

The Healing Power of Puppets – iKiDs Education Program

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Overview of iKiDs

- Funded by AGD, administered by FaHCSIA.
- Supports children & young people 2 – 18 after parental separation in three distinct ways:
 - ❖ One – on – one & family counselling
 - ❖ Therapeutic groups
 - ❖ Education skills program
- FaHCSIA guidelines quite flexible in how education component was to be delivered, this therefore presented us with creative opportunities for engaging children.

Education Skills Program

- Puppets were chosen as the medium for primary schools – relates to three principles of neuroplasticity namely “Novelty”; “Close Paying of Attention” & “Relationships” (Dan Siegal).
- Rationale of using storytelling – can convey strong messages but in an enjoyable way; children more likely to respond and learn if message is conveyed in their language.
- Researchers such as Beaugard; Hughes; Lane & Barish argue that approaches that target emotions in children communicate more effectively than other approaches by increasing emotional awareness and regulation and building resilience.

Education Skills Program

- Planning began in October 2009.
- Consultants: Master puppeteer and a drama tutor/scriptwriter.
- Script and character development evidence – based using counsellors’ clinical experiences with individual therapy clients – counsellors aware of common themes and complexities and could provide rich descriptions.

The Puppet Performances

- Dillon’s Secret Adventure: Reception to Yr 1.
- Leila’s Birthday Party: Years 2 to 4.
- Professional actors – educator and/or counsellor present at each performance.
- Using the device of a news program, the plays involve characters talking about their individual experiences. Multi – sensory learning.
- Although the stories are set in the context of family separation and conflict, each story has themes and messages relevant to all children.

Structure of School Program

- Shows fit into one lesson slot – 25 minutes performance followed by 25 minutes debriefing. DECS consultation.
- Resource CD contains pre and post show activities.
- POOCH peer – skills debriefing model: non - confrontational & safe way to debrief; also assesses comprehension.
- Teachers/school counsellors offered post program support, training and information.

Curriculum Compatibility

- Themes of the show encompass many elements of the Health and Physical Education; Society and Environment & English curriculums.
- Complements the Child Protection Curriculum.
- POOCH problem solving model used in most schools.

Workers' Experiences & Response to Show

- Program officially began in August 2010 but short showcase done at Paralowie R12 in June 2010.
- Program visits one school a month.
- Children's response: interact with show; relate to characters' experiences; engages children who don't usually engage.
- Anecdotes from various schools.

Vignette of Dillon's Secret Adventure

- We will now present two scenes from Dillon's Secret Adventure.
- Setting the scenes.
- Observe the themes covered, such as: the nature of secrets; distinguishing good and bad secrets; the healing power of sharing; making sense of feelings; managing feelings etc.



Supporting Children After Parental Separation