

Using the Incredible Years Parent-Toddler Programme to Enhance Parental Language

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1. Background

Behaviourally based parenting programmes have demonstrated benefits for a range of parenting and child behaviours. However, few have investigated the benefits in terms of their impact on parental language use with their child. The Welsh trial from which these data are drawn is the first randomised controlled trial (RCT) evaluation of the Incredible Years Parent-Toddler Programme (IYPTP) providing the first independent data on its use. Baseline and follow-up measures included a half-hour videotaped observation of the parent and child interacting during a naturalistic free-play situation.

2. Aim

To assess the efficacy of the Incredible Years Parent-Toddler programme (IYPTP) to enhance parental language.

3. Hypothesis

The IYPTP would benefit all five aspects of parental language measured; quantity and variety, encouraging, negative, passive parent and parent-led language interactions



4. Sample

Participants from the main RCT trial were eligible for inclusion if the parent had provided written informed consent to being videotaped and had been videotaped with their child during the half-hour free-play observation. Pre-intervention data for a total of 81 parent-child dyads (54 intervention and 27 control) was available. A total of 67 dyads completed both time points (45 intervention and 23 control). Parents were aged 28.94 years ($SD = 6.72$, range = 16 to 48 years) at the time of the first assessment. Children's were aged 21.57 months ($SD = 6.71$, range = 11 to 34 months) and 49 (61%) were male.

5. Measuring Parental Language

The last fifteen minutes of each half-hour video was transcribed. Each transcript was coded for 22 categories of parental language. Principle component analysis (PCA) was conducted using varimax rotation resulting in five factors. Together the five factors explained 80% of the variance.

1 Quantity & Variety of Language:

All, and all different parental nouns, verbs, modifiers and functors, in addition to all statements, yes-no questions and auxiliary fronted yes-no questions.

2 Encouraging Language:

Parental utterances that praised, reflected or expanded upon the child's previous verbalisation.

3 Critical Language:

Parental utterances that criticised the child, or that told the child to not do something (negative commands).

4 Passive Parent Language Interactions:

All child-initiated speech in addition to the number of parental responses to a child's utterance. This category has previously demonstrated a positive relationship to socioeconomic disadvantage.

5 Parent-Led Language Interactions:

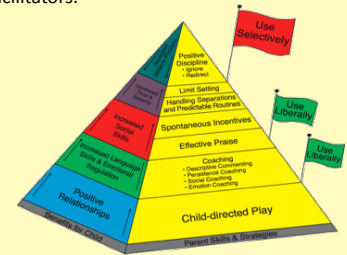
All incidents where the parent held the conversational floor, parental commands (excluding negative commands) and wh-questions (*where, what, when, how, and why*).

6. The Incredible Years Parent-Toddler Programme

Twelve 2-hour weekly group sessions run by two trained facilitators.

Covers eight core topics:

- 1) Child directed play
- 2) Promoting toddler language
- 3) Coaching child social and emotional development
- 4) Effective praise and encouragement
- 5) Spontaneous incentives
- 6) Handling separations
- 7) Positive discipline
- 8) Effective limit setting.



Parenting Pyramid Toddlers (1 - 3 years)

The programme was delivered to a median of 11 parents (range 8 to 14).

During sessions parents participated to group discussions, watched video vignettes to prompt the identification of key parenting principles and rehearsed effective parenting skills and techniques in role-play.

7. Results

7a. Intention to Treat (ITT)

Linear regression was performed to assess the effects of intervention.

Passive parental language (Figure 1) was the only category measured post-intervention for the ITT sample that benefited from the intervention, with a medium effect size ($B = -1.44$, 95% Confidence Intervals (CI) = -2.59 to -0.29 , $p = 0.015$, $ES = 0.47$).

Encouraging language approached significance ($B = 0.84$, 95% CI = -0.01 to 1.70 , $p = 0.052$, $ES = 0.42$) in favour of the intervention group.

7b. Per Protocol

Linear regression replicated the results obtained for the ITT sample with regards to passive parental language ($B = -1.66$, 95% CI = -2.96 to -0.36 , $p = 0.013$, $ES = 0.54$).

Analysis (Figure 2) also indicated that the intervention benefited encouraging language ($B = 1.07$, 95% CI = 0.11 to 2.03 , $p = 0.30$, $ES = 0.52$). Both findings indicated a medium effect of the intervention.

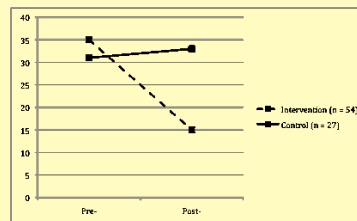


Figure 1. Mean scores for passive parental language across the 6-month period using the intention to treat intervention and control samples

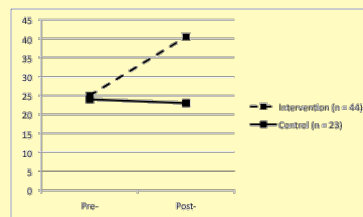


Figure 2. Mean scores for encouraging parental language across the 6-month period using the per protocol intervention and control samples

8. Soundbites

1. The IYPTP is a behaviourally based parent programme that includes components that teach parents how to support their child's language development using positive praise and encouragement.
2. The IYPTP was delivered across Wales as part of community based early intervention services.
3. Of the five observed parental language measures the IYPTP demonstrated significant benefits for passive and encouraging language interactions.
4. The sample that participated in the trial did not represent those parents and children most at risk for poor outcomes and the intervention needs to be tested further with parents of children most at risk.

