THE EFFECT OF A TAILORED PARENTING PROGRAMME WITH PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN WITH AUTISM ON CHILDREN’S PLAY AND BEHAVIOUR

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Introduction

• Children with ASD may have severe behavioural problems associated with difficulties in communicative, emotional and social functioning

• Early Intervention is crucial in improving long term outcomes for children with ASD

• Parent training has been effective in helping children with ASD achieve better outcomes
Literature Review

• Models of parent-training programmes
  – Strategies introduced to parents
  – Home-based v. clinic based
  – Expert model programmes vs. collaborative problem solving programmes

• Limitations and concerns associated with parent-training programmes
  – Engagement
  – Retention
  – Maintenance of Gains along side developmental and contextual changes
Programmes with very strong evidence-base

• Triple P (Positive Parenting Programme)
  – Expert led behavioural-based parent training programme
  – Many different versions of differing intensity

• Incredible Years for Parents
  – Collaborative play-based parent training programme, designed originally for parents of children with moderate conduct problems
Research Question

• The aim of this project was to investigate whether the *Incredible Years Basic Parenting Programme* (Webster-Stratton, 2008), delivered in a group format and tailored specifically for parents with children with ASD and severe behavioural problems, would reduce problem behaviour in clinic and home settings.
Design & Participants

Study Design
• Single-subject design (ABC) replicated across behaviours within families/children and across families
• Phases
  A. Baseline
  B. Tailored IY Intervention
  C. Follow-up

Participants & Settings
• Human Ethics Approval
• Settings
  – Clinic
  – Homes & Home Visits
• Parents
• Children
  – Criteria
  – Communication
Design & Participants

About the families

• All children had a paediatrician + specialist diagnosis of autism
• All parents had been through Early Bird but were still having severe behavioural problems
• 3 of 4 the participant families had two or more children- 1 of these children had a diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome
• No family could leave their child with autism with any other child or sibling without supervision
• Families were not able to go out together as a family or on holiday together
• No parents were able to get their child with autism to bed before 11 pm at the start of the study—they were all exhausted
• All parents had concerns about their child with autism’s healthy eating and growth
Parent-Training Intervention

Incredible Years for Parents Basic Preschool
   (Webster Stratton, 2008a; 2008b)
   – Adopted by Min of Ed for NZ
• Manualised Program

IY Materials
   Manual
   DVDs
   *The IY: A Trouble-Shooting Guide for Parents (A 12 Chapter Book)*
   Homework Sheets
   Refrigerator Notes
   Satisfaction Questionnaires
   Weekly Phone Calls
   Tip Sheets

Delivered by IY Facilitators
   IY Trained
   2 delivered IY per session

Tailoring
• Smaller Group
   – Group size adapted
• 19 Sessions
   -IY Manual (12; 18-20)
• 2.5 hours
• IY Book given to Parents to keep
• (Home Visits)
• Research Measures
• Content tailored for ASD/severe behavioural problems
# Example of Tailoring

## Tailored by Study Authors

### Sessions 1-2

**Content Tailoring:**
- Introductions
- Intro to IY & ASD
- Developmental milestones related to play
- How to recognise play and engage with child with ASD in play.
- Understanding sensory overload in play
- Play with siblings by children with ASD
- Visual schedules for ending play and play transitions.

**Materials Tailoring**
- Additional Homework Sheets for some sessions
- Additional Tip Sheets for some sessions
- Copies of Research Studies
- You-Tube Videos

**Sources:**
- Matson, 2007; Rutherford & Rodgers, 2003;

### Standard IY

- **Sessions 1-2**
  - Introductions
  - IY Goals
  - Child-Directed Play
  - How to play with your child
  - Homework Sheet
  - Tip Sheet
  - DVDs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard IY</th>
<th>Tailored</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Academic Coaching; Parent Language</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Natural Trial Language Training; Language introduction into play</td>
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<td>5-6</td>
<td>Social Emotional Coaching</td>
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<td>PECs  for emotions; Social Coaching at Mealtimes; Meal time problems</td>
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<td>7-9</td>
<td>Praise, Encouragement, Rewards, Teaching New Behaviours</td>
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<td>Visual elements of praise; visual schedules; backward chaining</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Household routines &amp; rules</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Routine for ASD; Visual schedules for Bedtime; Backward chaining for routines</td>
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<td>6 week Holiday Break</td>
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<td>11-12</td>
<td>Limit Setting</td>
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<td>No tailoring</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Ignoring Behaviour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Functions of Behaviour; Theory of Mind in ASD; Behavioural Triggers</td>
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<tr>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>Time-out to calm down &amp; Time-out for aggressive behaviour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social Stories to decrease anxiety; Calm-down processes; handling aggression &amp; triggers; tantrums and meltdowns</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Natural &amp; logical consequences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How to teach a child with ASD about consequences</td>
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<td>17-18</td>
<td>Teaching children problem solving</td>
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<td>Social interaction modelling and guidance</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>Celebration</td>
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Intervention

Sample Session

Agenda Session Five

• Welcome and discussion of “homework” in Group.
• Parent report on experiences during the week and group problem-solving.
• New Topic: Social and Emotion Coaching
  – IY vignettes and ASD video-clip
  – Emotion coaching using visuals for ASD
  – ~ Coffee Break ~ (15 minutes)
  – IY vignettes continued. Role-plays and practise.
• New homework for the week discussed, goals set. Closing.
Measures

• Daily
  – Target behaviours

• Weekly (IY Standard)
  – Parent Stress Report
  – Child-Behaviour Rating
  – Parent Satisfaction with IY Session
  – -IY Fidelity

• Baseline, Mid-Intervention, End of Intervention, 6 week Follow-up
  – Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI) IY
  – Direct Observation /Dyadic Parent-Child Interaction Coding System, (DPICS)
  – Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT)
Results

- Engagement & Retention
- Parent Diary Reports
- Parent Phone Reports (Mid-Week)
- Eyberg Child Problem Inventory Scores
- Modified Checklist Autism in Toddlers
- Direct Observation in Clinic Setting
- Social Validity
Parent Diary - Alex

- **Food refusal**
- **Tantrums**
- **Wakes at night**
- **Overactivity**
Parent Diary: Ben

Aggression

Tantrums

Anxiety

Refusals
Parent Diary - Chris

Leaves the table

Hours Sleeping

Anxiety attack

Tantrums
Parent Diary - David

Nesting

Retaliatory Behaviour

Food refusal

Meltdowns
Result: Parents rated improvement in behaviours for all children, and two parents rated some improvement in weekly stress experienced. All parents reported stress reduced, although not reflected in all Likert-scale responses.
Result: Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory Scores reduced below clinical levels in all children. More change in number of problem behaviours rather than intensity.
Result: Behaviors associated with ASD as measured by M-CHAT were reduced.
Results from observed interactions
Result: Child non-compliance to parent instructions was reduced – compliance increased in clinic setting.
Result: All children increased responding to parent questions and reduced non-responding in clinic setting.
Rate per Minute of Neutral Parent Talk to Child in Video-Taped Observations

Neutral talk is talk which
• Introduces information about people, objects, events or activities
• Or indicates attention to the child
• And is non-evaluative
• And is not a command

Examples:
• I need a few more of those big ones.
• Children aren’t supposed to hit
• I’m feeling tired, too
• I see that you look bored
• Gentle
• I’m making my rainbow just like yours
• That’s a tall tower you’re making

Result: All parents learned to increase their use of this strategy.
Child Pro-Social Talk is Talk Which
• Contributes positively to child-parent interaction
• positively evaluates an attribute, product, or behavior of the parent (specifically or generally);
• describes the parent’s behavior;
• provides neutral information;
• reflects the parent’s verbalizations; or acknowledge the parent.

Examples:
• That is a rainbow!
• You turned on the computer.
• Parent: The farmer is feeding his cows. Child: Feeding his cows.
• That’s where it goes!
• Hi!
• Yea!
• I love you

Result: All children were observed to contribute more positive talk to parents.
Social Validity (Parent Diaries)

- Behaviour
- Communication
- Friendship Development
- Social Skills
- Emotional Understanding
Discussion

• Parents learned effective strategies to reduce behaviours that were of the highest concern to them.
• Parents learned to problem-solve and think through new issues that came up.
• Parents stopped being ‘afraid of Autism’ and were able to restore their role as parents.
• Positive behaviour change was reported in the home and observed in the clinic settings.
• In many cases, positive changes continued through follow-up, as parents continued interactions to produce change.
Discussion, continued

• More effective than Triple-P for ASD
  (Whittingham, Sofronoff, Sheffield and Sanders, 1999)
  delivered in 8-9 sessions; IY-ASD higher parent satisfaction
• Consistent with international IY results
• Consistent with other IY in NZ results
Contributions to Results

• *Manualised IY Programme and its ability to be tailored for other populations*
• Video-clips
• High level of engagement
• Small group size
• Number of Sessions (19)
Limitations & Implications

• Four children—smaller group size
• Not tailored for Māori (but could be)
• Number of sessions beyond current MoEd levels of early intervention but could be accommodated over two years.
Questions?