviors because of their own sadness. Consequently in addition to practice looking for something positive in their children, parents are helped to clarify the important rules for their households and to follow through with them. By establishing clear household rules and practicing how to state them clearly and positively, not only do the children feel less anxious, but the parents themselves will find they spend less energy worrying about how they should respond.

Focus: Parents Learn Effective Discipline to Promote Persistence and Avoidance Responses (Parent BASIC Program Four, 3–6 Years and Program Ten, 6–8 Years)

Parents learn a variety of strategies including ignoring, redirecting, warning, logical and natural consequences and problem solving. The approach taken will depend on the nature of the child's problems. If the child is not aggressive or non compliant the emphases will be on what somatic behaviors can be ignored such as excessive complaining. Parents learn why it is important to encourage children to keep trying, to go right back to deal with the situation, and when they should problem solve with the children. Of course, all somatic complaints need to be checked out by a physician first before starting the program.

Focus: Parents Model Positive Communication and Problem Solving (ADVANCE Parenting Program 5, 6 & 7)

This program can be helpful for these parents because it focuses on communication skills, depression and anger management and ways to give and get support. It also teaches parents problem solving strategies. With these skills they will be better equipped to cope with their own anxieties and fears. Moreover, the parent group provides immense support and an ongoing network even after the program is completed.

Focus: Child Training in Feelings Language and Problem Solving (Incredible Years Dinosaur Treatment Program)

One of the first components of the Dinosaur Program is focused on the children learning to recognize their own feelings and to be able to put words to those feelings. Through the use of a relaxation thermometer children identify what kinds of things make them "tense" or fearful or sad and how their body reacts to these feelings. They draw body outlines and color in feelings in certain parts of the body. For example, using blue for sadness they identify their feeling fingerprints—that is the

places in their body that signal a happy or distressed feeling (e.g., racing heart, sweaty palms, stomach ache). This helps children recognize when they are feeling tense. Once children recognize and have words for these feelings then the children learn how to reduce their tenseness on the thermometer through relaxation exercises and bring their body temperature down into the “relaxed” zone. Large poster size pictures of the thermometer with arrows marking the change in stress are used to help children visualize the concept of changing feelings and help them understand that all feelings are okay.

Some of the strategies that the children learn to cope with their stressful or “problem” feelings include taking 3 deep breaths, visualizing a happy place where they can go in their imaginations, tensing and relaxing their muscles, and challenging their negative self talk with positive thoughts. Many games and small group activities are played to practice these self-soothing responses.

After the children develop a vocabulary for talking about feelings and some self-regulating skills, they learn a set of problem solving steps. Beginning with the first step of recognizing their problem through their problem feelings, they learn to generate possible solutions to these problems and to evaluate the best solution to use. Many of the solutions for these children will include cognitive strategies, such as, “Compliment yourself,” “Tell yourself you can try again,” “Take a deep breath and blow your bad feelings out of your fingers,” “Use your teasing shield,” “Throw away bad feelings,” “Tell a parent how you feel,” “Have a calming thought,” “Be brave and keep going,” “Do something that makes you feel happy,” “Tell yourself to keep trying,” and “Stop fearful thoughts.” There are over 40 laminated solution cards that children learn and can be used to cope with problems when they are feeling their stress build up on their worry thermometer. The children also learn how to evaluate their choices and how to give themselves self-praise for their efforts.

In addition to learning problem solving, another component of the program focuses on friendship skills and communication skills. Since many of these children are social phobic they need help in making friends and knowing how to enter in play or to play cooperatively with another child. In the Dinosaur program children have weekly coached practice sessions in play interaction skills with the other children.

Active participants in the Dinosaur Program are large child-size puppets known as Wally Problem Solver, Molly Manners, and Freddy and Felicity Feelings. Children find these puppets easy to talk to and more likely to talk with them than with therapists. These puppets are present at every session and disclose to the children their personal examples of stressful situations that are similar to the children’s difficulties. The children help the puppets solve their problems by teaching them the skills of relaxing, staying calm, and coming up with solutions. The puppets, in turn, learn from the children and provide models for how they have successfully coped with their anxiety. Together with the puppets the children engage in role plays, imagery, and many practices of coping skills.

Summary

In this chapter, we have shown how the Incredible Years Parenting Program focuses on teaching parents a common set of parenting and child-management “principles” and then applies these principles according to the parents’ target goals for their children or themselves. For example, parents of children who are impulsive, hyperactive, and inattentive learn about temperament and how their children’s biological make up makes it more difficult for their children to listen, follow directions, and play appropriately with other children. They learn the importance of clear limit setting and consistent follow through and ways to help coach their children’s social skills during play with other children. On the other hand, adoptive or foster parents are more likely to be focused on helping their children develop trusting relationships with them. This means they will spend more time on child-directed play and the relationship building components of the curriculum. Divorcing parents, on the other hand, will be working on achieving consistency from one home to another, keeping their children out of their adult conflict and providing them with consistent reassurance they are loved. Parents with children

who have somatic complaints will be sorting out which behaviors can be ignored and which ones need extra support or limit setting to keep the child from withdrawing from stressful situations.

In this discussion we have provided examples of ways the program is tailored to help parents learn how to respond to children with differing needs. In some cases we have recommended additional small group training for the child to help augment the parents' efforts as well as teacher training to promote consistency from home to school. The value of parents working in groups together to address their children's varying problems cannot be underestimated. The group support helps normalize and de-stigmatize their situation. For example, the single or divorcing parent realizes it is not because they are single that their child has a problem when they befriend couples in the group who have similar difficulties. Or, foster parents meet other foster parents and discover similar worries and issues regarding their attempts to parent a child who seems to reject their love. This sharing of similar experiences provides a supportive network that for some parent groups can last for years after the formal training. The therapists who have the privilege of facilitating these groups and their sharing will find this to be an ever challenging process and a highly rewarding experience.

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