



Supporting Teachers And childRen in Schools STARS

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This research study is being carried out by the Child Health Research Group at the Peninsula Medical School in Exeter. The study will examine whether a particular teacher training programme can help teachers with children who are disruptive in class. Studies elsewhere suggest that this training package can help teachers support these children more effectively and can reduce any disruption to the rest of the class. We know that this is what teachers already do in their every day work in schools; this programme gives them the opportunity to refine and hone these skills further.

The Incredible Years (IY) Teacher Classroom Management programme is part of a suite of programmes developed by Professor Carolyn Webster-Stratton, a clinical psychologist with many years experience of helping children with emotional and behavioural problems. The IY suite www.incredibleyears.com includes programmes for children, parents and teachers. The child and parent programmes have been researched extensively and have been shown to be extremely effective in reducing child problem behaviours and improving the child's emotional wellbeing. The teacher programme has also been shown to be very effective but has generally been researched alongside the other two programmes. This study will examine the teacher programme on its own, and is focused on children and teachers in primary school classes.

What is Teacher Classroom Management?

The Teacher Classroom Management (TCM) programme comprises a one day session per month over a six month period. The focus is on collaborative learning, discussions of teachers' own experiences and group work to find solutions to problems encountered in the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to experiment with the techniques discussed in their classrooms between sessions. The diagram below summarises TCM rationale: if the strategies at the bottom of the pyramid are used extensively, then the punitive measures at the top of the pyramid should be used less frequently.

The following principles underpin the TCM approach:

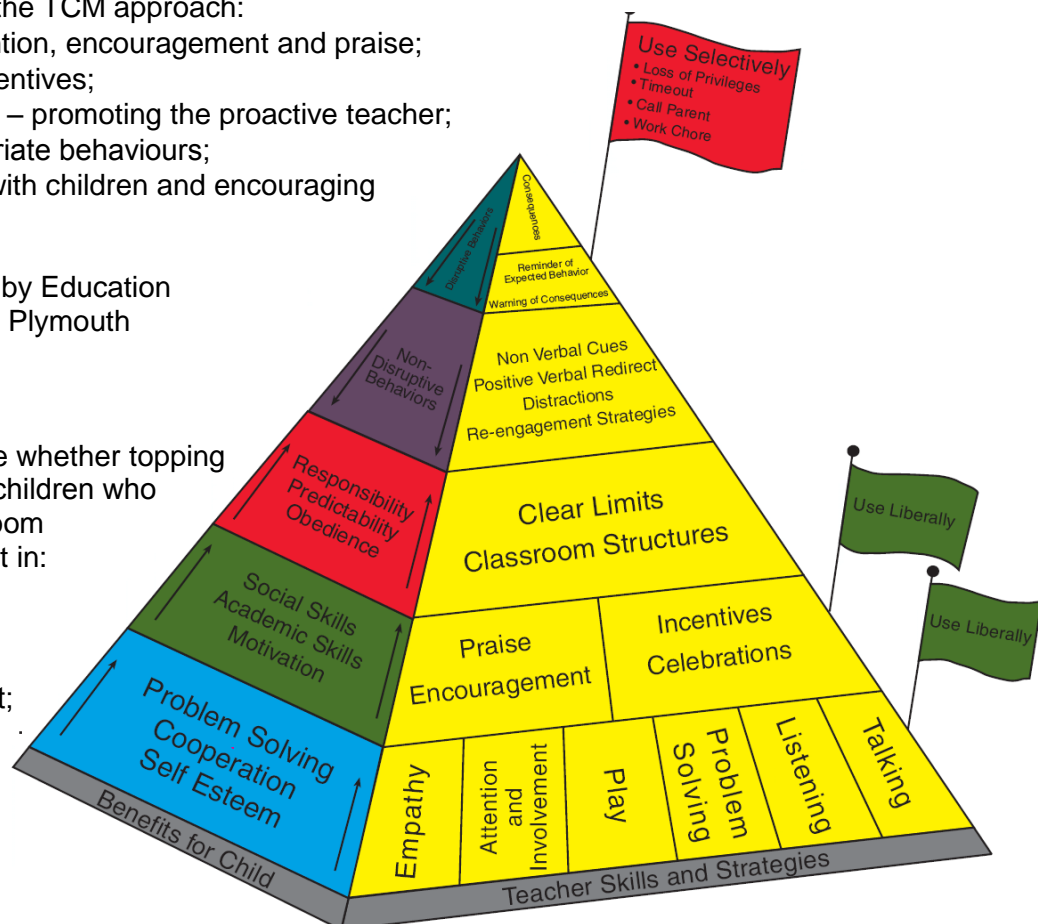
- the importance of teacher attention, encouragement and praise;
- motivating children through incentives;
- preventing behaviour problems – promoting the proactive teacher;
- decreasing children's inappropriate behaviours;
- building positive relationships with children and encouraging them to problem solve.

The TCM course will be delivered by Education Professionals from the Devon and Plymouth Behavioural Support Networks.

Outcomes of STARS Trial

Specifically, the study will evaluate whether topping up teachers' skills in dealing with children who are difficult to manage in a classroom environment leads to improvement in:

- the child's emotional wellbeing;
- the child's behaviour in the classroom;
- the child's academic attainment;
- the teacher's view of their own effectiveness as a teacher;
- the teacher's levels of stress;
- the child's view of school.



Teaching Pyramid

Who can take part in STARS?

Primary schools in Devon and Plymouth with at least one single year group class can take part. One teacher and their class will be recruited. The teacher must have management responsibility for their class and be at least 0.8 fte. Job share teachers and schools with only mixed year classes are unable to take part in STARS.

80 schools will be involved in STARS and each school will take part for three academic years.

What would taking part involve for schools?

Headteachers would give consent for the school's participation and individual consent will be obtained from the teachers involved and the parents of the children in their class. In the October, teachers, parents and children will complete a series of questionnaires, and researchers will visit school for about half a day to observe the teacher and the children in the classroom. After this, half of the schools would be randomly allocated to receive TCM (intervention schools) and the other half would continue teaching as usual (control schools). The intervention school teachers would attend TCM training between November and May. In June, the questionnaires and observations would be undertaken as before. When these are completed, the control teachers would be offered the chance to attend TCM training.

In the February/March of the following two years, the questionnaires about the original cohort of children will be completed again.

The TCM training will be provided free of charge, and funding for supply cover of the class teacher for all study related activities will also be provided.

Working with schools

We have an Advisory Group, comprising teachers, behavioural support network professionals and parents who monitor the study and ensure that it is designed and carried out in a way acceptable to schools and parents. We also have a dedicated team of researchers and a trial manager who aim to make each schools' involvement in the study as uncomplicated and enjoyable as possible, causing minimal disruption to schools.

Next Steps

A Feasibility Study involving 21 teachers from six schools who are receiving TCM training is currently underway. We will consult with these teachers and their headteachers about the acceptability of the course and use their experiences of taking part to determine how we run the main STARS trial.

We have applied for funding from the Department of Health for STARS, and we will hear if we have been successful in July 2011. If we are successful, we aim to start the main STARS trial in September 2012.

Interested in taking part or would like more information?

Please contact the researchers using the details below to find out more and register your interest without commitment. We will contact interested schools in September 2011 to notify them of the outcome of our funding application.

For more information, please contact:

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Thank you for reading this

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