**The Incredible Years Parenting Groups.**

**Information for Professionals and Referral Criteria.**

Tower Hamlets Children and Young People’s IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) Service offers two Incredible Years parent groups.

* The School Age Group is for parents of children age 6-10 and runs for a period of 12 - 14 weeks. Where possible, we aim to run this group twice a year, once in spring/summer and once in the autumn term.
* The Preschool Group is for parents of children age 3-6 and runs for a period of 14 – 16 weeks. This group will run during the spring/summer term only, where there is sufficient demand and staff capacity.
* Both groups run for 2 hours per week.

Across both groups, the Incredible Years programme aims to:

* Strengthen the relationship and bond between the parent and the child
* Improve parent- child interaction
* Reduce behavioural difficulties through increasing the use of positive parenting and behaviour management strategies
* Build and promote the child’s social and emotional skills

The early weeks of the group programme cover a series of topics including; child directed play, social, emotional and academic coaching, praise, and rewards. These sessions aim to enhance the parent–child relationship in building a solid foundation for the next stage of the programme. The next phase of the intervention involves a focus on effective limit setting, where sessions include; rules and routines, ignoring, time out and natural and logical consequences.

The programme uses a combination of group discussion, video vignettes, in session practice (role play) and home practice for parents to develop their use of techniques listed. For parents to progress with this particular approach, it is vital that they are able to attend groups on a weekly basis and are committed to carrying out home practices.

Parents are supported by weekly phone calls from the group leaders.

**Referral Criteria:**

Children may be referred with difficulties including;

* Aggressive and oppositional behaviour (mild to severe), e.g. hitting, biting, kicking, hair pulling
* Non- compliance/difficulties following instructions
* Relationship difficulties with parents or carers

Requirements for parents:

* Parents must be able to commit to attending the group for 2 hours on a weekly basis.
* Parents must be able to complete homework e.g. 10 minute daily play sessions, setting up reward systems, reading.
* Parents must have the space in their lives and minds to think about new ways of parenting alongside putting these into practice. Please think carefully about referrals for those managing multiple interventions, appointments, and environmental changes.
* Please refer parents awaiting diagnoses for their children with careful consideration. It can be most helpful if these issues are resolved prior to starting the group due to parental concern that behavioural improvement may impact on the receipt of a diagnosis.

Parents will be assessed prior to the group. There are between 12-15 spaces available in each group depending on venue size.