'Making a Difference' – An Independent Evaluation of the Incredible Years Programme in Pre-Schools in Galway City

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION 6
1.1 Introduction 7
1.2 The Incredible Years Programme (IYP) 7
1.3 Report Structure 9
CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW 11
2.1 Social and Emotional Competencies in Children 12
2.2 Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties 15
2.3 Early Intervention and Prevention 18
2.4 Pre-school Policy in Ireland 21
2.5 Conclusion 24
CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY 25
3.1 Methodology 26
3.2 Stakeholders Research 28
3.3 Outcome Data Collection 29
CHAPTER FOUR – RATIONALE FOR INVOLVEMENT OF GALWAY CITY PARTNERSHIP AND STAKEHOLDERS 34
4.1 Incredible Years Programme (IYP) in Galway City 35
4.2 Organisational Structure of EdStart 37
4.3 Accreditation Process and Achievements of IYP in Galway City 39
4.4 Incredible Programme Years – Rationale for Involvement 40
4.5 Conclusions 44
CHAPTER FIVE – SMALL GROUP DINA AND PARENT PROGRAMME 45
5.1 Small Group Dina Programme in Galway City (2006-2010) 46
5.2 Whole School Approach and Teacher Classroom Management (2010) 48
5.3 Strengths of Small Group Dina Programme and Teacher Classroom Management Programme in Galway City 49
5.4 Weaknesses of Small Group Dina Programme and Teacher Classroom Management Programme in Galway City 52
5.5 The Parent Programme in Galway City (2006-2010) 53
5.6 Strengths of the IYP Parent Programme in Galway City 57
5.7 Weakness of IYP Parent Programme in Galway City 59
5.8 Conclusion 61
CHAPTER SIX – DINA IN THE CLASSROOM (PRE-SCHOOL) PROGRAMME – GALWAY CITY 63
6.1 Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme (2007-2010) 64
6.2 Introduction to Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme 66
6.3 Planning and Preparation 69
6.4 Delivery of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme 70
6.5 Strengths of Pre-School Programme in Galway 72

6.6 Weaknesses of Pre-School Programme in Galway City 76
6.7 Key Implementation Recommendations for Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme 77
6.8 Profile of Children involved in Pre-School and their Parents 78
6.9 Profile of the Children 79
6.10 Profile of Parents 80
6.11 Details of the Pregnancy and Child's Development to Date 82
6.12 Parent's Health Since the Birth of the Child 84
6.13 Composition of the Child's Household 84
6.14 Socio Economic Disadvantage (SED) 87
6.14.1 Family Stressors: Problems with work 87
6.14.2 Family Stressors: Financial Problems 88
6.14.3 Family Stressors: Chronic stressors 89
6.14.4 Family Stressors: Other stressors 89
6.15 Conclusion 90
CHAPTER SEVEN - PRESENTATION OF OUTCOMES STUDY 92
7.1 Introduction 93
7.2 Parenting Competencies 95
7.3 Depression Level of Parent 99
7.4 The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire 101
7.4.1 Pre-school Workers SDQ Measures T1 and T2 105
7.5 Social Competence 107
7.6 Eyberg 112
7.7 Conclusion 114
CHAPTER EIGHT - DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 117
8.1 Introduction 118
8.2 Outcomes for Children and Parents 119
8.3 Fidelity to the Programme 123
8.4 The IYP as an effective Community Development Based Approach .. 124
8.5 Emerging themes 126
8.6 Recommendations 129
BIBLIOGRAPHY 134
APPENDIX ONE - DINA IN THE CLASSROOM CURRICULUM 142

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The focus of this report is the implementation of the Incredible Years Programme (IYP) in Galway City. The report explores the process of developing the Incredible Years Programme in Galway City with a particular focus on the evaluation of the implementation and outcomes of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme.

1.2 The Incredible Years Programme (IYP)

The IYP is designed to promote social and emotional competencies in children aged 3-10 years. The IYP which was developed in the University of Washington, Seattle by Professor Carolyn Webster-Stratton contains three separate training programmes, one for parents, teachers and children. Whilst each programme is designed as a stand-alone intervention, taken together they provide a cohesive and uniform strategy to address and eliminate behavioural difficulties for children. Over almost 30 years the IYP has been subjected to rigorous evaluation and based on the positive outcomes produced in these evaluations a number of separate independent reviews found that it meets the highest standard of scientific proof. The US government has awarded the IYP with "exemplary programme" status due to the programmes success in several Randomised Controlled Trials (Webster-Stratton, 2000). This evidence based validation has led to the IYP being introduced in most states in the US, the UK (Scott et al, 2001; Hutchings et al, 2004), Sweden (Axberg et al, 2007) Canada (Taylor et al, 1998; Stern et al, 2007) and Norway (Morch et al, 2004).

The IYP is designed to meet the needs of children with behavioural difficulties in the widest sense of the term. This encompasses a broad spectrum of behaviours from mildly disruptive to severely destructive which

can present in the home and school, particularly among younger children. Yet this can also result in anti-social activities among adolescents and young people. Behavioural difficulties have a conduct dimension characterised by aggression, defiance and destructiveness as well as an emotional dimension, which is marked by negative affect and deficits in peer relations and pro-social behaviour.

The IYP three programmes are;

1. *Children's Programme:* There are two IYP programmes being implemented in Galway City which support children:
    - *Small Group Dina Programme* - The Dinosaur Social Skills and Problem Solving Curriculum is a child training curriculum that strengthens children's social, emotional and academic competencies such as understanding and communicating feelings, using effective problem solving strategies, managing anger, practicing friendship and conversational skills and appropriate classroom behaviours. The Small Group Dina Programme works with 6 children between the ages of 5 and 8. The children are withdrawn from the mainstream classroom for 2 hours per week for up to 20 weeks.
    - *Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme* - This curriculum is delivered 2-3 times a week by pre-school workers in the classroom. It consists of 20-30 minute circle time lessons, followed by small group practice activities and promotion of skills throughout the school day. The Programme also includes letters to be sent home to parents with suggestions for home activities that parents can do with their children. These activities reinforce the classroom learning and promote parent involvement.
2. *The Parents Programme*: The IYP parent training programme is a series of inputs focused on strengthening parenting competencies (relationship

building, positive discipline, confidence and calmness) and fostering parents' involvement in children's school and life experiences in order to promote children's academic, social and emotional competencies and reduce conduct problems. The basic parent programme involves 12 sessions. There is also a 4 session School Readiness Programme.

3. *Teacher Classroom Management Programme*: The teacher programme focuses on evidence-based practices and strategies that have been shown to reduce problem behaviour in the classroom through strengthening children's social, emotional and academic competencies. It is delivered over five days, ideally one month apart. Between sessions, teachers undertake classroom assignments and verbal feedback on their efforts. The teacher programme is linked to the IYP parent and child programmes, all of which promote positive and effective strategies to improve children's emotional and social competencies at school and home.

1.3 Report Structure

The report includes seven further chapters. Chapter Two provides a comprehensive review of literature addressing emotional and behavioural difficulties among children, early intervention and prevention, and current pre-school policies in Ireland. Chapter Three outlines the methodology utilised within this evaluation; including a detailed description of the quantitative and qualitative tools employed within the interviewing process. The rationale for stakeholders' involvement in the IYP is detailed within Chapter Four. Chapter Five describes and examines the Small Group Dina, Parent and Teacher Classroom Management Programmes. A description and overview of the implementation process of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme in Galway City is developed in Chapter Six. Chapter Seven presents the findings of the outcome element of the study. Finally,

Chapter Eight discusses the findings of the process and outcome study and presents recommendations for future actions.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Two provides a context to the evaluation process through a comprehensive review of relevant literature under four key headings: Children and Behaviour, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties in Childhood, Early Intervention and Prevention and Pre-school Policy in Ireland.

2.1 Social and Emotional Competencies in Children

As a form of early intervention, prevention and treatment the IYP addresses emotional and behavioural difficulties that contribute to conduct disorders using techniques that reinforce positive behaviours and discourage aggressive and negative behaviours, which act as impediments to students deriving appropriate benefits from education. If such behaviours are not attended to at an early age, they can lead to subsequent problems for the child in later life, which in turn affects the community and society in general.

In 2005, the World Health Organisation indicated that the incidence rate of children with behavioural difficulties stands at approximately 20% of the child population worldwide. Webster-Stratton, Reid & Hammond (2001) report that 7-20% of children meet the diagnostic criteria for oppositional defiant disorder or conduct disorder and may be as high as 35% for low income families (Gaspar& Santos e Paiva, 2001). In 2006, the Irish College of Psychiatrists published data pertaining to the prevalence of child emotional and mental health problems in children aged 0-18 years. The findings are reported in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1 Prevalence of child emotional and mental health problems in children aged 0-18 years

Disorder	Percentage	Ratio
Psychological Problem	20%	1 in 5
Mental illness with some impairment	10%	1 in 10
Major Psychiatric Disorder	5%	1 in 20
Mental illness requiring in-patient admissions	.5%	1 in 200
ADHD	3-5%	1 in 20-30
Autism and related conditions	.5-1%	1 in 100-200
Mental health problems among children in care	60-70%	> 1 in 2
Mental health problems among children in residential homes	90%	< 1 in 1

Source: Cummins and Master, 2006 cited in Bradley & Hayes, 2007.

Current data pertaining to behavioural problems in Irish children is limited. In 2004, the HSE commissioned a study of behavioural problems of children in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. 3,724 children (74% of the child population) were screened for mental health problems using the Child Behaviour Checklist. The study found a prevalence rate of 18.71% for at least one psychological disorder in the children. In addition, 17% of the two to five year olds, 10% of the six to twelve year olds and 26% of the teenagers screened for a mental health problem. Of those who screened positive 43% had an anxiety disorder, 25% had oppositional defiance disorder and just over one fifth had ADHD. Compared with age and gender matched normal controls, the cases with psychological disorders were more socially disadvantaged, had more behavioural difficulties and adaptive behaviour problems, more physical health problems, more family problems, more life stress, and poorer coping skills (Martin and Carr, 2005).

Early school leaving in Ireland is approximately 12.3%. However, early leaving rates differ markedly by social class background as there are much

higher levels of early school leaving among young people from working-class and unemployed households. Young men from a working class background are particularly likely to leave school early. Disengagement from school is therefore a significant source of inequality in Irish society (ESRI, 2010). The ESRI study 'No Way Back: The Dynamics of Early School Leaving' also found that the roots of early school leaving lie in early experiences of educational failure and difficulties with homework often stemming from primary school and drop-out rates are higher in those schools with a concentration of children from disadvantaged backgrounds (ESRI, 2010).

A study conducted by the ESRI on behalf of Barnardos considering educational disadvantage in Ireland concluded that there are clear differences in educational outcomes according to social class in Ireland. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to have literacy and numeracy problems, leave school early and are less likely to go onto third level. The report concludes that;

> "Without the proper supports many children living in disadvantage simply don't have the resources they need to get an adequate education. Early intervention is crucial to supporting these children and their families to give them the best hope of learning and staying in school, which is vitally important for both children and society" (Barnardos & ESRI, 2009, 6).

In 2009, according to the EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), 8.7% of all children aged 0-17 years were living in '*consistent poverty*' and 18.6% were '*at risk of poverty*'- that means living in families whose income is below 60% of the median income.

2.2 Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

> "Children who need love the most, ask for it in most unloving ways; the same can be said of children most in need of positive attention, praise and encouragement" (Webster-Stratton, 2007, 72)

Children with conduct problems can be difficult to deal with, as they can be non-compliant and oppositional to adults' requests. Conduct disorder is a behavioural and emotional disorder linked to childhood and adolescence and is differentiated from other psychiatric disorders diagnosed in children by the following criteria: "repetitive and persistent pattern of behaviour in which the basic rights of others or major age appropriate societal norms of rules are violated" (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, 98). Children with conduct disorder act inappropriately, infringe on the rights of others and violate the behavioural expectations of others, which creates a barrier to a child's development. There are four categories of behaviour: aggressiveness to people and animals, property destruction, deceptiveness or theft and serious rule violation (McMahon & Kotler, 2006, 155). Within this categorisation, two types of conduct disorder exist and which are differentiated based on the child's age at the appearance of the first symptoms (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Children with conduct disorder have poor outcomes in a variety of social arenas. They receive poorer grades at school, are more often placed in a special class or fail a grade, and drop out of school (Ledingham, 1999, 366). To ignore or deal negatively with such behaviours can exacerbate the problems for the child, parent, teacher and the environments the children occupy (Webster-Stratton, 2007, 72). Moreover, childhood emotional well-being determines adult emotional well-being, which is the primary

determinant of the quality of adult relationships and consequently social well-being in communities and society (Gaspor & Santos e Paiva, 2001).

A child's actions and behaviours can be evident for all to see yet the reasons for doing so are usually not as obvious, therefore, the underlying causes of negative behaviour must be explored. There is little evidence to suggest that large numbers of children are born troubled, although some appear to be born with pre-dispositions to restlessness and impulsiveness (Barkely cited in Sutton, 2000, 22). This suggests that a child's environment and interactions have a bearing on the child's behaviour. Cognitive social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) posits that children learn behaviour not only by experiencing its direct consequences but also by observing similar behaviour and its consequences (cited in Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2009, 249). The development of a child's social cognitive skills may be affected by;

- neuropsychological deficits in encoding (i.e. lack of attention to relevant social cues and hyper vigilant biases),
- hostile attribution biases and errors in the interpretation of social cues,
- having deficient quantity and quality of generated solutions to social situations,
- evaluating aggressive solutions more positively and are more likely to decide to engage in aggressive behaviour. (McMahon & Kotler, 2006, 165).

A number of studies have identified risk factors from a variety of areas that contribute to child conduct problems including;

- ineffective parenting,
- family mental health and criminal risk factors,
- child biological and developmental risk factors, e.g. attention deficit disorders, learning disabilities and language delays,
- school risk factors, and

- peer and community risk factors (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2008, 2).

Attending to these risk factors increases a child's protective factors and social support is considered to be a protective mechanism (Rosenthal and Wilson, 2008, 695). Social support is fundamental to any child's development as it allows them to become more resilient and in this context the role of the community is imperative (Dhesi, 2000, 200).

Much behaviour is learned and it is the earliest years of their life that children are at their most vulnerable (Sutton, 2000). Indeed, "aggressive and uncooperative social behaviour that begins in early childhood has serious long-term social and psychological consequences" (Barrera et al, 2000, 83). Social and emotional capabilities, especially for empathy, are a significant antidote to anti-social behaviour (Duncan et al, 2008). Hence, increasing and strengthening social and emotional capabilities from an early age is beneficial. Targeting children who display behavioural and emotional problems can lead to an improvement in their interactions and "may put children on a trajectory leading to a cycle of lasting improvements in school achievement and mental health" (Webster-Stratton, 2007, 37).

Introducing programmes that improve behavioural and emotional problems, into the school environment can not only facilitate the process at an early stage but also facilitate the mainstreaming of such an intervention. Richardson et al (1982) analysed continuities between pre-school and school behaviour and found that children with behavioural problems in pre-school continued to experience such problems in school as they progressed (Sutton, 2000). If left unresolved, problematic behaviours can remain present in adolescence and adulthood and can contribute to substance misuse, criminality, violence and ongoing mental health issues (Broidy et al, 2003,

Coid, 2003 cited in Hutchings et al 2007). Therefore, the case for early intervention in dealing with behavioural and emotional problems is strong in order to combat the short and long-term affects by affecting positively on children's development and their quality of life.

2.3 Early Intervention and Prevention

"Just as early insults may have long-term effects, early interventions enable children and young people to accrue some of the social capital needed for good long-term outcomes" (Roberts & McDonald cited in DOHC, 2004, 28). In this context early intervention refers to work with children at a young age which aims to improve the child's ability to deal with situations in an appropriate manner. Early interventions aim to be proactive and preventative. There is a growing consensus in policy and research circles that well designed intervention programmes, especially those aimed at developmental rather than remedial intervention, can alter the pathways available to children and their families, and in so doing reduce the likelihood of participants experiencing negative outcomes (Manning et al, 2006). It is also acknowledged that early intervention programmes implemented during infancy and/or pre-school years can have long term effects on the reduction of conduct problems in childhood and adolescence (McMahon & Kotler, 2006).

Preventative approaches to behavioural and emotional problems are regarded as practical but are also viewed as being more advantageous than reactive approaches. "Preventative approaches are the most practical way to proceed as the pyramid of numbers inevitably promises less and less to increasing numbers of children and youth who are problems to themselves and to others" (Stanley & Stanley, 2005, 48). Preventative approaches to behavioural and emotional problems are not dependent on the (unwanted) occurrence of

the disruptive behaviour, they permit positive instruction to be delivered far more frequently and tend to be less intrusive and more effective than interventions applied after the behaviour has occurred (Kavale et al, 1999).

Duncan-Smith and Graham (2008) argue that early intervention is both cheaper and more effective than the traditional expensive and failed philosophy of late intervention. In a similar vein Hayes argues that the prevention of educational failure and social exclusion beginning at the pre-primary school level is less expensive and more effective in solving a wide range of social problems as opposed to treatment after the problem has emerged (cited in Department of Education and Science, 1999). Evidence indicates that the earlier the intervention is offered, the more positive the child's behavioural adjustment and the greater the chance of preventing later delinquency (Taylor & Biglan, 1998). Bredekamp & Copple (1997) state that the development of certain social skills is not automatic, particularly for those children viewed as being at high risk, rather more explicit and intentional teaching of social skills is required (cited in Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004). Training students in peer mediation and conflict resolution can make a significant contribution to the efforts of teachers in achieving a disciplined learning environment (Riley, 1995).

Indeed, the development of emotional self-regulation and social competence in the early years plays a critical role in shaping the ways in which children think, learn, react to challenges and develop relationships throughout their lives (Raver & Knitzer cited in Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2009). Teaching social and emotional skills to young children, who are deemed at risk due to biological and temperament factors or because of family disadvantage and stressful life factors, can result in fewer aggressive responses, inclusion with

pro social peer groups and more academic success (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004).

A partnership approach to early interventions that address emotional and behavioural problems in children is advocated because children's lives are influenced by a vast variety of people and experiences. Duncan-Smith & Graham (2008) argue that the optimum solution in the provision of early intervention often involves a blend of voluntary sector organisations with national and local government, working to ensure that the most at risk families are given the support they need. If individuals have no investment or sense of ownership in the changes that have been made by such interventions then only limited success will be possible (Taylor, 1998). Instead, initiatives should start where the people are, recognise and embrace community strengths and assets as opposed to problems, and engage in meaningful dialogue (Minkler & Hancock, 2003). This partnership approach avoids the professional service providers becoming the dominant figure in community approaches and parental involvement in such interventions helps to raise the quality and participation rates leading to benefits for the children and parents alike (Department of Education and Science, 1999).

Best practice in the USA suggests that early intervention is effective when it provides high quality, intensive and clearly articulated programmes, delivered by highly skilled and carefully trained personnel in contexts of small group and individual instruction which are planned specifically to address individual identified needs (DES, 1999). Prevention and treatment studies have demonstrated the added impact of combining the IYP Parenting Programme with the Teacher Classroom Management programme and/or the Dina School Programme. These studies have shown that these interventions significantly enhance the outcomes for children in relation to peer

relationships, school readiness and the reduction of aggressive behaviours in the classroom (Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 1997, 2004 cited in Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2009).

2.4 Pre-school Policy in Ireland

Early childhood in Ireland is taken to mean children who have not yet reached their sixth birthday (Department of Education and Science, 1999). The rationale for implementing an early intervention preventative programme like the IYP is influenced by national child and education policy. The 1990's saw a plethora of policy developments in relation to children in Ireland following the ratification of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. The Education Act (1998) created the background for early childhood care and education (ECCE) and the responsibility for ECCE at that time was with the Departments of Education & Science, Health & Children, and Justice, Equality & Law Reform.

The 1999 White Paper 'Ready to Learn' states that the principal objective of government policy in relation to early childhood education is:

> "To support the development and educational achievement of children through high quality early education; with particular focus on the target groups of the disadvantaged and those with special needs." (Department of Education and Science, 1999)

In relation to pre-schools, the White Paper outlines the role of the state as confined to an element of funding voluntary and community groups and inspection of basic standards under the Child Care Act. It also considered the various curricula used in EECE in Ireland (Department of Education and Science, 1999). Whilst there is legal provision for the regulation and inspection of pre-school childcare services there are no specific educational standards nor is there a national curriculum. In 2004, the OECD was critical

of pre-school childcare services in Ireland: "The regulatory framework in place in Ireland seems weak in comparison to other countries. It is basically a license to practice, but does not include sufficient incentives to train, employ qualified staff or continually improve expertise" (Schonfield, 2007, 4).

Siolta is Ireland's National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education developed from 2002-05 in line with the recommendations of 'Ready to Learn'. The framework is designed to assist those involved in the provision of early education to participate in the development toward the improvement and enrichment of young children's early life experiences. Rather than prescribing activities that should take place it aims to highlight good practice in ECCE. The framework is intended to complement existing curricular material, to bring greater coherence to children's learning, and to increase connections in learning throughout early childhood (Fitzpatrick & Forster cited in O'Kane, 2007, 27). The primary focus of Siolta is quality, containing three interdependent elements;

- It provides national standards of quality in early childcare and education,
- It is involved in the provision of a range of supports to ECCE practitioners and services towards the enhancement and implementation of quality and
- Is concerned with the assessment of quality (Siolta, 2006).

The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education closed in November 2008 due to the cessation of government funding and responsibility for Siolta moved to the Department of Education and Science.

In October 2009, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment published 'Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework'. Similar to Siolta, Aistear is directed at parents, teachers and other professionals who work with young children. It provides information to assist in the

appropriate planning and provision of challenging, positive and enjoyable learning experiences for children from birth to six years as well as guidelines to support children's learning (Aistear, 2009).

Siolta and Aistear are mere guidelines that can be implemented or ignored. Barnardos highlights this weakness in pre-school education policy arguing, "the evolution of a comprehensive infrastructure in Ireland has been extremely slow" (2009, 16). Irish policy has failed to recognise pre-schools as the first step in the educational system. The absence of a national pre-school curriculum could result in children not being prepared or equipped appropriately for primary school. Moreover, the introduction of a national pre-school curriculum would be an opportune development to link pre-school and primary school holistically and consistently nationally (Walker, 2007, 4).

Currently the three most utilised curricula in Irish pre-schools are Montessori, High Scope and Play Based Learning. The Montessori Curriculum emphasises the environment, both the physical and the individuals with whom the child interacts, grounded in the belief that children learn best from sensory experiences. Teachers determine the curriculum deciding which of the prescribed Montessori materials to demonstrate and then assess the child's progress by observing their ability to complete the activity. The High Scope Curriculum, for three to five year olds defines key developmental indicators in creative representation, language, literacy, initiative and social relations, classification, movement, music, space and time. High Scope is a child centred approach with the child making decisions on what they want to do and the adults act in a supportive role. In relation to Play Based Learning a variety of terms are used to describe the concept including imaginative play, heuristic play, constructive play, structured play and role-play amongst others. The aim of Play Based Learning is provide opportunities for

assessment and evaluation of children's learning. The information gathered while observing children at play is intended to provide an effective means for evaluating the individual curriculum (O'Kane, 2007, 20-3).

One of the most significant policy initiatives in recent years in relation to ECCE has been the introduction of the free pre-school year. As part of the April 2009 Budget, the Government announced a new programme to provide for a Free Pre-School Year with effect from January 2010. The programme is administered by the Childcare Directorate of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, with the local operation of the programme managed by the City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs). This scheme was designed to give children access to a free pre-school year of appropriate programme based activities in the year prior to beginning primary school. In order to avail of the scheme the pre-school, which the child is attending, must agree to provide an appropriate educational programme for children, which adheres to the principals of Siolta (Department of Health and Children, 2009, 2). The scheme aims to improve children's educational experience and outcomes as well as providing a level of childcare. The impact of the scheme on attendance levels is not yet known.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored and reviewed literature which addresses emotional and social competence, early intervention and prevention and current pre-school policy in Ireland. The challenges and issues raised within this chapter provide a context for the evaluation process of this report. Chapter Three will outline the research methodologies which were employed within this evaluation.

CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

This evaluation reports on the process and outcome study of the implementation of the IYP, particularly the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme in Galway City. A process evaluation concentrates on documenting aspects of the project's history, highlighting in particular key decision points and features of implementation (Dehar et al cited in Billings, 2000). Summative evaluation is often referred to as outcome evaluation and considers the impact of the project on its participants. The overall aim of the evaluation was to establish the quality of programme implementation and the outcomes it generates, for children, parents, teachers, pre-school leaders and other stakeholders.

The aim of the process study was to evaluate the initial experience of the establishment and early implementation of the Incredible Years Programme in the context of the GCP's programme of local and community development actions and its general community-led approach to its work. It focuses on the implementation of the programme since 2006 to date**.** Specific evaluation objectives proposed for the process evaluation are:

- Describe the operation of Incredible Years in Galway in particular, the process of establishment and implementation
- Assess fidelity of programme implementation
- Establish outcomes from the programme for children, parents, teachers, other stakeholders, GCP systems / structures / processes
- Establish stakeholders' view of the programme (experience, value, strengths and weaknesses etc.)
- Establish key learning points from initial implementation

This was carried out using documentary analysis and in-depth interviews with stakeholders. Documentary analysis involved analysis of all the GCP

and the IYP programme information held on the database and filling cabinets. Such documents included minutes of staff meetings, annual reports, work plans, correspondence, planning documents, resources, training, parents programme, pre-schools programme, schools programme, research, promotion and dealings with Archways and other agencies. The stakeholder interviews explored the views of these individuals in relation to,

- The outcomes from the programme for children, parents, teachers and other stakeholders,
- Providing a detailed account of operation and value of the IYP at primary and pre-school level,
- Establishing stakeholders' view of the programme (experience, value, strengths, etc.) and
- Establishing key learning points from initial implementation.

Particular emphases in the outcome evaluation is on the operation of the IYP in the pre-school setting, the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme and on generating learning for the partnership on the introduction of standardised evidence-based programmes in the context of the community development approach to its work. Specific outcome evaluation objectives proposed for the evaluation are:

- Establish outcomes from the programme for children, parents, teachers, other stakeholders, GCP systems / structures / processes
- Provide detailed account of operation and value of the IYP for pre-school children
- Establish key learning points from initial implementation
- Establish learning for GCP on implementation of innovative / standardised programmes in local settings

In relation to the outcome study data was collected in four pre-schools in Galway City where Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme is being delivered. Data was collected from parents at three times;

- Time 1 (T1) September 2009 - Pre Intervention Baseline prior to school year
- Time 2 (T2) Summer 2010 - Post Intervention data at the end of the pre-school year, and
- Time 3 (T3) Summer 2011 - Follow up data towards the end of the 1st year in primary school

In addition, data was collected from the pre-school teachers at Time 1 and Time 2. The limitations of the research concern the nature of the study as being non-experimental. This study was not an experimental approach as no control group was used; as such, no cause and effect conclusions can be drawn from the changes in the children's behaviour and their participation in the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme.

3.2 Stakeholders Research

Twenty-nine stakeholder interviews were carried out in order to ascertain the views of those involved in the implementation of the IYP in Galway City. This included staff or members from EdStart GCP, pre-schools participating in the IYP, St. Vincent de Paul Conference, School Completion Programme, National Educational Psychological Service, Foroige, HSE West Family Support Services, Galway City and County Childcare Committee, Home School Liaison Teachers and School Principals. In addition, facilitators of the Parenting Programme and the Small Group Dina Programme were also interviewed. Many of the respondents have direct experience in implementing the Parent Programme, Small Group Dina and Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme. Others have been involved in the implementation of the IYP since it was first introduced to Galway City either

as members of partner agencies or directly as EdStart staff. Additionally, internal documents held by EdStart including reports, correspondence and minutes of meetings were reviewed as part of this evaluation. All interviews were taped, transcribed, and analysed using the grounded theory method. The findings from these interviews are reported in chapters four, five and six.

3.3 Outcome Data Collection

In September 2009, Time 1 (T1) 81 children became involved in the study,[1] non-involvement was due to either parents declining to be involved or language barriers. Data was collected from the parents in a 35-minute interview, which was held in the pre-school (in a few instances the parents were visited in their homes, local libraries, place of work, mother and toddler group or local coffee shop). However, in summer 2010, Time 2 (T2) data was collected for 66 of the 81 children. The reasons for the non-collection of the data from the remaining 15 children were that; seven of the children had left the pre-schools; two of the children's parents had left Ireland and returned to the parent's country of origin, two of the children were now attending different pre-schools and for the remaining four children staff were unaware of their reasons for leaving. During the early summer of 2011, Time 3 (T3) data was collected for 61 children; the other five children had all left Galway City and had no contact details.

Ethical approval for the research was obtained from the NUI Galway Ethics Committee. The study operated based on active informed consent (opt-in), with written consent being required from all potential participants. The study operated under the principle of protection from harm, right of withdrawal,

[1] Questionnaires were completed for 84 children however; three of the children entered primary school in September 2009 and could no longer be included in the study.

and confidentiality. Data collected in the study has been stored in such a way as to ensure confidentiality and participants remain anonymous.

3.4 Outcome Study Data Collected

Over 271 variables were collected. This report provides information on the data collected from the parents and the pre-schools teachers in order to mark the changes in the children's behaviour as reported by the parents from T1 to T3 and the teachers from Time 1 (T1) to Time 2 (T2). During this time, the children took part in the Incredible Years Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme. Prior to data collection at T1 the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme worker from EdStart and the evaluator met with the staff and manager of the pre-schools and explained the nature of the study and provided them with a copy of the questionnaire to be used with the parents. Then the parents in all four pre-schools were invited to a meeting with the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme worker from EdStart and the evaluator where the aims of the study was explained to them and parents were given an opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns they might have in relation to the study. Parents were invited to opt-in to the study and the evaluator arranged time slots in which she would be in the pre-school and the parents selected a time that suited them. The evaluator met with the parents and discussed the study with them and gained informed consent and then conducted the questionnaire. At T1, all parents met with the evaluator in a private room in the pre-school and their contact details were acquired in order to facilitate the data collection process of T2 and T3. At T1, the questionnaire took approximately 45 minutes to complete at T2 and T3 it was 25 minutes and some interviews were conducted in the parent's home, place of work, local libraries, coffee shops and the pre-schools.

Table 3.1 Data Collected from Parents

Measure	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Personal Data and Health Questionnaire	•	•	•
Socio Economic Disadvantage	•		
Index of Major Life Events	•	•	•
Beck Depression Inventory	•	•	•
Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory	•	•	•
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	•	•	•
Social Competence Scale	•	•	•
The Parenting Scale	•	•	•

Table 3.2 Data Collected from Pre-School Workers

Measure	Time 1	Time 2
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	•	•

The data collected from the parents included;

- demographic and family risk factors,
- the depression levels of the parents,
- child social competence and conduct disorder problems at home, and
- parental competencies.

Demographic and family risk factors are measured using The Personal Data and Health Questionnaire (PDHQ), Socio Economic Disadvantage, The Index of Major Life Events and the Becks Depression Inventory. The Personal Data and Health Questionnaire measure is used to gather basic socio-demographic & general health of family members. It covers aspects of the child's health and development as well as questions about the rest of the child's family, quality of relationship between parents where applicable, quality of housing and the parent's level of education (Hutchings, 1996). The level of Socio economic disadvantage is derived from answers provided on the PDHQ. The six socio-economic risk factors measured are employment status, martial status, number of children, maternal education, housing and level of crime in area of residence (Hutchings, 1996). The Index of Major Life Events assesses a

number of objectively serious stressors that have affected the family over the last few years; work, finance, health, housing, bereavement and relationships (Hutchings, 1996). The Beck Depression Inventory measures depression levels of the parent by considering the severity of characteristic attitudes and symptoms associated with depression (Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock & Erbaugh, 1961).

Child social competence and conduct problems at home were measured using the Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory (ECBI), Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ's) and the Social Competence Scale. The ECBI is designed to measure the parent's report of their child's conduct behavioural problems and the frequency of such problems. The measures include the intensity of problems, problem behaviour sub-scales, inattention, impulsivity and the total level of behavioural problems (Eyberg and Ross, 1978). This is a 36-item inventory designed to be completed by the parent for the assessment of problem behaviours occurring in children from the age of 2-16 years. An example item of problem behaviour would be *'has temper tantrums'*. Each behaviour is rated on two scales: a 7-point Intensity scale that measures how often the behaviour is perceived to occur, ranging in response intensity from 1 (*Never*) to 7 (*Always*); and a *Yes-No* Problem scale that identifies whether the behaviour is currently seen as a problem for the parent.

Hutchings (2004; 34) explains that the ECBI can be used:
(1) "As a screening measure in the clinical identification of children for the diagnosis and treatment of externalising behaviour problems.
(2) As a selection measure for the identification of "high risk" children for delinquency prevention programmes.
(3) As a measure of treatment outcome."

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997) parent version is designed to assess parents perceptions of their child's behaviour. It measures hyperactivity, conduct problems, emotional difficulties, peer problems, pro-social behaviours and the level of total difficulties. The Social Competence Scale is a 12-item measure that assesses a child's pro social behaviours, communication skills, and self-control. The Social Competence Scale contains two subscales: Pro social/Communication Skills and Emotional Regulation Skills (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 1999).

Parental competencies were measured using the Parenting Scale. The Parenting Scale is designed to measure dysfunctional discipline practices in parents of children aged 18-48 months (Arnold, O'Leary, Wolff & Acker, 1993). The scale targets specific aspects of parenting discipline practices and contains three sub-scales; Laxness, Overreactivity and Verbosity (Incredible Years, 2010). In relation to changes in parenting practices, responses are made using a 7-point scale anchored between two alternative responses to a situation. A score of 7 is the highest score in terms of ineffectiveness, therefore the lower the score the more effective the parenting practices. (Incredible Years, 2010).

At T1, all completed questionnaires were numbered and anonymised and then the data was inputted into an SPSS database and then analysed for frequencies. Subsequent data collected at T2 and T3 was added to the database and the data from the demographic and risk factor data is presented in Chapter Six and all other data collected from the parents is presented in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER FOUR – RATIONALE FOR INVOLVEMENT OF GALWAY CITY PARTNERSHIP AND STAKEHOLDERS

Chapter Four provides an overview of the development of the Incredible Years Programme in Galway City. The rationale for the involvement of stakeholders in the Incredible Years Programme is also explored.

4.1 Incredible Years Programme (IYP) in Galway City

The IYP was introduced to Galway City through Galway City Partnership (GCP) in 2005. GCP is an independent not-for-profit company which receives core funding for the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, through Pobal, under the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP)[2], a sub-measure of the National Development Plan. Under the LDSIP, Partnerships have flexibility to prepare local development plans that respond to local economic and social needs. While actions funded by the LDSIP involve integrated responses to the multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion, they are grouped into three areas of activity; Services to the Unemployed, Community Development and Community Based Youth Initiatives.

GCP and the Partnership structure lend itself to innovation and spring-boarding new ideas and programmes. From the perspective of GCP their involvement in the IYP stemmed from two primary motivations, the need for evaluating the impact of the Education and Training programmes they were supporting and the need to tackle early school leaving in Galway City. In 2005, GCP decided that there was a need to assess the level of impact that the programmes they were providing were having on their participants and the wider community. In the Education and Training section of GCP it was

[2] When this evaluation was initiated the funding stream was LDSIP, however the current fund is titled the Local Community Development Fund (LCDP). LCDP focus on four goals: 1) Promote awareness, knowledge and uptake of a wide range of statutory voluntary and community services, 2) Increase access to formal and informal educational, recreational and cultural activities and resources, 3) Increase in people's work readiness and employment prospect and 4) Promote engagement with policy, practice, and decision making processes on matters affecting local communities.

decided to concentrate on delivering fewer programmes and assessing the impact of those programmes that were being delivered.

The Education and Training Co-ordinator within GCP researched the IYP and brought it to the attention of the Manager of GCP that the programme had developed significantly outside of the US with the evidence based programme being delivered internationally, including the UK. Also at that time, the programme had been implemented in a limited number of locations in Ireland, including Clondalkin and Ennis. It was decided that Galway City Partnership would explore the programme in greater detail and consider its application to Galway City.

With this is mind, the Manager and the Education and Training Co-ordinator of GCP attended a network meeting where the Education and Training Co-ordinator from Clondalkin Partnership delivered a presentation on the IYP. Clondalkin Partnership had begun delivering the IYP Small Group Dina and Parent Programme in the Clondalkin area. This was followed by a visit to Clondalkin Partnership to explore the implementation of the IYP in Clondalkin. During the initial implementation of the IYP in Galway City there was a high level of supports provided by the Education Team of Clondalkin Partnership (which subsequently developed into Archways). Regular meetings between the two organisations took place providing support in relation to the recruitment of participants and key agencies, delivery of the programme, training of facilitators, and accreditation. Those initial supports were vital to the development of the programme in Galway City.

Community based education involves an education plan of support created because of community involvement and is designed to cater for community

interests. Community interventions are a particularly useful way to integrate efforts by various actors because "communities are the functional unit within which children are raised" (Taylor & Biglan, 1998, 56). As a community based early intervention programme the IYP in Galway is a community development project as it is implemented in disadvantaged areas and incorporates stakeholders involved in the education of children and the support of parents. In November 2005, the Education and Training Co-ordinator submitted a funding proposal to the Education and Training Sub-Committee of GCP seeking funding to implement the IYP. The Sub-Committee agreed to fund the purchase of resources and material for the implementation of the Small Group Dina in two pilot schools.

4.2 Organisational Structure of EdStart

In 2007, the title 'Edstart – Incredible Years Galway'[3] was developed to provide an identity for the Incredible Years Programme in Galway City. Initially the Education and Training Co-ordinator was the sole worker involved in the programme. In 2007, a part-time worker was employed. In 2008, two further part-time workers were employed through LDSIP and St. Vincent de Paul funding (further details of this funding are included in Chapter 6 of this report). There are currently three part-time members of staff working within Edstart each having responsibility for one of element of the programme (Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme, Small Group Dina and Teacher Classroom Management (TCM) Programme and the Parent Programme). Whilst both the EdStart Pre-school and Primary School Workers are trained in the delivery of the respective IYP they don't deliver that particular programme (all EdStart staff deliver the TCM Programme. Instead, their role is to oversee the implementation of the programme by

[3] 'EdStart – Incredible Years Galway' will be referred to as EdStart for the remainder of this report.

working with the schools in a support and supervision function. The Parent Programme Worker delivers the Parent Programme and provides support to other facilitators delivering the programme as well as working with the participating parents.

The EdStart Co-ordinator[4] supports the EdStart workers to carry out their roles and responsibilities, provides overall direction for the programme, and is trained in the delivery of the IYP. The EdStart Co-ordinator reports to the Education and Training Sub-Committee, which is comprised of representatives from schools, Galway City and County Childcare Committee (GCCC), the Vocational and Educational Committee (VEC) and many other agencies. They in turn report to the Board of the GCP. Specifically in relation to the Pre-School Programme, quarterly meetings take place with the Society of the St. Vincent de Paul.

Initially, outside of the formal structure, an informal advisory structure was in place involving those participating in the implementation of the programme including staff from local primary schools; Family Support Services (HSE) and Galway City East School Completion Programme (SCP). In May 2007, a new format for the future of the programme in Galway City was developed with the GCP assuming the role as the lead agency for the IYP. Subsequently, all referrals (children and parents) were co-ordinated by the GCP.

The current objectives of EdStart for the IYP in Galway City are;

- To support the facilitators implementing the Small Group Dina and Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme.

[4] The Education and Training Co-ordinator within Galway City Partnership became the EdStart Co-ordinator in May 2007.

- To support and direct Parent Programmes and promote the principle of the programmes in other forums and groups in targeted communities.
- To monitor and ensure fidelity to the IYP in Galway City.
- To source and apply for funding (LDSIP and external) to implement the programme.
- To develop a research protocol and implement research in relation to the IYP.
- To promote the IYP among agencies and services in Galway City.

4.3 Accreditation Process and Achievements of IYP in Galway City

Central to the development of the IYP has been the accreditation process associated with the programme. While the accreditation process varies to a certain extent for each programme within the IYP, in general the process involves the recording of the facilitators delivering the programme to ensure fidelity to the programme content. One taped session is forwarded for review to Professor Judy Hutchings, University of Bangor, an Incredible Years Mentor. Professor Hutchings is in a position to assess and approve a tape as meeting the fidelity/ accreditation standard. The accreditation process is extremely rigorous, time intensive and comprehensive which ensures fidelity to the programme is achieved. Chapter 3 of this evaluation report provides an insight into the professional and personal benefits for those who have achieved their accreditation. Table 4.1 outlines the number of facilitators that have been accredited in Galway City across the three programmes.

Table 4.1 Number of Facilitators Accredited in Galway City

Programmes In Galway City	Number Accredited in Galway City
Small Group Dina	4
Parent Programme	5
Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School)	9
Total	**18**

4.4 Incredible Programme Years – Rationale for Involvement

Many of the stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the IYP in Galway City identified the reason(s) for their involvement in the programme. All of those interviewed spoke positively of the IYP as an intervention, primarily because it reaches the **child, the home and the school**. The opinion of the majority of stakeholders is that the intervention is positive as it involves the community and more particularly the parents, not just the children in isolation.

> "Incredible Years is probably the best of what I have come across because of the multi-element that's there to it, because certainly, I think those three strands, the child, the parent environment, the school environment they all have to be addressed. Probably it's not going to work unless there is all three in terms of making things more positive for children" (Respondent 15).

The involvement of the children, the home and the school is regarded by stakeholders as being very important and different to what other services provide in the City. The primary benefit identified by stakeholders is the tripartite approach of children, the home and the school being involved in a programme that can bring about a consistency in how children behave and are disciplined in both the school and home. Linked to the tripartite approach is the consistency of vocabulary/ language and behavioural strategies across the three programmes. Numerous stakeholders regarded this as an aspect of

the main benefit of the IYP approach. That is, that everyone who participates in the programme utilises consistent vocabulary/ language and strategies in relation to behaviour.

As many teachers explained, school can only do so much with difficult behaviour in the classroom as strategies and approaches need to be reinforced in the home. IYP is regarded as having the capacity to fill that service void.

> "It is of huge value particularly to schools over the last number of years you see more and more children with difficult behaviour. So I think a programme like this, you know that tackles it from all angles. One of the biggest things that I think is lacking and that IYP filled in is you can bring kids into school and do so much work with them but if it is not being reinforced at home. That's where the downside is and I think that with IYP you are giving the parents the knowledge of how to deal with it at home and to reinforce the good as opposed to correcting the bad" (Respondent 22).

> "I think there's a good balance in the programme in the sense of it targets parents and or children, at different levels and the teachers. It's the bringing together of all that, any other programme that I have dealt with just mainly they're for parents, they never really looked at how you get the parents and their detachment or otherwise from school and the teachers, and their ability to interact with children in a consistent way" (Respondent 18).

> "The principal of X School is interested and the only reason he is interested in the Incredible Years is because it's both parents and children and I think that's what makes it different, that's one if it's real strengths. Because you know you can take the child in school and work with them however many hours a day and then once they go home their experiences sometimes are very negative for lots of reasons, so how much can you do if you don't work with the parents" (Respondent 14).

Some stakeholders believe that the IYP will improve the confidence and capacity of the teachers, parents and children involved by providing them with the vocabulary/ language and skills to deal with behavioural problems.

Furthermore, whilst the pre-school staff would all have relevant training and qualifications little of it would have dealt with behavioural management and as such, their involvement in the IYP develops their professional skills and abilities in this area;

> "It is a huge support to parents and to schools and teachers, even in terms of the pre-school staff, who've been largely neglected, and underpaid and underutilised. It is something they have taken on board well and have the professional skills which will help them be more confident in the classroom and the children they are working with obviously they're benefitting hugely from it" (Respondent 12).

The use of puppets as an appropriate way to work with young children in the IYP is again unique compared to the other approaches in Galway City. However, overwhelmingly teachers, principals and managers of pre-schools view the primary difference of the IYP compared to other approaches is the promotion of positive behaviour amongst the children. This achieved by encouraging the children to reflect on the impact of their negative behaviours and rewarding them for their positive behaviour. This in turn has the effect of the child's self-esteem improving, as they are no longer attracting negative attention.

> "Promoting positive behaviour and it treats the children in a very positive way; they are made to see themselves how their behaviour impinges on other children and they are made to look at it and view it in a different light and their positive behaviour is rewarded. When that's happening everyday it boosts their morale and their not always in trouble and treated negatively, they are made to see how their behaviour is impacting on others and how it is unacceptable" (Respondent 26).

The fact that the IYP is an **evidence based programme** was viewed as a key reason for becoming involved in the programme. The strengths identified included the fact that the IYP is evidence based the accreditation process for staff, the nature of the skills taught and learned, the structure of the

programme, the inclusion of the home, relationships, the lifelong benefits and the fun element of the IYP. The strengths identified in relation to the work of EdStart included; their partnership approach, the expansion of their activities to date, the calibre of the facilitators and the contagion effect the programme is having in the wider community. Stakeholders believe that the programme works and that in itself is regarded as one of the core strengths.

Furthermore, the fact that the programme has been **successfully implemented internationally** was viewed as a positive factor. This also facilitates those agencies that engaged with both the pre-schools and primary schools as they are introducing a programme which has been proven to work. Added to this, some stakeholders stated that they found the prescriptive nature of the programme to be extremely helpful because they know that if they remain true to the programme and implement it with fidelity they will get the desired results.

The **accreditation process** was also viewed as a key reason for becoming involved in the programme. All stakeholders regard the accreditation process of facilitators as a significant strength of the IYP. The pre-school workers found the accreditation to be positive for their own professional development, excellent for reflective practice and improving where necessary how they teach and manage their classrooms. They found the accreditation process quite straightforward and informative as well as providing affirmation that they are facilitating the programme properly.

> "I had to video tape my sessions, send them off with paperwork and also background information on myself. If I needed to work on any areas, it was sent back with information and I corrected those areas and sent the tapes of another session off. Once I met all the criteria I was accredited" (Respondent 4).

> "You want to make sure you're implementing the programme properly in the way it's supposed to be implemented so to get accredited is great, you know its working well" (Respondent 2).

One stakeholder explained that there are limited services for children of primary school age in Galway City and there is a need further supports within the City, particularly in relation to behavioural problems or difficulties. Furthermore, not only is there an intervention for the children with difficulties there is also a programme for the parents of these children.

> "What the schools do is brilliant … the fact that it's a specific behaviour modification programme. There's plenty of things like basketball but it's very difficult to get your child into a behaviour modification kind of personal development programme and it's being offered for free in school. … It's providing a very good solid service to kids in that age group for who there are not that many services out there and then it's providing a very good parenting course for parents as well" (Respondent 17).

4.5 Conclusions

The initial development of the Incredible Years Programme in Galway City centred on the work of Galway City Partnership. However, the progression of the programme has involved the inclusion of many external agencies and organisations. The process evaluation has firmly identified that those who have become stakeholders in the IYP in Galway City have done so due to the tripartite structure, the international evidence based nature and accreditation system within the Incredible Years Programme. This chapter has also outlined the organisation structure of IYP in Galway City and numbers currently accredited in the programme in Galway City.

CHAPTER FIVE – SMALL GROUP DINA AND PARENT PROGRAMME

Chapter Five provides an insight into the development of the Small Group Dina in the primary school, Parent Programme and Teacher Classroom Management in Galway City. In addition, the stakeholders' views of the Small Group Dina and Parent Programmes are provided through an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of these programmes.

5.1 Small Group Dina Programme in Galway City (2006-2010)

As outlined in Chapter 1 the Small Group Dina Programme works with six children for two hours per week over an 18-20 week period. Consistent with one of the aims of GCP to tackle early school leaving the initial implementation of the Incredible Years Programme in Galway City was centred on the Small Group Dina Programme. Table 5.1 outlines the location of the Small Group Dina Programme since it initial implementation in 2006.

Table 5.1 Location of Small Group Dina Programme

Year (Begins Oct)	**Schools**	**Delivered by**	**Number of Children**
2006	St. Michaels School, Mervue	SCP Staff*	6
2006	Scoil Bhride, Shantalla	School Staff	6
2007	St. Michaels School, Mervue	SCP and School Staff	6
2007	Holy Trinity School, Mervue	SCP and School Staff	6
2008	St. Michaels School, Mervue	SCP and School Staff	6
2008	Holy Trinity School, Mervue	SCP and School Staff	6
2008	Scoil St Phrionsias in Tirellan	SCP and School Staff	6
2009	St. Michaels School, Mervue	SCP and School Staff	6
2009	Holy Trinity School, Mervue	SCP and School Staff	6
2009	Scoil St Phrionsias in Tirellan	SCP and School Staff	6
2010	St. Michaels School, Mervue	SCP and School Staff	6
2010	Holy Trinity School, Mervue	SCP and School Staff	6
	Total		**72**

*SCP Staff is the Project Officers of Galway City East SCP.

Four primary schools have been involved in the delivery of the Small Group Dina Programme. Each of these schools are part of the Department of Education and Skills Scheme - Delivering Equality of Opportunities in School (DEIS). Three of the schools are based on the eastside of Galway City and are linked to Galway City East School Completion Programme (SCP). The fourth school is linked to Galway City West School Completion Programme. The Galway City East SCP has been central to the implementation of the IYP in Galway City. The Co-ordinator of Galway City East SCP, in co-operation with the GCP Education and Training Co-ordinator, introduced the IYP to the Principals of the Schools within that particular SCP. Getting the schools involved was perhaps the most significant milestone in the implementation of Incredible Years Programme in Galway as the success of the programme hinged on the involvement of the primary schools and in particular the Principals;

> "At the end of the day it all came down to getting into a school. How willing is the Principal, not how willing is the teacher. The Principal will talk about teachers but at the end of the day if the Principal goes and sells the concept, teachers will at least say 'Well ok I will give it a go" (Respondent 18).

Whilst the schools were open to the IYP, they were naturally quite wary about introducing the programme. However, as noted in Chapter Three the existing research findings on the IYP and the fidelity/ accreditation process involved helped in convincing the key personnel to introduce the programme to their school. Moreover, the involvement of the parents was regarded by the schools as unique to the IYP:

> "It was the parent involvement, they really felt that a lot of their (schools) work had been just focusing on the children and they believed that parents have a huge impact" (Respondent 10).

As noted previously, four schools have been involved in the delivery of the Small Group Dina Programme, however only two schools are currently

involved in the delivery of the Programme. Both of these schools are linked to the Galway City East SCP. Certainly the support of the Galway City East SCP staff has been integral to the IYP continuing within the two remaining schools. In contrast, issues such as underestimation of the time commitment involved, initial implementation problems with the Parent Programme and the limited impact on the whole school of the Small Group Dina Programme contributed to the other two schools discontinuation of the Programme.

Feedback from schools involved in the Small Group Dina Programme in 2009, highlighted the limited impact of the programme. With the above in mind and an acknowledgement by Webster-Stratton (2004) of the benefits of a classroom wide intervention, it was decided to focus attention on implementing a Classroom Based/ Whole School Approach. A significant milestone in the history of EdStart has been the evolution of the IYP in Holy Trinity School in Mervue from the Small Group Dina Programme to a Whole School Approach.

5.2 Whole School Approach and Teacher Classroom Management (2010)

Encouraged by the implementation of the Whole Pre-School Approach in the Pre-Schools (as described in Chapter 6) and the previously identified limitations of the Small Group Dina Programme, the concept of the Whole School Approach in a primary school was explored. It was felt that the development of a Whole School Approach among the schools who were already delivering the Small Group Dina Programme would further support the students who were involved. Furthermore, a whole school approach would expose all students in the school to IYP. The key programmes included in the development of a Whole School Approach are: Small Group Dina, Parent Programmes (Basic Parent Programme and School Readiness Programme), Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme and the Teacher

Classroom Management Programme (TCM). The decision was taken to pilot the Whole School Approach in one school, Holy Trinity School, Mervue.

As part of the Whole School Approach, the TCM Programme was delivered to Holy Trinity School, Mervue. Four staff members of EdStart were trained in the programme and began delivery in September 2010 with the intention of training all members of staff in Holy Trinity School, Mervue. The TCM programme has been, and continues to be, delivered to teachers by the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) programme in Galway City on an annual basis. EdStart has always supported NEPS with this initiative through the provision of relevant resources.

5.3 Strengths of Small Group Dina Programme and Teacher Classroom Management Programme in Galway City

In relation to the Small Group Dina Programme, it is viewed as being extremely positive for the children involved and that both the parents and teachers have been very responsive to this.

> "I think it is an excellent programme … I've been to at a few schools, you can almost see the difference, you know you can hear the teachers saying there's a difference, I think that will actually stand to them. But you can certainly see the parents, how they approach children and even the way they talk to them" (Respondent 18).

The Small Group Dina Programme is regarded as invaluable for children with behavioural difficulties and low self-esteem as it brings a better understanding to the children of how they should behave in school. No other programme is currently being used which actually spells out for children what type of behaviour is appropriate particularly in such a fun way. In addition, the feedback from the facilitators and the teachers has been very

positive. One Principal explained that the parents in that school were very receptive to having their children involved in the IYP and some parents whose children have completed the programme have requested that their child remain involved in the programme, even though this is not possible.

The children engage with the programme and like the puppets. The children look at the puppets when they are talking and believe that they are talking to them and telling them stories. One stakeholder explained how the children demonstrate aspects of the programme for the parents at graduation and even the more advanced children engage with the puppets.

> "At the time of the graduation the children do a little bit of the programme for their parents. You see children that would have been very reluctant to take to the stage and do any kind of thing like that and certain children would have been very streetwise to sit beside a puppet. You know they really are engaged in the whole thing and the parents are responsive to that" (Respondent 14).

The Galway City East School Completion Programme (2008) completed an internal audit of the attendance of all the children involved in the project and requested the schools to furnish then with attendance figures for all of the target children. When they focused on the attendance of those children involved in IYP they discovered that those children missed on average fourteen days each year, however, their improved attendance at school on IYP days was notable. Three of the children missed two of the sessions and two children missed one session. For the children who had a high rate of absence this was not carrying through to days on which the IYP was being delivered. Indeed one of the children had missed 40 school days that year but only missed one of the IYP sessions.

According to relevant stakeholders, the interaction of the children with one another has also improved as they try to solve their own problems around

sharing and turn taking when they are playing rather than seeking the assistance of an adult. The teachers also noted an improvement in the sharing of materials and toys in class. Teachers spoke of how these skills give the children a foundation that they will have for life. One teacher spoke of how beneficial the programme has been for shy children;

> "I would have to say it would be that the quiet children that they shine, they do shine through Dina School" (Respondent 7).

Primary school teachers also spoke of the contagion effect the IYP can have on families. For those parents who have children involved in the Small Group Dina Programme and they themselves are involved in the Parent Programme have now acquired new skills that can they follow through with their children, thereby eliminating the future need for those children and parents to engage in the IYP.

> "I think the parents are getting a lot more out of it, because they are getting a Parenting Programme and down through the years what we would be hoping is that if the parent is trained up in the Parenting Programme, they will follow through with the younger kids so they won't end up in the Small Group Dina. That the Mum or Dad will have the skills at home which means that when they arrive at school they don't need Small Group Dina" (Respondent 21).

In relation to the Teacher Classroom Management Programme (TCM) from the perspective of the facilitators, one of the main strengths was that the training for the teachers takes place over a number of weeks rather than a one-day workshop. It was perceived that the main benefit of this method of delivery is that the teachers can go back to the classrooms, practice their skills base, and reflect on what they have learned and how they applied it.

> "A lot of it was about reflection, going away and trying things out, and coming back and sometimes they had missed the point of the exercise. So you had to go back over the ground again. Or because there were others in the group who had hit the nail on the head, there was learning there. … So I think in comparison with other courses, I would say that's

its big strength; that model of breaking down the skills that are needed and building up a management approach over a number of sessions with lots of skills practice in between"(Respondent 20).

5.4 Weaknesses of Small Group Dina Programme and Teacher Classroom Management Programme in Galway City

The fact that the Department of Education and Skills has not adopted the IYP approach nationally nor have they been directly engaged in the IYP projects around the country has been identified as a weakness. ***The IYP would fit into a category of professional development for teachers approved by the Department of Education and Skills. However, the IYP has not been established as a programme of professional development.*** Stakeholders noted that the Department of Education and Skills commitment to IYP TCM Programme would be beneficial in terms of encouraging teachers to become involved in training and would be seen as an approval of the programme by the Department. However, the involvement of NEPS in Galway City, which is a unit of the Department, can be viewed as a positive move in terms of linkage with the Department of Education and Skills. Linked to this would be the acknowledgment by the HSE of the IYP as a component of their parenting strategy.

"If you really want Incredible Years to become a bigger sustainable entity you have to look much bigger than local. … If the Department of Education was to say, this is going to be a plank of our behavioural strategy with young people. If the HSE was to say this is going to be a plank of our parenting strategy in communities, that's how it would really work" (Respondent 18).

In relation to the TCM Programme, one respondent explained that the teachers were unimpressed with the quality of the video vignettes, that whilst the vignettes were effective in demonstrating good behaviour management the quality of the teaching was questioned.

From the perspective of the primary school stakeholders, the Whole School Approach is the best way to bring about the greatest change in the children's behaviour. Currently, Small Group Dina Programme operates in two schools yet not all the teachers are current trained in the IYP. Consequently, children may be exposed to one set of practices and behaviours in Dina School and another set in the classroom. Whilst facilitators attempt to overcome this weakness by incorporating the rules of the classroom into Dina School it can still cause confusion for some children. Stakeholders argued that this could be overcome by implementing a Whole School Approach.

> "Where there is a Whole School Approach, when the children go back into the class the teachers have their own set of rules. Now what I try to do is incorporate their rules into the Dina School rules so that they're not being confused. But I would see it as a weakness that when the kids go back into the class the Dina School approach is not being followed" (Respondent 21).

Furthermore, in relation to the Small Group Dina Programme it can be challenging initially as it is prescriptive but also the use of the puppets in the children's programmes is a new departure for most and the filming of the sessions can take time to adjust to.

> "Whenever I see new staff starting to do facilitation, I always really feel for them, because it's a difficult programme to take on and it's something very unlike anything else that they've ever done. You know using the puppets, being filmed … when they are doing it the first time they almost feel that they need to know the script off by heart, when they do it the second time they relax a bit" (Respondent 13).

5.5 The Parent Programme in Galway City (2006-2010)

The three-pronged approach of the IYP working with children, teachers and parents was viewed as a one of the key reasons for implementing the programme in Galway City. In 2006, at the same time as the Small Group Dina Programme, the Parent Programme commenced. Therefore, the first Parent Programmes were run in Ballybane and Westside. These two

programmes were delivered by staff from Ballybane and Westside Family Support Services who are trained to deliver the IYP through funding from GCP. These two programmes were not completed. One of the key reasons for the non-completion of these programmes was non-engagement of parents and the underestimation of the time requirement for the implementation of the programme. As a result, a review of the process and the key partners involved in the Parent Programme was required as noted in the following statement:

> "The Parent Programme is very, very specific, evidence based work … but there is a huge amount of effort put into building a relationship with parents before the programme starts. And that is difficult, that is time consuming, you are spending four weeks working with parents before the programme starts and that is a big commitment" (Respondent 10).

It was hoped that a partnership approach could be developed in the delivery of the Parenting Programme in Galway City. As part of the review of the Parent Programme in 2007, GCP staff engaged with Family Support Services, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and Foroige in relation to potentially becoming involved in the delivery of the programme. Despite initial enthusiasm and the training of CAMHS staff through funding from GCP, no IYP Parent Programmes were delivered by CAMHS. GCP attempted to establish reasons for non-delivery of the programme but CAHMS did not re-engage with GCP. The Family Support Services were not in a position to deliver the programme in 2007 and 2008 but staff from the Ballybane Family Support Service did co-facilitate programmes in 2009 and 2010. Foroige emerged from this review process as a partner in relation to the delivery of the Parent Programme and subsequently facilitated programmes between 2007 and 2009.

The final conclusions from the internal review of the Parent Programme was that GCP, in the absence of a formal specific partnership, would have to manage and deliver the programme using internal staffing and volunteers. Since 2007, five staff members of GCP and eight volunteers have facilitated the IYP Parent Programme. The process of recruiting, training and supporting volunteers was co-ordinated by the Parent Programme Worker. In 2008, a volunteer policy was developed and adopted by GCP to support the volunteers and the worker involved.

To date, 30 individuals in total have been trained to deliver the Parent Programme and 16 of these have delivered at least part of an IYP Basic Parent Programme. In addition, there are consultation days with accredited peer-support trainers or accredited facilitators that the trainee facilitators attend. The consultation days are facilitated by staff from Seattle, Archways and GCP. Those who have been trained as facilitators are extremely positive about the quality of training they received;

> "The training was excellent, really, really, excellent, probably the best training I've ever done and I'm doing this work over ten years and I really enjoyed it, I thought it was delivered brilliantly and really felt coming away that once I have my manual I am competent enough to do the course" (Respondent 17).

Table 5.2 provides an overview of the location of the Parent Programmes between 2007 and 2011. The participants on these programmes were referred from the following sources:

- Parents of Children involved in the Small Group Dina Programme,
- Parents of Children involved in the Dina in the Classroom Pre-School Programme,
- Self-Referrals,

- Referrals from relevant voluntary and statutory agencies[5].

Table 5.2 Location of the Completed Parent Programmes in Galway City

Time of Delivery	Location (12 sessions)	Participant number	Completed at least 8 Sessions
Oct 2007	Ballybane	8	4
Oct 2007	Ballybane	10	7
April 2008	Westside	11	9
Sept 2008	Tirellan	12	8
Sept 2008	Ballybane	11	9
Sept 2008	Knocknacarra	12	9
March 2009	**Westside***	13	7
March 2009	Ballybane	11	6
March 2009	**Knockncarra***	11	6
Sept 2009	Ballybane	12	7
Sept 2009	Tirellan	13	8
March2010	Bohermore	10	7
March 2010	Ballybane	14	9
March 2010	Westside	14	13
Sept 2010	Mervue	13	11
Nov 2010	Westside	18	10
March 2011	Westside	14	11
March 2011	Mervue	10	8
	Total	**217**	**149**

***These programme were 14 sessions**

In 2010, EdStart began the delivery of the Incredible Years Programme School Readiness Programme. This programme is a four session programme for parents of children who are beginning primary school. The programme covers the following topics: child directed play, social, emotional and cognitive skills, interactive reading and pre-writing.

Table 5.3 School Readiness Programme Galway City

Date of Delivery	Location	Number of Participants
May 2010	Holy Trinity School Mervue	45
May 2011	Holy Trinity School Mervue	60

[5] Due to limited resources, all adult referrals are now based on the participation of their child in the Small Group Dina Programme or the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme.

5.6 Strengths of the IYP Parent Programme in Galway City

One of the main strengths of the parents being involved in the programme is that they and their children, who are involved in the children's programme, are speaking the same vocabulary/ language and the parent understands the communication skills the child has learned in the programme.

> "They are talking the same language, the child will come back and talk about 'ignoring' or 'calming down' and the parent will have covered that in the parent programme, they will have discussed it, there is going to be a shared communication between the child and parent" (Respondent 14).

Facilitators of the Parent Programme advocate that whilst there is a great benefit for those parents whose children are receiving one of the children's programme, the Parent Programme is also a stand-alone intervention which can assist parents greatly in their capacity as a parent. The facilitator of the Parent Programme are strong advocates of it and have seen the difference it has made for participants. One of the main benefits of the Parent Programme is that it empowers the parents to view themselves as experts of their own situation and the aim of the intervention is to improve what they are already doing as parents.

> "It is a very simple easy to communicate programme, nobody needs to be an expert, except everybody in the room is an expert and I think that empowers parents … it's not rocket science. It's just improving what parents are doing anyway and telling them 'You're doing that right so just do more of it, and maybe be more conscious that you are doing it, and things will change" (Respondent 17).

One stakeholder spoke of how some parents continue to meet up with one another following completion of the Parent Programme and support each other in their parenting.

> "It seems to be quite effective, there's a reasonably high retention level of the parents doing it and the staff put in a lot of time and effort. I've also heard that some parents go off and continue to keep contact with each other … they actually meet and they support each other as well … My understanding is that from the parenting part its excellent, the young people are doing better in school than they might do if it wasn't there" (Respondent 16).

The Parent Programme also works with parents of pre-school children and this is the only one of its kind in Galway City. One stakeholder identified the main difference in the IYP Parent Programme compared to other programme is that the approach that puts the focus back on the family to become involved, as there is no coercion or payments for attendance. The real strength of the programme for many of the stakeholders is the involvement of the parents, as their parenting skills being enhanced it benefits all of the family.

> "I think the parents are the most powerful people in a family and because of that with changing behaviours the most influential" (Respondent 20).

In practical terms, one of the benefits of the Parent Programme is that the sessions are held locally as opposed to a city centre location and as such are easily accessible on foot for the target population. The programme is a standard course for parents and does not carry the stigmatism as being "just for bad parents" (Respondent 29) rather all parents are encouraged to be involved. Furthermore, because the programme is being held in local resource and community centres they are regarded as being more inviting to parents as opposed to programmes held in a clinical setting.

> "As a community run programme that is run in the community as opposed to a clinical environment, that adds to the whole benefit of the programme, it's open, it's friendly for parents who be a little about apprehensive about coming in, in the first place to do a parenting programme" (Respondent 25).

The views of those stakeholders working with families in the city is that the Parent Programme is ideal for those families who do not require intensive family support but could benefit from help in parenting. They also view the Parent Programme as an important stand-alone intervention for those parents who do not have children attending Small Dina School.

> "The Parenting Programme works well with families in a settled stable period who need support around handling the children but other things are settled in their lives and it works for them" (Respondent 24).

Pre-school workers experience's of the Parent Programme were also very positive. In particular, they acknowledged the amount of support the parents were given and the importance of them becoming involved in the programme. Indeed, the pre-school staff and primary teachers are advocates of the parents getting involved in the Parent Programme because of the benefit of becoming familiar with emotional vocabulary and the behavioural skills the children have learned in school.

> "For the year we had him we brought him so far and his Mum went on the Parent Programme. So he was getting it at home, he was getting it here … I just feel the parents should avail of the Parenting Programme" (Respondent 1).

5.7 Weakness of IYP Parent Programme in Galway City

The cultural differences involved in implementing an American programme in an Irish context, which requires high levels of fidelity, emerged as a problem for some of the stakeholders. One facilitator of the Parent Programme explained that one group of parents disliked the video vignettes as they described them as patronising and out-dated and the subsequently found it difficult to relate to them as they don't reflect how they interact with their own children.

> "I think some of the parents were like 'Man they are patronising us with these'. They say they have upgraded the videos really only the

> first two clips are modern and its straight back to the 1970's stuff and I guess that shouldn't matter but it tends to matter and because it's very American. Like we had, a man ask the first week 'Is this an American programme? This is too kind of haggy, touchy feely' and sometimes the videos are a bit like … they don't look like they're real parents in real settings" (Respondent 17).

However, the vignettes are a key element of all the IYP interventions as it is through them that the instruction and learning take place. With this in mind some facilitators of the Parenting Programme use only those vignettes essential for each session and have found that by introducing the clip to the parents by explaining what it deals with and why it is important prior to showing parents tend to be more receptive to them.

> "Participants still regard the vignettes as useful particularly when facilitators are positive about the importance of what is in the vignette" (Respondent 20).

The lack of involvement of parents in the Parenting Programme poses a dilemma where there is an identifiable need for a particular child's involvement in the IYP children's programme. Many stakeholders were insistent that this is not a phenomenon unique to EdStart.

> "My only criticism of it is the parenting thing, and I mean that's not even EdStart's problem or fault, if I could crack that nut, I'd make a fortune. But I don't know how they are going to get the parents more involved, the parents of the kids doing the course, that's the sixty million dollar question" (Respondent 17).

Furthermore, in relation to the Parent Programme the amount of commitment required by the parents can be challenging. An example of this would be the prescribed reading for the parents, which has been condensed slightly where necessary, but there remains a significant amount to be covered. However, the nature of the target group for this intervention is one characterised with low levels of literacy.

> "If it targets the children that were most in need of it, parents will vary in terms of their ability to become involved, because by definition some of these children will have complex backgrounds which would make it difficult for parents to be consistent, or involve, or buy in. I'd be wary of making it a complete condition that there has to be parental involvement" (Respondent 15).

An additional constraint for participants raised by some stakeholders is the level of time commitment required by parents. Once more given the profile of the target group, it can be difficult for them to commit to a programme for 12 weeks. If parents become involved in the Parenting Programme and subsequently, have poor attendance this can be challenging for the facilitators and disconcerting for the other participants. This is not however unique to the IYP Parent Programme.

> "I just think attendance is a big issue in this community specifically and its not a cop-out, but you hear that a lot, like we might invite fifteen people to something and we might get seven or eight and that would be hammering them on the phone" (Respondent 17).

> "Some of the parents would struggle, would actually struggle to attend a 14 week programme, the length of the commitment which is always an issue not just with parenting programmes but with courses in general for parents from a disadvantaged community, staying with it is always an issue" (Respondent 29).

Feedback from stakeholders involved in facilitating the Parenting Programme outlined the considerable amount of work and preparation required to deliver the programme.

5.8 Conclusion

The initial foundations of the IYP in Galway City are the Small Group Dina Programme and the Parent Programme. Chapter Five provides an insight into the numbers involved in these programmes since inception and the strengths and weaknesses of both programmes as stated by the stakeholders.

The strengths focus on the training, materials, and the evidence based nature of the programme. The weaknesses and issues are linked to the American nature of the programme, the vignettes within the programme and the time commitment for parents and for the facilitators to implement the programme to the required standards. Chapter Six will explore the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme.

CHAPTER SIX – DINA IN THE CLASSROOM (PRE-SCHOOL) PROGRAMME – GALWAY CITY

Chapter Six provides a detailed insight into the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme being delivered in six pre-schools in Galway City[6] with specific details of the curriculum, the planning/ preparation required for the programme and details of how the programme is delivered. Furthermore, Chapter Six will provide a profile of the children participating in the Programme and their parents.

6.1 Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme (2007-2010)

An opportunity for further expansion of the IYP emerged in 2007 when the St Augustine Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul in Galway City released funding from the Maureen O'Connell fund for educational work with young children. One of the main aims of St. Vincent de Paul is to deal with the causes of poverty as well as alleviating poverty itself. A member of the Blessed Frederick Conference had worked with the Education and Training Co-ordinator in GCP in another capacity and therefore had links with GCP. The Conference was most interested in funding work with pre-school children in Galway City. Edstart saw this as an opportunity to expand their activities and decided to add a pre-school programme to its IYP activities, which was and still is the first of its kind in Ireland and the UK. In October 2007, St. Vincent de Paul provided funding to develop the programme in Pre-Schools in Galway City[7].

This was a new departure for Edstart and following on from the success of the partnership approach with SCP and primary schools it was decided to in the first instance align themselves with the Galway City and County Childcare

[6] Only Four of the Six pre-schools are involved in the Outcomes Study outlined in Chapter Five

[7] The funding was matched by funding provided by Galway City Partnership and supports from Galway City and County Childcare Committee

Committee (GCCC) who provided Edstart with a list of community pre-schools in Galway City. All pre-schools in a position to deliver an American evidence based programme were visited and the project was explained to them in detail. Once a pre-school expressed an initial interest in this Edstart had meetings with the Manager and Committee of each pre-school to outline in detail the benefits to the staff and children as well as the commitment required to implement the programme. Each pre-school who completed this process in turn formally agreed to take on and implement the programme in their pre-school.

Initially, the view taken was that the Small Group Dina Programme would be the most relevant for the pre-schools in Galway and certain pre-school staff were trained in this programme. However, on further exploration it was decided Dina in the Classroom (whole class approach) was the most appropriate programme for staff to be trained in. The Dina in the Classroom training for the pre-school workers in this programme is three days in total. An IY trainer from University of Washington, Seattle was invited over to facilitate training in Galway City. Training included a number of facets, the nature of the programme, using puppets, role-play and questions and answers. What impressed staff most about the training was the practical application, which they found relevant to what would later be required from them in the classroom.

> "Basically the training covered all about the programme, the puppets, examples on how to use them, examples of them in action and questions and answers for everything you needed to know" (Respondent 4).

> "They didn't just talk about it, they used the puppets and they showed us how things work and what way it goes and there was a lot of role-play in it" (Respondent 5).

Table 6.1 Numbers of children and Staff involved with Pre-School Programme

	June 2008	June 2009	June 2010	June 2011	Total no of children completed programme	No of Staff trained
Sunflowers Crèche and Pre-school, Westside	36	36	38	38	148	4
Rainbow Childcare Centre, Ballybane	30	26	31	37	127	4
Bohermore Pre-School		14	15	17	46	4
Sli Burca Childcare, Knocknacarra		22	21	22	65	4
Teach Athais, Ballybane			24		24	5
Presentation Pre-school, Newcastle			19	15	34	3
TOTAL					**444**	**24**

6.2 Introduction to Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme

The cornerstone of developmentally appropriate practice and setting goals is individualizing the curriculum and experiences for all children (Webster-Stratton and Reid, 2004). Using a prescribed curriculum such as the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme does not mean that it is delivered inflexibly or without sensitivity to individual students, families or community differences (Webster-Stratton and Reid, 2004). The ***Dina Dinosaur's Social Skills Problem Solving in the Classroom Programme*** (commonly referred to as the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme) was developed by

Carolyn Webster-Stratton in 2004. This programme is a comprehensive video and theme based social skills and problem solving course for use by teachers and staff in pre-schools and junior classes in Primary Schools. The purpose of the curriculum is to teach children aged 3-8 years positive social skills, conflict and anger management skills, emotional literacy, appropriate school behaviours and reading, writing and communication skills in order to promote their positive self-esteem and general social, emotional, and academic competence.

All aspects of the curriculum focus on:

- Using a child-centred teaching philosophy
- Integrating research – based on principles of learning
- Valuing the development stages and abilities of children as well as acknowledging individual differences in temperament and learning styles
- Opportunities for cultural diversity
- Regular involvement with the parent in all aspects of the curriculum and the learning process
- Utilising learning approaches based on active experiences with peers and materials
- Integrating academic competencies (i.e., reading, writing, maths, oral language) with social and emotional competencies
- Activities that encourage children's choices and self-direction in learning
- Respect for children's and parents' input and inclusion of adaptable material to address themes meaningful to children within a particular classroom
- Multiple opportunities designed to encourage language and literacy development

The Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme curriculum is designed to be offered to all students in the classroom. Offering this programme to the

entire classroom is less stigmatising than "pull-out" groups for children with behaviour problems and is more likely to result in sustained effects across settings and time. While aggressive and socially withdrawn children learn new skills in "pull-out" programmes, the skills do not necessarily generalise back to the classroom, because peers continue to react negatively to the child with problems because of his or her negative reputation.

By offering classroom wide intervention it can help to integrate these children into their peer groups and create a sense that every child is special and everyone helps each other according to individual needs and abilities. Classroom wide intervention also provides the opportunity for more pro social children to model appropriate social skill for less socially competent children and provides the classroom with a common vocabulary and problem solving steps to use in resolving everyday conflicts. Thus, social competence is strengthened for the low risk children as well as the aggressive children and the classroom environment generally fosters appropriate skills on an on-going basis.

Additionally with a classroom based model, the dosage of intervention is magnified as teachers provide positive reinforcement of key concepts throughout the day. It is vitally important that the pre-school staff have positive and proactive classroom management skills in order for the curriculum to be most effective. Harsh and critical approaches, a poorly managed classroom with no clear limits or predictable schedule or a failure to collaborate with parents will reduce the effectiveness of the programme (Webster-Stratton and Reid, 2004). The pre-schools implementing the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme in Galway City use the following effective classroom management strategies:

- High levels of praise and encouragement: Labelling and specific praise for positive behaviours,
- Incentives and rewards: Tangible rewards such as stickers, special rewards and celebrations give children concrete evidence of their progress,
- Predictable rules and schedules: 'Show me five' and Visual Timetables,
- Effective limit setting and developmentally appropriate discipline systems.

6.3 Planning and Preparation

The curriculum (See Appendix One) is designed to be adjusted according to the age and developmental abilities of the children. Furthermore, the curriculum is incorporated into the daily timetable and meets the academic and policy requirements of the pre-school. This can be achieved by varying the frequencies of the lessons, the emphasis on content and the depth of complexity of the activities. For pre-school children the emphasis is on discussing and practicing specific pro social behaviours such as sharing.

Prior to each lesson the pre-school workers prepare a lesson plan, review the videotape and prepare the materials. The pre-school workers in this study have shown great willingness to be flexible and creative. For example, if an issue arises on the playground the pre-school workers integrates this experience into the lesson on feelings, friendship or problem solving. The pre-school workers creatively use real life experiences of the students at home and at school and bring these themes into each lesson. Any issue for the children in school can provide the content for discussions with Wally (the puppet) and for role-play situations.

Circle time discussions promote reading through use of the cue cards and books whilst small group activities promote communication language and

writing skills through pictures, role-plays and art activities. All units are opportunities to promote effective learning behaviours such as verbal and nonverbal communication skills that include collaborating cooperating, listening, attending, speaking up and asking questions.

Prior to the commencement of the programme, meetings are held with the parents to inform them of the curriculum and letters are sent home prior to each unit so that they can reinforce the newly learned skills at home. It is important that parents understand that their involvement in homework is to watch, read, and encourage their children's colouring and participation. The pre-school workers are engaging, humorous, creative, imaginative and clear about their objectives. They are effective at ignoring minor misbehaviours such as talking out, moving about or making noise while giving plenty of praise and encouragement to the children who are exhibiting pro social behaviours.

6.4 Delivery of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme

The Wally, Molly, Dina Dinosaur and Tiny Turtle puppets help the pre-school workers to teach the concepts. Young children are enthralled with puppets and will talk more easily to the puppet than with an adult as indicated in the stakeholders review. The puppets become real to the children and can be very effective models. Puppets look at the video, raise a quiet hand and take turns. They are models for the children. Puppets occasionally make mistakes as the children do but when a puppet talks about a mistake or misbehaviour, it is important also to show the puppet coping and problem solving and making a plan to solve the problem (Webster-Stratton and Reid, 2004).

The pre-school workers have found that circle time normally works well after free play near the start of the session. The children sit on the floor or chairs

depending on layout of the room. At the opening of circle time, the puppets arrive and are welcomed with a 'Hello' song. Dina Dinosaur is resting in her house and the children sing a song to wake her up. Some children are chosen to knock on the door of her house to wake her up. Dina Dinosaur reviews the homework which has been posted in the Dina Letterbox by the children. She also explains the next homework and praises all for working hard and bringing back homework.

The puppets introduce the lesson of the day (e.g. taking turns) and then a DVD is shown. The DVD can be used to review and reinforce concepts that have been discussed in circle time as well as to vary the presentation and redirect children's' attention. They are also useful to trigger role plays and re-enactment of the scenes with appropriate behaviours. Role play activities provide opportunities to practice new skills and to experience different perspectives (Webster- Stratton & Reid, 2004). Wally and Molly can also role play everyday problem situations and the children give suggestions how they can solve their problem.

During the circle time the pre-school workers pause frequently to praise and encourage children for their ideas and participation. In the beginning behaviours such as listening, putting up a quiet hand and paying attention are commented on but as the year progresses there is more emphasis on good thinking and creative answers. The children are encouraged to self-praise by asking them to pat themselves on the back if they got the same correct answer as the child who was called upon. Before the end of circle time the small group activity is explained and modelled.

After the skill is presented in the circle time it is essential to have small group practice activities. The children are divided into groups of five to six children

who will work together on the small group activity. The small group activities are planned according to developmental level and age of the children. A staff member sits with the children to explain the project and coaches and comments on pro social behaviours. These coached small group guided learning activities are a key process to children's learning because they take the cognitive social and emotional concepts into the actual behaviour interactions between children.

The pre-school workers involved in this project have implemented this programme with fidelity, which is reflected in the fact that nine staff, as outlined in Chapter two, have received official accreditation.

6.5 Strengths of Pre-School Programme in Galway

Stakeholders regard the expansion of the IYP to the pre-schools as a significant achievement by EdStart. The importance of the pre-school dimension has been emphasised as this is regarded as an area which has not been a priority for policy makers and service providers. At the initiation of this evaluation process, there was no comparable IYP programme running in Irish pre-schools and stakeholders believe IYP helps bring structure to the classroom and assists children in acquiring the skills they need for primary school.

> "In the pre-schools there is no comparable programme, there is no particular curriculum in any pre-schools so it helps to bring some structure to the classroom … it is giving children skills to manage better in national school, it is very useful to all the parents and staff, and children" (Respondent 12).

Pre-school staff regard IYP as an early intervention programme that teaches children numerous life skills ranging from social and emotional skills to problem solving through the use of prescribed materials and techniques. The

pre-school staff regard the development of these skills as important in the child's progression to primary school. They regard the main purpose of the programme as getting the children to understand their feelings by learning acceptable behaviours through the promotion of positive behaviour.

> "The right way to behave and how to cope, it's coping strategies from an early age" (Respondent 8).

> "The skills to help children understand their feelings and give them the language to express themselves, problem solve and control anger" (Respondent 4).

Strengths highlighted by the pre-school workers and managers are that the programme promotes positive behaviour, the tailored age appropriateness of the programme and specifically the use of puppets.

> "I think the kids do relate to the puppets" (Respondent 8).

> "The stories that Wally or Molly would be telling would be relevant to the children's life, about toys, about Mams and Dads and things. So I think it's all quite relevant" (Respondent 5).

Pre-school staff stated that their work practices have changed for the better due to the implementation of the IYP in their pre-schools. This has occurred due to the new skills, techniques and knowledge they have acquired from implementing the IYP. The most frequently cited change has been the management of negative behaviour in the classroom coupled with the praise of positive behaviour. This has led to a complete shift in how staff communicate with the children and a noted improvement in the children's behaviour. Staff also explained that the knowledge they have gained from the IYP enables them to understand and deal with the children's negative behaviour.

> "I think that all this positive reinforcement is so much better than I suppose constantly giving out" (Respondent 2).

> "You're constantly praising the children saying 'Well done, that's fantastic' and you even change your voice and you get so excited because in Dina School you're constantly praising and you're saying 'Well done, good job, thumbs up" (Respondent 7).

> "Before you'd be telling him not to be doing it and the more you tell him not to do it, he's do it. But with the IYP you just ignore it; eventually he just got bored because I wasn't giving him attention" (Respondent 1).

Pre-school staff spoke of the contagion effect of the new skills the children are taught in the classroom; whereby the young children vocalise what they have learned and teach the parents how to handle their emotions.

> "If they see their parents angry, the parents find it awful funny because the children say 'Mam I think you are angry, I think you should take your deep breath'. You know so that calms the children down or the parent down instantly and so with the children learning a new skill, the parents are learning what the children are doing" (Respondent 5).

Moreover, those pre-school staff members with children of their own spoke of how the skills they learned through IYP now extend to how they parent their own children.

> "You're actually going home saying the same things to your own kids, I've children myself and you're going home saying 'That's great well done'. You know so it does, I don't know does it bring out the best in you or what it is, it is great" (Respondent 7).

Some of the pre-school staff spoke of the benefits of the inclusivity of the pre-school programme whereby all the children in the class are involved. Whereas the IYP is perceived as a programme for children with behavioural problems or challenging behaviour, pre-school workers argue that all children benefit from it not just those with difficulties.

> "One of the little difficulties I have with IYP is that when I see ads for it or read up about it, it links it to children with behavioural problems.

> All of the class in there are benefitting from the work being done through the IYP" (Respondent 6).

Pre-school staff spoke of the benefits of the IYP to the children, parents, staff and the pre-school as well as the wider context of the community and the primary schools. Pre-school staff spoke of how much the children love the programme and how they themselves can see a positive difference in the children's behaviour. Specifically, they identified how the children have become more communicative and easier for the teachers to understand.

> "It has helped them use their words a lot more because they're into identifying all their feelings … So that when they do have a problem they will explain quicker than before, their language skills are a lot better" (Respondent 5).

Pre-school staff reported that the children are practicing what they have learned in the classroom in the wider community. As such, they regard the IYP as benefitting the wider communities that these children live in as they have learned lifelong communication and social skills. Rather than dealing with problem situations in a negative way, the children now have the language and behavioural skills to deal with such dilemmas.

> "I remember meeting one of the little boys who said 'Those kids are fighting' and I said 'Did you get involved'. He said 'No I just kept away' and like before, I remember seeing him before and he would be the one in the middle of them" (Respondent 1).

Indeed, the pre-school workers pointed to their own professional development through their involvement in IYP, which has led to an extension of their skills base, and an increase in their self-confidence.

> "I said before you're never taught how to teach kids or how to even manage a classroom but this really shows you how to manage the kids or manage a classroom" (Respondent 1).

6.6 Weaknesses of Pre-School Programme in Galway City

One of the difficulties posed in relation to the pre-school and primary school programme is sustainability for the children. Pre-school staff and other stakeholders believe that if the programme is not extended into primary schools it will be a weakness as the longer the children are exposed to IYP the more they will gain from it.

> "The difficulty of keeping it going when children get into primary school, a lot of hard work, a lot of good work could be lost" (Respondent 11)

At the pre-school level, the staff also raised the issue of the difficulty in using American materials at times. Referring to the language of the programme when the children bring homework home, the parents have said that they do not understand the wording. This can then pose difficulties for staff, as they have to modify the language in order for the children to understand the material

> "We'd do a lesson on 'Special' … I think 'Lonely' and 'Special'. The kids would understand 'Lonely' but 'Special' is kind of a hard one to explain" (Respondent 1).

The pre-school staff and managers also raised concern about the age appropriateness of some of the content of the programme. Specifically, the length of the vignettes whereby the children become bored if they were too long and in some instances the content was too advanced for pre-schoolers. Although it is time consuming in relation to preparation, the teachers have adjusted the lessons by delivering them more frequently for a shorter time.

> "We have broken it down into shorter lessons to suit the age of the children … adjust it suit your own setting and how you fit it into your routine" (Respondent 3).

Criticism of the pre-school training centred on adaptation to the pre-school setting, as most of the examples shown in the training were with older

children and staff had to adapt to that. In addition, some felt that demonstrations whilst beneficial were not specific enough to the pre-school setting. However, all of the pre-school staff spoke of the practical application of what they learned in training in the day-to-day running of the schools and integrated into their daily schedule.

> "We have used a lot of the training, ignoring bad behaviour to a certain extent, praise good behaviour, green card patrol, stampers" (Respondent 4).

6.7 Key Implementation Recommendations for Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme

- Three staff available and interested in training and delivering the programme – It works best if staff members from the same room within the pre-school are trained as they can work together to reinforce strategies throughout the day and have more opportunities to discuss lessons informally. It is also less disruptive to a childcare centre if staff does not have to move around. In case of staff turnover, it is useful if there is a third member of staff available to take over.
- Supportive Management Committee – The committee needs to be familiar with the programme and to support staff to have extra time for meetings and preparation. Relief staff may be required in order to facilitate this.
- A Strong and Enthusiastic Manager – It is ideal if a manager is trained in order to support the staff and parents with the programme and also to promote a Whole School Approach to the IYP.
- Commitment to organising time for staff planning and meetings – Especially in the first year, the time taken to plan sessions can be considerable and it is important that staff get opportunities to meet the support worker or to attend other consultation sessions. The encouragement and support from other colleagues is very valuable.

- The Feeder Pre-School for Primary School using The Incredible Years Programme – If the children from the pre-school proceed to a primary school using the IYP it provides more consistency for the children.

6.8 Profile of Children involved in Pre-School and their Parents

The four pre-schools involved in the outcome study are community pre-schools managed by voluntary committees in the areas of Ballybane, Knocknacarra, Bohermore and Westside. These areas are located within Galway City and its suburbs. The Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID) has identified Ballybane, Bohermore and Westside as designated disadvantaged. Whilst Knocknacarra is not a designated disadvantaged area it has high rates of private rental housing, large council and affordable housing schemes and a large number of lone parents living in the area in comparison with other areas of the City.

The 2006 census reported that 9,871 people live in the area of Ballybane in 3,370 households. 2,197 of the residents in Ballybane are aged between 0 and 14 years. 1,502 households in the area are family units with one to five children living in them. 610 of these households are headed by lone parents. There are no primary schools in the area despite having the second highest population of the city. There are two schools in Mervue which border the electoral division of Ballybane. Westside is incorporated within the electoral division of Rahoon, 2,920 people live in 979 households. 645 are aged between 0 and 14 years. 483 family units are in the area of which 179 are headed by a lone parent. There is one primary school in the area.

In 2006, 1428 people were living in Knocknacarra, 192 are aged between 0 and 14 years. There are 516 households of which 217 family units with one to five children living in them, 36 of these are headed by a lone parent. There is one

primary school in the area. Bohermore is included in the electoral division of Eyre Square were 4,105 people live 121 are aged between 0 and 14 years. There are 1,297 households of which 146 family units with one to five children living in them, 52 of these are headed by a lone parent. There is no primary school in the area but there are a number of primary schools in the surrounding area.

6.9 Profile of the Children

Of the 61 children studied

- 11 attend Bohermore pre-school,
- 14 attend Rainbow pre-school,
- 13 attend Sli Burca pre-school and
- 23 attend Sunflowers pre-school.

31 of the children are male and 30 female. 48 of the children are Irish, six of the children have a parent that is African born, and seven are European. 26 of the 61 parents completed the Parenting Programme element of the Incredible Years Programme a further two had partial attendance. The age of the children in June 2011 is set out in Table 6.2, 17 (28%) of the children are four years of age, 38 (62%) are five and six (10%) are six years old. At Time 3, 46 (75%) of the children were attending Primary School and 15 were still attending Pre-School.

Table 6.2 Age of Outcome Study Children in June 2011.

Age	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
4 years	17	28%
5 years	38	62%
6 years	6	10%
Total	61	100%

6.10 Profile of Parents

The youngest parent interviewed was 21 years of age (of which there were two) and the oldest parent was 45 years old (of which there were was one). Table 6.3 demonstrates the breakdown of the parents' age by cluster in September 2009. 13 (21.3%) of the parents are aged between 20 and 24, 25 and 29, and 30 to 34 and 14 of the parents (23%) are 35 to 39 and 8 of the parents (13%) are aged over 40. Of the 61 parents that were consulted, one was male and 60 were female.

Table 6.3 Parents Age by Cluster September 2009.

Age	Number of Parents	Percentage of Parents
20-24 years of age	13	21.3%
25-29 years of age	13	21.3%
30-34 years of age	13	21.3%
35-39 years of age	14	23%
40+ years of age	8	13.1%
Total	**61**	**100%**

Table 6.4 Parents Preferred Language for Reading and Speaking

Language	Number of Parents	Percentage of Parents
English	54	86%
European	3	6%
Eastern European	4	8%
Total	**61**	**100%**

Table 6.5 Table Parents Age when their first child was born.

Age Range	Number of Parents	Percentage of Parents
Less than 20 years of age	10	16%
20-24 years of age	27	44%
25-29 years of age	14	24%
30-34 years of age	5	8%
35-39 years of age	2	3%
More than 40 years of age	3	5%
Total	**61**	**100%**

Table 6.6 Age Parent Left School

Age of School Leaving	Number of Parents	Percentage of Parents
No formal schooling	2	3%
11 years old	1	1%
12 years old	1	1%
15 years old	5	8%
16 years old	12	20%
17 years old	18	30%
18 years old	18	30%
19 years old	4	7%
Total	**61**	**100%**

Table 6.7 Parents Level of Secondary Education

Level of education	Number of Parents	Percentage of Parents
No Qualifications	8	13%
Junior Cert or National Equivalent	14	23%
Leaving Cert or National Equivalent	39	64%
Total	**61**	**100%**

Table 6.8 Parents Further Qualifications

Qualification	Number of Parents	Percentage of Parents
No Further Qualification	23	38%
FETAC	22	36%
Diploma	5	8%
Degree	11	18%
Total	**61**	**100%**

In terms of the respondent parents' level of education, two of the parents received no formal schooling at all, one parent left at the age of 11 and one at the age of 12 (Table 6.6). Five (8%) left school at the age of 15, 12 (20%) at the age of 16 and 40 (67%) were aged between 17 and 19 years when they left school. This is reflected in the levels of attainment of qualifications (Table 6.7), eight (13%) of the parents have no formal qualifications, 14 (23%) have a Junior Cert or its national equivalent and 39 (64%) have a Leaving Cert or its national equivalent. Further educational attainment (see Table 6.8) amongst

the parents varied with 23 (38%) having no further qualifications, 22 (36%) have a FETAC qualification, five have a diploma and 11 (18%) have a third level degree.

Parents were asked their preferred language for reading and speaking 57 (86%) stated that English was their preferred language the remaining languages are broken down as being European or Eastern European as to list them would not ensure anonymity because the numbers are so small. The results were identical for the children's preferred language for speaking. In relation to the parents age when their first child was born 10 parents (16%) were less than 20 years old, 27 parents (44%) were aged 20 to 24, 14 parents (23%) were aged 25 to 29, 7 parents (12%) were in their thirties and 3 parents were aged over 40.

6.11 Details of the Pregnancy and Child's Development to Date

Respondents were asked if they had experienced any problems during the pregnancy of the child in the study. 39 (64%) parents reported having no problems and of the 22 (36%) parents of those who stated they had problems, these included bleeding complications during pregnancy, and low or high blood pressure, and severe morning sickness. 42 (69%) of the parents reported having no problems at the birth and of the 19 who did have problems these included the need for an emergency C section, forceps or ventouse was reported for 13 of the deliveries. Other problems included high blood pressure, the cord being knotted, premature and difficult deliveries. 53 (87%) of parents reported that their child was easy to manage as a baby. Of the eight parents who stated that, their child was difficult as a baby, the reasons given included colic, problems feeding cranky and sleeping badly.

21 (33%) of the children have suffered ill health or a serious injury since they were born. Seven of the children have asthma and three have bronchitis. Other individual problems included; compulsive fits, accidents, dietary problem and five of the children have ongoing physical health difficulties that require them to attend a paediatrician regularly. 26 (43%) of the children have been hospitalised of these, 12 were for infection with a high temperature, four were for feeding difficulties, three were for bronchitis, two were as a result of accidents, and other reasons included compulsive fits, stomach bugs, premature birth and asthma.

Parents were asked to describe their child's development to date. 50 (72%) of parents said that their child's development was fine and 11 (18%) said that they were concerned about their child's development. However, in a separate question parents were asked specifically if they were concerned about their child's development, at T1 29 (48%) of parents said they had no concern and 32 (52%) had concerns. Of these 29 children the nature of the developmental concern were as follows; nine of the parents had concern about their child's speech including problems pronouncing some words and delay in talking, four parents said that their children were fussy eaters and a further three were worried that their child had low body weight. Four were concerned about the way their child walked including feet going inward when walking, late walking and walking on their toes. Four parents were concerned about their children's behaviour and/or hyperactivity. Other individual concerns included allergies, a lazy eye, need for circumcision and sleeping problems.

At T2 and at T3 the parents were asked if they had any new health or developmental concerns for their child in the last twelve months. At T2 11 (18%) of the parents had concerns, four related to speech and language difficulties, two were in relation to behaviour, two were awaiting diagnosis

for ADHD, one was under-weight and one had recently been diagnosed with asthma. At T3 43 (70%) of the parents said they had no new concerns and 18 (30%) parents said they had new concerns. The nature of these concerns was varied and included behavioural problems for four of the children and speech and language difficulties for five of the children. Others included allergies, issues with weight and sight and hearing difficulties, one of the children had just been diagnosed with ADHD and another is suspected of having dyslexia.

6.12 Parent's Health Since the Birth of the Child

Parents were asked if they have suffered any significant health problems since the birth of the child in the study. 43 (71%) of them said they had not had any health problems and 18 (29%) reported that they had health problems. Of the 29% who reported health problems, the most frequent illness with nine (15%) of the 61 parents experiencing was depression. Other individual illnesses or health problems included back problems, thyroid problems, deep vein thrombosis, viral infections, obesity, seizures and blood pressure problems. Eight of the parents are currently on medication; five take anti-depressants, other medication was for back pain and blood pressure. Parents were asked if their child's behaviour had ever led them to feeling low or depressed 47 (79%) said no and 14 (21%) said that this had occurred.

6.13 Composition of the Child's Household

In relation to the parents marital status at T1 (see Table 6.9), 25 (41%) of the parents are married, 17 (28%) are single or have never been married and 12 (20%) are cohabitating. Three (5%) are separated and four (6%) are in relationship with someone other than the child's other parent but are living apart. In terms of family size (see Table 6.10), 27 (44%) of the children are in families that have two children, eight (13%) of the children are in families that have three children and nine of the children are in families that have four

children in their families. Two of the children are in families of five and one child is in a family of seven children.

Table 6.9 Parents Marital Status

Marital Status	Number of Parents	Percentage of Parents
Married	25	41%
Single/Never Married	17	28%
Co-habiting	12	20%
Separated	3	5%
In relationship but living apart	4	6%
Total	**61**	**100%**

Table 6.10 Number of Siblings in the Outcome Child's Family

Number of Siblings	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
No Siblings	14	23%
1 Sibling	27	45%
2 Siblings	8	13%
3 Siblings	9	15%
4 Siblings	2	3%
6 Siblings	1	1%
Total	**61**	**100%**

Table 6.11 Housing Tenure of Outcome Children

Housing Type	Number of Children Living in Housing Type	Percentage of Children Living in Housing Type
Owner With a Mortgage	15	25%
Local Authority	21	34%
Privately Rented	20	33%
RAS	5	8%
Total	**61**	**100%**

In relation to housing tenure, 21 (34%) of the children are living in council housing, 20 (33%) of the children are living in privately rented

accommodation, and a further five (8%) of children are living in homes under the Rental Accommodation Scheme and 15 (25%) of the children parents own their own homes. This compares to 2006 national tenure levels of 12.7% of the population living in local authority housing and 75% in owner occupied homes and 12% in private rental accommodation. In this study, 42% of the children live in local authority housing, and only 25% live in owner occupied accommodation compared to the national average of 75%. Five of the children live in two bedroom homes, 41 (67%) live in three bedroom homes and 15 (25%) live in homes with four bedrooms.

Table 6.12 Weekly Income in Outcome Child's Home

Income	**Number of Children**	**Percentage of Children**
Less than €200	1	1%
€201-€250	12	20%
€251-€300	13	22%
More than €300	35	57%
Total	**61**	**100%**

Table 6.13 Main Source of Income in Outcome Child's Home

Source of Income	**Number of Children**	**Percentage of Children**
State Benefits	33	54%
Wages	28	46%
Total	**61**	**100%**

35 (57%) of the families have a weekly income of more than €300, 13 (22%) have an income of between €251 and €300, 12 (20%) have an income between €201 to €250 and one parent has an income of the less than €200. 33 (54%) of all families rely on state benefits as their main source of income and 28 (46%) stated that wages were their main source of income. In 2007, 15% of all Irish children live in homes that rely on state benefits as their main source of income (Office for Social Inclusion, 2007). As such in this study, almost three times the national average of the children researched is living in such a home.

6.14 Socio Economic Disadvantage (SED)

The socio economic risk factors measured in this study are employment status, marital status, number of children, maternal education, housing and level of crime in area of residence. In relation to socio economic disadvantage two (3%) of the children live in a home with no socio economic disadvantage, 28 (46%) live in mild socio economic disadvantage and 27 (44%) live in moderate socio economic disadvantage. Four (7%) of the children live in high levels of socio economic disadvantage.

Table 6.14 Level of Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Level of SED	Number of Children living in that level	Percentage of Children living in that level
No SED	2	3%
Mild SED	28	46%
Moderate SED	27	44%
High SED	4	7%
Total	**61**	**100%**

6.14.1 Family Stressors: Problems with work

This part of the interview assesses the number of objectively serious stressors that have affected the family over the last few years work; finance, health, housing, bereavement and relationships. The data shows the presence of many stressors in the families' lives primarily in relation to work and money.

Table 6.15 Family Stressors – Work

Nature of Work Problem	Number of Parents T1	Number of Parents T2	Number of Parents T3
Not working	5 (8%)	5 (8%)	21 (34%)
Problems with work	32 (52%)	13 (21%)	13 (21%)
No problems with work	24 (40%)	43 (71%)	27 (45%)
Total	**61 (100%)**	**61 (100%)**	**61 (100%)**

In September 2009 (T1) in relation to work five (8%) of the parents had never worked, 24 (40%) have had no problems with work in the last few years, however, 32 (52%) over half of all respondents had encountered difficulties. Of those that reported having difficulties 15 (23%) stated that they or their partner had recently been made unemployed, 10 (15%) have had their hours of work reduced, three were looking for work for some time and two were worried about the prospect of being made unemployed in the near future. During the summer of 2010 (T2) in relation to problems at work parents were asked had they experienced any new problems at work since they were last interviewed. Five (8%) of the parents stated that this was not applicable to them, 13 (20%) stated that they had and 48 (73%) said no. Of the 13 who had problems, five had their hours at work reduced, five had been recently made unemployed, and three parents had returned to employment. During the summer of 2011 (T3), the problems at work remained the same with more parents being made unemployed or having hours reduced.

6.14.2 Family Stressors: Financial Problems

Parents were asked if there had been any major positive or negative changes to the family finances in the last couple of years. At T1 28 (46%) said there had been no change and 33 (54%) said there had been changes in the family finances. For these 33 families nine had a decrease in income due to unemployment and 15 had a reduction in their wages due to a decrease in working hours. Eight of the parents said money has been tight for them over the last few years. One parent was waiting nine months for her One Parent Family Payment to be increased since the birth of her second child. At T2, parents were asked if there had been any major positive or negative changes to the family finances since T1, 39 (64%) said there had been no change. Fifteen had a decrease in income due to unemployment or a reduction in hours, six reported that money was very tight, one stated they were having

trouble with mortgage repayments, however, seven reported an increase in income. At T3, 47 (77%) of the parents reported no change in income, six (10%) had experienced an increase income since T2, and eight (13%) had a decrease income.

Table 6.16 Family Stressors – Change in Family Finances

Nature of Income Change	**Number of Parents T1**	**Number of Parents T2**	**Number of Parents T3**
No Change	28 (46%)	39 (64%)	47 (77%)
Decrease in Income	33 (54%)	15 (25%)	8 (13%)
Increase in Income	0	7 (11%)	6 (10%)
Total	**61 (100%)**	**61 (100%)**	**61 (100%)**

6.14.3 Family Stressors: Chronic stressors

Parents were asked if any of the problems could be described as chronic stressors, that is, problems that have been going on for longer than two years. At T1 54 (85%) said they had not experienced chronic stress. Of the nine (15%) who had these stressors these included; depression, dealing with a sibling with ADHD or on the autism spectrum, and one parent each cited sleep deprivation, significant weight gain and dealing with an ill child. At T2, seven (11%) of the parents reported chronic stress. At T3, six (9%) of the parents reported chronic stress these included caring for a sick child, pregnancy, housing conditions, caring for a parent and being a lone parent.

6.14.4 Family Stressors: Other stressors

Parents were asked are there any other significant or major life problems that have not been covered that have had an important impact on their life in the last couple of years. At T1, 37 (61%) had not experienced other stressors. Of the remaining 24 (39%) parents stressors included; nine had money worries,

four cited depression, two are looking after elderly relatives, one had had gambling problems, and four cited the recent split with their partner. One parent who split from their partner is still living in the same house as their partner due to financial constraints and this is causing a considerable amount of stress. One would not explain what the stressor was, one was not sleeping well due to their child's sleeping problems, one parent cited court appearances over custody, two cited alcoholism in the extended family and one said that they found it tough parenting alone. At T2, 12 (20%) of the parents reported other stressors that had emerged since T1. These included money worries, separation, trying for a baby, alcoholism, family health issues, problems with the child's other parent and the child not eating well. At T3, 12 of the parents reported other stressors these included; money problems, learning difficulties of other children and their relationship with the child's father whom no longer lives with them.

6.15 Conclusion

One of main aims of EdStart within GCP is to combat early school leaving and it is known that children with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage are at greatest risk of leaving school without qualifications. With this in mind the profile data shows that the children being targeted by EdStart are being reached in this programme with 90% of the children living in mild to moderate levels of disadvantage. In addition, the levels of maternal education are also linked to early school leaving and only 64% of the parents have a Leaving Certificate education. The children are living in homes with a very high level of dependence on state benefits, and as such, are at a significant risk of living in poverty. Indeed, there are also very low levels of home ownership and high levels of living in rental accommodation. The profile data also shows significant levels of family stressors particularly in

relation to work and money and this is a reflection of what is happening in the wider economy at present. At T1, T2 and T3 a significant number of parents reported negative changes in their employment situation and subsequently in the family finances. Levels of chronic stress reported by parents varied from 10% to 15%.

CHAPTER SEVEN - PRESENTATION OF OUTCOMES STUDY

7.1 Introduction

As explained in Chapter three, data was collected in September 2009 Time 1 (T1), summer 2010, Time 2 (T2) and early summer of 2011, Time 3 (T3) for 61 children attending four community pre-schools in Galway City. During this time, the children took part in the Incredible Years Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme. Data was collected from parents and pre-school workers in order to mark the changes in the children's behaviour as reported by the parents from T1 to T3 and pre-school workers from T1 to T2. The pre-school workers completed the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. Data was collected from parents on demographic and family risk factors, the depression levels of the parents, child social competence, child conduct disorder problems at home and parental competencies. Chapter Six presented the analysis of the demographic and family risk factors. In this chapter, the findings of the research are presented in relation to parenting competencies and child social competence and child conduct disorder problems at home.

The over-arching aim of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme is that there will be a positive change in the social competence and conduct disorder problems at home for the children who participated in the programme as well as an improvement in parental competencies. To this end the data collected from the Parenting Scale, the Beck Depression Scale, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), the Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory (ECBI) and the Social Competence Scale was analysed to determine whether or not there has been a positive change in child social competence and child conduct disorder problems at home as well as an improvement in parental competencies. The information was collected from the children's parents at T1, T2 and T3.

All data collected at T1, T2 and T3 was inputted into SPSS and analysed first for frequencies and then using a paired-samples t-test the data was analysed to ascertain whether there had been statistically significant changes in behaviour from T1 to T2 to T3.[8] A paired-samples t-test compares the mean scores on a continuous variable; it compares the mean scores of the same group at two different points in time. This is used for example when measuring the gain in scores made by a group from T1 to T2 and from T1 to T3. Effect sizes are also reported as this is a way of quantifying the difference between two groups. It is often used to quantify the effectiveness of a programme or intervention. When using t-tests, effect sizes are represented as Cohen's d values, and the convention is that a value of .2 is small, .5 is medium, and .8 is large (Cohen, 1988, pp. 19-27). The other type of analysis used in this chapter is analysis of variance (ANOVA). It is used when comparing two or more means. Once again there is a continuous dependent variable and this time the independent variable can have a number of levels. The test compares the variance (variability in scores) between the different groups (believed to be due to the independent variable) with the variability within each group (believed to be due to chance). It calculates an F ratio: a large F ratio indicates there is more variability between the groups (caused by the independent variable) than there is within each group (caused by chance).

The analysis presented in this chapter demonstrates that there was a positive change from T1 to T3 in social competence and conduct disorder problems at home for the children who participated in the programme as well as an improvement in parental competencies. Some of the changes in behaviour are

[8] The terms statistical significance are used to describe the likelihood of a particular finding or result having occurred by chance. The evidence required to demonstrate that a finding did not happen by chance is the significance level and the most common significance level is .05, which means that the finding has a 95% chance of being true. We report all significance levels <0.5 as being statistically significance

statistically significant. The analysis also indicates that between T1 and T3 there was a slight increase in the number of children whose behaviour can be classified as 'normal.' This study did not have an experimental design as no control group was used with random allocation of participants. For that reason, the report cannot infer conclusions about causality, namely that the observed changes in the children's behaviour were 'caused' by their participation in the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme. However, the study did observe improvements in the children's social competence and a decrease in their conduct disorder problems combined with an improvement in parental competencies. The presence of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme combined with the absence of any observed changes in the objective circumstances of the parents and or the children is strongly suggestive that the programme is having a positive impact in key areas.

7.2 Parenting Competencies

Parental competencies were measured using the Parenting Scale. An overall score is presented as is a score for Laxness, Over reactivity and Verbosity. The data show (Table 7.1) that there was an improvement in the mean score of participants from T1 (M = 2.75) to T2 (M = 2.41) to T3 (M = 2.61). There was a statistically significant difference in the parental competencies between T1 and T3 (p = .027) and the effect size was small (d = .26). Laxness implies that the parents lack rigor, strictness of firmness in their parenting. There was also an improvement in the average laxness score of participants from T1 (M = 2.71) to T2 (M = 2.55) and again at T3 (M = 2.43). There was a statistically significant difference in the laxness levels of parents between T1 and T3 (p = .006) and the effect size was small (d = .24). The measure of Over reactivity looks at whether or not the parent overreacts excessively to the child's negative behaviour. The data show was a reduction in scores for Over

reactivity from T1 to T2. However, by T3 the mean score for over reactivity had risen slightly (M = 2.14). The measure of Verbosity considers if the parents use an excessive amount of words in their communication with their children. There was a statistically significant difference in the scores for Verbosity between T1 and T2 (p = .005) and from T1 to T3 (d. = .38; p =.006), indicating an improvement between T1 and T2 and T1 and T3. However, scores for Verbosity also worsened between T2 and T3.

Table 7.1 Parenting Scale Scores for T1, T2 and T3 for all parents (n = 56)

	Mean T1	**Mean T2**	**Mean T3**	**T1 -T2 p**	**T1 -T3 p**	**T1 - T3 Effect Size Cohen's d**
Parenting Scale Mean	2.81	2.65	2.61	.127	.027	.26
Laxness	2.71	2.55	2.43	.265	.006	.24
Over reactivity	2.22	2.11	2.13	.257	.260	.15
Verbosity	4.16	3.64	3.72	.005	.006	.38

Table 7.2 Differences in Parenting Laxness by level of SED

	Mean T1	**Mean T2**	**Mean T3**
No Socio Economic Disadvantage	2.04	1.59	1.40
Mild Socio Economic Disadvantage	2.33	2.38	2.07
Moderate Socio Economic Disadvantage	3.23	2.74	2.80
High Socio Economic Disadvantage	2.45	2.18	2.47

The analysis also showed that for the Laxness sub-scale there were statistically significant differences in scores depending on parents' Socio

Economic Disadvantage, Child's Health, whether or not the Child has been hospitalised and the age at which the mother left school. Laxness implies that the parents lack rigor, strictness of firmness in their parenting practices. Table 7.2 illustrates the differences in laxness by SED. Parents living in moderate SED displayed significantly greater levels of laxness (p = .044). Although differences in laxness between SED levels remain apparent at T2 and T3, these differences were not significant. Differences in laxness scores were evident between parents who had reported that their child had suffered ill health since they had been born and those who had not; and also parents of children who had been ill and/or hospitalised had much higher levels of laxness than other parents (Table 7.3). At T1 (p = .013) and T3 (p = .013) there were statistically significant differences in the laxness scores with the parents of those children who had been hospitalised having higher levels of laxness. Again statistically significant higher levels of laxness were observed at T1 (p = .050), T2 (p = .008) and T3 (p = .025) for those parents who reported that their children had suffered ill health since they have been born. Finally, at T1, the laxness mean scores of those parents who left school before the age of 16 were also statistically significantly higher than those who did not (p = .033).

Table 7.3 Differences in Parenting Laxness by Child's Health Status

	T1 Child Ill Health	**T1 Child no Ill Health**	**Child Hospitalised**	**Child Not Hospitalised**
Laxness T1	3.18	2.52	3.27	2.35
Laxness T2	3.06	2.16	2.83	2.23
Laxness T3	2.92	2.12	2.88	2.04

The age of the parents was also an important variable. There were statistically significant differences in the Parenting Scale scores between the five parental age cohorts at T1 (p = .031), T2 (p = .035) and T3 (p = .038). The higher scores

on the Parenting Scale represent the more ineffective parenting practices, and Table 7.4 shows that those parents in the 20-24 age group had on average higher scores than all other age groups. In addition, there were also differences in the effectiveness of parenting practices in relation to the maternal level of secondary school qualifications. Those with no qualifications had much higher levels of Laxness and those with a Junior Certificate scored more ineffectively in the Parenting Scale Total.

Table 7.4 Difference in Parenting Scale Total by Parent's Age.

Age	Mean T1	Mean T2	Mean T3
20-24	3.23	3.12	3.05
25-29	3.08	2.63	2.78
30-34	2.50	2.34	2.33
35-39	2.85	2.55	2.40
40+	2.25	2.11	2.15

Table 7.5 Differences in Parenting Scale by Maternal Second Level Education

Level of Education	PS Total T1	PS Total T3	Laxness T1	Laxness T3
No Qualifications	3.71	3.58	4.20	4.01
Junior Cert or National Equivalent	2.57	2.45	2.67	2.18
Leaving Cert or National Equivalent	2.76	2.47	2.50	2.23

Summary of Parental Competencies Findings

- There was an improvement in parental competencies between T1 and T3, observed on the overall Parenting Scale score as well as the measures of laxness and verbosity.
- However, the data also show some dis-improvements in scores between T2 and T3 for over reactivity and verbosity.
- There were differences in parental competencies among sub-groups of participants.

- Parents living in moderate levels of socio-economic disadvantage, those parents whose children had suffered ill health and/or been hospitalised had higher levels of laxness than those who did not.
- Parents in the 20-24 age group demonstrated more ineffective parenting competencies than those parents in other age groups.

7.3 Depression Level of Parent

The Beck Depression scale was administered to 48 of the 61 parents. The remaining parents were not offered the questionnaire because of language difficulties, their emotional state or literacy challenges. At T1, 20 (42%) were not currently suffering from depression, nine (19%) were experiencing upset from 'the normal ups and downs' in life. Eleven (23%) were suffering from 'mild to moderate' depression and five (10%) had 'moderate to severe' depression. By T3, 24 (50%) of the parents were not suffering from depression, nine (19%) were experiencing upset from the normal ups and downs in life. Eleven (23%) were suffering from mild to moderate depression, three (6%) had moderate to severe depression and one parent had severe depression. There was no statistically significant change in the depression levels of the parents between the three data collection time points.

Table 7.5 Depression Levels of Parent (n = 45)

Depression Level	**T1**	**T2**	**T3**
No Depression	20 (42%)	25 (52%)	24 (50%)
Normal Ups and Downs	9 (19%)	12 (25%)	9 (19%)
Mild to Moderate Depression	11 (23%)	6 (12%)	11 (23%)
Moderate to Severe Depression	5 (10%)	4 (8%)	3 (6%)
Severe Depression	0	0	1 (2%)
Total	**47**	**47**	**48**

Table 7.6 Parent Depression Level Means for T1, T2 and T3 for all parents (n = 45)

	Mean T1	Mean T2	Mean T3	T1 -T3 p	T1 - T3 Effect Size Cohen's d
Depression Mean	7.7111	5.5909	6.8222	.369	.011

Table 7.7 Differences in Scores by Maternal Reported Depression Caused by Child's Behaviour (n = 61)

Measure	Child behaviour had caused depression	Child behaviour had not caused depression	p
T1 Parenting Scale	3.23	2.71	.031
T1 Becks	13.69	5.63	.001
T1 Social Competence	24.14	30.10	.021
T1 Pro Social Competence	14.07	17.17	.034
T1 ECBI Total Intensity	89.23	65.60	.000
T1 ECBI Total Problem	8.46	3.35	.007
T1 SDQ Conduct Problems	5.21	3.28	.029
T1 SDQ Total Difficulties Score	9.42	8.64	.016

Parents were also asked if their child's behaviour had ever caused them to feel depressed. At T1, there was a statistically significant difference in scores on the Parenting Scale, the Beck Depression scale, the Social Competence scale, the Pro Social Competence scale, the ECBI Total Intensity scale, the ECBI Total Problem scale, the SDQ Conduct Problem scale and the SDQ Total Difficulties scale between parents who had reported that their child's behaviour had caused their depression and parents who had not reported that their child's behaviour had led to their depression (see Table 7.7). By T2, and again at T3,

there was no longer a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

Summary of Parental Depression Level Scores

- There were no statistically significant changes in the depression levels of parents between T1 and T3.
- Children whose parents reported that their child's behaviour had caused them to feel depressed received significantly more negative behavioural scores at T1 than those children whose parents did not report that their child's behaviour had caused them to feel depressed.
- At T2 and T3, there were no longer statistically significant differences in the behavioural scores for the two groups.

7.4 The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997) is a measure advocated by IYP in monitoring differences in children's behaviour. The SDQ is a 25-item inventory, which measures hyperactivity, conduct problems, emotional problems, peer problems, pro social behaviours and the level of total difficulties. The norms for the measure suggest that 10% of the population will fall in the 'abnormal' range, 10% in the 'borderline' range and 80% in the 'normal' range. Table 7.8 shows where the children fell within these three ranges at T1, T2 and T3. At T1, 79% of the children were in the normal range but this had risen to 90% by T3.

Table 7.8 SDQ Range of Children T1,T2 and T3 (n=61)

	SDQ Number of Children in Range Time 1	**SDQ Number of Children in Range Time 2**	**SDQ Number of Children in Range Time 3**
Normal	48 (79%)	51 (84%)	55 (90%)
Borderline	7 (11%)	6 (10%)	4 (7%)
Abnormal	6 (10%)	3 (5%)	2 (3%)
Total	61	60	61

Table 7.9 Strengths and Difficulties Measures Parent Version Norms T1, T2 and T3 for Outcome Study Children (n = 61)

	Norm	Mean T1	Mean T2	Mean T3	T1 to T3 Effect Size Cohen's d
Conduct Problems Score	**1.6**	3.72	1.87	1.23	1.08
Hyperactivity Problems Score	**3.6**	3.59	3.11	3.46	.05
Emotional Symptoms	**1.9**	2.18	1.90	1.77	.23
Pro social behaviour score	**8.6**	8.33	8.38	9.14	.54
Peer Problems Score	**1.4**	1.79	1.55	1.19	.41
Total Difficulties Score	**8.6**	9.43	8.43	7.65	.39

Table 7.10 Strengths and Difficulties Measures Parent Version T1 and T2 for Outcome Study Children.

	Mean T1	Mean T2	Mean T3	T1-T2 p	T1-T3 p	T1 - T3 Effect Size Cohen's d
Conduct Problems Score	3.72	1.86	1.22	.000	.009	1.08
Hyperactivity Problems Score	3.59	3.12	3.45	.093	.649	.05
Emotional Symptoms	2.18	1.90	1.77	.250	.139	.23
Pro social behaviour score	8.32	8.38	9.15	.704	.000	.54
Peer Problems Score	1.78	1.55	1.19	.241	.011	.41
Total Difficulties Score	9.42	8.43	7.65	.098	.009	.39

Hutchings (2004) explains that there are no norms available internationally for children aged 3 to 4 on the SDQ. Data from a sample of 5855 children aged 5-10 did report mean scores for the SDQ and these are presented in Table 7.9 under the column heading 'Norm'. The mean scores for the children in this study are also presented in Table 7.9. At T1, the outcome study children's scores on the SDQ were higher than the norm in all areas except the

Hyperactivity scale and the Pro social scale where the higher the score the more positive the behaviour. By T3, the outcome children scores were all lower than the norm with the exception of scores on the Pro-Social scale.

In relation to the children's behaviour, between T1 and T2 there was a positive change in the children's conduct problem levels and hyperactivity levels as measured in the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Table 7.10). Questions related to conduct problems included those about temper tantrums, obedience, fighting and bullying, lying and cheating. The Hyperactivity scale measures such phenomena as over activity, fidgeting, poor concentration and attention span. The maximum score for both the Conduct Problems scale and the Hyperactivity scale is 10 and the lowest is zero. The mean score for Conduct Problems at T1 was 3.72. The mean score reduced to 1.86 at T2 and the difference in means was statistically significant ($p = .000$). From T1 to T3 there was a statistically significant change in scores on the Conduct Problems scale ($d = 1.08$; $p = .009$), the Pro Social Behaviour scale ($d = .54$; $p = .000$), the Peer Problems scale ($d = .41$; $p = .011$) and the Total Difficulties Score ($d = .39$; $p = .009$).

Table 7.10 Impact of Developmental Concerns on SDQ at T1 and T2

	T1 Parent with Developmental Concerns	T1 Parent without Developmental Concerns	T1 Effect Size Cohen's d	T2 Parent with Developmental Concerns	T2 Parent without Developmental Concerns	T2 Effect Size Cohen's d
SDQ Total Score	10.84	8.37	.59	8.37	8.30	.04

At T3, there was statistically significant difference in the hyperactivity levels of the boys and girls with the boys having a higher mean score ($M = 4.19$) than

the girls (M = 2.70) and the difference between the groups was statistically significant (p = .004).

Table 7.11 Differences in SDQ Scores for Children with Development or Behavioural Concerns at T3.

	Children with Concerns T3	Children without Concerns T3	**T1 to T3 Effect Size Cohen's F**
SDQ Emotional Score	2.66	1.39	.64
SDQ Conduct Problems Score	2.00	.90	.72
SDQ Peer Problems Score	1.61	1.02	.53
SDQ Total Difficulties Score	9.88	6.72	.48

Table 7.10 shows that parents who had concerns about their children's development also were more likely to have concerns about their children's behaviour than parents who did not have such concerns about their children's development. There was a large but not statistically significant difference in SDQ scores recorded by those parents who reported concerns about their children's development at T1 and those parents who did not (d = .59; p. = 0.14). Data from the SDQ measure also showed statistically significant differences between parents who did or did not have new developmental or behavioural concerns for their children at T3 (see Table 7.11). In relation to the SDQ, there were statistically significant differences between the two groups in scores on the Emotional scale (p = .015), the Conduct scale (p = .005) and the Peer Problems scale (p = .004), as well as on the Total Difficulties scale (p = .008).

Summary of SDQ Findings

- At T1, 79% of the children fell in the normal range of strengths and difficulties; this figure rose to 90% by T3 with a corresponding decrease in the number of children in the borderline and abnormal ranges.
- At T1, the strengths and difficulties scores of the outcome study children were higher than the measure's norm indicating that, at T1, the study children had higher levels of difficulties and lower levels of strengths than those found in the general population.
- By T3, the strengths and difficulties scores of the outcome study children were lower than the measure's norm suggesting that, at T3, the children had lower levels of difficulties and higher level of strengths than those found in the general population.
- From T1 to T3 the changes in all but two of the sub-scales of the SDQ were statistically significant, and while there was an improvement in the Hyperactivity and Emotional Symptoms scores they were not statistically significant.
- At T3, parents who had concerns about their children's development also were more likely to have concerns about their children's behaviour than parents who did not have these concerns about their children's development.
- There was a large but not statistically significant difference in SDQ scores recorded by those parents who reported concerns about their children's development at T1 and those parents who did not.

7.4.1 Pre-school Workers SDQ Measures T1 and T2

Pre-school workers are central to pre-schools and are extremely familiar with the children within the pre-school. As a result, data on 89 children including the outcome study children was gathered among pre-school workers in the four pre-schools. Two pre-school workers completed the SDQ at T1 and T2 for each of the children.

Table 7.12 presents the scores returned by pre-school worker A and shows an improvement in all scores. There were statistically significant gains between T1 and T2 for the Emotional Symptoms, Pro Social, Peer Problems and the Total Difficulties Scores. Table 7.13 presents the findings of data collected from the second teacher. There were statistically significant gains between T1 and T2 on the Pro Social scale, the Peer Problems scale and the Total Difficulties Score.

Data collected from the two pre-school workers highlighted an improvement in the children's strengths and a decrease in their difficulties from T1 to T2 as measured by the SDQ. Both pre-school workers' scores showed statistically significant gains in relation to the Pro Social behaviour score and the Peer Problems score as well as the Total Difficulties Score.

Table 7.12 Strengths and Difficulties Scores Pre-School Worker A T1 and T2 for all preschool children (n = 89)

	Mean T1	**Mean T2**	**df**	**T**	**p**	**T1 - T3 Effect Size Cohen's d**
Conduct Problems Score	1.61	1.50	88	.85	.398	.06
Hyperactivity Problems Score	4.24	4.02	88	1.36	.177	.11
Emotional Symptoms	1.91	1.59	88	2.01	. 047	.16
Pro social behaviour score	6.51	7.10	88	3.01	.003	.30
Peer Problems Score	1.94	.78	88	8.15	.000	.80
Total Difficulties Score	9.71	7.91	88	5.30	.000	.70

Table 7.13 Strengths and Difficulties Scores Pre-School Worker B T1 and T2 for all preschool children (n = 89)

	Mean T1	Mean T2	df	T	p	T1 - T3 Effect Size Cohen's d
Conduct Problems Score	1.35	.96	88	3.03	.003	.26
Hyperactivity Problems Score	3.85	3.73	88	.70	.485	.07
Emotional Symptoms	1.59	1.80	88	-1.17	.242	-0.13
Pro social behaviour score	6.14	7.48	88	7.23	.000	.40
Peer Problems Score	1.71	1.05	88	4.58	.000	.65
Total Difficulties Score	8.43	7.55	88	5.30	.000	.20

7.5 Social Competence

This 12-item measure assesses a child's pro social behaviours, communication skills and self-control. The parent is asked how well each of the statements describes their child. An example item would be: *Your child is very good at understanding other people's feelings.* Responses are recorded on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*very well*). Children are scored as being in the 'normal' range of social competence, 'borderline' or 'in need of clinical intervention.' At T1, in relation to the Total Social Competence scale, 50 (82%) of the children were in the normal range, five (8%) were in the borderline range, and six (10%) were in need of clinical intervention. At T2 and T3, in relation to the Total Social Competence scale, 55 (90%) were in the normal range, three (5%) were in the borderline range and three (5%) were in need of clinical intervention.

Therefore, the number of children in the normal range increased from 50 at T1 to 55 at T2 and T3, while the number in the borderline range decreased from 5 at T1 to 3 at T2 and T3 and the number in the clinical intervention range decreased from 6 at T1 to 3 at T2 and T3.

Table 7.14 Social Competence Range

Range	Total Social Competence Number of Children in Range Time 1	Total Social Competence Number of Children in Range Time 2	Total Social Competence Number of Children in Range Time 3
Normal	50 (82%)	55 (90%)	55 (90%)
Borderline	5 (8%)	3 (5%)	3 (5%)
Clinical Intervention	6 (10%)	3 (5%)	3 (5%)
Total	61	61	61

Table 7.15 Emotional Regulation Change in Scores T1, T2 and T3

	Emotional Regulation Number of Children in Range Time 1	Emotional Regulation Number of Children in Range Time 2	Emotional Regulation Number of Children in Range Time 3
Normal	36 (59%)	44 (72%)	49 (81%)
Borderline	10 (16%)	13 (21%)	5 (8%)
Clinical Intervention	15 (25%)	4 (7%)	7 (11%)
Total	61	61	61

In relation to emotional regulation scores, at T1, 36 (59%) of the children were in the normal range, 10 (16%) were in the borderline range and 15 (25%) were in need of clinical intervention (Table 7.15). By T2, 44 (72%) were in the normal range, 13 (21%) were in the borderline range and four (7%) were in need of clinical intervention. By T3, 49 (81%) were in the normal range, 5 (8%) were in the borderline range and 7 (11%) were in need of clinical intervention.

Table 7.16 Pro-social Change in Scores T1, T2 and T3

	Pro social Score Number of Children in Range Time 1	Pro social Score Number of Children in Range Time 2	Pro social Score Number of Children in Range Time 3
Normal	53 (87%)	57 (94%)	55 (90%)
Borderline	4 (6.5%)	2 (3%)	3 (5%)
Clinical Intervention	4 (6.5%)	2 (3%)	3 (5%)
Total	61	61	61

On the Pro Social scale, at T1 53 (87%) of the children were in the normal range, four (6.5%) were in the borderline range and four (6.5%) were in need of clinical intervention (Table 7.16). By T2, 57 (94%) were in the normal range but this dropped to 55 (90%) at T3.

Table 7.17 Social Competence changes T1, T2 and T3 (n=61)

	Mean T1	Mean T2	Mean T3	T1 – T2 p	T1-T3 p	T1 to T3 Effect Size Cohen's d
Social Competence Score	28.73	29.44	30.67	.520	.065	.23
Emotional Regulation Score	12.27	12.65	13.72	.589	.041	.30
Pro-social score	16.45	16.78	16.95	.338	.582	.11

Table 7.17 illustrates the changes in the Social Competence scores from T1 to T2 and from T1 to T3. There was a statistically significant gain in the Emotional Regulation scores between T1 and T3. However, there was also evidence of an improvement in all measures from T1 to T3 with an increase in Social Competence, Emotional Regulation and Pro-Social scores.

There was a statistically significant difference between scores for boys and girls at T1 on the Social Competence and Emotional Regulation scales at T1. Girls had higher levels of total Social Competence and Emotional Regulation than boys (Table 7.18). However, there was no statistically significant difference between T2 and T3 as the boys' scores moved closer to those of the girls. There was also a statistically significant difference between parents who had new concerns about their child's development at T3 and those who did not (Table 7.19). Significant differences were found on the Total Social Competence (p = .009), Emotional Regulation (p = .008) and Pro Social Competence scales (p = .033) and scores were all higher for those children whose parents did not have concerns about their development. There was a statistically significant difference at T1 in the Social Competence and Emotional Regulation levels between those children whose parents had concerns about their child's development compared to those who did not, but there was no such difference at T2 (Table 7.20).

Table 7.18 Differences in Social Competence by Gender

	Boys T1	Girls T1	Boys T2	Girls T2	Boys T3	Girls T3
T1 Total Social Competence	26.35	31.20	28.19	30.73	30.16	31.20
T1 Emotional Regulation	10.35	14.26	12.22	13.10	13.45	14.00

Table 7.19 Differences in Social Competence by Developmental or Behavioural concerns

	Children with new concerns	Children without concerns
T3 Total Social Competence	26.61	32.37
T3 Emotional Regulation Competence	11.27	14.74
T3 Pro Social Competence Total	15.33	17.62

Table 7.20 Differences in Social Competence by Developmental or Behavioural concerns T1 to T2

	T1 Parent with Development Concerns	T1 Parent without Development Concerns	**Effect Size Cohen's d**	T2 Parent with Development Concerns	T2 Parent without Development Concerns	**Effect Size Cohen's d**
Total Social Competence	26.59	31.55	.59	30.25	30.00	.08
Emotional Regulation Competence	11.12	13.94	.60	12.78	13.32	.11

Summary of Social Competence Scores

- There was an increase in the number of children scoring in the normal range on the Social Competence Scale from T1 to T2 to T3 and a corresponding reduction in the number of children in the borderline and clinical intervention categories.
- At T1, 59% of the children were in the normal range for scores on Emotional Regulation, and this rose to 81% by T3.
- The Pro-social scores for the children were high at T1 with 87% in the normal range. This increased to 90% by T3.
- There was an increase in scores on the Social Competence, Emotional Regulation and Pro-social scales from T1 to T3 with a statistically significant gain in scores on Emotional Regulation between T1 and T3.
- There was a statistically significant difference between girls and boys at T1 in scores for Social Competence and Emotional Regulation. Girls had higher scores than boys. This was no longer the case at T2 and T3 as the boys' scores moved closer to those of the girls.
- At T1, there was a statistically significant difference in scores for Social Competence and Emotional Regulation between those children whose parents reported concerns over their children's behaviour and development and those that did not. By T2, the difference between these two groups of children was no longer statistically significant as

the social competence of these children moved closer to those children without behavioural or developmental concerns.

7.6 Eyberg

The Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory (ECBI) is designed to measure the parent's report of their child's conduct behavioural problems and the frequency of such problems. The measure has two sub-scales, the Intensity scale and the Problem scale (Eyberg and Ross, 1978). In terms of normative information, original standardisation of the ECBI (Robinson, Eyberg, & Ross, 1980), with a sample of 512 children (aged 2 –12 years), yielded norms of 103.8 (*S.D.* = 34.6) for Intensity and 6.9 (*S.D.* = 7.8) for Problem scales. Sub-sample analysis of 57 children identified as having conduct problems yielded mean scores of 137.2 (*S.D.* = 38.8) for the Intensity scale and 15.0 (*S.D.* = 9.6) for the Problem scale (Hutchings, 2004, 34).

Table 7.21 ECBI Means T1, T2 and T3 (n = 58)

	Mean T1	**Mean T2**	**Mean T3**	**T1-T2 p**	**T1-T3 p**
ECBI Intensity Score	70.40	71.52	65.92	.775	.163
ECBI Problem Scale	4.28	4.14	2.89	.867	.035

At T1, the mean ECBI Intensity score for the outcome study children was 70.40, and by T3, the mean score dropped to 65.92. This demonstrates that the outcome children's scores were below the norms at T1 and T3 as identified above and therefore had lower levels of conduct problems and intensity levels than those found in the general population. The same is true for the Problem

Scale where there was a statistically significant difference in the scores between T1 and T3.

Table 7.22 ECBI Intensity Score Range

	Intensity Score Number of Children in Range Time 1	**Intensity Score Number of Children in Range Time 2**	**Intensity Score Number of Children in Range Time 3**
Normal	55 (97%)	53 (93%)	56 (98%)
Above Clinical Cut Off	2 (3%)	4 (7%)	1 (2%)
Total	57	57	57

In relation to the Intensity of Problems scale, at T1, 55 (97%) children were at the normal level and two (3%) were above the clinical cut off point. At T3, one of the children was above the clinical cut-off point.

Table 7.23 Differences in ECBI Scores for Children with new developmental or behavioural concerns at T3

	Children with Concerns T3	Children without Concerns T3
ECBI Total Intensity Score	77.27	61.20
ECBI Total Problem Score	5.44	1.62

Table 7.23 presents ECBI scores for those children whose parents had concerns about their development or behaviour at T3 and those whose parents did not have such concerns. There was a statistically significant difference between the two groups. In relation to the Total Intensity score those children whose parents had concerns scored higher (M = 77.28) than those children whose parents did not have concerns (M = 61.21) and the difference was statistically significant (p = .014). In addition, in relation to the Total Problem score those children whose parents had concerns scored higher

(M = 5.45) than children whose parents did not have such concerns (M = 1.63) and the difference was statistically significant (p = .003).

Summary of findings on the Eyberg measure

- The intensity of children's problems as measured by the Eyberg Child Behaviour Index decreased between T1 and T3.
- The total level of behavioural problems also decreased between T1 and T3.
- Those children whose parents reported concerns over their children's behaviour and development had significantly higher levels of behavioural problems and greater intensity of problems than those children whose parents did not report such concerns.

7.7 Conclusion

Data was collected from parents on demographic and family risk factors, the depression levels of the parents, child social competence, child conduct disorder problems at home and parental competencies. Data collected on demographic and family risk factors have already been discussed in Chapter Six.

In relation to parental competencies, there was a statistically significant gain between T1 and T3 for all parents. However, demographic factors also had an impact on parenting effectiveness.

Socio-economic disadvantage, the mother's level of education, the mother's age and the child's health all impacted on parental competence. The parent's laxness was impacted upon by the parent's levels of education whereby those parents with no qualifications were more lax and more ineffective. The 90% of parents living in mild to moderate socio-economic disadvantage were also

more lax in their parenting than. Child ill health and/or hospitalisation also affected parenting, as those parents whose child had been ill tended to be more lax.

In relation to child social competence and conduct disorder problems at home there was an improvement in the children's social competence and a decrease in their conduct problems from T1 to T3. There was a statistically significant gain in Emotional Regulation scores between T1 and T3. There was also evidence of an improvement in scores on all measures from T1 to T3 with an increase in Social Competence, Emotional Regulation and Pro-social scores. There was a statistically significant difference between boys and girls at T1 as the girls displayed higher levels of social competence. However, those differences were not present by T3. Data from the Eyberg measure also showed an improvement in children's Intensity scores and in their Problem scores from T1 to T3. On the SDQ, there was a statistically significant difference between T1 and T3 as reported by the parents and between T1 and T2 by the Teachers. In each instance, the children's scores improved.

Development and behavioural concerns has a statistically significant impact on the children's scores on the ECBI, SDQ and Social Competence Scores. Those children whose parents were concerned scored more negatively than those who did not have such concerns. The nature of these concerns varied from physical ill health to bad behaviour to the need for speech and language therapy or a concern with ADHD. At T1, there were statistically significant differences in scores between those children whose parents were concerned about their development and those children whose parents were not concerned. There was no longer a statistically significant difference at T2. Again at T3, those children whose parents had new concerns also received

higher scores for negative behaviour than those children whose parents did not have such concerns.

CHAPTER EIGHT - DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

Chapter Eight considers the relevant findings of this study as they relate to the operation of IYP in Galway City. The chapter will outline the impact the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme has had on the children involved in the programme in the four Pre-Schools studied. The approach to the IYP developed in Galway City will be reviewed. Furthermore, other significant findings relating to the overall IYP project in Galway City will be discussed. As a form of early intervention, prevention and treatment the IYP addresses emotional and behavioural difficulties that contribute to conduct disorders using techniques that reinforce positive behaviours and discourage aggressive and negative behaviours, which act as impediments to children deriving appropriate benefits from education. If such behaviours are not attended to at an early age, they can lead to subsequent problems for the child in later life, which in turn affects the community and society in general.

The IYP programme is designed to meet the needs of children with behavioural difficulties in the widest sense of the term. This encompasses a broad spectrum of behaviours from mildly disruptive to severely destructive, which can present in the home and school, particularly among younger children but also can result in anti-social activities among adolescents and young people. A study conducted by the ESRI on behalf of Barnardos considered educational disadvantage in Ireland and concluded that there are clear differences in educational outcomes according to social class. Children in Ireland from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to have literacy and numeracy problems, leave school early and are less likely to go on to third level (Barnardos & ESRI, 2009).

Burchinal et al (2000) found that children from low-income families in high quality child care or pre-school settings are significantly better off cognitively, socially and emotionally than similar children in low quality settings (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2008). This supports the argument for programmes such as the IYP in community pre-schools and the training of the pre-school workers. The fact that all children in the pre-school receive the intervention means that it is non-stigmatising and for many children the programme is preventative. The evidence base that the IYP has developed was paramount in the acceptance of the programme by the pre-schools involved and the requirement of fidelity ensured that the intervention was implemented as it should have been.

All those stakeholders interviewed in this study spoke positively of IYP as an intervention identifying the benefit of the programme as its scope to include the child, the home, the school and the wider community. Small Group Dina is viewed as an excellent programme for those primary school children with behavioural difficulties or low self-esteem. The Parenting Programme is regarded as empowering parents who are treated as experts of their own situation. Dina in the Classroom in the pre-schools is unique to Ireland and provides an early intervention which teaches children crucial life skills ranging from social and emotional skills to problem solving.

8.2 Outcomes for Children and Parents

A total of 61 pre-school children who participated in the IYP in four community pre-schools in Galway City had their behaviours tracked from the summer of 2009, the summer of 2010 and the early summer of 2011. 90% of the children were living in mild to moderate levels of disadvantage and there

was evidence that the children were living in homes with a very high level of dependence on state benefits, and as such, were at a significant risk of living in poverty. Indeed, there were also very low levels of home ownership and high levels of living in rental accommodation. The profile data also shows significant levels of family stressors particularly in relation to work and money and this is a reflection of what is happening in the wider economy at present.

There were statistically significant improvements in children's behaviour during the period of the evaluation. Across each of the measures (SDQ, ECBI, Social Competence and Eyberg) there was an improvement in the children's behaviour. Chapter Seven outlines these changes in detail but the following are some of the key changes:

- In relation to child social competence and conduct disorder problems at home, there was an improvement in the children's social competence and a decrease in their conduct problems.
- The children therefore became better equipped to express themselves, solve problems and make decisions.
- At T1, 79% of the children fell in the normal range of strengths and difficulties; this rose to 90% by T3 with a corresponding decrease in the number of children in the borderline and abnormal ranges.
- At T1, the strengths and difficulties scores of the outcome study children were higher than the population norms indicating that, at T1, the study children had higher levels of difficulties and lower levels of strengths than those found in the population.
- By T3, the strengths and difficulties scores of the outcome study children were lower than the population norm suggesting that, at T3, the children had lower levels of difficulties and higher level of strengths than those found in the population.

- From T1 to T3 the changes in all but two of the sub-scales were statistically significant, and while there was an improvement in the Hyperactivity and Emotional Symptoms scores they were not statistically significant.
- The Social Competence Scale shows an increase in the number of children in the normal range from T1 to T2 to T3 and a corresponding reduction in the number of children in the borderline and clinical intervention categories.
- There was an improvement in scores on the Social Competence, Emotional Regulation and Pro-social scales from T1 to T3 with a statistically significant difference in the change in scores for Emotional Regulation between T1 and T3.
- The intensity of children's problems, as measured by the Eyberg Child Behaviour index, decreased from T1 to T3.
- The total level of child behavioural problems also decreased from T1 to T3.
- In the data collected from the Eyberg and the Social Competence measures, those children whose parents reported concerns over their children's behaviour and development had significantly higher levels of behavioural problems and greater intensity of problems than those that children whose parents did not report such concerns.

There is also evidence of changes in Parenting Practices**.** There was an improvement in the parental competencies from T1 to T3. There was a statistically significant improvement in parenting practices from T1 to T3 for all parents in relation to the overall parenting scale, laxness and verbosity. Parents living in moderate levels of socio-economic disadvantage, those whose children had suffered ill health and/or been hospitalised had higher levels of laxness than those who did not. Differences in parental competencies

are also evident in relation to the parents' age with those parents in the 20-24 age group demonstrating more ineffective parenting competencies than those parents in other age groups.

The outcomes study did not have an experimental design as no control group was used with random allocation of participants. For that reason, the report cannot draw conclusions about what 'caused' the gains observed above. However, the study did observe improvements in the children's social competence and a decrease in their conduct disorder problems combined with an improvement in parental competencies. The presence of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme combined with the absence of any observed changes in the objective circumstances of the parents and or the children is strongly suggestive that the programme had a positive impact in key areas.

The evidence from the data gathered highlights the significant positive impact the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme has had on the social and emotional competencies on the children involved in the four Pre-schools. Furthermore, the data indicates that specific children within the sample group whose behaviour was classified as being in need of clinical intervention, since participating in the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme, their behaviour is now classified as normal. There is significant evidence that children within the sample have moved closer to national and international norms in relation to their behaviour during the period of participation in the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme.

The acknowledged benefits of early intervention among children are replicated within this evaluation. Although the process evaluation identifies issues with the cultural differences in implementing an American Programme

in an Irish context, the outcomes evaluation indicates that the programme had significant behavioural benefits for children and is suited for implementation within a community pre-school setting.

8.3 Fidelity to the Programme

When addressing the effectiveness of any programme the preparation and organisation for the implementation of the programme requires examination. There has been a strong degree of fidelity in the programme in relation to training, facilitation, implementation of the programme and accreditation of facilitators. The respondents who have been trained in IYP were very positive about the experience. Indeed pre-school workers who had no specific training in classroom management found that the training enabled them to operate more effectively in the classroom. The accreditation process, which nine workers have completed, reinforces the training received by staff as it examines the quality of the implementation of the programme as carried out by the individual facilitator. This accreditation is an advantage to the pre-schools workers as the agencies involved recognise their efforts and achievements. Overall, there is strong evidence that the programme has been extremely well implemented.

The development of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme in the pre-schools in Galway City is viewed as a significant achievement particularly as the pre-school curriculum has not been a priority for Irish policy makers. Stakeholders believe that the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme brings structure to the classroom and assists the children in their transition to primary school. The co-operation and support of the pre-school management and staff has been crucial to the success of Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme. Staff are partial to the prescriptive nature of the programme and

the use of prescribed materials and techniques. They regard the intervention as being inclusive and beneficial to all the children in the school not just those with behavioural problems. Staff also reported that the children love the programme and regard it as being fun and the communication between teachers and children has improved, as the children have the capacity to explain how they are feeling. However, the primary benefit of IYP as perceived by the staff is the focus on the 'positive' in what the children do, a u-turn in the discipline of behaviour.

8.4 The IYP as an effective Community Development Based Approach

The stakeholder interviews highlight strong evidence and support of a community development based approach practised by EdStart in the implementation of IYP in Galway City. There is clear evidence of the employment of a partnership approach by EdStart since the inception of the programme. Unlike many other early intervention or behavioural programmes, EdStart have employed a voluntary opt-in approach to IYP in relation to the organisations, the schools, the parents and the children. Whilst all children in the pre-schools receive the intervention, the parents are informed and agree to this prior to their child entering the school. Furthermore, from the beginning EdStart were realistic with all stakeholders in relation to the level of commitment required by all partners including parents, should they become involved in the programme.

This voluntary commitment to IYP in Galway City by organisations and individuals constitutes a true form of a community-based approach to a community need. A community-based approach is underpinned by a process, which recognises a need and works collectively towards meeting that need. The evidence from the stakeholder interviews indicates that EdStart

has employed such an approach. It was acknowledged by participants that the broad encompassing nature of the programme to include the parents, teachers and children facilitates the child's overall development. This partnership approach contributes to the effectiveness of the programme within communities as both school and the community are interconnected, interwoven and dependent on each other (Negroni, 1995). However, it is important to note that not all agencies approached to become involved in the IYP project participated. Key statutory agencies are not involved in the programme and this raises issues for future implementations and more importantly for children in communities.

In relation to the other agencies, staff and schools, stakeholders pointed to EdStart's manner of engagement and working with funders, organisations and individuals as being responsive to suggestions and amendments to programme delivery, where possible, as well as supportive at all times in relation to assisting them with the delivery of the programme. EdStart has provided the schools with the training, resources and ongoing support to deliver the IYP whilst monitoring closely the implementation of the programme, those involved in delivery were afforded autonomy.

Underlying all of the work that EdStart has conducted with all members of the community has been a respect of the individuals and organisations that they have encountered as well as the ideas and concerns they may have. This way of working has been pivotal in keeping staff, parents, schools and organisations involved in the delivery of IYP and the success of the programme to date. It is clear from this evaluation that the EdStart staff have been central to the development and the fidelity of the programme. The ability of this programme to be replicated in other locations is dependent on

the establishment of a focal organisation which demonstrates similar professionalism, enthusiasm and ability to work in partnership as EdStart.

8.5 Emerging themes

In a society in which there are multiple demands on the resources of the state and at a time of government austerity, the importance of funding social interventions by not for profit organisations is crucial. Indeed, in Ireland there has been a long tradition of voluntary organisations providing for unmet social need. Without the belief and confidence of the St Augustine Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Galway City and the financial support of the Maureen O'Connell fund, the delivery of IYP to the pre-schools would not have been possible. However, this raises a significant issue as to whether it is the role of charitable organisations to fund this type of community intervention.

To date there has not been a strong tradition of evaluating community interventions such as this. However, this evaluation highlights the willingness of stakeholders and users to become involved in the approach. The professionals working with children accepted the need to record the children's behaviour levels both before and after programme delivery. Those stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation were obliging in their involvement. The pre-school managers and staff facilitated the evaluation greatly by enabling the interviews with the parents to take place on their premises and encouraging the parents to get involved and reminding them of their appointments. Critically, parents were open and willing to provide information on their parenting practices and their children's behaviours. For a community identified by many of the stakeholders as difficult to engage with due to their commitments and busy lives, there was tremendous engagement by those parents on three separate occasions spanning three

years and furthermore they were extremely forthcoming with what was very personal and sometimes sensitive information about them, their children and their families.

The relationship EdStart has fostered with parents involved with the IYP has been based on partnership approach, parents are encouraged rather than coerced into participating. In this sense, stakeholders have identified the IYP as a form of family support within the community as the wider network of the pre-school staff, teachers, schools and EdStart are incorporated into the development of the child with the parents. The skills and knowledge that the adults learn facilitate the child's development whilst the skills the children learn furthers this, which can improve relationships and communication in the family.

Whilst empowerment was not a stated aim of the work of EdStart evidence of its achievement through the implementation of the IYP can be seen in the pre-school workers, teachers, parents and children. Empowerment can be defined as "where the powerless gain the experience and confidence needed to influence the decisions that affect their own daily lives" (Rifkin & Pridmore, 2001, 3). It is evident that the children, parents and teachers have become empowered. The pre-school workers, project workers and teachers have received training and many have become accredited as facilitators of IYP, their confidence has increased and they endorse the reinforcement of positive behaviour, which has involved a significant shift in classroom management. The children have been taught to negotiate problems and identify solutions to issues that arise in their daily lives. Stakeholders regard this as beneficial to the wider community in the long run as the children have acquired lifelong skills. More widely, childhood emotional well-being determines adult emotional well-being which is the primary determinant of the quality of adult

relationships and the social well-being of communities and society (Gaspar & Santos e Paiva). Creating a foundation of emotional well-being from an early age allows children to use their stored experiences, skills and knowledge to make informed decisions as they journey through life.

The Parenting Programme is viewed as empowering and aimed at improving what parents are already doing; furthermore, participants are not coerced into involvement. Facilitators recognise the amount of work and commitment that is required by them in implementing the programme but as with the pre-school workers, their experience of training and the resources are positive. Practically, EdStart has made the programme accessible to parents by running the sessions in local community locations with no charges to the parents. Whilst the parent intervention is a stand-alone programme stakeholders have noted the importance of parents whose children are engaging in the IYP to become involved in the Parent Programme due to the benefits realised.

The expansion of IYP in the Galway primary schools from Small Group Dina to the Whole School Approach is regarded as extremely positive for the children and staff that have been involved. Small Group Dina is viewed as invaluable for children with behavioural difficulties and low self-esteem. The roll out of the Whole School Approach is a culmination of the perceived success of Small Group Dina and the willingness of primary school staff to engage in such an intervention. The Whole School Approach is viewed as an appropriate approach to promote social and emotional competencies amongst all children in the school in a consistent, fun and evidence based way.

Supporting the implementation of the IYP in Galway City is one of the main objectives of EdStart and the three support workers in EdStart specifically provide support. The findings highlight very high levels of frequent support,

which is available when needed. The communication between EdStart staff and the facilitators of all the IYP programmes allows for the facilitation and introduction of new ideas and improvements in programme delivery. Moreover, all of those involved agreed that such a programme could not be delivered but for the support provided to them by EdStart. The support EdStart provided advances the implementation of IYP as it reinforces the partnership approach.

The implementation of IYP in Galway City began in 2006 as an exploration of programmes that might alleviate early school leaving; staff at GCP identified the IYP as a possible programme and then researched the project in greater detail. Today IYP is being delivered in six community pre-schools, two primary schools and one school has recently employed the Whole School Approach. 19 cycles of the Parenting Programme have been delivered across the City. Presently, there are demands to expand further with a number of pre-schools and primary schools contacting EdStart requesting the IYP.

This demand is based on the reputation of EdStart and also the desire within schools to introduce a 'positive' approach to discipline. Currently, there are limited programmes available to schools like IYP. The Whole School Approach in primary schools emerged as an aspiration for EdStart and was informed by the success of Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme in the pre-schools. Whilst Small Group Dina will remain available to children in need of specific intervention, schools wish to adapt the Whole School Approach as an inclusive way of promoting positive behaviour in all children.

8.6 Recommendations

The views of the stakeholders and the findings of the outcome study strongly endorse the Incredible Years Programme in Galway City. While indications

from the stakeholders are that all elements of the programme are having positive impacts on the local communities in Galway City, it is the impact of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme which is prioritised in this evaluation. The positive impact of the programme on pre-school children's social and emotional competencies emphasises the potential for this programme to become a key element of government policy. The following are specific recommendations based on the evaluation process:

1. The evaluation completed on the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme has demonstrated positive outcomes for the pre-school aged children involved. Three key features have been central to achieving these positive outcomes: 1) Pre-School Staff and Management who are willing to fully embrace an evidence-based programme, 2) Retaining fidelity to the programme and 3) Supports/ resources provided by EdStart. The positive outcomes can be replicated in other locations provided similar conditions are created. Fidelity to the programme requires the appropriate training, resources, time for pre-school staff to prepare/ plan and an IYP accreditation process are put in place. External support to complete the aforementioned must be provided by a community-based organisation with the required skill base and flexibility. Within the community and voluntary sector, Area Based Partnerships and Childcare Committees may be the most appropriate organisation. Furthermore, in a time of austerity, a major attribute of the programme is its limited funding requirements. Initial front loading for training, resources, accreditation and supports are required; but then again as Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme progresses and develops into common practice in a pre-school funding requirements are reduced to minimum.
2. Through the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme pre-schools in Galway City have developed extremely positive environments which promote positive behaviour and reduce negative behaviour. The children

who participated in this programme will require local primary schools to adopt a similar IYP based philosophy. EdStart is piloting the IYP whole school approach in one primary school in Galway City in an attempt to replicate the whole school approach developed within the pre-schools. However, the IYP approach needs to be developed further within primary schools to ensure all the children who have become 'active participants' in their pre-school can continue to be 'active participants' with school and throughout their educational journey.

3. Evidence-based programmes must be prioritised within national funding and policy. As supported by this evaluation, programmes such as the IYP can work. The implementation of evidence-based programmes within local and national policy will provide far greater levels of predictable outcomes for individuals, communities and funders.
4. National policy relating to pre-schools has developed significantly in recent years with the introduction of national guidelines and policy documents. The Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme meets the criteria identified within guidelines as Síolta and Aistear and should be recognised by the Office for the Minister for Children as a programme, which does so. At the pre-school level, recognition of the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme as a curriculum, which meets national standards, would encourage more pre-schools and staff to become involved in IYP. EdStart and its partner agencies should liaise with the Office of the Minister for Children in this regard.
5. The tripartite nature of IYP is unique. As such, IYP should continue to be supported and expand to those communities who seek to engage in the programme. EdStart has expanded its remit and is continuously evolving. However, further expansion will require further funding. In order to ensure continued success EdStart should internally review its long-term strategy, funding, resourcing and organisational structure.

6. IYP fits into the category of professional development for those involved in the delivery of programmes to parents and/ or children. Pre-school workers involved in this evaluation have noted the professional benefits of being trained in, and delivering, the Dina in the Classroom (Pre-School) Programme. Similar feedback has been provided by those delivering the Small Group Dina and Parent Programmes. EdStart should endeavour to work with partner agencies to influence relevant national policy makers to acknowledge IYP within relevant training courses i.e. FETAC Courses and Teacher Training Courses.
7. The need for and benefit of evaluation of community-based projects are highlighted through this research process. The successful implementation of this research model underlines the opportunity, which exists for more research to be undertaken in a community setting. In an era when efficiency and effectiveness are viewed as imperative, evidence-based programmes with built in evaluation tools must be prioritised. Consequently, greater links must be developed by agencies/ organisation involved in delivery of programmes in the community and academic/ research institutions with research expertise.
8. From the initial implementation of IYP in Galway City evaluation of the programme has been advocated. As can be seen from the outcome findings, the information gathered can be used to inform the future delivery of the programme and create a body of knowledge for those working with children and parents in Galway City. EdStart should endeavour to work with partner agencies, involved in practice and research/ evaluation, to explore how data generated locally can be appropriately analysed and disseminated.

8.7 Conclusion

The IYP was introduced to Galway City through Galway City Partnership in 2005 as an evidence-based approach to meet the needs of behavioural

difficulties of children in the widest sense. By working in partnership with state and voluntary agencies, schools and pre-schools, St. Vincent de Paul and children and parents the IYP has been rolled out successfully by EdStart. This report has demonstrated a commitment and approval of IYP and the work of EdStart by all stakeholders with an overwhelming belief that the programme is providing a unique and worthwhile service for children and their families in Galway City. Moreover, the data collected from the outcome study children demonstrates that there has been an improvement in the children's social competence and a decrease in their conduct problems during the period in which they partook in Dina in the Classroom. This and the views of the stakeholders towards IYP and the work of EdStart all point to the importance of this intervention in Galway City and the recommendation that it continue in its operation and expansion.

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APPENDIX ONE - DINA IN THE CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

Content	Objectives
UNIT 1 Introduction to Dinosaur School	• Understanding the importance of rules • Participating in the process of rule making • Understanding what will happen if rules are broken • Learning how to earn rewards for good behaviour • Learning to build friendships
UNIT 2 Doing your best detective work at school Listening, waiting, quiet hands up Concentrating, checking and cooperating	• Leaning how to listen, wait, avoid interruptions and put up a quiet hand to ask question in class • Learning now to handle other children who poke fun and interfere with the child's ability to work at school • Learning the importance of cooperation with the teacher and other children • Practicing concentrating and good classroom skills
UNIT 3 Understanding and detection feelings Wally teaches clues to detecting feelings Wally teaches clues to understanding feelings	• Learning words for different feelings • Learning how to tell how someone is feeling from verbal and nonverbal expressions • Increasing awareness of nonverbal facial communication used to portray feelings • Learning different ways to relax • Understanding why different feelings occur • Understanding feelings from different perspectives • Practicing talking about feelings
UNIT 4 Wally teaches problem solving steps Identifying problems and solutions Finding more solutions Thinking of consequences	• Learning how to identify a problem • Thinking of solutions to hypothetical problems • Learning verbal assertive skills • Learning how to inhibit impulsive reactions • Understanding what apology means • Thinking of alternative solutions to problem situations such as being teased and het • Learning to understand that solutions have different consequences
UNIT 5 Tiny Turtle teaches anger management	• Recognising that anger can interfere with good problem solving • Understanding Tiny Turtle's story about managing anger and getting help • Understanding when apologies are helpful • Recognizing anger in themselves and others • Understanding anger is okay is feel inside but not to act

	out by hitting or hurting someone else
UNIT 6 Molly Manners teaches how to be friendly Helping, Sharing. Teamwork at school and home	• Learning what friendship means and how to be friendly • Understanding ways to help others • Learning the concept of sharing and the relationship between sharing and helping • Learning what teamwork means • Understanding the benefits of sharing, helping and teamwork • Practicing friendship skills
UNIT 7 Molly explains how to talk with friends	• Learning how to ask question and tell something to a friend • Leaning how to listen carefully to what a friend is saying • Understanding why it is important to speak up about something that is bothering you • Understanding how and when to give and apology of complement • Learning how to enter into a group of children who are already playing • Learning how to make a suggestion rather than give commands • Practicing friendships skills