INTRODUCTION TO THE IRIE CLASSROOM TOOLBOX
The IRIE Classroom Toolbox

Please visit www.irietoolbox.com for more information and resources.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION TO THE IRIE CLASSROOM TOOLBOX**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the IRIE Classroom Toolbox?</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents of the IRIE Classroom Toolbox</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims of the IRIE Classroom Toolbox</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials for Teachers</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is the IRIE Classroom Toolbox Delivered</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How To Use This Book</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT IS THE IRIE CLASSROOM TOOLBOX?

The IRIE Classroom Toolbox is a training programme for teachers of children aged 3-8 years. The Toolbox provides teachers with a variety of tools to use when interacting with and teaching young children.
CONTENTS OF THE IRIE CLASSROOM TOOLBOX

The IRIE Classroom Toolbox consists of four modules:

1. CREATING AN EMOTIONALLY SUPPORTIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT
   - Building positive relationships
   - Using praise and rewards
   - Interactive reading

2. MANAGING CHILD BEHAVIOUR
   - Preventing behaviour problems
   - Managing misbehaviour
   - Games to promote self-regulation skills

3. PROMOTING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE
   - Teaching friendship skills
   - Understanding and managing emotions
   - Problem-solving stories

4. BEHAVIOUR PLANNING
   - Individual behaviour planning
   - Classwide behaviour planning

Within each module, there are a number of ‘Tools’ and teachers choose the tools that they need to use throughout the day.

Teachers are advised to choose a tool based on:

1) The needs of the child(ren)
2) How easy it is for them to use
3) How effective the tool is likely to be
4) How well the tool contributes to an emotionally supportive classroom environment.
# AIMS OF THE IRIE CLASSROOM TOOLBOX

The aims of the IRIE Classroom Toolbox are:

## For Teachers
- To increase teachers’ use of appropriate behaviour management strategies
- To reduce teachers’ use of harsh discipline practices
- To increase teacher self-efficacy
- To reduce teacher burn-out
- To improve teachers’ relationships with parents

## For the Quality of the Classroom Environment
- To decrease classwide behaviour problems
- To increase classwide prosocial skills
- To improve the quality of the classroom environment

## For Individual Children
- To decrease behaviour problems
- To increase social-emotional competence
- To increase self-regulation
- To increase school readiness skills

The Toolbox was designed in Jamaica for the Jamaican classroom. It has been developed, tested and refined through a series of research trials and has been shown to be effective.
MATERIALS FOR TEACHERS

The IRIE Classroom Toolbox has a resource pack for teachers that include:

1. An **IRIE Classroom Tools** book giving a description of all the Tools that are introduced in the Toolbox and providing guidance on how and why to use each one.

2. An **IRIE Classroom Activities** book that includes:
   - Lesson plans to help teachers teach classroom rules, friendship skills, and emotions.
   - Games to help children develop skills they need to do well in school (*e.g.* learning to listen, wait, and follow instructions).
   - Classroom activities with ideas to integrate activities to promote children’s social and emotional skills into everyday teaching and learning activities.
   - Songs to reinforce the concepts introduced through the IRIE Classroom Toolbox.

3. Fourteen **IRIE Classroom Social Problem-Solving Stories**. These stories include common problems faced by children in school and how to overcome them (*e.g.* how to share materials, waiting for a turn, and working together). Each story has a one-page teacher guide with the aims, key vocabulary, discussion points, and suggested questions.

4. **Resources for teachers** including:
   - Pictures to use as visual aids when teaching classroom rules, friendship skills, and emotions. These are available in black and white and in colour.
   - Pictures to make a responsibility chart: to allocate classroom responsibilities to children.
   - Pictures to make a chart showing the sequence of daily activities.
   - Behaviour planning forms: including forms to make individual and classwide behaviour plans.
   - IRIE notes: to send positive notes home to parents.
The Toolbox is a teacher-training programme that is implemented over one school year with participating teachers.

**Training involves the following activities:**

1. Teachers attend 30 hours of training workshops. These workshops can be delivered flexibly. For example:
   - Five full-day workshops
   - Ten half-day workshops
   - Twenty one-and-a-half hour sessions

2. Teachers receive monthly in-class support to help them to implement the strategies taught in the workshops. A coach works with the teacher for one teaching session (approximately one-and-a-half hours) each month during the school year.

3. Teachers do practical assignments to help them to practice the strategies taught and to reflect on their practice. Their coach gives feedback on these assignments.

4. Teachers receive a resource pack including all of the materials required to implement the program.
HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

STRATEGIC PRAISE

Praise children who are displaying the correct behaviour (rather than focussing on the children who are not).
When the other children follow, praise them too.

EXAMPLES

When some children are behaving appropriately and some are not, **pay attention to the behaviour you want more of.**

For example, children are walking to the pipe and one child is running.

**Praise** the children who are walking.

“Wow, I like how Tajay and Thomas are using their walking feet. Great job boys.”

When the target child starts to walk, **praise him/her:** “Wow and Marsha is using her walking feet. Good girl Marsha.”

**WHY:** *Children will start to display the correct behaviour because they want to be praised too.*