

Incredible Years Program Report
July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008

Name of Board: Stark Mental Health & Recovery Services Board

Provider (Agency) Name(s): Childhood Resiliency Project

Name and title of person completing the Report: Susan Lowery O'Connell, Ph.D., Project Director

Dates of report if different than July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008: N/A

Each local mental health board participating in the Incredible Years program must submit a program report, separate from the ECMH report.

1) Describe which of the parent, teacher and/or child programs are being used
IY Parent BASIC, IY Teacher Classroom Management, IY Dina Classroom

2) Report the number of groups, sessions and the number of total participants by program type

Program Types	# of groups	# of sessions	# of total participants
Parent	3	33	36
Teacher	2	20	27
Dina Classroom	11	204	178
Dina Small Group Therapy			

Incredible Years Parent Satisfaction surveys were collected from **18 participants in FY2008, for a response rate of 100% of Parent Group completers.** (50% of parents who attended an IY Parent Group session completed the Parenting Group). Overall, the results are very positive. 94% of parents indicated that their feeling about achieving their goal in the IY program for their child and family was positive, and 100% of participants would recommend the program to a friend or relative.

Parenting Scale – 36 parents attended one or more IY Parent Group sessions. One Parent Group was conducted in Fall 2007, prior to consistent administration of the Arnold & O'Leary Parenting Scale as a pre-post measure. For 22 parents who attended at least one session of the Winter/Spring 2008 Incredible Years Parent Groups, 18 Parenting Scale pre-tests (82% response rate) were obtained. **12 participants attended the final IY Parent Group session (Winter/Spring Parent Groups) and 12 completed the post-test Parenting Scale (response**

rate 100%). For one parent, no pre-test Parenting Scale was available. Results are based on 11 matched pre-and post-test sets.

As a group, the parents displayed positive change toward more effective discipline strategies on a variety of items from the pre-to post-test. On 26 of the 30 items, group means moved in the positive (effective) direction from pre-test to post-test. 4 items displayed statistically significant change. Parents reduced their use of repeated reminders and warnings to children, increased their ability to ignore child “pestering,” became more brief and focused in discussing problem behaviors with children, and improved in their ability to take appropriate action when children did not respond to verbal limits.

Incredible Years Teacher Satisfaction surveys were collected from **23 participants in FY2008, for a response rate of 85%.** Overall, the results are very positive. 100% of respondents indicated that their feeling about achieving their goals in the workshop for their children and classroom was positive, and 90% of teachers expressed satisfaction regarding their children’s progress. One of the participants wrote, ***“It was the most pertinent class that I have ever taken on how to work with special needs children.”***

Incredible Years Dina School Teacher Evaluations were obtained from **6 Dina Programs (55% response rate)** provided at Massillon YWCA Child Development Center, Interfaith Child Development Center, Oak Park Preschool – Jackson, Head Start Alliance, Minerva Area Christian School, and A Wonder World Learning Center **during the 2007-2008 program year.**

Teacher responses reflected positive evaluations of the Dina programs for their children. 100% of teachers indicated that 1) the Dina School met their goals for social and emotional development, 2) the Dina program was easy to integrate into their regular curriculum, and 3) the Dina group leaders were helpful.

Responses from teachers with children participating in Dina indicated the following:

What they viewed as most helpful to teachers about the Dina program –

- “Gave me the opportunity to learn new strategies;”
- “Working with the children on problem solving and how to ignore misbehavior”
- “The instructors gave me word cards/cues to use when I notice children struggling”
- “Dina School Rules”
- “Behavior cues, tiny turtle shell, developing ideas or solutions”
- “The Children learned different ways to control their feelings and several practiced this in the classroom”

What they viewed as most helpful to children about the Dina program –

- “They seemed to learn better ways of calming down and always came back proud after the Dina group”
- “It helped two of my children extremely with thinking, taking turns & their anger”
- “I observed their great interest in the lessons shared. They were able to understand and remember the rules”
- “It helped the children learn how to solve problems and how to use their words”
- “Children were receptive to Dina and her friends. They learned a lot and practiced what was taught”

- “They were really excited and enjoyed the class – they came back to our classroom with a very positive attitude”
- “Children are more eager to help each other. They give each other reminders of rules and skills learned in Dina school”

What changes they observed in their children -

- “When they find themselves doing something wrong, they would wonder what Wally would do”
- “The children became a family – when playing on the fourth floor with other classes, the children stuck up for one another”
- “One of the children is now asking for help when needed and speaking out more for himself”
- “My children calmed down since being in the program”
- “They will begin to use their breathing techniques. If I mention “breath,” when they are angry – they begin taking deep breaths”
- “Much more expressive concerning their feelings”
- “More positive behavior, cooperative behavior, more kind words towards peers”

Additional comments –

- “I love Dina school - It provides the children with a sense of belonging”
- “I feel the children were able to understand the concepts much better through work with the puppets”
- “They ALL have done better using their words to express how they feel in situations”

Drexel Early Childhood Behavior Rating Scale

The Drexel was selected for pre-post evaluations of children participating in IY DINA programs. The Drexel is a Likert-scale instrument, designed for use with children ages 3 to 6, brief and simple to complete, and can be utilized with both teachers and/or parents. Sites (5) that hosted IY DINA programs and administered Drexel Rating Scales included: Interfaith, North Canton YMCA, Oak Park – Jackson, Oak Park – Massillon, and Wonder World. All of the sites had teacher ratings; and three, Interfaith, North Canton YMCA and Oak Park Preschool – Massillon, administered and collected parent ratings.

A total of **322 children** received at least one rating on the Drexel Scale by either a teacher or parent during 2007-2008. All **322** children received at least one teacher rating, and **18** children also had parent ratings. Some of the ratings were given during summer Dina Intro groups. Our intent is to use the Drexel to obtain information about progress for children completing the full DINA curriculum. The following comparisons and summary were completed for the **108 children with both pre and posttest teacher ratings** (see Figure 2), administered at the beginning of, and following conclusion of the IY DINA curriculum.

Child Demographics:

Average Age (Median & Mode) = 4

Race:

71% Caucasian 18% African American 7% Other 4% Missing

Gender:

52% Female 47% Male 1% Missing

Results:

According to pre-test results (see Figure 1), both parents and teachers show agreement that the top five areas needing improvement include:

- Being liked by peers
- Showing concern for others
- Learning skills
- Emotional control
- Positive behaviors

100% of children participating in IY DINA Programs, for whom both pre- and post-test Drexels were completed, displayed improvement in one or more areas. Results for pre/post comparison ratings by teachers (n=108) reveal that the percentage of children with positive ratings improved on five of the five above identified concerns: being liked by peers, showing concern for others, learning skills, emotional control, and positive behaviors. In addition, the percentage of children with positive responses in two additional areas improved from pre to post-test administration. Areas demonstrating improved ratings included physical aggression, and shy/withdrawn. Thus, children attending IY DINA programs were rated by teachers as showing at least some improvement in 10 of 12 behaviors.

Scale Item	Positive Ratings	Teacher (n=146)	Parent (n=18)
Physically aggressive	1 or 2	60.4%	66.7%
Liked by peers	8 or 9	28.5%	38.6%
Makes others feel bad	1 or 2	67.1%	77.8%
Shows concern for others	8 or 9	21.7%	27.8%
Is isolated	1 or 2	78.3%	94.4%
Good learning skills	8 or 9	35.9%	47.0%
Poor emotional control	1 or 2	47.6%	29.4%
Displays positive behaviors	8 or 9	24.0%	29.4%
Is shy/withdrawn	1 or 2	54.5%	70.6%
Is relationally aggressive	1 or 2	62.2%	82.4%
Is victimized	1 or 2	86.7%	76.5%
Is verbally aggressive	1 or 2	74.1%	58.8%

Scale Item	# Test Pairs	Positive Ratings	% Positive Ratings - Pre	% Positive Ratings - Post	Change
Physically aggressive	108	1 or 2	62.6%	67.6%	Improvement
Liked by peers	108	8 or 9	27.1%	44.5%	Improvement
Makes others feel bad	108	1 or 2	69.8%	69.4%	No Change
Shows concern for others	108	8 or 9	21.7%	30.5%	Improvement
Is isolated	108	1 or 2	78.3%	80.6%	Small Improvement
Good learning skills	108	8 or 9	32.1%	38.9%	Improvement
Poor emotional control	108	1 or 2	50.0%	56.5%	Improvement
Displays positive behaviors	108	8 or 9	19.8%	37.1%	Improvement
Is shy/withdrawn	108	1 or 2	51.9%	63.9%	Improvement
Is relationally aggressive	108	1 or 2	64.2%	67.6%	Small Improvement
Is victimized	108	1 or 2	85.8%	88.9%	Small Improvement
Is verbally aggressive	108	1 or 2	76.4%	76.9%	No Change

3) Describe the strengths related to implementing the Incredible Years program.

The Childhood Resiliency Project as a group holds three IY certifications: the Project Director has achieved certification as an Incredible Years Parent Group Leader, IY Teacher Classroom Management Leader, and IY Parent Mentor. She has been accepted for training as an Incredible Years Teacher Mentor. One of the Resiliency ECMH specialists has begun the process to obtain certification in the Dina Classroom Program, and has submitted a videotape for review. We have six ECMH Specialists on staff capable of delivering IY programming. The structure of our program, which provides for weekly supervision and monthly IY consultation, supplies a high level of support for both new and ongoing IY group leaders. Further, our program has assumed a leadership role in implementing and modeling fidelity in IY delivery.

An ECMH specialist states, ***“The amount of experience we have as a team provides a tremendous strength in implementing Incredible Years with fidelity. We are able to consult not only with each other on a weekly basis, but we also have the advantage of participating in a IY parenting group consultation once a month to increase and refresh our skills in delivering the parenting program.”***

This sentiment is echoed by another consultant assigned to the Resiliency Project who writes, ***“Our strengths related to implementing the IY program include: trained, experienced group leaders, effective supervision which allows the group leaders to deliver the program with fidelity, and enthusiasm and strong belief in the program.”***

By implementing Incredible Years programs throughout Stark County since 2003, the Childhood Resiliency Project has been able to gain expertise, generate interest and demand, and forge community partnerships necessary for program implementation. Partners who have worked with

the Resiliency Project to support IY programming include mental health agencies, EC programs, churches, social service organizations, Head Start, and the Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC).

During 2007 – 2008, the Childhood Resiliency Project obtained Ohio Department of Education (ODE) approval for professional development hours for the IY Teacher Training. In addition, Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) has approved the IY Teacher Training delivered through the Resiliency Project as a specialized training.

4) Describe the challenges related to implementing the Incredible Years program.

Several areas present challenges to implementing and maintaining accessibility of IY programming in a community. These include: funding, logistics, coordination, recruitment, engagement and follow through by participants, and fidelity in delivery, especially across service providers/agencies.

Funding constraints create significant challenges to scheduling, planning and implementing IY programming. Available funding frequently is insufficient, or has participant requirements (i.e., evidence of income) or budget limitations (i.e., can not use to purchase food, etc.) which complicate program delivery. Further, funding availability is not always clarified until well into a program fiscal year, making planning, ensuring accessibility of curriculum and materials, and scheduling difficult. During periods of fiscal challenge, even high quality and valued programs struggle to maintain service levels. Securing a wider range of funding support would be of great value, and is challenging to achieve at the local level. Advocacy and education provided at the state level to encourage support of ECMHC and IY programming by major family and child serving systems would benefit local programs. Stability in adequate funding would facilitate implementation and marketing of a predictable schedule of parenting groups, which would enhance recruitment, planning, staffing and supplying efforts.

The logistics required for full implementation can be quite a barrier. The philosophy of IY is to provide meals, childcare and transportation for participants in order to reduce the barriers that prevent families from attending. It is clear that addressing such barriers does influence participation by families. Such supports are costly to obtain, and time consuming to plan and manage, particularly when offering multiple IY groups during the same time frame. This challenge would best be addressed by adequate funding, and support for IY coordination activities, separate from the group leader's responsibilities.

Due to the challenge described above with logistics, a need is created for IY coordination. Having a centralized person manage the logistics for IY programs would allow group leaders to concentrate on quality delivery of the IY training sessions. Further, having the support for an IY coordinator to handle parent contacts and referrals, especially in areas running multiple IY groups, or in locations with multiple organizations implementing IY groups, would streamline parent intake and group assignment. Since such a position would be an administrative rather

than a direct service role (i.e., non-billable), many agencies lack the resources to support this function. This challenge is partly a funding issue, and partly a community buy-in issue. Many organizations who do support and value the IY programming in their communities still have not stepped forward to provide financial or personnel assistance.

Despite having achieved positive results for several years of implementing IY groups, and being rated favorably by families who have participated, parent recruitment remains a challenge. Like most programs, the number of people who express interest in and even commitment to attending a group often do not match the number of actual participants. Our program has utilized flyers, ongoing recruitment, public presentations and other means of attracting parents. Further, both day time and evening programs have been offered, and supports (meals and childcare) have been available. It is somewhat disconcerting for staff to expect 14 people for an IY group, and have 4 or 5 attend. Questions about getting parents involved in the groups and keeping them involved in the groups are one of the most frequent concerns that arise during IY consultations. When my staff is asked about challenges of IY, a typical response is, . . .

“keeping the parents engaged and coming consistently.” It is clear from the research that increasing the number of sessions attended positively impacts the outcome effect. Therefore, we continue to work at delivering the best quality groups possible, investing energy in building relationships with parents, and being responsive to the needs and challenges of the families in our community. Parent recruitment and engagement continues to be a challenge that likely has no simple answer.

In addition to engagement of parents, teachers and children, obtaining behavioral change or follow through can be another challenge. For example, in the Child Dina program, we are aware of the importance of repetition and practice. An ECMH specialist states, ***“When providing a Classroom Dina, we must rely on the teacher to continue practicing the skill taught during the Dina session to build the skills and increase effectiveness of the program.”*** Another adds, ***“The challenge I faced relating to implementing the Dina program was the lack of parent involvement. Although letters explaining the program and activities were sent home weekly, I received very little parental follow-thru on homework.”*** Issues of follow through can be related to insufficient buy-in or lack of understanding, but also to the time and work demands of being an early childhood teacher or parent. Our commitment is to convey the importance of the follow through on producing improved outcomes, and the value of each person’s capacity to contribute toward family and classroom success.

Our program has invested considerable energy in working toward fidelity in delivering IY programming, so this is an area of strength for the Childhood Resiliency Project. In many areas, multiple programs are offering IY programming and securing consistency and fidelity in implementation across agencies can be more challenging. For various reasons, agencies report difficulties in meeting requirements to maintain fidelity, and fidelity requirements emerge as a frequent question in IY consultations. For example, despite being an evidenced-based, SAMHSA recognized model, many county DJFS or court systems expect that IY group leaders will deliver the program in a shorter number of sessions (i.e., 10), or maintain open enrollment.

One avenue for addressing this challenge/barrier, would be to increase advocacy and education efforts at the state level, particularly toward many parent and child-serving systems (i.e., ODJFS, court systems, ODADAS, early childhood initiatives such as SUTQ, and others), so that we can increase recognition of and support for full implementation of the IY programming.

5) Describe a success story highlighting the use of the Incredible Years program.

Example provided by LH (ECMHC) - **A three year old boy** participated in a classroom Dina program at a childcare center. There were approximately 26 children and two teachers in this classroom during the DINA sessions. Sessions were implemented once a week for 14 weeks, for a total of 14 sessions. The full curriculum was not able to be provided at this site, due to maternity leave of the ECMHC. This three year old boy attended the childcare center six to eight hours a day, five days a week. **At the beginning of the school year, this child was regularly defiant to teacher and parent requests. When a request was made, he would cry and scream loudly, kick furniture or walls in the room, and at times, hit the teachers. These tantrums became worse when the usual school routine was interrupted, or a different teacher was in the room.**

During Dina sessions this child responded very well to the visual cues of rules, and when/then or first/then statements. Responding to visual cues, or when/then directives provided the child with opportunities to make choices about his behavior, rather than immediately becoming oppositional when directed by adults. When the group leaders modeled using visual cues and when/then directives effectively with children in the Dina session, the teachers trust in and commitment to trying these strategies in the classroom during the week between Dina sessions increased. During one of the Dina sessions, group leaders led the children through practice calming down by taking three deep breaths. The teacher began using this approach with the child, coaching him through tantrums by having him take deep breaths and taking a break away from the group, until he felt more calm. The teacher reported great success in coaching him to help him calm himself during tantrums. Both teacher and child felt confident and successful. After about three weeks of reminding him and coaching him, the teacher said that she noticed him calming himself down without any coaching. The tantrums still occur in the classroom, but much less frequently. This young boy was now spending more of his day engaged in activities in the classroom and connecting to both teachers and children, instead of being reactive and upset. One of the most powerful aspects of this Classroom Dina was the modeling that occurred for the teachers, and the teacher's ability to follow through with implementing "Dina" techniques in the classroom. The teachers indicated that they really appreciated being able to observe the techniques "in action," and learn from the Dina group leaders.

Example provided by DO (ECMHC) - **Justin is a four-year old boy who was reported by teachers to be disruptive, impulsive, and lacking self- control.** He participated in a classroom Incredible Years Dina Program during this year. The Dina Program was conducted weekly. During the fall Dina sessions, Justin had difficulty remaining engaged and seated for the Dina circle time. When other children received positive attention for following Dina rules, Justin became upset. The group leaders and teachers continued to reinforce his efforts, and to ignore

his off task and disruptive behavior. Several times, Justin became quite frustrated when he did not earn a sticker for positive behavior. Dina group leaders continued to send a clear message that they believed Justin would be able to display positive behaviors and earn stickers. Teachers would review rules prior to Dina sessions to help Justin prepare.

After several sessions and with continued reinforcement and practice, Justin received his sticker for displaying appropriate behaviors throughout one particular Dina session. Justin (with a huge smile on his face and two thumbs up) stated “I did it, I did it, I did it!” His happiness and pride brought joy to everyone in the room. The child who was known for being disruptive made a big break-through. As sessions continued, Justin has displayed significant progress in his ability to sit for Dina School, participate in activities and display prosocial behaviors. One of the most notable aspects of his progress was Justin’s own awareness of his ability to recognize his impulsive tendencies, think about alternative options and make a decision to maintain self control. The unit on problem solving was key to Justin’s developing sense of self management. He now displays a great sense of pride when following rules, solving problems and calming down, and seeks positive attention and praise from the adults around him. Although he still has much learning to do, the teachers are able to recognize his growth, and in doing so, reinforce the positive changes he has made. Dina school has given Justin, and the teachers, an opportunity to recognize his strengths.

Example provided by RV (ECMHC) - During an IY Parent group which began during June 2008 in a community center, a mother participating in a role play reported experiencing an “ah-ha” moment. The early sessions of the IY Parent training focus on play and relationship building. Group leaders involved participants in a role play in which parents and “children” (parents taking the role of the child) practiced child directed play, descriptive commenting, and differential attention. This mother was playing the role of the child with another parent. After the role play ended, she shared with the group that she had an “ah-ha” moment. The parent in the role play had not given the “child” positive attention, even though she was playing appropriately. The mother was caught off guard by her own reaction – she spontaneously threw play dough at the person playing the role of the mother! This mother suddenly realized how she felt (and how it must feel to her child), to be ignored or not get attention when she was “being good.” She had “acted out” in a negative manner to get attention, a behavior her daughter displays. This experience had a great impact mother’s understanding of the “Attention Principle.” Mom stated that she went home that week with increased motivation to give positive attention to her child when she was doing well.