Sure Start Rowley Regis, Sandwell

Handling Children’s Behaviour Evaluation Summary
2005 Valencia Anderson

The course is an 8-week positive parenting programme aimed at parents of children aged 2-8 years for whom behaviour is seen as a problem. Designed by NCH it aims to help parents to understand how their own behaviour and expectations impact upon their children’s behaviour. The course arms parents with understanding and practical methods to adjust their own reactions and expectations and ultimately lead to improvement in their child’s behaviour.

➢ The course is open to any parent from the local area that feels that they are experiencing difficulty with their child’s behaviour. The course also is open to parents outside the Sure Start area.

➢ Families can self refer to the course, or can be (and are) referred by any one of a number of mainstream professionals including:

  Health Visitors (including those outside of the Rowley Sure Start area)
  School Nurses
  Social workers
  Teachers
  Early Years staff

Local nurseries have also referred their staff to attend the course as the learning is deemed to be very useful for the daily handling of children at a nursery.

Course Attendees rating of the impact of course

8 questions are asked, the respondents are asked to rate themselves in a Likert style rating of ‘very poor’, ‘poor’, ‘average’, ‘fair’, ‘good’ or ‘very good’ for a variety of statements. Each response has been assigned a score for the purpose of this report with ‘very poor’ receiving a score of 0, and ‘very good receiving a score of 5.

Response score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parent A Pre Course</th>
<th>Parent A Post Course</th>
<th>Parent B Pre Course</th>
<th>Parent B Post Course</th>
<th>Parent C Pre Course</th>
<th>Parent C Post Course</th>
<th>Parent D Pre Course</th>
<th>Parent D Post Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-course scores are quite consistent and average 15.75, which falls in the range of ‘average’ on the scale. Post-course scores are again quite consistent with an average of 30.75, which falls in the range of ‘good’. This shows that overall and individually, all parents that attend the course feel that their skills rate significantly higher after attending the course.

Cost per family:
If the maximum of 15 families attend the cost equates to **£34.41** per family
If 10 families attend the cost equates to £51.62 per family.
If 5 families attend the cost equates to £103.23 per family.

On average 5 families attend each course at a cost of 103.23 per family.

**Staff hours**
The family worker who delivers the course spends approximately 2 hours per week delivering the course (during the weeks that it runs), plus 30 minutes debriefing with other staff and 30 minutes spent on each pre-course home visit. For the average number of attendees (5) running a HCB course takes up 19 staff hours plus 3 ½ hours of admin time prior to the course.

**Output**

**Referrals made to the HCB course**
Between September 2004 and November 2005 64 families were referred to the course at Rowley Sure Start.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referral Source</th>
<th>Sep 04-Nov 04</th>
<th>Jan 05- Mar 05</th>
<th>May 05- Jul 05</th>
<th>Sep 05-Nov 05</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Visitors</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Nurse</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMHS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Referral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options 4 Life</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Worker</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development Worker</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>In area sub total</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Out-of-area sub total</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attendance

- There have been 14 HCB courses run so far at the programme.
- 123 carers have signed up for courses, and 64 of those attended at least half of the sessions.
- Three fathers have attended a HCB course.
- Between September 2004 and November 2005 64 families were referred to the course at Rowley Sure Start, 24 of those are from within the Sure Start area and 40 are from outside of the area.
- Between 1st November 2004 and 31st October 2005 15 children and 17 carers have completed the course- this is a total of 16 individual families
- A mean average of 9 families sign up for each course and an average of 5 attend at least half of each course from within and outside of the area.
- Three carers are attending the current course that started on 27th September 2005. More parents may join this course (17 have expressed an interest).
- The maximum number to sign up for the course is 15 carers.
- The maximum number of carers to attend at least half of a course is 10
- The lowest number to sign up has been 5 with 2 (the lowest number across all courses held) of those completing at least half of the course.

Outcomes
Parental Outcomes

Over and above responses to the questionnaires, parents have made positive comments about the benefits of attending the course both verbally to staff and in writing (see app 4 for full written comments).

Those stated benefits are:

- “I am not alone!” Many parents have said that attending the course makes them appreciate that their experiences and perceived difficulties are not unusual and are in fact normal aspects of parenting.

- “I have learnt a lot about how to communicate with my child”. Parents have reported that they have learnt through the course, more effective and positive ways of communicating with and disciplining their children as well as minimising the level of ‘bad’ behaviour that they experience.

- “I understand that what I thought was bad behaviour is in fact a normal part of growing up”. The course has helped parents to recognise the difference between bad behaviour and misaligned expectation and normal age/stage-appropriate behaviour. This understanding is likely to result in improved carer-child relationships.

- Importantly, parents are reporting that their children’s behaviour is fact improving when the skills and understanding learnt during the course are put into practice, and the effect is a largely a lasting one.

- Some parents have forged friendships through the course, maintaining contact with each other after the course has ended. This is particularly positive when considering that some parents feel isolated, especially during the day-time when they are usually at home alone with their children.

- Some mums have reported that even after taking the course they are having difficulty implementing change because their partners are not backing them up with the new skills that they have learnt as they have not also attended the course. This indicates a need for consistency among parents handling their children’s behaviour for the benefits of the course to be optimal. Fathers have proven to be far harder to reach than local mothers and are a recognised ‘hard to reach’ group for the programme. It is thought that the introduction of ‘out or hours’ services, and sessions specifically for fathers and children could be a way to engage more fathers and so should be considered by the programme for the future.

- “I am a quiet and reserved person I felt a little uneasy, but after a short period of time I felt relaxed and at ease”, “…were all very professional, but I felt at ease with them”. Parents have reported that attending the course has led them to feel more confident when engaging with the programme in general.

- “I have seen them since the course and still feel that I can talk to them on a professional and friendly basis… also I have spoken to [health visitor at programme] on the phone a couple of time which I have found very helpful.”
Carers who have attended the course seem to be more willing to contact the programme for advice and further support with behaviour and parenting issues.

**The HCB and mainstream services**

Staff anticipate that the HCB course helps to prevent future referrals to mainstream intervention services, by way of delivering early prevention of problems that would otherwise become more serious if left unchecked, and then possibly need to be referred to agencies such as social services and CAMHS.

Similarly, staff feel that the course deals with issues that would not ‘make the grade’ for mainstream intervention, but nonetheless helps families in a clear and positive way.

**The sustainability of the HCB course**

As a trailblazer Rowley Regis Sure Start has reached the end of it’s 100% funding phase and are now entering the 25% year on year funding taper (starting yr 2006/7) and as such the sustainability of running the HCB should be addressed.

- The programme should consider ways of increasing the average number of attendees per course for better cost-efficiency.

- However consideration should also be given to the issue raised about not keeping families waiting for too long before being able to get support through the course.

- Given that there are a significant number of families that attend the course who are not residing in the Sure Start area, match funding could be sought from other programmes and other concerned/ referring agencies.

**Staffing/facilitating the course:**

The family worker who delivers the course spends approximately 2 hours per week delivering the course (during the weeks that it runs), plus 30 minutes debriefing with other staff and 30 minutes spent on each pre-course home visit.

- The programme will need to consider whether this level of staff hours is maintainable, particularly in light of uncertainty about the core staff and service offer yet to be clarified for Children’s Centres.

- Again, given the significant number of families that attend the course who are not residing in the Sure Start area, staffing support could be sought from other
programmes and other concerned/ referring agencies who are equipped to delivery the course or support it’s delivery.

**Issues arising/ Recommendations**

- The repeated measure questionnaire needs to be redesigned to identify the same respondent so that the change in responses can be seen (and a copy kept by the programme) Confidentiality & disclosure issues.

- Given the relatively high number of carers that fail to complete the HCB course together with the benefit that it can have upon families, it would be beneficial to the programme to ask those that do not finish the course to complete a questionnaire in an attempt to ascertain why they do not wish to finish the course and to see if there are any measures the programme can take to better retain those that sign up.

The introduction of out or hours’ services, and sessions specifically for fathers and children could be a way to engage more fathers and so should be considered by the programme for the future.