



Bringing The Incredible Years to Your Community

Over the last three years, Invest in Kids (IIK) has helped to bring The Incredible Years (IY) to children and families across Colorado. IIK selected IY as its second major initiative because of the outstanding outcomes IY has produced in over 10 years of rigorous research. The purpose of IIK's work is to provide communities the support necessary to implement the program with fidelity to the proven model and to achieve similar positive outcomes with children and families.

Description of The Incredible Years:

IY has been proven to: 1) promote children's social competence, 2) reduce children's behavior problems, 3) help children succeed in school, 4) strengthen the skills of parents and caregivers, 5) strengthen parental involvement with teachers and school activities, 6) strengthen the classroom management skills of teachers, and 7) increase the ability of teachers to offer an effective model focused on social and emotional skill building.

1. **Child social skills program (Dinosaur School):** Offered in the classroom, Dinosaur School is a program that teaches children (ages 3-8 years old) skills such as:
 - anger management
 - understanding feelings in themselves and others
 - learning school rules
 - problem-solving
 - teamwork and how to make friends

The program is developmentally appropriate and culturally competent and uses life-size puppets, role plays, video vignettes and hands-on activities. Children who have participated in this program consistently show improved social skills and fewer behavior problems.

2. **Teacher skill building program:** This is a comprehensive program for teachers designed to provide more strategies to strengthen children's academic and social skills. The program covers the importance of:
 - giving attention and praise
 - becoming more proactive
 - decreasing inappropriate behavior of students

- building positive relationships with difficult students
 - increasing social skills and problem-solving skills of students
 - engaging parents and families
3. **Parent skill building program:** This program for parents and families uses group discussion, role plays, video vignettes and home activities and is led by two trained group leaders. The group teaches parents:
- how to play with their child
 - how to reinforce positive behavior
 - how to use nonviolent discipline techniques
 - how to support their children’s education
 - how to problem-solve with their children

In Colorado, this prevention program has been used implemented with over 2000 families who have children in Head Start, in private childcare programs or in their local public schools. The program has resulted in significant reductions in children’s behavior problems at home and at school and significant improvements in parenting skills.

Community Components Needed to Implement The Incredible Years:

The following is a description of the community components needed if your community is interested in implementing IY:

1. **Build a Coalition** – One of the keys to a sustainable program is a broad base of support in the community. Therefore, the first and most important step is to get all of the “players” at the table. In most communities, this initial group will include the following people: principals, parents, teachers and other representatives from school districts, Head Start and other early childhood programs, directors of mental health, departments of social services, home visitation programs and county health departments, county commissioners, representatives from law enforcement, business leaders and other community decision-makers and members of the press. If your community has an existing council, it may be appropriate for them to assume this role.

2. **Create a Working Group** – Communities may choose to build broad coalitions with smaller working groups that break off and work on the logistics of preparing the community for the implementation of the program and then report back to the bigger group. This enables communities to keep those involved who might not be needed in the day to day planning, but who are crucial to the program’s long-term viability in the community.

3. **Survey Existing Services and Define How the Program Can Meet Community Needs and Goals** - Work with your coalition to discuss how the program can be integrated into existing community schools, child care centers,

consolidated child care pilots and/or Head Start sites that serve children in preschool, kindergarten, first grade and/or second grade. Discuss where there is the greatest need for the services provided by IY. Review the continuum of services that currently exists and then add IY to see how it will fit in.

4. Focus on Population to be Served – The program targets children ages 3-8 years, their parents and their teachers.

5. Survey Potential Implementing Agencies/Organizations – A variety of settings to deliver the program are appropriate. Therefore, in one site, Head Start might be the perfect agency to implement the program, while in another site, an elementary school with preschool, kindergarten, first and second grade classrooms might be the best. Your coalition should decide what strategy would best meet the needs of the community.

6. Select Agency - The coalition must ensure that the leadership and staff members of selected agencies/organizations understand IY and desire to implement the program.

7. Secure and Direct Funding – IIK will provide up to \$5,000 in matching funds in the first year. The community must raise the initial funds and decide how all funding will be allocated among implementing agencies in the community.

8. Agency Commitment –The lead agency must agree to implement the program in a high quality manner, with fidelity to the proven model. IY implementation standards below outline program methods, staffing guidelines, training, evaluation standards and funding strategies to be adhered to by each site:

a. Program Methods –

Parent group:

- Parent groups will be offered one time per week for 12-14 weeks. Each group should have a maximum of 14 parents attending over the 12-14 week period.
- Parent groups may be offered in the evenings, on weekends or on weekdays, depending on the availability of the parents and the needs within your particular community.
- All parent groups must be co-facilitated by two IY trained staff from your agency, school or community.
- All parent group leaders will participate in regular support and technical assistance with IIK staff.
- Each 12-14 week parenting group typically requires up to five hours of staff time per week including preparation, group facilitation and post group evaluation.
- Each agency will need to plan recruitment strategies to enroll parents in the groups, involve parents in the planning process and throughout the duration of the program.

Teacher/child classroom:

- Dinosaur School and the Teacher Classroom Management program will be integrated into everyday class work.
- Dinosaur School will be co-facilitated by the teacher and another IY trained teacher or agency staff member.
- Dinosaur School will be offered two to three times each week for 15-20 minutes in circle time followed by 15-20 minutes in small group practice activities.
- All teachers will participate in regular support and technical assistance, including classroom observation by IIK staff.

b. **Staffing** – The teachers and parent group leaders should come from the disciplines of counseling, social work, psychology, psychiatry, nursing and/or education. Prospective teachers and parent group leaders should have skills and experience in child development, family dynamics, behavior management, collaborative styles of facilitation, cognitive social learning theory, group process and be able to teach and lead in a reflective and non-judgmental manner.

c. **Training** – All teachers and agency staff interested in co-facilitating the groups will participate in group training (child/teacher or parent) offered by certified trainers from IIK. This small group training gives leaders a detailed introduction to the content and process of leading the groups, with extensive role-plays and troubleshooting for difficult issues.

- Parent Group Leader Training – Agency staff interested in co-facilitating parent groups will attend an official IY three-day training from a certified trainer.
- Child/Teacher Training – Teachers will attend a total of three, one- day training workshops. These workshops are usually offered over several months. Two undergraduate or graduate level credits are available for this training through Adams State College.
- Peer Mentoring – On-site group meetings, group observations, videotaped observations, phone consultations and/or one to one technical assistance will be provided to all parent group leaders and teachers to enhance quality implementation. This technical assistance will be provided by IIK.

d. **Evaluation** – IIK will assist sites in successfully implementing, monitoring and continuously improving the quality of the program. Participating program sites will be required to collect and submit

demographic (descriptive information on site and participant characteristics) and evaluative data, such as questionnaires before and after each group session from all enrolled parents. All parent group leaders and teachers will also have evaluation forms to complete and submit after each parent group series and at the end of each Dinosaur School Unit.

e. **Work Plan** – IIK will walk each site through a Work Plan to assure that, to the greatest degree possible, communities/schools are prepared to successfully meet the challenges of implementing IY in a way that assures a high probability of success and sustainability.

f. **Funding** - Each community/school should develop a variety of funding strategies for the long-term sustainability of IY that supports the need within the community. IIK will work with communities/schools to develop such a plan.

The Role of Invest in Kids:

- a. Site Development – IIK will:
 - Introduce the program to communities.
 - Convene meetings with local leaders to discuss community needs and how the program can help to meet those needs and how it would fit into the existing continuum of services.
 - Work with communities to build broad based community coalitions who will collaboratively plan for the program's implementation and who will ensure that IY is implemented successfully and is sustained over time.
 - Assist communities in starting programs once the communities determine they need and want them.
 - Collaborate with other programs to maximize service offerings for young children and families.
 - Coordinate and schedule all authorized IY trainings.

- b. Technical Assistance
 - IIK staff members will provide intensive and effective technical assistance to parent group leaders and teachers.
 - IIK will share lessons learned among sites and provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities for staff of our IY sites.
 - IIK will support any trained staff in the IY child/teacher or parent program who wish to become certified group leaders or certified mentors.

- c. Evaluation – The University of Denver will be conducting an independent evaluation of IY and through that evaluation IIK will provide feedback to communities (and individual sites if there are sufficient numbers of children and parents to make the evaluation valid).
- d. Materials – IIK will order all program materials from Seattle, for your community, so that you can receive the IIK discounts.
- e. Funding – IIK will provide up to \$5,000 in matching funds for each new IY community in the first year of implementation. The balance of funding necessary to implement the program must be raised by your community.