

LIFESKILLS

Botvin LifeSkills in Waltham Forest Schools

An early intervention and prevention
programme to build resilience

**Believe in
children**
 **Barnardo's**


Waltham Forest

 Botvin
LifeSkills® Training



What is LifeSkills?

LifeSkills is a highly **evidence based** early intervention and prevention programme that improves **children's emotional health and well-being** in schools. LifeSkills promotes **resilience** through the development of emotional literacy, critical thinking, problem solving, healthy relationships and strategies to **prevent risk taking behaviour**.



LifeSkills is a universal, whole class programme that reduces the prevalence of children engaging in risk taking behaviours with effects lasting up to 12 years. As well as preventing risk taking behaviours, it also leads to important improvements in other core skills which are key for healthy development amongst young people. These include self-esteem, emotional regulation, motivation, communication, social skills and ability to cope with stress.

Preventing poor choices in relation to health behaviours and building children's self-belief and resilience through universal programmes has been shown to be cost effective. Science tells us that some children develop resilience or the ability to overcome trauma while others do not. Learning to cope with manageable threats is critical for the development of resilience. There are numerous opportunities in every child's life to experience manageable stress and over time we become better able to cope with life's obstacles, both physically and mentally.¹

The capabilities that underlie resilience can be strengthened at any age. It is never too late to build resilience. Age appropriate, health-promoting activities can significantly improve the odds that an individual will recover from stress-inducing experiences.

The Centre on the Developing Child in Harvard University (2017) has developed design principles that policy makers and practitioners can use to improve outcomes for children and families.²

To be effective, services should:



1. Support Responsive Relationships



2. Strengthen Core Life Skills



3. Reduce Sources of Stress

¹ <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/resilience/>

² <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/three-early-childhood-development-principles-improve-child-family-outcomes/>

Implementation

The LifeSkills model has three core components;



TRAINING



UK ADAPTED RESOURCES



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

One full day of online training allows teachers to explore the topic of resilience: what it is, the science behind it and how we build it before learning how to implement the programme effectively. Resource packs are then sent to the school to allow teachers to deliver 9 x one hour sessions during class time in years 4, year 5 and year 6. Session topics focus on self esteem, making decisions, dealing with stress, communication, social skills and being

assertive. On-going technical assistance is provided to teachers to support delivery and monitor fidelity. This ensures the programme is delivered as intended, to a high standard and more likely to achieve a positive impact. Workshops are also available for parents, senior leadership and non-teaching staff to ensure a whole school approach. On completion of the programme schools will receive a LifeSkills impact report detailing class outcomes.

WALTHAM FOREST DATA 2019-2022



Total WF schools worked with:

28



Total WF teachers trained:

374



Resources provided for

22,225

children

SCORES



77%
Average Knowledge results



62.8%
Average Attitudes results



55.3%
Average Skills results

Teacher feedback

'LifeSkills is a brilliant resource to support children's understanding of vital life skills and supporting them in making important decisions. It is a great programme and should be made compulsory in primary schools.'

'We regularly use breathing techniques in the classroom to practice how to manage stress effectively. It was a good reminder that the feelings they were experiencing were normal.'



'I would recommend the LifeSkills programme to all other teachers and schools because of the empowering impact it has had on my children. It has really helped children to navigate the world around them in a resilient, mature and considered manner.'

Children feedback

'I liked learning about decision making the most. I learned how to make choices in tricky dilemmas. Usually I would just 'Go!' but now I will think about my choices'

'I learned how to be assertive when you don't want to do something. I can be confident when I say no.'

'Now I know that you can tell the emotions that someone is feeling by what they do with their body language. This really helps me with my friends.'

'I know about emotions and how to calm myself down if I am stressed. I know lots of strategies to remain calm. I will remember to always believe in myself. Thank you LifeSkills!'



Outcomes

LifeSkills is a highly evidenced based programme. LifeSkills is rated as a Model Programme in the Blueprints for Violence Prevention (its highest rating). It has also been rated by the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) as being Level 3. This means that LifeSkills has been independently assessed and shown to have the highest standards of evidence of effectiveness.

LifeSkills has been shown to deliver cross-cutting benefits beyond the behaviours it specifically targets. These include reductions in violence and delinquency, risky driving and risky sexual behaviours:

- ✓ By helping students to improve their social and emotional skills, it increases the likelihood that children and young people will attend school regularly and increase their attainment. The skills it teaches are also relevant to coping with stress and anxiety and avoiding emotional as well as behavioural difficulties.
- ✓ LifeSkills has been proven to empower young people and improve core resiliencies that help them to engage in education.
- ✓ It reduces young people's use of unhealthy behaviours with attested long-term benefits
- ✓ LifeSkills has been shown to improve young people's relationships with their peers, families and broader social networks.
- ✓ LifeSkills has been proven to improve young people's health and well-being by reducing risk taking behaviours, improved decision making and coping strategies.

³ Investing in Children (2013) LifeSkills training: Blueprints approved, Available at: <http://investinginchildren.eu/interventions/life-skills-training> (Accessed: August 2019).

72%

Rate on return
investment
as calculated
by the Social
Research Unit.³



Believe in
children



Barnardo's

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