

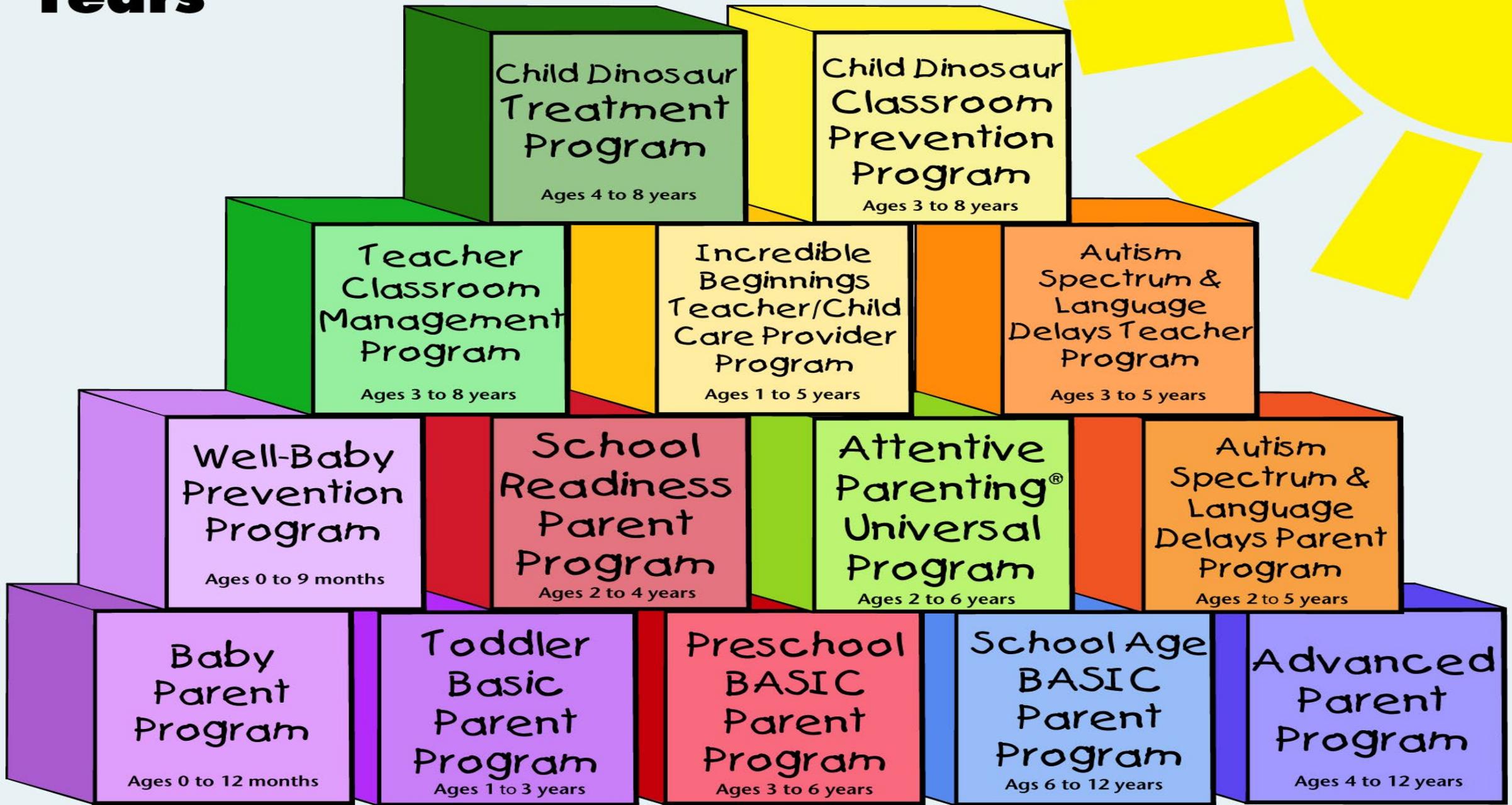
Evidence from NI Incredible Years® Autism Spectrum & Language Delays Program for Parents

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Aims

- ▶ The Northern Ireland (NI) Context
 - ▶ Program selection
 - ▶ Outcomes to date
 - ▶ Reflections
 - ▶ Future plans
 - ▶ Current Research project
- 



NI context

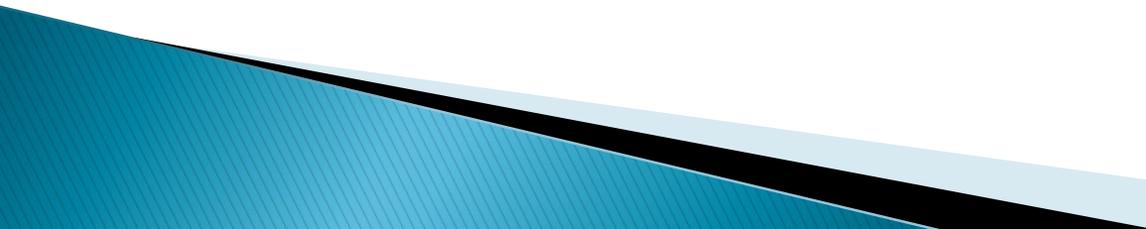
Source: Information Analysis Directorate

(DoH & NISRA publication May 2023, Rodgers, H., & McCluney, J.)

- ▶ The estimated prevalence of autism within the school aged population in Northern Ireland was **5.0%** in 2023 (1.2% in 2008/9), 6.5% of 11-14 year olds
- ▶ Prevalence rate of autism in males 7.3%; in females 2.7% (almost 3 times more likely in males)
- ▶ 40% higher in most deprived decile compared to NI average
- ▶ In 2022/23, 18% of children diagnosed with autism did not have any special educational needs whereas **59%** were classified at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice on Special Educational Needs, indicating they had a Statement of SEN.

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/asd-children-ni-2023.pdf>

Why this program?

- ▶ Importance of delivering a manualised, evidence based, tried and tested program
 - ▶ Parents as primary agents of change
 - ▶ Importance of length of program (13/14 weeks)
 - ▶ Tailoring topics to the individual child (1 - 7 year olds)
 - ▶ Neurodiversity - differences not deficits
 - ▶ Video mediated learning (video clips dated 2016)
 - ▶ Importance of buddy calls, nurturing parents
 - ▶ Suitable to deliver online
 - ▶ Suited to needs of children with neurodevelopmental difficulties, and speech and language delays
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Getting into the child's attention spotlight

- ▶ Child-Directed Narrated Play
- ▶ Pre-academic and persistence coaching
- ▶ Social coaching promotes friendship skills
- ▶ Emotion coaching for emotional literacy
- ▶ Pretend Play & puppetry for Empathy, social skills
- ▶ Promoting Self-regulation skills
- ▶ Praise and rewards to motivate children
- ▶ Effective Limit Setting, Behaviour Management



Visual aids

ABCs

Sensory likes

Imitation

Evidence base (feasibility and acceptability)

- ❖ A pilot trial of the Incredible Years® Autism Spectrum and Language Delays Programme (IY-ASLD) (Hutchings, J. et al., 2016). **Results** Vignettes rated particularly helpful, positive SDQ results, group discussion
- ❖ Report on two pilot programmes of IY-ASLD, Gordon, J. (2017) [Ministry of Parenting, Essex]. **Results** Autism Parent Stress Index (APSI), qualitative comments overwhelmingly positive
- ❖ The IY-ASLD: a report for NHSCT, McAleese M., & Nesbitt, A., (2018) **Results** statistically significant improvements in frequency of behaviours characteristic of Autism and the impact on everyday functioning. Statistically significant decreases in parental stress and problematic behavioural difficulties
- ❖ Spanish Multi-centre RCT (Valencia et al., 2021) ASD, communication and socialisation difficulties. 12 measures

What have we been doing in NI?

Mixed Methods design for all programmes

Quantitative

- ▶ Paired t tests used to compare pre/post results across 4 measures: Autism Impact Measure (AIM); Autism Parenting Stress Index (APSI); Child Behaviour Inventory (ECBI); and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).

Statistically significant results found across

- ▶ all 4 measures when data from 66 participants combined (70% online, 30% face to face)

Qualitative

Evaluative comments, built-in IY evaluation questionnaires, and video evaluation

What have we found out so far? *Outcomes*

Measure	Mean Pre	Mean Post	P value	Effect size
AIM 1 Freq	57.46	51.21	.00	0.64 (medium)
AIM 1 Impact	51.98	41.27	.00	0.92 (large)
AIM 2 Impact	20.62	17.52	.09	n/a
APSI	29.33	20.45	.00	0.94 (large)
Eyberg Freq*	151.74	137.22	.00	0.49 (Medium)
Eyberg Probs	19.42	14.85	.02	0.57 (medium)
SDQ TD*	22.33	18.81	.00	0.75 (medium)

Note: p values less than .05 or .01 ($p < .05$; $p < .01$) are statistically significant decreases; p values greater than .05 ($p > .05$) are not statistically significant.

Delivery format

Parent vote! 13 online 11 face to face. Offer a choice or once a month meet ups?

Attending online suited some parents...

- ▶ No travel
- ▶ No childcare required
- ▶ Saved time
- ▶ 'Handier' regarding school pick-ups
- ▶ Convenient to use mute and camera off at times
- ▶ Suited when children are sick
- ▶ Suited shy / socially anxious
- ▶ High attendance rates (over 81%) and retention rates (over 85%)
- ▶ Challenges include paperwork completion and evaluation/data collection (20% missing data)

What has worked? *Reflections*

▶ Group Leader skill level
and access to Supervision

Group Leader knowledge
of Autism and associated
difficulties

High Level
Outcomes

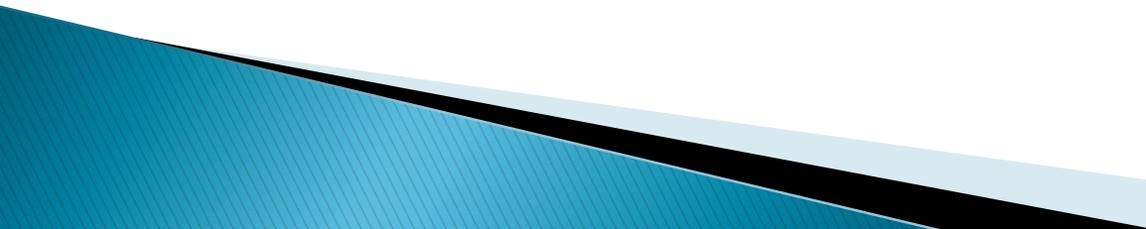
Investment of Time (intro
sessions / screening /
relationship building /
buddy calls)

Program Specifics
(fidelity/delivery format/
attendance & retention)

In parents' words....

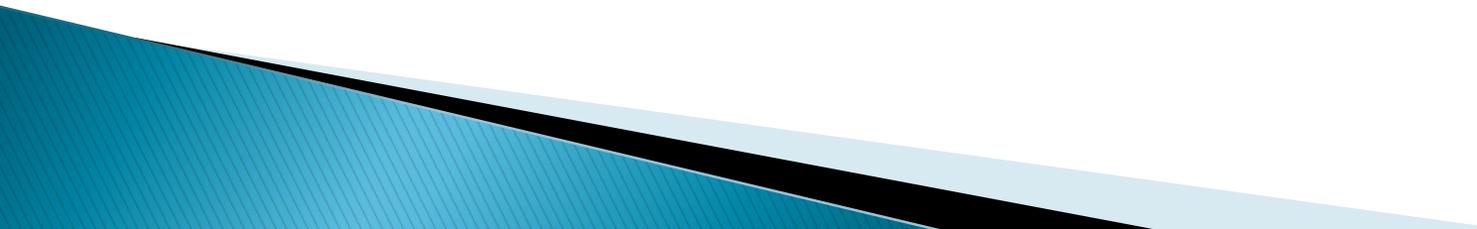
“The difference in my son now only half-way through the course is unbelievable. He is so much **calmer**, understanding and easier to work with. His outbursts are **easier managed** and are less frequent. He is **able to communicate to us better** what is his problem or where he needs help. He has even started commenting and helping other kids in his class. I am blown away at the difference and would highly recommend this course to anyone who is struggling”. Deirdre*

*Pseudonym



“I have found the program useful and engaging. The main thing I’ve learned is **how to get into my son’s attention spotlight**. We have noted more eye contact from Ben and the **use of more words** by not asking him questions but by commenting on what he is doing in the moment. The group have been lovely, Angela and yourself are incredible at what you do. I really liked **listening to everyone’s story** and sharing my own as everyone was really helpful and understanding. Thanks very much”.

Laura*



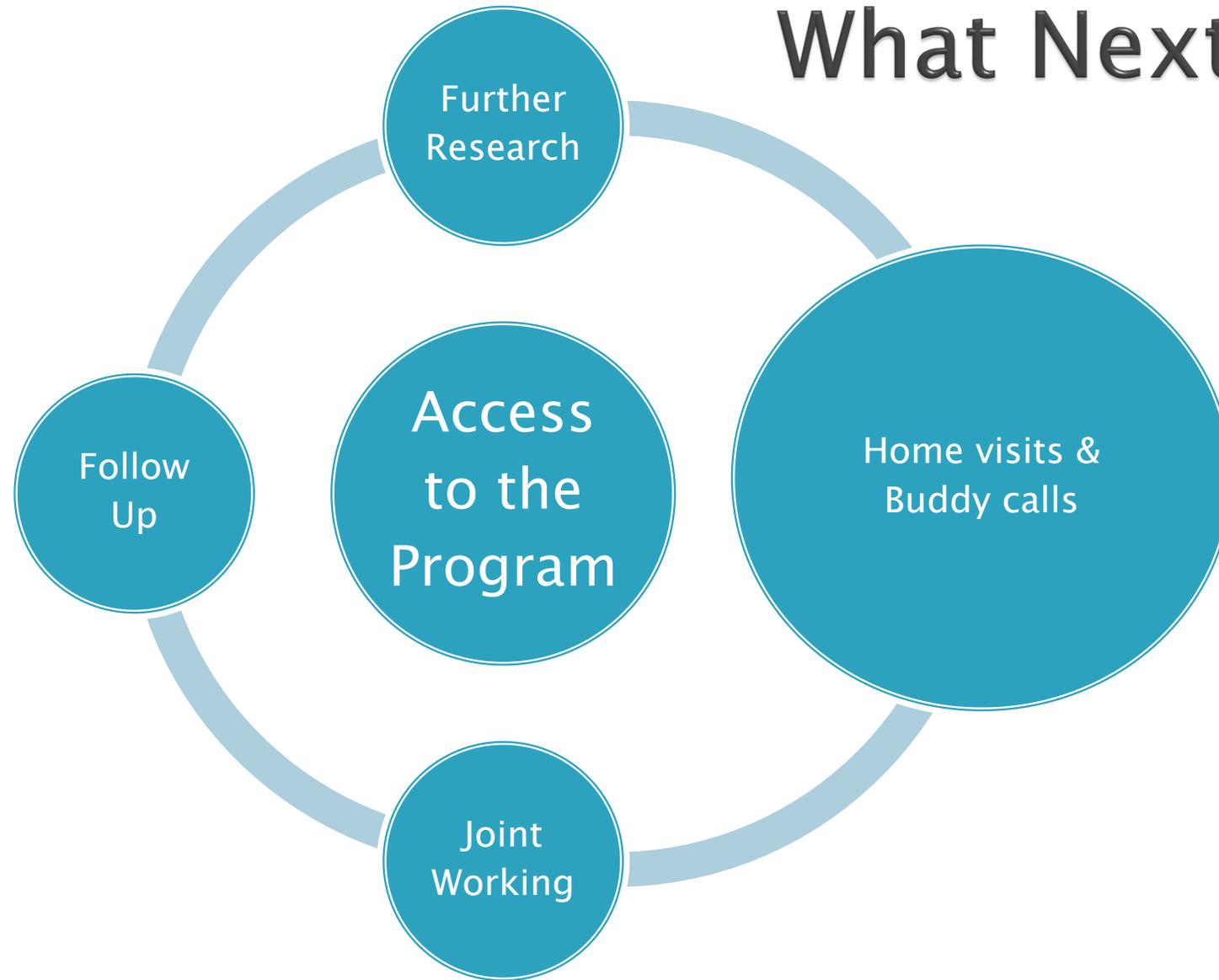
“Wow! The advice that's given is **tailored to your child's needs**, now I have done at least 6 courses in the past none have compared to the incredible years, the others where only "general information" these ladies do their very best coming up with **different strategies for every individual**.

They are so down to earth they make you feel so **welcome and comfortable** to share your experiences I also suffer with anxiety so speaking out is a massive achievement for me one thing I love about the sessions they are just so **raw and honest** you end up **finding people dealing with similar struggles** it really is an **amazing support network**.”

Vicky*



What Next?

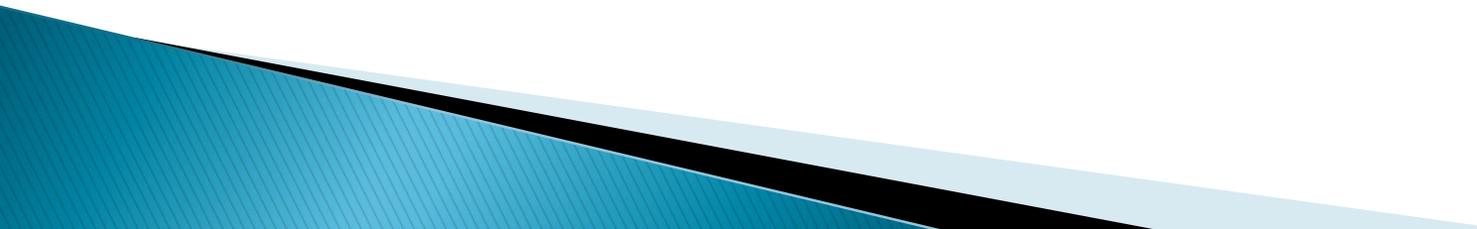


Doctoral Research Project 2020-26

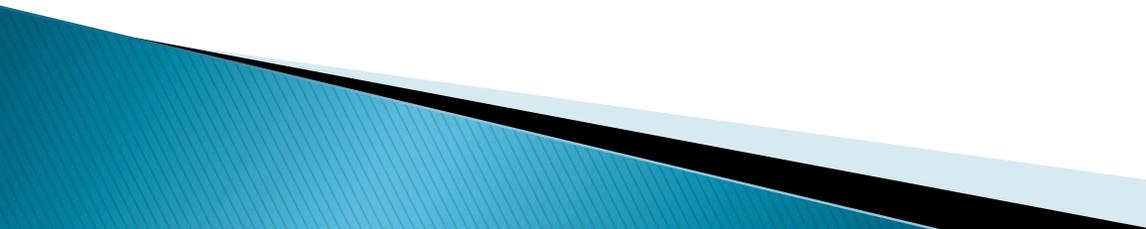
Examining the impact of parents on group intervention outcomes for parents of children with neurodevelopmental difficulties

Supervisors: Dr Tim Fosker

Dr Katrina Mclaughlin, Dr Carolyn Webster-Stratton



Rationale and research design

- ▶ Building a theoretical model
 - ▶ Broad look at parent mediated interventions before narrowing the focus (returning to broader implications of findings)
 - ▶ Quantitative methodology
 - ▶ Invariant and variant characteristics
 - Age Gender Parental Education Martial status
 - socio-economic status
 - Metacognitive skilfulness, coping skill,
 - socio-communicative skill, locus of control
 - ▶ Role played by intervention readiness
 - ▶ Fidelity, effectiveness of program
- 

Guiding hypotheses

Higher levels of metacognitive skilfulness will positively predict intervention effectiveness.

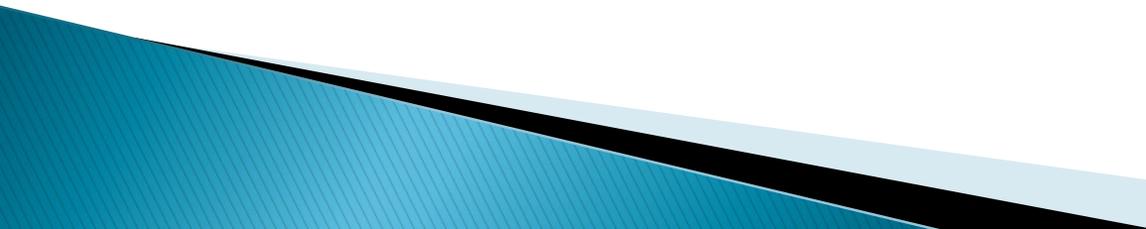
Better adaptive coping skill will positively predict intervention effectiveness.

Higher levels of internal locus of control (lower external) will positively predict intervention effectiveness.

Greater socio-communicative skill will positively predict intervention effectiveness.

Intervention readiness will positively predict intervention effectiveness.

Intervention readiness will mediate the relationship between each psychosocial skill and intervention effectiveness after controlling for demographic factors (i.e. age, gender, employment status, income, and marital status).



Considerations

- ▶ Conceptualising effectiveness?
 - ▶ How should the theoretical model be revised?
 - ▶ Measurement of constructs
 - ▶ Adult learners
 - ▶ Levelling up?
- 

A life built around pyramids !

