



## **Invest in Kids**

**Location:** Colorado

### **Type of Agency:**

Invest in Kids (IIK) is a non-profit agency whose mission is to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable children and families throughout Colorado. Working in partnership with local communities, we identify, introduce, implement and ensure the success of research-based, proven programs.

Invest in Kids' unique approach includes finding, delivering and measuring the effectiveness of the programs we provide. First, we identify programs with proven track records or methodologies for success. Second, we introduce these programs to communities to see where and how they can net the greatest impact. Third, we implement the programs through agency partners, in collaboration with community leaders and other key constituents. Lastly, we ensure each program's ongoing success through strict adherence to guidelines and measurement of results.

After working to implement the Nurse-Family Partnership program in 50 of Colorado's 64 counties, Invest in Kids asked community members what the state needed next. Resoundingly, we heard that early childhood mental health and school readiness were foremost in people's minds. For this reason, Invest in Kids identified The Incredible Years program in 2002 after an intensive international search for a program with significant and sustained evidence that would benefit children, their families and their teachers. We began working in six communities around the state of Colorado with nine agency partners, implementing both the Basic Parent Program and the Classroom Dina Prevention Program in local schools, childcare centers, Head Start classrooms and community-based non-profit organizations.

Nine years later, we are partnering with local communities to support the planning, training, coaching, evaluation and ongoing quality improvement and sustainability of The Incredible Years Parent, Child and Teacher programs with over 6,500 children in 400 classrooms and with 600 parents in 50 parent groups in 17 counties across the state.

We recently launched an Invest in Kids peer coach initiative to encourage more local leaders to go through the IY Certification process and to build internal capacity in our local communities. We were able to accomplish this with the support of the Colorado Health Foundation and with consultation from Dr. Karen Blasé at the National Implementation Research Network and ongoing support from Dr. Webster-Stratton and the IY office in Seattle. The Colorado Health Foundation made a two-year, \$166,000 investment in the Invest in Kids peer coach model allowing us to formalize a process to identify, train, coach

and evaluate our peer coaches, recruited from high quality program implementers so that proven programs are sustained over time. Invest in Kids peer coaches will offer the training and coaching offered by our Program Consultants and will retain the knowledge and resources in local schools and local communities across the state. This initiative will allow Invest in Kids to leverage donor support by increasing the number of children and families served by The Incredible Years without requiring exponential growth of Invest in Kids staff.

Because as an organization, we want to ensure that our local replication efforts yield similar outcomes to the research trials, we conduct an evaluation of our program statewide each year. For the most recent evaluation report click [here](#), please contact Jodi Vongsakoun at [jvongsakoun@iik.org](mailto:jvongsakoun@iik.org). (2010-11 report is a companion to this document.)

In addition, Invest in Kids was awarded the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) 2011 Science and Service Award in the category of Mental Health Promotion for its outstanding implementation of The Incredible Years program. This national award recognizes community-based organizations that have successfully implemented recognized evidence-based interventions demonstrating positive outcomes. Invest in Kids was one of only 11 organizations nationally who received this honor and the only organization in its category.

We are proud of the strength and fidelity of our implementation in Colorado and of the numbers of children and families we continue to serve!

For more information, see:

Invest in Kids  
[www.iik.org](http://www.iik.org)

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