
The Incredible Years Preschool/ Early Childhood & School Age BASIC Parent Series

FY 2012-2013

North Carolina Outcomes Evaluation
Executive Summary

Prepared for Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina
October 2013

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Introduction

The Incredible Years BASIC Parent Program

The Incredible Years (IY) BASIC Parent Program is an evidence-based parent training program focused on the healthy development of young children by strengthening parenting competencies and promoting effective strategies for managing children's challenging behaviors. There are four curricula of the Parent Program grouped according to children's ages starting in infancy. The two curricula being implemented in local communities across the state and supported by Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina are

- Preschool/Early Childhood BASIC Series (for parents of children ages 3-6 years)
- School Age BASIC Series (for parents of children ages 6-12 years)

Preschool/Early Childhood BASIC Series (for parents of children ages 3-6 years)

The Preschool/Early Childhood BASIC Series focuses on strengthening parenting skills and consists of components which build upon one another. The series includes:

1. Strengthening Children's Social Skills, Emotional Regulation and School Readiness Skills
2. Using Praise and Incentives to Encourage Cooperative Behavior
3. Positive Discipline-Rules, Routines and Effective Limit Setting
4. Positive Discipline-Handling Misbehavior

School Age BASIC Series (for parents of children ages 6-12 years)

The School Age BASIC Series focuses on the importance of promoting positive behaviors, building social skills, and effective praise. The components of this series include:

1. Promoting Positive Behaviors in School Age Children
2. Reducing Inappropriate Behaviors in School Age Children
3. Supporting Your Child's Education

Lead by trained facilitators, parents and caregivers attend weekly group sessions for 14 to 16 weeks to practice skills that promote children's academic, social, and emotional development.

Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina

Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina (PCANC) is the only statewide organization dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Through investment in innovative programs proven to prevent child maltreatment before it occurs, PCANC works with North Carolina's communities to help build safe, stable, nurturing, and healthy relationships for all children. PCANC provides training, technical assistance, and coaching to community organizations implementing family-strengthening programs, and works in partnership with state agencies and private organizations such as The North Carolina Partnership for Children, the North Carolina Division of Social Services, and The Duke Endowment to support implementation of evidence-based prevention programs.

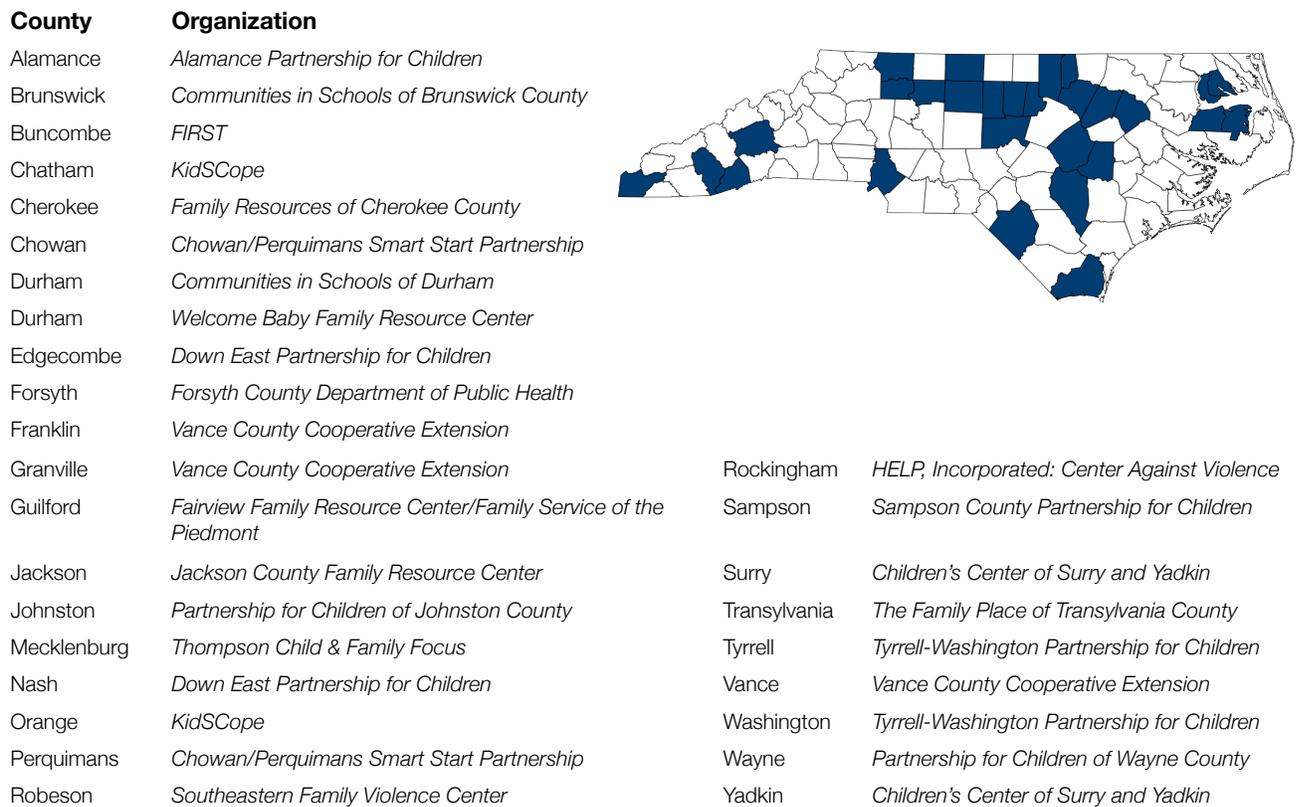
Scope of Evaluation

PCANC contracted with Harman & Associates, LLC, an independent education research consulting firm, to evaluate the 2012-2013 outcomes of The Incredible Years BASIC Parent Program in North Carolina. Outcomes were measured across the state using a self-reported, pre-test/post-test model for the following evaluation instruments :

- Parent Practices Interview (PPI), with subscales for Harsh Discipline, Inconsistent Discipline, Appropriate Discipline, Positive Parenting, and Clear Expectations
- Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI), with subscales for Intensity (frequency of behavior) and Problem (the degree to which parents find the behavior problematic)

The 2012-2013 statewide evaluation includes data from 22 IY-Network member sites serving 28 of North Carolina's 100 counties. These sites conducted 59 program groups (series), serving 672 parents/caregivers, representing 563 families.

Figure 1. Counties represented by IY-Network participant organizations



Evaluation Design

Methodology

Participant Base

The 2012-2013 Incredible Years BASIC Parent Program was delivered at 22 sites across North Carolina through funding by the North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) and the North Carolina Division of Social Services (DSS) with the target audience being families experiencing challenges with their children's behavior. Prospective participants were custodial parents and supportive adults who helped parent the identified child and voluntarily sought enrollment based on fliers and information shared in their community, such as doctors' offices, newspaper articles, postings in community settings, letters from school counselors, and mailings to a parent education listserv. Once the families made contact with the providing agency, the agency used a screening questionnaire to help determine if a parent was a good match for the group. Considerations for participation included attendance commitment, willingness to complete home practice, ages of children in the home, and type of behavioral challenges that were of concern to the parent(s). Groups of 8 to 12 adults plus two trained IY group facilitators were considered optimal. Groups of fewer than six or more than 14 were discouraged.

Parent/caregiver participation in this outcomes evaluation was entirely voluntary. Group facilitators were provided a script to use as a guideline to explain the purpose of the evaluation and collected signed consent forms from those who agreed to participate. The consent form and the measurement tools described below were offered in both English and Spanish.

Measurement

Program outcomes were measured by a self-reported pre-test/post-test model using the instruments described below.

Parent Practices Interview (PPI) - The Parent Practices Interview (PPI) is a 72-item questionnaire adapted from the Oregon Social Learning Center's Discipline Questionnaire and revised for young children. It can be administered as an interview or a self-report questionnaire completed by the child's primary caregiver(s) and is composed of seven subscales—Harsh Discipline (14 items), Harsh for Age (9 items), Inconsistent Discipline (6 items), Appropriate Discipline (16 items), Positive Parenting (15 items), Clear Expectations (3 items), and Monitoring (9 items)—rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (always). It should be noted that although the PPI subscales were revised in 2006 to six subscales, North Carolina continues to use the 1998, 7-subscale format and associated scoring for comparison consistency year-to-year. Five subscales of interest for this report are: Harsh Discipline, Inconsistent Discipline, Appropriate Discipline, Positive Parenting, and Clear Expectations.

Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI) - The Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI) is a 36-item questionnaire from PAR, Inc. It can be administered as an interview or a self-report questionnaire completed by the child's primary caregiver(s) and is composed of two subscales used to assess children's behavior problems. It includes an Intensity Scale, which measures the frequency of each problem behavior and a Problem Scale which reflects parents' tolerance of the behaviors and the distress caused. The ECBI is intended to assess both the type of behavior problems and the degree to which parents find them problematic.

Facilitators administered the PPI and the ECBI to voluntary participants both prior to the start of curriculum delivery (pre-test) and again at the completion of the curriculum (post-test). If more than one parent or caregiver from a single family attended the series, each completed the instruments independently but was asked to consider the same one child in their responses, as confirmed by the coded Child ID on each form.

Although the outcomes evaluation is based on parent self-report, Rosenbalm & Christopoulos found a "substantial correlation" between independent observer ratings and PPI/ECBI scores, recommending that North Carolina continue to use this method as a cost-effective, reliable means of assessing program quality at the state and local level. (Rosenbalm, K., & Christopoulos, C.,

2011. Incredible Years: Expected Effects and Recommendations for Monitoring Outcomes. Retrieved from http://www.childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu/pdfs/projects/IY_Eval_Review_final.pdf

Summary of Program Results

Participant Demographics

Parent Participant Demographic Highlights

- Parental relationship to child: 71% Mother, 14% Father, 12% Other Relative, 3% Other Non-Relative
- Highest level of education: 29% high school diploma/GED, 27% some college, 23% college graduate, 19% less than high school
- Primary language spoken at home: 74% English, 21% Spanish
- Annual family income: 74% less than \$30,000; 15% \$30,000 to \$50,000; 10% more than \$50,000, 1% not reported

Target Child Demographic Highlights

- Gender: 61% male, 39% female
- Race/ethnicity: 33% White, not-Hispanic; 28% Black or African American; 26% Hispanic/Latino of any race
- Age group:* 36% (4 to 5 years), 32% (6 to 10 years), 19% (3 years)

*Age reflects the target child's age on the first day of the parent's IY group.

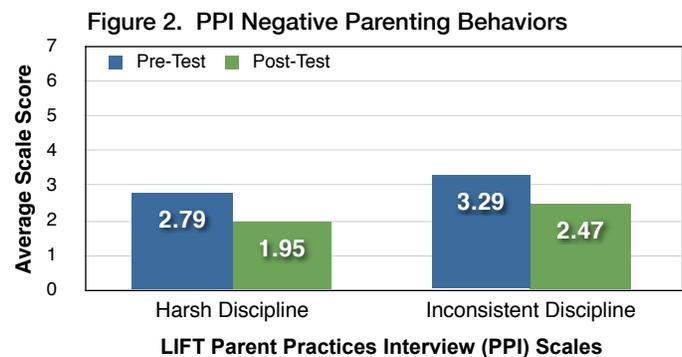
Outcomes Evaluation

For the period of July 2012 through June 2013, across 22 program sites, 59 IY series (groups) were conducted with a total enrollment of 672 parents/caregivers, representing 563 families. These series (groups) provided 489 (72.8%) sets of matched pre-test/post-test evaluation instruments for this report. Individual data sets met analysis criteria for one or more scales, but did not necessarily meet analysis criteria for every scale.

Parent Practices Interview (PPI)

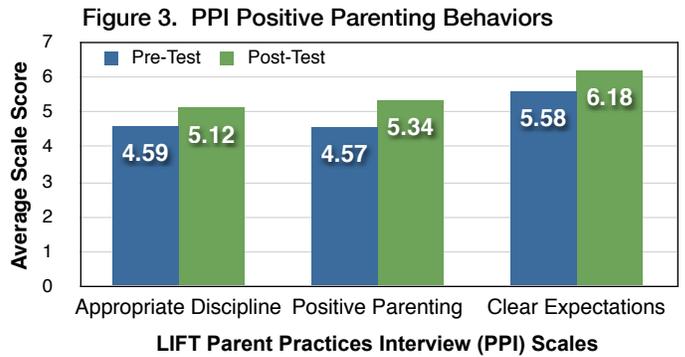
Negative Parenting Behaviors

- 468 parents completed all 14 items included on the **Harsh Discipline** scale. Parents significantly decreased their use of harsh discipline practices with their children. The average pre-program Harsh Discipline scale score on the PPI was 2.79 before participating in the program compared to 1.95 after. **This decrease in parents' reported use of harsh discipline practices with their young children is statistically significant and represents a large program effect** ($t_{(460)}=-19.455$, $p<0.001$; $d=-1.06$).
- 472 parents completed all 6 items included on the **Inconsistent Discipline** scale. Parents significantly decreased their use of inconsistent discipline practices with their children. The average pre-program Inconsistent Discipline scale score was 3.29; the average post-program scale score was 2.47. **This decrease in parents' reported inconsistent use of discipline practices with their young children is statistically significant and represents a large program effect** ($t_{(464)}=-18.300$, $p<0.001$; $d=-0.94$).



Positive Parenting Behaviors

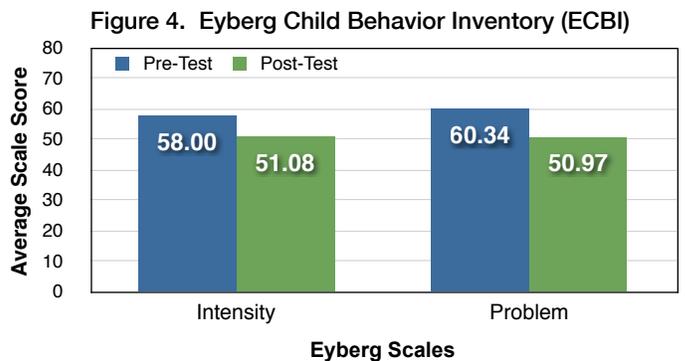
- 464 parents completed all 16 items included on the **Appropriate Discipline** scale. Parents significantly increased their use of appropriate discipline practices with their children. The average pre-program Appropriate Discipline scale score was 4.59; the average post-program scale score was 5.12. **This increase in parents' reported use of appropriate discipline practices with their young children is statistically significant and represents a moderate program effect** ($t_{(456)}=11.188$, $p<0.001$; $d=0.55$).
- 462 parents completed all 15 items included on the **Positive Parenting** scale. Parents significantly increased their use of positive parenting practices with their children. The average pre-program Positive Parenting scale score was 4.57; the average post-program was 5.34. **This increase in parents' reported use of positive parenting practices with their young children is statistically significant and represents a large program effect** ($t_{(454)}=18.770$, $p<0.001$; $d=1.01$).
- 475 parents completed all 3 items included on the **Clear Expectations** scale. Parents significantly increased their communication of clear expectations to their children. The average pre-program Clear Expectations scale score was 5.58; the average post-program scale score was 6.18. **This increase in parents' reported use of clear expectations with their young children is statistically significant and represents a moderate program effect** ($t_{(467)}=9.336$, $p<0.001$; $d=0.53$).



Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI)

Child Behavior

- 450 parents completed 33 or more of the 36 items included on the **Intensity** scale. Parents reported a significant decrease in the frequency (intensity scale) with which their children displayed problem behaviors. The average pre-program Intensity T-scale score was 58.00; the average post-program T-scale score was 51.08. **This decrease in parents' reported frequency of problem behaviors by their children is statistically significant and represents a large program effect** ($t_{(442)}=-16.452$, $p<0.001$; $d=-0.71$).
- 408 parents completed 33 or more of the 36 items included on the **Problem** scale. Parents reported a significant decrease in the number of behaviors displayed by their children that they considered problematic. The average pre-program Problem T-scale score was 60.34; the average post-program T-scale score was 50.97. **This decrease in number of behaviors that parents' reported as being a problem for them is statistically significant and represents a large program effect** ($t_{(404)}=-16.565$, $p<0.001$; $d=-0.89$).
- The decrease in the number of parents with clinically significant Intensity scale scores is statistically significant.



Dosage Effect

For curriculum-based educational programs like the Incredible Years, the level of exposure that participants have to the program's elements is often thought of as dosage. For the IY program, two questions were explored regarding dosage effect. First, is attending the second session in the IY program series significantly correlated with change in participants' PPI and ECBI scale scores? Second, is attending more program sessions in the IY program series significantly correlated with change in participants' PPI and ECBI scale scores?

Second session attendance

Agencies informed potential participants that they were expected to attend session 2. The second session in the series is considered by the program's developers to be foundational because it is the first full content session on child-directed play/special time. The program developers postulate that parents that are present for this foundational session on child-directed play/special time are more likely to have success in the program. Of the 489 paired pre-test/post-test data sets, 455 participants attended the second IY session and 34 did not.

The dosage effect of participating in the second session of the IY program was analyzed by calculating the correlation between second session attendance and change in scale score (post-pre) for each PPI and ECBI scale. Table 1 below shows the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) for each PPI and ECBI scale, as well as the p-value associates with each correlation coefficient. Of the five PPI scales only the Clear Expectations Scale showed a statistically significant increase ($r=0.118$, $p=0.005$) in mean scale score from pre-test to post-test for participants that attended the second session compared to those that did not.

Table 1. Dosage Effect: Session Two Attendance

	N	Mean Change in Scale Score (Post - Pre)	Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Harsh Discipline Scale	468	-0.837	-0.027	0.282
Inconsistent Discipline Scale	472	-0.826	-0.014	0.384
Appropriate Discipline Scale	464	0.525	-0.004	0.470
Positive Parenting Scale	462	0.766	0.022	0.317
Clear Expectations Scale	475	0.596	0.118	0.005
ECBI Intensity Scale	450	-6.922	-0.019	0.347
ECBI Problem Scale	408	-9.363	-0.055	0.135

Total session attendance

Parents/caregivers attended weekly group sessions for 14 to 16 weeks. Individual groups had the flexibility to extend sessions based on the needs of the group, but in order to successfully graduate from the program, participants were required to miss no more than three sessions. **Of the 489 paired pre-test/post-test data sets, 33 participants attended fewer than the minimum of 11 sessions. 93% of participants attended 11-16 sessions with an average of 13 sessions attended.**

The dosage effect of the IY program was analyzed by calculating the correlation between total number of sessions attended and change in scale score (post-pre) for each PPI and ECBI scale. Table 2 below shows the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) for each PPI and ECBI scale, as well as the p-value associates with each correlation coefficient. Of the five PPI scales only

Inconsistent Discipline Scale showed a statistically significant change ($r=-0.088$, $p=0.029$) in mean scale score from pre-test to post-test for participants that attended more sessions compared to those that attended fewer.

Table 2. Dosage Effect: Total Session Attendance

	N	Mean Change in Scale Score (Post - Pre)	Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Harsh Discipline Scale	468	-0.837	-0.012	0.400
Inconsistent Discipline Scale	472	-0.826	-0.088	0.029
Appropriate Discipline Scale	464	0.525	0.061	0.096
Positive Parenting Scale	462	0.766	0.025	0.297
Clear Expectations Scale	475	0.596	-0.690	0.066
ECBI Intensity Scale	450	-6.922	-0.033	0.243
ECBI Problem Scale	408	-9.363	-0.073	0.071

Conclusion

Statistically significant improvements in parenting practices and child behavior were calculated across all evaluation scales. These outcomes are consistent with those reported in numerous evaluations of The Incredible Years BASIC Parent Program over the last 25 years and contribute further evidence to the effectiveness of the program. The lack of statistically significant findings for dosage effect should be interpreted with caution. Nearly all participants (93%) attended the second IY session and over two-thirds (67%) attended between 12 and 14 sessions in total. The variation in both of these measures was extremely small and may be masking any dosage effects associated with the IY program.

It should be noted that program effectiveness is dependent on fidelity of implementation and the program must continue to be delivered across all provider sites consistently and as the developer intended. Via its IY Network, Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina, in partnership with committed state and private funders, provides the ongoing supports and training necessary to ensure the continued quality of program delivery.