

Hedgehogs UK



Type of intervention



Classroom setting

Target groups, level of prevention and sub-groups:



Primary prevention

Children (6-11 Years) | Male & Female | Classroom Setting | English

Target population

Children aged 9 to 11 years, in schools in England and Wales (and their parents/carers and teaching staff).

Delivery organisation

The delivery organisation is child protection charity, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, UK.

Mode and context of delivery

Delivered in primary schools to classes of children aged 9-11 years. An external facilitator delivers all five lessons of the programme to each group of children (maximum 30) to maintain consistency and to build trust. At least one teacher is present at all times. Schools may align their sex education lesson(s) with the programme. More positive effects may be observed if schools continue some strands of the programme following the final lesson.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

A facilitator's background might include child protection and/or policing, with experience of working with children that may include teaching. An informal teaching style and an ability to engage with children of this age group are essential.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

The programme consists of:

- 5 sessions with the children, each lasting 2.5 to 3 hours, once a week
- 2 meetings with the children's parents/carers – before the start of the programme and after it concludes
- 1 briefing with the teaching staff before the programme begins
- 1 debriefing with the teaching staff when the programme concludes

Description of intervention

The key objectives of the programme are to:

- build children's confidence in asking questions and seeking information
- enhance children's knowledge and understanding about their bodies
- equip children with the tools necessary to enable them to understand when a situation is potentially risky and what actions to take to protect themselves
- help children to develop critical awareness and build confidence so they feel able to trust appropriate adults and approach them to talk to and ask for help
- raise awareness about the programme and provide relevant information to adults (parents, carers and teaching staff) to enable them to support children's learning.

Programme content:

- **Lesson 1: We are Beautiful and Different**
 - Children learn that they all have similarities but that they are all different and unique. They also learn how to give and receive positive written comments about their physical characteristics from each other.
- **Lesson 2: Our Bodies are Beautiful Because...**
 - The children learn the differences between the male and female body and are helped to understand the developmental changes of the body with adolescence.
- **Session 3: The Friendly Touch**
 - Activities help children to learn the difference between positive and negative touch. They learn that they have the ability, power and right to say 'No' or 'Yes' to touch actions; and that they should respect others who tell them "No" to touch actions.
- **Session 4: Learning to Avoid Danger**
 - Children start to recognise uncomfortable situations, learn some strategies for self-protection and explore the importance of being able to trust appropriate adults.
- **Session 5: Saying No, Trusting Someone and Getting Help**
 - Children develop their understanding of the differences between a good secret and bad secret, and the meaning of the word 'confide'. They further embed their learning around recognising dangerous situations; rehearse how they would say "no" or remove themselves from the situation and in whom they would confide.

The programme is not confined solely to the five sessions in the classroom. Children are encouraged to ask questions between sessions through use of a 'Confidence Box' that is opened in the next session. In this box children can place questions that they mark as either 'public' (can be read out in front of the group in the next session) or 'private' (dealt with by the facilitator one-to-one with the child). Some homework with parents/carers is also involved. Participation is voluntary, as schools opt to have the programme delivered and to give parents/carers the opportunity to withdraw their child(ren) from the programme.

Evaluation

Positive feedback has been received from children, parents/carers and teaching staff. This, along with observations of the children's increase in comprehension throughout the programme and schools deciding to continue the use of the Confidence Box in classrooms, indicates achievement of the programme's objectives. The programme tends to complement rather than duplicate existing school practices and it appears that without the programme, there would be large gaps in children's learning. With respect to future evaluations some areas would require attention, such as including a pre- and post-programme test of children's knowledge.

References

Hedgehogs Pilot Programme Evaluation Report, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, 2012.
http://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk/our_research.htm#primary_prevention_primary_schools

Hedgehogs Pilot Programme Evaluation Executive Summary, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, 2012.
http://www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk/our_research.htm#primary_prevention_primary_schools

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