



BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON VISIT OF CAROLYN WEBSTER-STRATTON – FOUNDER OF INCREDIBLE YEARS PROGRAMMES FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

Dr Carolyn Webster-Stratton is Professor and Director of the Parenting Clinic at the University of Washington. Thirty years ago she founded the Incredible Years programmes. Since then Incredible Years programmes have been applied in more than twelve countries, including New Zealand.

The parent and teacher programmes are being delivered in New Zealand as part of the *Positive Behaviour for Learning Action Plan* – to 12,000 parents and 5,000 teachers by 2014.

Carolyn is visiting New Zealand from Seattle **from 14-24 March 2010**. She will be training Ministry of Education and NGO staff and Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour to become group leaders to deliver the classroom management programmes to New Zealand teachers. The Ministry of Education has slowly been building its delivery of the Incredible Years parent and teacher programmes over the past five years.

ABOUT CAROLYN WEBSTER-STRATTON

Carolyn Webster-Stratton is internationally renowned as a leading authority on teaching parenting and teacher classroom management skills to prevent antisocial behaviour in children and promote social competence and problem solving skills. She has both a distinguished academic career and extensive 'hands-on' experience in clinical work and with delivering these programmes. While she insists that she is 'just an ordinary person', she has made some extraordinary contributions both academically, personally and professionally.

Academic achievements:

- Masters in Paediatric Nursing from Yale University.
- Outstanding Alumna of Yale University School of Nursing.
- Masters in Public Health from Yale School of Medicine.
- PhD in Educational Psychology from the University of Washington.
- PhD - dissertation on the Effectiveness of Videotape Modelling Parental Education.
- Outstanding Alumna of University of Washington Department of Education.

Personal perspectives

- 'Single, quite ordinary individuals such as myself have the power to make a difference in their small corner of the world – whether it be with their family, children, community or something larger. This notion is a belief system I hold firmly – even if, as my mother says, I am always trying to change things – at least I will have said I had fun trying to change things!'
- Brought up in Canada, Webster-Stratton had what she calls 'English Parenting' – firm discipline and clear limit setting in an authoritative manner with little discussion about feelings, but at the same time a strong emphasis on working together as a family team.

Professional achievements

- Carolyn travelled to Africa in 1970 as part of a project to send white and black Americans together to Africa to promote greater understanding of each other's cultural heritage. Her challenge was to train a group of indigenous people to change the toilet habits of the local people to prevent the spread of schistosomiasis and to promote healthier births and babies. She took a small generator and slide projector with her which began her interest in videotape modelling.

- In 1974, as a qualified nurse, Carolyn worked at the Alaska Indian Health Service as Nurse Practitioner in the Family and Child Guidance Clinic. The Service provided mental health services to Native Americans, including prenatal and parenting classes.
- In 1983 Carolyn became a Licensed Clinical Psychologist.
- She was Director of the Paediatric Nurse Practitioner Programme at Washington University from 1979 to 1990. In 1989 she was appointed Professor.
- In 1982 Carolyn started set up the Parenting Clinic at the University of Washington and in 1990 gave up the Paediatric Nurse Practitioner Programme directorship to concentrate full-time on the parenting clinic and on research. The clinic has now helped over 1000 families of children with conduct problems through 'The Incredible Years Programmes'
- Carolyn has received a Research Scientist Award from the National Institute of Mental Health.
- She was visiting Professor at Oxford University and at The Maudsley Hospital in South London in 1990 and 1997.

ABOUT THE INCREDIBLE YEARS PROGRAMMES FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

The Incredible Years programmes for parents and teachers reduce challenging behaviours in children aged three to eight years, and increase their social and self-control skills.

The Incredible Years programmes have been evaluated by the developer and independent investigators. Evaluations have included randomised control group research studies with diverse groups of parents and teachers. The programmes have been found to be effective in strengthening teacher and parent management skills, improving children's social competence and reducing behaviour problems.

Evidence shows that the programmes have turned around the behaviours of up to 80 percent of the children of participating parents and teachers. If left unchecked these behaviours would mean those children are at greater risk in adulthood of unemployment, mental health problems, substance abuse, early pregnancy/early fatherhood, criminal offending, multiple arrests and imprisonment, higher rates of domestic violence and shortened life expectancy.

Incredible Years gives parents and teachers strategies to manage behaviours such as aggressiveness, ongoing tantrums, and acting out behaviour such as swearing, whining, yelling, hitting and kicking, answering back, and refusing to follow rules.

It is estimated that around five percent of children in New Zealand have severe behaviour difficulties (are on what is clinically called an 'anti-social pathway').

Through using a range of strategies, parents and teachers help children regulate their emotions and improve their social skills so that they can get along better with peers and adults, and do better academically. It can also mean a more enjoyable family life.

Parents will be referred to this programme on the basis of an assessment of their child as part of the B4 School Checks or through agencies such as Child, Youth and Family. This programme will also support self referrals.

HOW IT WORKS

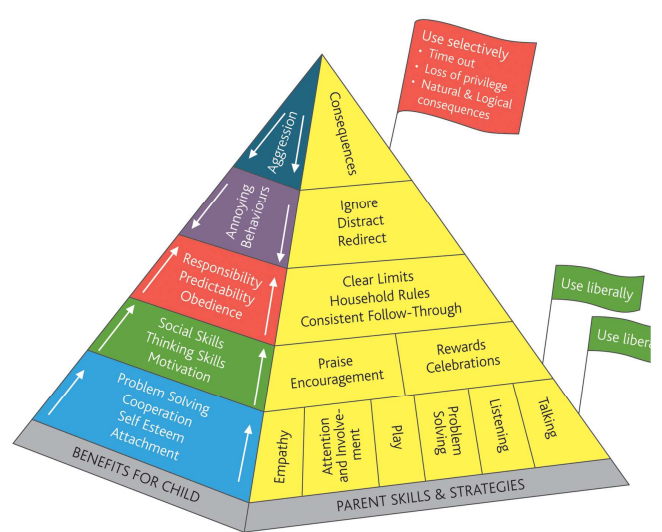
Parents or teachers meet as a group, with two trained facilitators and are given opportunities to collectively and individually develop new strategies for managing their children.

The course includes role plays, homework, setting personal goals, and feedback. Facilitators use video taped scenes to encourage group discussion, problem-solving and sharing of ideas. Parents and teachers are given handouts, activities to practice with children, and reminder notes to put on their refrigerator or blackboards.

WHAT THE PARENT PROGRAMME COVERS

Topics covered include:

- how to play/spend special time together
- praising and rewarding children
- communicating positively
- setting up predictable routines and schedules
- setting effective limits
- dealing with disobedience, selectively using distractions, ignoring, time out and other consequences
- helping children learn to problem-solve.
- how to promote children's success in school
- problem-solving with teachers.



Parenting Pyramid – The Incredible Years.

WHAT THE TEACHER PROGRAMME COVERS

This programme is for early childhood and classroom teachers of children aged from three to eight years. It focuses on:

- effectively using teacher attention, praise and encouragement
- using incentives for difficult behaviour problems
- proactive teaching strategies
- how to manage difficult classroom behaviours with discipline hierarchies
- the importance of building positive relationships with students
- how to teach empathy, social skills and problem-solving in the classroom.

The programme is delivered through a series of six one-day workshops offered monthly, with a follow-up refresher.

The results include:

- a decline in levels of classroom aggression
- an increase in teacher capability and confidence
- a more positive climate for learning in the classroom
- improvements in the management of difficult and challenging behaviour
- improvements in overall behaviour
- greater engagement in the classroom
- increased school readiness skills
- improvements in learning.

It is hoped that teacher training providers will adopt this programme as a core element of initial teacher education.

ABOUT POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING

Positive Behaviour for Learning is a series of programmes and initiatives that will be rolled out over five years to address behaviour problems in New Zealand schools. This includes programmes and initiatives for parents and teachers, school-wide programmes, improved behaviour crisis support for schools and improved intensive programmes for individual students with severe behaviour problems. *Positive Behaviour for Learning* is a collaboration between the Ministry of Education and eight other education sector organisations.

CONTACT DETAILS

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