

Evaluation of The Incredible Years

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	- 2 -
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	- 8 -
Evaluation Design.....	- 9 -
Methods of Analysis	- 9 -
Statistical Considerations for Interpretation of Results.....	- 10 -
SECTION 1: DINOSAUR SCHOOL PROGRAM	- 12 -
Program Overview- 12 -	
<i>Description of Teachers</i>	- 12 -
<i>Description of Children</i>	- 14 -
Dinosaur School Evaluation Results	- 15 -
<i>Teacher Outcomes</i>	- 15 -
<i>Child Outcomes</i>	- 22 -
<i>Fidelity to the IY Model and its Relationship to Child Outcomes</i>	- 25 -
SECTION 2: BASIC PARENT TRAINING PROGRAM	- 27 -
Program Overview	- 27 -
<i>Description of Parents</i>	- 27 -
<i>Description of Children</i>	- 28 -
<i>Description of Parent Group Leaders</i>	- 29 -
BASIC Parent Training Program Evaluation Results	- 31 -
<i>Child Outcomes</i>	- 31 -
<i>Parent Outcomes</i>	- 32 -
<i>Fidelity to the IY Model and its Relationship to Parenting Outcomes</i>	- 42 -
DISCUSSION	- 43 -
Dinosaur School Program.....	- 43 -
BASIC Parent Training Program	- 43 -
Data Limitations	- 44 -
EVALUATION SUMMARY	- 46 -
REFERENCES	- 47 -
APPENDICES	- 49 -

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction and Background

The mission of Invest in Kids (IIK) is to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable young children and families throughout Colorado. Working in partnership with local communities, it identifies, introduces, implements and ensures the success of research-based, proven programs. To-date, IIK has adopted three such programs: the Nurse-Family Partnership, the Good Behavior Game and The Incredible Years (IY).

IIK contracted with OMNI Institute, a nonprofit, social science research and technical assistance firm based in Denver, to evaluate The Incredible Years program in Colorado. This is the fifth annual evaluation and the goals are to assess: (1) the overall effectiveness of The Incredible Years in early childhood care and education settings in Colorado, and (2) the critical implementation factors associated with program success in these settings.

Evaluation Design

The evaluation design included pre-test and post-test measurement, based on surveys completed by teachers and parents, to assess changes in child and parent skills during the time they were involved in The Incredible Years programs. Fidelity of implementation was assessed throughout the program, based on observations of teachers and parent group leaders and surveys completed by parent group leaders. Lastly, parent satisfaction and teacher satisfaction with the programs were assessed using parent and teacher surveys that were completed at the end of the program year, as well as parent weekly evaluation ratings.

Description of Programs and Participants

Dinosaur School Program Overview

The Dina Dinosaur Classroom Curriculum includes 60 different lessons, which are delivered two-to-three times weekly in each classroom. Two trained teachers co-lead the child curriculum which includes life-size puppets, engaging activities, cards and video vignettes. The lessons help children identify their feelings, control their anger, problem-solve, succeed in school and make friends. The children learn concrete strategies for calming down and generating different solutions for any given problem. The teachers learn positive teaching strategies (i.e., focusing on what children are doing right instead of what they are doing wrong), how to connect with children who exhibit challenging behaviors and help them control those behaviors, among many other skills and strategies.

Dinosaur School Participants

- Teachers:
 - 703 Teachers completed *Teacher Profile* (pre) forms and 569 completed *Teacher Satisfaction* (post) forms.
 - Over 56% of the teachers submitting *Teacher Profile* forms reported being the Lead Teacher (n=391) in the classroom and approximately 38% were Paraprofessionals (Paras) (n=262).
 - Most of the teachers reported being Caucasian (76.4% of Lead Teachers and 51.4% of Paras)
 - Most teachers reported receiving 3 days of IY training (72% of Lead Teachers and 57.5% of Paras); however, 15.8% of Paras and 2.6% of Lead Teachers reported receiving no training.
- Children:
 - *Social Competence Scale/Teacher* pre-test forms were submitted for a total of 6,507 children, an increase of 47.3% (over 2,000 children) from last year's evaluation.
 - 53.7% of children were male, 38.9% were Caucasian, and 34.2% were Mexican/Mexican American.

Parent Program Overview

The BASIC Parent Training Program was implemented in Colorado through a series of 14 weekly parent group meetings facilitated by two trained group leaders. Groups of 10-14 parents learn strategies for playing with and praising their children, effective limit setting, handling aggressive and non-compliant behaviors, and partnering with teachers in their children's education.

Parent Program Participants

- Parents
 - *Parent Profile* responses were obtained from a total of 416 parents, a 25% increase from the numbers submitted during last year's programming.
 - 75.6% of parent participants were mothers
 - 47.7% were Caucasian
 - Over one-fourth had obtained a college degree or higher
 - Most (72.5%) parents reported speaking English as the primary language at home
- Parent Group Leaders
 - *Parent Group Leader Profile* forms were completed by 68 individuals
 - Over 70% were Caucasian
 - Approximately 35% had 1-3 years experience delivering any parent training
 - Almost 90% had at least a bachelor's degree

Summary of Results

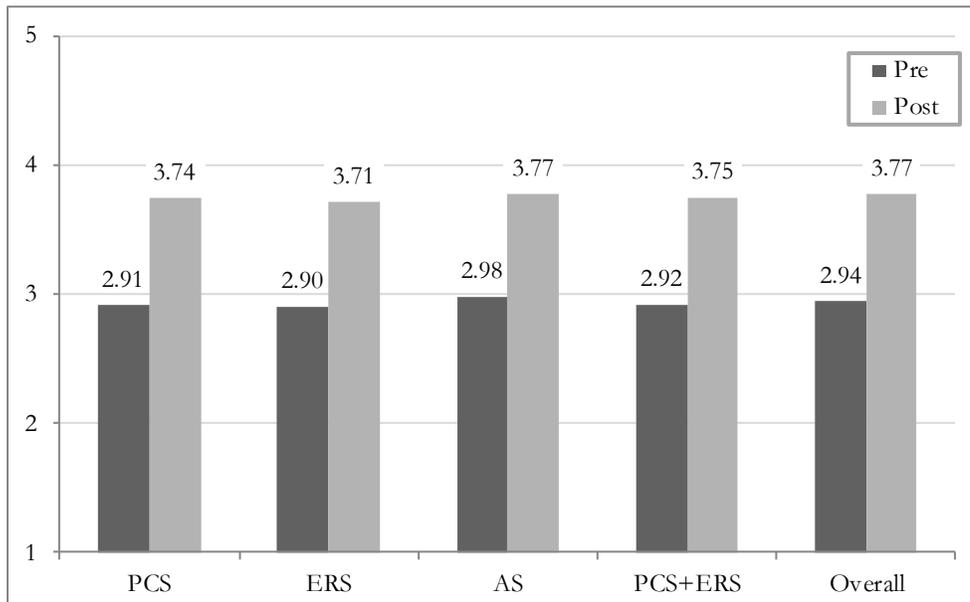
Dinosaur School Program

- Children demonstrated a statistically significant increase from pre-test to post-test in social competence in all areas during The Incredible Years Dinosaur School program.

Social Competence Scale/Teacher: Pre-Post Results (n=5221)

Scale: 1 = 'Not at all'; 2 = 'A little'; 3 = 'Moderately Well'; 4 = 'Well'; 5 = 'Very Well'

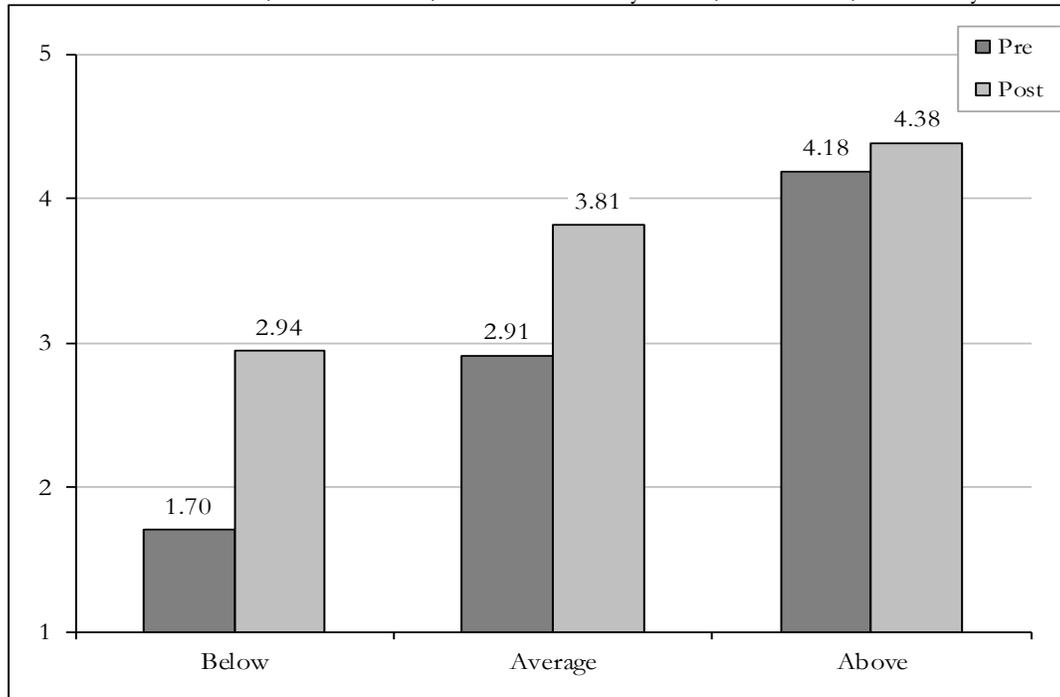
Key: PCS= Prosocial/Communication Skills; ERS= Emotion Regulation Skills; AS= Academic Skills



- Children who started off with the lowest social competence scores (below average) showed over a one point increase on average.

Social Competence Scale/Teacher: Pre-post Change by Group (n=5221)

Scale: 1 = 'Not at all'; 2 = 'A little'; 3 = 'Moderately Well'; 4 = 'Well'; 5 = 'Very Well'



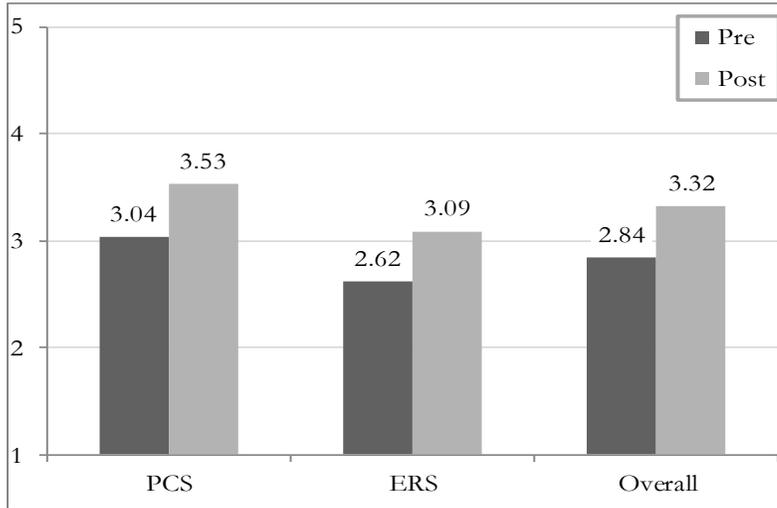
- The majority of teachers reported the Dinosaur School program was easy to integrate into the regular classroom curriculum and met their goals for child social and emotional development.
- Based on observer ratings on *The Fidelity Checklist*, very few teachers (n=13) demonstrated low overall fidelity to the IY program. Fidelity scores for most indicators increased over the course of the site visits.

Parent Program

- Children of parents in The Incredible Years parent program showed improvement in social competence in all areas during the program.

Social Competence Scale/Parent: Results (n=233)

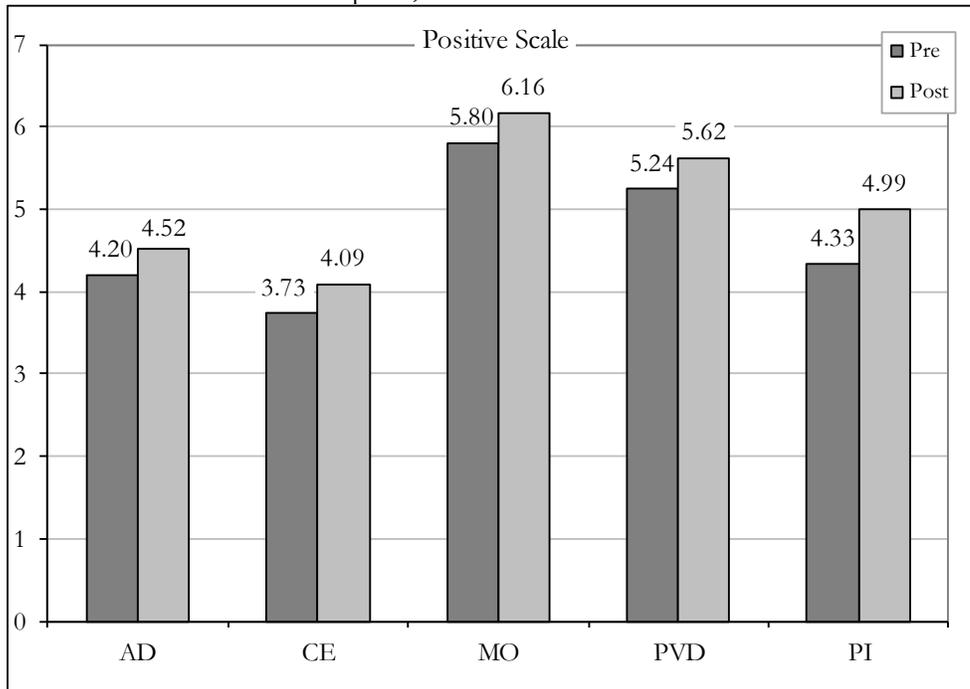
Scale: 1 = 'Not at all'; 2 = 'A little'; 3 = 'Moderately Well'; 4 = 'Well'; 5 = 'Very Well'



- Parents' use of positive parenting practices increased and use of negative parenting practices decreased during The Incredible Years parent program.

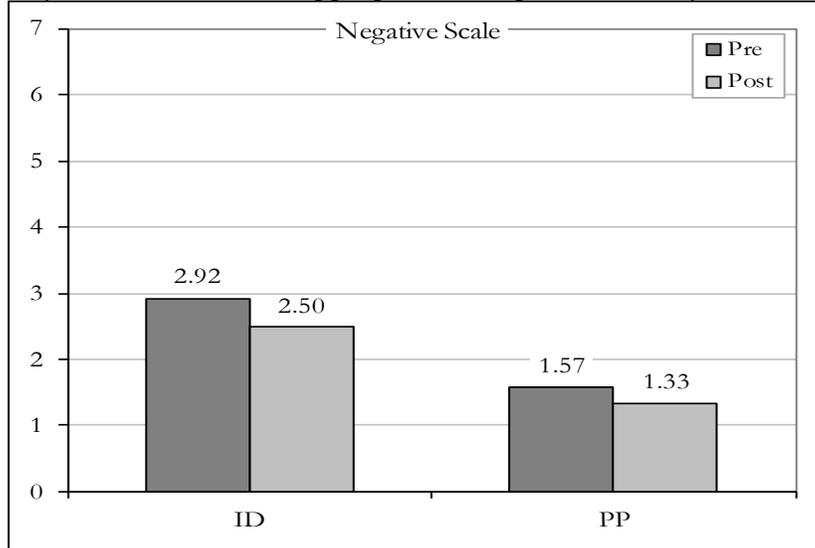
Parenting Practices Interview: Positive Subscales (n=230)

Key: AD=Appropriate Discipline; CE=Clear Expectations; MO= Monitoring; PVD=Positive Verbal Discipline; PI= Praise and Incentives



Parenting Practices Interview: Negative Subscales (n=230)

Key: ID= Harsh and Inappropriate Discipline; PP= Physical Punishment



- Parents rated each session of The Incredible Years parent program highly.
- Parents reported a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of The Incredible Years parent program at the end of the program.
- Over 98% of parents reported that they would recommend the program to a friend or relative.

Data Limitations

Findings were supportive of a positive impact of the Incredible Years program on teachers, parents, and children. However, the evaluation methodology did not allow for tests of whether similar changes in children’s social competence and parenting practices would have occurred in the absence of participation.

Evaluation Summary

Over the past five years, OMNI has served as the external evaluator for the Invest in Kids Incredible Years Dinosaur School and BASIC Parent Training Programs. Evaluation findings have supported the positive impact the programming has had on teachers, parents, and children in Colorado. Over the five year period, IIK dramatically expanded service delivery, increasing the numbers of parents and children touched by the program each year. Moreover, many alterations have been made to evaluation tools utilizing lessons from data results and a solid foundation has been laid for evaluating multiple program components, including multiple means for assessing fidelity of program implementation. Moving forward, Invest in Kids will analyze the IY programs in-house and will seek to advance the process of utilizing fidelity of implementation to adapt and refine programming.