



## Incredible Years Autism

The Incredible Years Autism (IYA) programmes are a recent extension of the basic IY programmes, with the specific focus on children on the autism spectrum and the caregivers and teachers who support them. IYA is one of three Ministry social wellbeing initiatives focused on key adults (i.e. caregivers and teachers/kaiako) in the lives of children aged 2 to 5 years who are either diagnosed with or showing signs of autism. The IYA programmes have been delivered through various providers since 2019. Because of these initiatives, we expect to see children with enhanced social-emotional competence and communication skills, and becoming increasingly engaged. We also expect to see teachers, parents and family/whānau feel more supported and confident.



## How effective is it so far?

Since February 2019, the IYA monitoring data show a significant and moderately large improvement in parent's stress and coping skills.

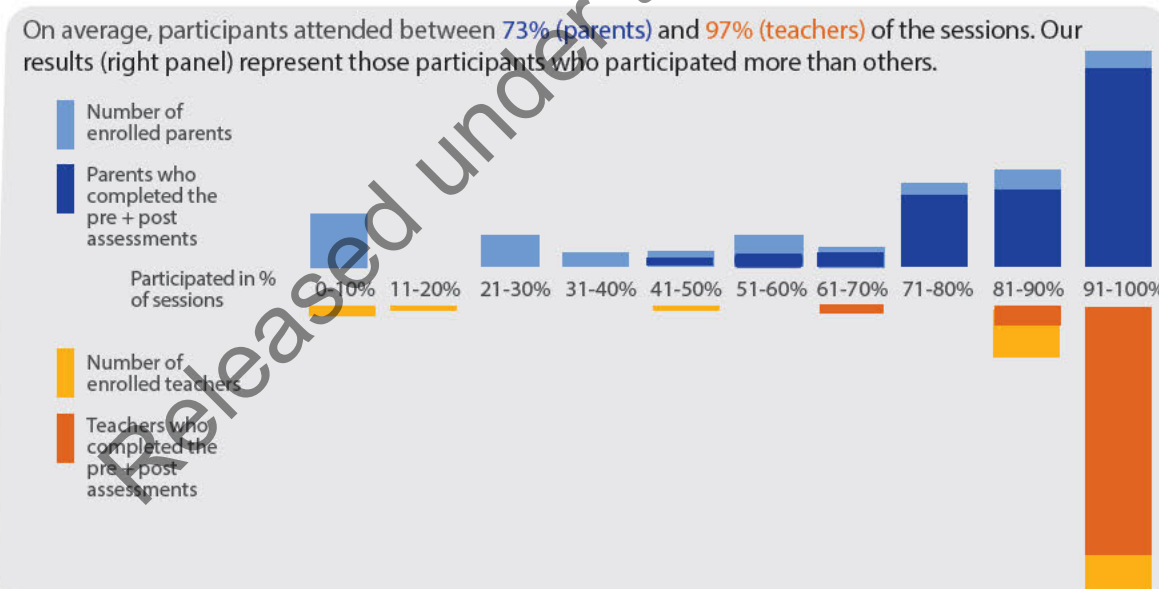
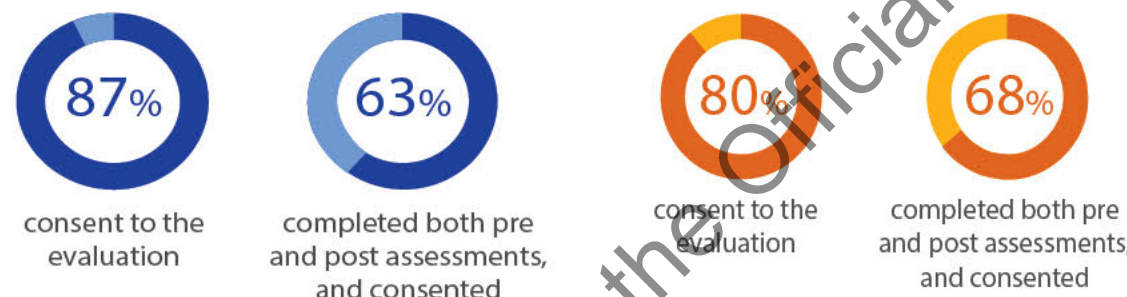
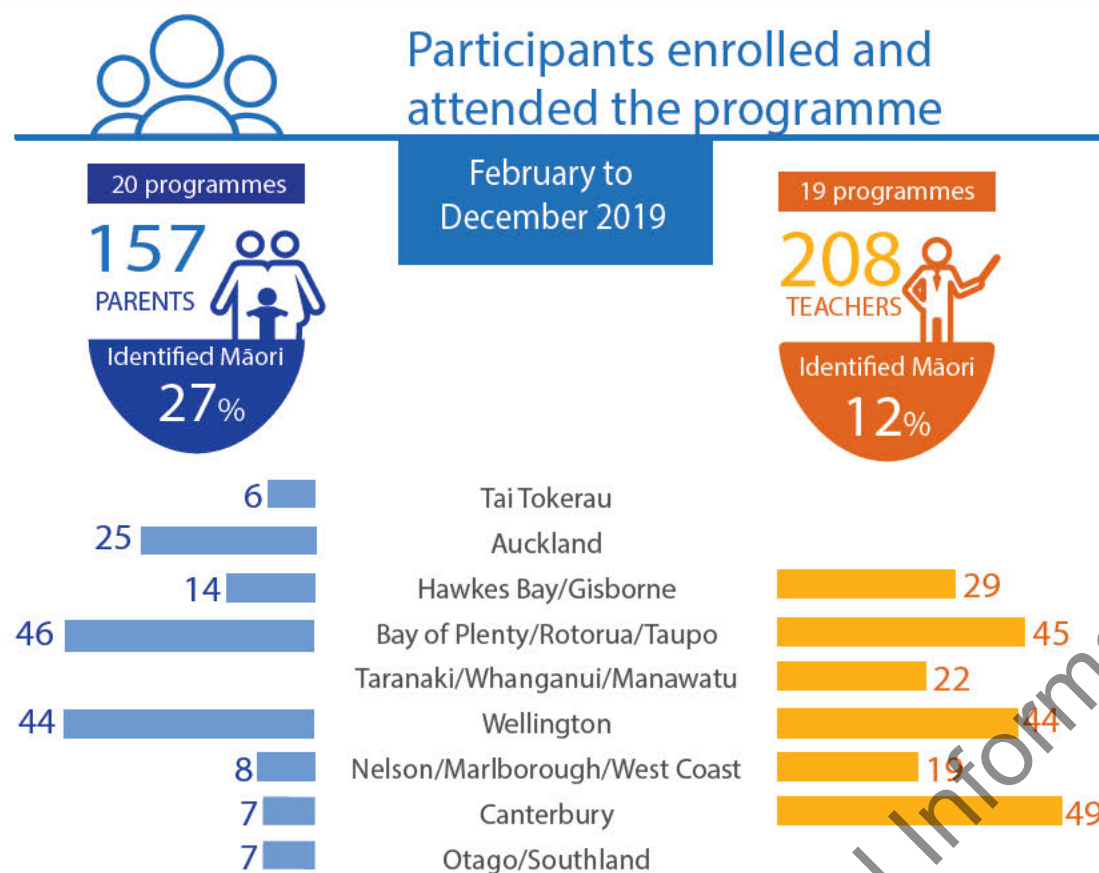
The benefits for the children were smaller when compared to the parents' benefits, which was expected. Nevertheless, the changes were significant and showed children participating in more home activities, such as chores, basic care routines, playing and socialising, as well as becoming more engaged and involved in these activities.

The teacher programme demonstrated a large, positive shift in teachers' confidence in promoting social, emotional and language skills. Similarly, there were significant positive (self-reported) improvements in the frequency of using specific teaching techniques to promote parental involvement.



## Our next steps

The first cycle of the impact evaluation was undertaken in late 2019. Through an independent evaluator, we will examine if the children have enhanced social-emotional competence and communication skills as well as increased engagement, and determine if these changes are sustained over time. We will also compare those who participated in all or most sessions with those who participated in fewer sessions (where possible).



Participants found the tools and strategies useful in the sessions



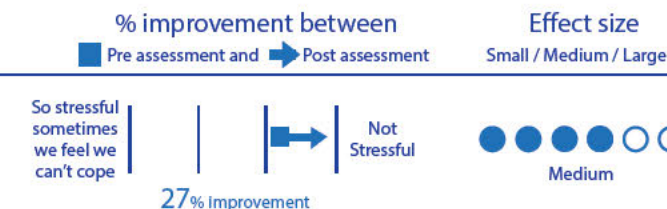
After all sessions, almost all (96%) parent participants found the teaching format and parenting techniques useful or extremely useful. 90% parents also felt their child's social and emotional skills had improved or greatly improved. Half (50%) of parents felt their child's pre-academic skills had improved or greatly improved (IYA Parent Programme Satisfaction Questionnaire). Almost all (~99%) teacher participants found the teaching format and parenting techniques useful or extremely useful. Most (80%-92%) also felt the social and emotional, self-regulation, and communication skills of the children had improved or greatly improved (IYA Teacher Programme Satisfaction Questionnaire).



Parents improved coping skills and their children engaged more at home  
Between the start and end of the 14-session programme:

## Parental wellbeing

Significant improvement in parent's stress and coping skills  
Autism Parenting Stress Index  
 $t(98) = -6.47, p < .001, d = -.4$



Significant improvement in the % of activities the parent would like to see change  
Young Children's Participation and Environment Measure  
 $V = 3.04$  (Wilcoxon matched pairs),  $p < .01, d = .19$



## Child engagement

Significant improvement in child involvement in home activities  
Young Children's Participation and Environment Measure  
 $t(98) = 3.04, p < .01, d = .19$



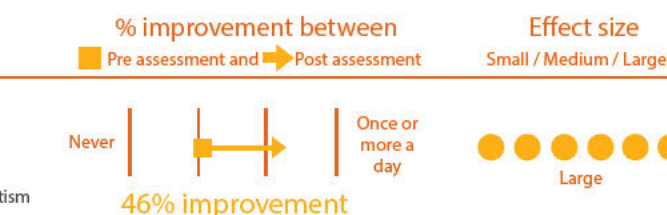
Significant improvement in % of home activities the child participates in  
Young Children's Participation and Environment Measure  
 $V = 1714$  (Wilcoxon matched pairs),  $p < .001, d = .17$



Teachers improved their confidence and practices  
Between the start and end of the six-session programme:

## Teacher confidence

Significant improvement in teacher confidence in promoting social, emotional, language skills  
IY Teacher Strategies Questionnaire for Children with Autism  
 $t(137) = 21, p < .001, d = 1.69$



## Teacher reported practices

Significant improvement in frequency of using specific teaching techniques  
IY Teacher Strategies Questionnaire for Children with Autism  
 $V = 9798.5$  (Wilcoxon matched pairs),  $p < .001, d = .77$



Significant improvement in frequency of using specific strategies for promoting parent involvement  
IY Teacher Strategies Questionnaire for Children with Autism  
 $t(140) = 8.38, p < .001, d = .46$

