

Length of Incredible Years (IY) Parent Program – Does dosage make a difference?

Over the past 15 years all of our Incredible Years control group intervention studies with children with conduct problems have evaluated IY programs that are between 20 to 26 2-hour sessions. We recently compared our IY 20 week parent program with a 10 week version of the IY program for families of young children diagnosed with ADHD. We found that parents in the 20 week program were more confident in their ability to handle their children's behavior than parents in the 10 week program. Parents in the longer program also reported fewer child problems and lower intensity of problems on the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory. Lastly, parents in the longer program reported that their children showed better emotion regulation than those in the shorter program.

Our prevention parent program is typically offered as 12 to 14 sessions that are 2-2 ½ hours in length. (Note that the program is often 1.5 times longer for non English speaking populations, so may run 18 sessions) With these prevention populations we have found that effect sizes increase as attendance increases.

The new updated preschool program (ages 3-5 years) is 14 sessions for prevention populations and a minimum of 20 sessions for children with conduct problems or families referred by child protective services.

Offering fewer than the recommended sessions for prevention and treatment populations will result in reduced effectiveness of the IY program.