



25 May 2020



Dear 

Thank you for your email of 15 April 2020 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information in relation to how parents and children access Incredible Years Programs in the preschool years:

1. *Who and how are they referred? Are the programmes targeting parents and children who are identified as 'at risk'?*
2. *Who administers and facilitates the programmes?*
3. *What is the uptake like?*
4. *Is there any research, data or feedback collected in NZ to capture parents and children's perceptions of the success of the programmes?*
5. *Have the programmes had to adapt or change to the increasingly multicultural preschools and schools we are seeing?*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Background information

The Ministry of Education started delivering two of the Incredible Years programmes – the Incredible Years Parent Programme and the Incredible Years Teacher Programme, in 2010. These are part of Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L), and have been designed for both parents and teachers of children aged 3-8, to help reduce challenging behaviour and increase children's social and emotional skills.

In addition to these, the Ministry has been funded through Budget 2017 to deliver three new Incredible Years programmes: Autism Parent (IYAP) and Teacher (IYAT) programmes, and Incredible Years Toddler (IY Toddler) over the last three years.

Incredible Years Autism programmes are for caregivers and teachers of children on the autism spectrum aged 2 to 5. Children do not need to have a diagnosis or undergo screening for autism for their caregivers or teachers to enrol in the programme.

Some Ministry regions have contracted NGOs to deliver IY Toddler programmes; in one region Ministry staff have delivered the programme. In 2018/2019, IY Toddler was delivered in three regions. In 2019/2020, six regions in total delivered the programme.

1. Who and how are they (participants) referred? Are the programmes targeting parents and children who are identified as 'at risk'?

Programme providers or Ministry practitioners are the contact points for caregivers who want to refer themselves to Incredible Years programmes. Other agencies may also provide referrals. Below are examples of how caregivers and teachers may find out about Incredible Years programmes:

1. Health – through a health professional, such as a general practitioner, paediatrician, Child Development Service or Autism Spectrum Disorder coordinator.
2. Education – through an educational professional such as an early intervention teacher, speech language therapist or educational psychologist.
3. Oranga Tamariki – through a Family Start programme provider or social worker.
4. Autism sector group – through a charity or advocacy group such as Autism NZ or the Children's Autism Foundation.
5. Parent/Teacher programme provider – caregivers and teachers can refer themselves directly to an Incredible Years Parent/Teacher provider, or contact the Ministry to find out about training opportunities in their region.

IY Toddler

IY Toddler specifically supports families that are considered “at risk”.

The programme is a preventative measure and is available to families experiencing social disadvantage. These families will be vulnerable in terms of their parenting due to their life experiences, current or past life-style choices and their past or current relationships. Additionally, the wellbeing of some children may be compromised due to parental mental health problems. Some parents may be at risk of abuse and neglect of their children. By building parent capability with a strong focus on family wellbeing, the aim is to reduce the likelihood of additional support being required in future.

2. Who administers and facilitates the programmes?

The IY Teacher and Parent programmes are coordinated and administered by the Ministry of Education's regional staff, and funded nationally. IY Autism Teacher and Parent programmes and IY Toddler are coordinated and administered by the Ministry's national office. They are facilitated by Group Leaders, who are Ministry specialist staff, for example educational psychologists and early intervention teachers. Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour or NGO employees who have been trained to deliver Incredible Years programmes also facilitate programmes.

Each group should have two group leaders. Group leaders complete a certification/ accreditation process that involves attendance at a certified training workshop, peer review, videotape feedback, and consultation. They follow training in accordance with fidelity requirements from the Incredible Years International developer, Dr Carolyn Webster-Stratton.

3. What is the uptake like?

IY basic programmes

Each year, approximately 3,400 caregivers attend the parent programme, and approximately 2,600 teachers attend the teacher programme.

IY Toddler

Over the last two years, 83 parents have completed the toddler programme.

IY Autism

IYA programmes are offered across seven regions. 355 caregivers of children aged 2-5 have attended the IYAP programmes and 430 teachers (ECE or new entrant teachers) have attended the IYAT programmes since 2018.

4. Is there any research, data or feedback collected in NZ to capture parents and children's perceptions of the success of the programmes?

The Ministry of Education is funded to undertake an evaluation of Incredible Years Autism programmes. A process evaluation, which looked at how the new programme was implemented, was completed in 2018. The process evaluation reported on the progress and learning of the initial implementation of IYA programmes to inform the planning and delivery of future IYA programmes. Its purpose was not to capture parents and children's perceptions of the success of the programme. You may wish to read the final evaluation report, which is publicly available at <http://www.incredibleyears.com/download/administrators/implementations/Ministry-of-Education-IYA-Process-Evaluation-Report-Final-15-Nov-2018.pdf>.

An impact evaluation is currently underway and is expected to be completed in August 2020. I am releasing to you, in full, the interim report, attached as **Appendix A**. The impact evaluation will evaluate whether the programme is achieving the intended outcomes for parents/whānau and teachers of children on the Autism spectrum. We expect the final evaluation report will be available in September 2020.

The Ministry also collects data from participants to IYT and IYP basic programmes which I am releasing to you as **Appendix B**. Part of this excel document is a sheet with a list of more than 2,500 children who have participated in the program which has identifying personal information like dates of birth and parent contact details. I am withholding this information under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of natural persons. This sheet also includes verbatim feedback from each child's guardian about the benefits of the program and how it may be improved. I am withholding this feedback under 9(2)(ba)(i) of the Act, as it was provided to the Ministry under an obligation of confidence and releasing this information would likely prejudice the further supply of information, which is in the public interest to continue being supplied.

Please note that the Ministry does not collate any feedback from children, as the programmes target teachers and caregivers.

5. Have the programmes had to adapt or change to the increasingly multicultural preschools and schools we are seeing?

The Ministry continues to work with the international developer and IY programme Mentors to adapt IY to the New Zealand context. Below are examples of how IY programmes are being adapted to the New Zealand cultural context:

1. IY programmes are being delivered on marae;
2. Programme providers are funded to contract an interpreter if necessary;
3. IY practitioners are supported by Pacifica Fono fidelity workshops.

You can find more information on the Incredible Years at:

1. <http://pb4l.tki.org.nz/Incredible-Years-Autism>,
2. <http://pb4l.tki.org.nz/Incredible-Years-Teacher>,
3. <http://pb4l.tki.org.nz/Incredible-Years-Parent>.

Please note, the Ministry now proactively publishes OIA responses on our website. As such, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Casey', with a long, sweeping underline.

Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support