

Faculty of Education, Health & Sciences
School of Education

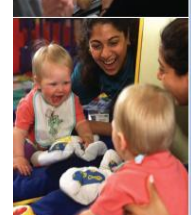
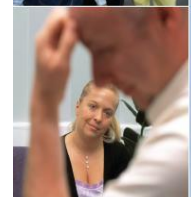
Consultancy Project for NACRO OSMASTON FAMILY PROJECT

Final Report

Authors:

Michelle Appleby
Ruby Oates
Andrew Sanders
Robin Sedgwick

From the Early Childhood Studies Team
March 2011



FACULTY OF EDUCATION, HEALTH & SCIENCES



Introduction

This consultancy project developed from a request from NACRO, Allenton, Derby, for an independent assessment of the provision of the Managing Teenage Behaviours courses run at the centre during 2009 and 2010.

The project took place in two phases: October 2009 to February 2010 and March 2010 to February 2011. Three methods were used to undertake an assessment of the courses to gather a full picture of the participants' feedback and experiences. The findings are reported in three sections as follows:

1. Findings from the analysis of questionnaires to referring agencies.
2. A report on the distance travelled data provided by parents/carers before and upon completion of the course.
3. Findings from two focus groups from two course groups.

1. Findings from the analysis of questionnaires to referring agencies

This analysis is based on the cohort C parenting programme which ran in April and May 2010. Questionnaires were distributed to those agencies which had referred parents onto the parenting programme

Sample size = Nine

1.1. What effect did the parenting programme have on the parent / carer?

Referring agencies were asked to quantify the effect the parenting programme has had on four specific outcomes for the parent/carer, by stating whether each outcome had undergone "*...a huge improvement, much Improvement, little improvement, no change or a backward step*".

- **Self –confidence and self- esteem.**

All nine identified there had been much improvement.

- **The quality of the relationship with their teenager**

All nine identified an improvement, with four recognising much improvement and five a little improvement.

- **How well they respond to their teenagers' behaviour**

All nine identified an improvement, with five recognising much improvement and four a little improvement.

- **The effectiveness of their parenting style**

All nine identified an improvement, with six recognising much improvement and three a little improvement.

A request to comment on the overall impact the course has had on the parent/carer elicited the following responses;

...greatly improved confidence & self belief as a parent.

...has given her practical advice on how to approach difficult situations in a positive and productive manner

(the parent).....has commented on the programme building her confidence, which was different to what she usually experienced

Parents have increased confidence in their own ability to manage (teenager's) behaviour.

The parent has taken the opportunity to consider their parenting skills

...has also had an effect on how they view themselves in the wider community.

Mother and teenage daughter's relationship has improved significantly.....it is unclear whether this is a direct result of mother's positive response to the parenting course. (A possible alternative influencing factor was identified).

...confidence improved mostly and the programme enabled her to learn different strategies to the other course she had been on.

Main area of improvement is in self esteem.....has also realised her child isn't as difficult as some.

1.2. What effect did the parenting programme have on the teenager?

Referring agencies were asked to quantify the effect the parenting programme has had on seven specific outcomes for the teenager, by stating whether each outcome had undergone *a huge improvement, much Improvement, little improvement, no change or a backward step.*

○ Self-confidence and self- esteem

All nine identified an improvement, with four recognising much improvement and five a little improvement.

○ Emotional well-being

All nine identified an improvement, with two recognising much improvement and seven a little improvement.

- **Incidence of behavioural problems**

Three responses indicated there had been no change, but 6 identified an improvement. Of those who identified an improvement one regarded it to be huge, two much improved & three a little improved.

- **Incidence of offending behaviour**

Responses were identical to the previous outcome, with three respondents indicating there had been no change, but six identifying an improvement. Of those identifying an improvement one regarded it to be huge, two much improved & three a little improved.

- **School attendance**

Four responses identified improvement (two huge, two little). Four respondents identified no change, while one thought there had been a backward step. It was suggested by the respondent that the latter outcome was because the teenager had (wrongly) believed herself to be pregnant.

- **How appropriately their needs are being met**

Seven responses identified an improvement (two huge, two much and three a little). One response indicated no change.

- **Their experience of a safe and fair family life**

Six responses indicated an improvement (one huge, two much and three a little). Three responses indicated no change.

A request to comment on the overall impact the course has had on the teenager elicited the following responses:

Has responded to improved parenting but is continuing to push boundaries and is still able to control the household.

She is responding in a calmer manner with decreased incidents of aggression and escalating physical behaviours

This is difficult to tell at the moment due to factors in the home environment.

This teen seems more aware of boundaries and routines. This is a direct result of parent engaging with the course.

1.3. What effect might the parenting programme have had on long term outcomes?

Referring agencies were asked to quantify to what extent the parenting programme has changed the likelihood of a number of longer term outcomes

by indicating whether they were now *much more unlikely, more unlikely, more likely, much more unlikely or whether there was no change.*

- **The teenager misusing alcohol or illicit substances**

Five respondents indicated that this was now more unlikely (four more unlikely, one much more unlikely). Four indicated no change

- **The teenager offending or engaging in criminal activity**

Four respondents indicated this was now more unlikely. Four indicated no change.

- **Family breakdown**

Three respondents indicated this was more unlikely, two much more unlikely and two no change.

- **The teenager returning to school**

One respondent indicated this was now much more likely, three more likely and five no change.

- **The teenagers' development moving towards fulfilling their potential**

Four respondents indicated that this was much more likely, three more likely and two no change.

Respondents were asked to identify any other long term outcomes which they believe the course has influenced and gave the following responses:

Family relationships are more improved and parents' understanding of the needs of her teen.

Parents have increased abilities in managing unwanted behaviours and we believe they are more equipped to guide their son away from illicit substances.

She had no problems with substance misuse or school attendance and was not likely to offend prior to the course, but course has greatly improved family life which has previously been strained and confrontational. It has greatly improved the carer's approach towards the teenager and improved understanding between them.

The group have helped provide a basis for ongoing work to maintain improvements. The young person's self esteem has improved, but is still fragile.

1.4. Summary

The referring agencies regarded the effects of the programme on the parents who had attended to be unerringly positive with much improvement in self confidence, self esteem, their ability to respond to the teenager's behaviour and the effectiveness of their parenting style. Whilst the impact on improvement of the quality of the relationship with the teenager was not seen to be enhanced as significantly there was, nevertheless, a little improvement recognised in all cases.

In considering the outcomes of the course, with regard to the teenager, the perceived benefits were not as substantial as those for the parents, but were still significantly positive with self confidence, self esteem and emotional well being all improved. The incidence of behavioural problems and offending behaviour were both seen to have improved and in a large minority of cases there was an improvement in school attendance. In the majority of cases there were improvements in both how the teenager's needs were met and in their experience of a safe and fair family life.

Long term outcomes were also thought to have been improved with a reduced chance of the teenager misusing alcohol or illegal substances or offending or engaging in criminal activity. A minority of respondents indicated a likelihood of the teenager returning to school and family breakdown was now thought to be more unlikely. It is of significance that seven of the nine respondents indicated there was an increased likelihood of the teenagers' development moving towards a fulfilment of potential.

In total the 16 questions generated 129 individual responses:

- 97 (75%) were indicative of positive outcomes resulting from the parenting course.
- 31 (24%) indicated no change.
- One (<1%) indicated a negative outcome

2. A report on the distance travelled data provided by parents/carers before and upon completion of the course.

The Handling Teenage Behaviour programme is aimed at parents and carers working with children and young people over the age of 10 years of age. Its primary aim is to promote the building of positive relationships between parents and carers and the children and young people in their lives. This course is run over an eight to 10 week period and takes place one a week for two and a half hours. It offers participants a structured and flexible approach in exploring issues that effect behaviour and relationships between parents and young people. The focus of the groups is to find new ways of improving communication and cooperation to promote a sense of well being for all involved.

2.1. Population and Cohorts

This report has looked closely at the distance travelled data provided by parents/ carers before and upon completion of the course. The data was collected from three separate cohorts. Participants in Cohort A began the course in September 2009 and completed it in December 2009. There were 17 parents who were referred to this cohort and offered places. On the first session 12 parents attended but only nine of these completed the course. The data analysed is from the nine participants who began and completed the course.

Participants in Cohort B took part in the programme from January to April 2010. The number of parents referred and offered places in this cohort is not known but 10 participants completed the questionnaire at the beginning and end of the course.

Members of Cohort C took part in the course from February to May 2010. The number of parents referred and offered places in this cohort is also not known but nine participants completed the questionnaire at the beginning and end of the course. The key findings of the distance travelled data are as follows.

2.2. Key Findings

The vast majority of participants stated they were completely satisfied with the course and would attend other groups or courses running at the Centre again in the future. Participants showed an undeniable increase in all areas from the beginning to the end of course. Most notable was an increase in abilities to handle behaviour, perceived success in discipline and an increase in improved perception of relationships between adult and teenager. Participants also comment upon the usefulness of the course and feeling of having a support system in place to help with difficult situations. Participants found that specific strategies were essential in helping to improve relationships between parent and child. Overall, the data suggests that this course is extremely effective at identifying influences on teenagers and parents today, helping parents to understand development and improving communication between both parties.

2.3. Summary

The participants in the study regarded the effects of the programme to be positive. The data shows a consistent trend that indicates parents felt better after the course about all areas, but most notably better about handling their teenagers' behaviour, more successful in terms of disciplining the teenager and that consequently their relationships with the teenagers had improved.

Note: the quantitative data for the above section can be found in the Appendix at the end of the report.

3. Findings from the two focus groups

Two events were organised, both towards the end of the two separate 12 week courses in Spring (18th March 2010) and Summer (1st July 2010). Each event started with a brief contextual explanation and the ethical conditions of the session. All participants were asked to sign a permission slip; this permitted us to support this report with some of the actual words spoken by the participants. Each exercise was recorded and lasted about three-quarters of an hour.

Transcripts were prepared from digital recordings following an independent narrative analysis by the consultants, this section of the report outlines the findings and summarises the emerging themes from the participants.

The findings can be loosely grouped into three areas: the course itself, the perceived impact on self and awareness of the course.

3.1. The course itself:

After initially fearing being judged by others on the course, this soon changed. Indeed, this was reversed after a short time in that there was a clear and recognised value of being with others in the same situation, feeling less alone and isolated.

Moreover, they felt that they could talk in a place that they had created. Impressions included ownership with positive and enjoyable support from each other:

Yeah, it's good, it's support. You don't feel like you're on your own...it's a fact of other people being in the same situation.

For the participants being part of a group, having a shared understanding alongside a different dynamic, provided a sort of group bonding; it was seen as therapeutic for some and as a release through talking and sharing experiences and stories.

Of particular worth was the relaxed learning environment provided by the tutor, notably an independent tutor with empathy through her own life experiences who was able to share stories. The course facilitator's skill (being seen as non-judgemental, information giver) was important to participants. The tutor was able to frame the session to provide credibility, for example:

She taught you as an equal...and shares her personal experience; she's not a government official.

3.2. The impact on self

Through an exploration of both their own and their children's behaviours, participants realised they were involved in a series of 'normal' communicative events:

...but it (the course) made me be able to see that he didn't hate me as much as it felt like he did but a lot of it was just normal behaviour whereas I felt personally attacked.

It was clear that, in objectifying this process, they were able to see what was going on. This increased their individual and group confidence in three ways: firstly, to articulate with their children what might be going on and, secondly, to stand back from it and thirdly, to intervene and resist (or not) in positive and thought-through ways:

It was more enlightening for me and certain issues that we touch upon in dealing with certain conflicting situations where you can argue backwards and forwards and it can go on forever, it made me not buy into that so much now.

The strength of this process contributed to the building of resilience and a determination not to fold or give in because of the trying circumstances at home. This showed itself in other ways, for example, participants' rights and responsibilities in relation to school had, through the course, not only been clarified but also put into action, for example:

You can just say to the school, well no, they're at school, they are your responsibility so you have to deal with that behaviour, that is what they get paid for...at home, then that's our job.

For some, the experience was transformative and, as a group, they had become survivors as through their discussions they appeared to have moved beyond immediate stress to a more measured, longer term approach and a structured, positive response to their children's behaviours this provided insight into their own behaviour and responses.

The process for one participant had been a "...light bulb moment" a personal realisation of, and involvement in, processes happening. Taking control over these was shown by others in the use of (experts) language: some commented on consequences and boundaries, for example:

They're the child and you're the adult and that's what stops it and changes the psyche, I mean occasionally we still have arguments but it is loads better because you have the awareness.

Added to this, participants sometimes put confidence, resilience and transformative experiences together through turning a bad feeling of overwhelming powerlessness into reasonable control...but not just their in establishing, regulating and articulating a process [with their children] but in their confidence to put this into action and stick to it. Knowing what was happening and demonstrating this with their children through avoiding stressful confrontation and recognising flashpoints.

Some participants also recognised that, in themselves, they had become more reflective about their situations; there was talk not only about understanding behavioural strategies but also about the importance of actually having a framework of response. These are illustrated in the following conversation between a facilitator (F) and Respondents (R) about a Playstation and swearing:

F: So can you give us an example of something you've seen or learnt here that you have applied at home that worked?

R1: Well, yeah, because my son never went to school before, he hated going to school, he couldn't stand it, didn't want to do, wouldn't do nothing when he was there, did everything he could to get sent home. But now he goes to two schools and he goes everyday. And he absolutely loves it and that's because I put down a rule, you know, it might sound silly to everybody else, but...me taking his Playstation off him for not going to school, that worked a treat.

Others: And she made him make that decision.

R1: And I said to him if you don't go to school, then you got to choose something that is yours, you know and he said well I won't play on my Playstation. So you put the responsibility on him and you know he stuck to it, you know, he knows that if he doesn't go to school now he can't go straight upstairs and play on his Playstation...and he knows if he doesn't go to school he's just got to sit around bored all day doing nothing.

F: So as a mum you've sort of put in a framework, you've given him a choice, his choice sort of thing.

R2 Yes like swearing, he chose that I will take 25p out of his pocket money every time he swore, not like if he's with his friends swearing because that's something that you can't really control but if he swore at me or I heard him swearing then I would, he chose that I would take 250 out of his pocket money every week and that has been working.

F: But he chose it?

R2: Yes he chose it himself.

Significantly, both groups said that this doesn't happen overnight, it's a slow and gradual process, for example:

You hope everything will be sun and happiness. It does take a long time.

3.3. Awareness of the course

It's a good course and I mean I'd never heard of it until I was a chronic mess.

This was expressed elsewhere alongside related thoughts about the title of the course itself (Handling Teenage Behaviour)...it was felt that it ought to be more pro-active and broader, for example, moving away from response to a preventative stance. They generally considered that the outsider view is wrong and made some positive suggestions about this including the use of the word 'support'. Strategies which might help awareness-raising within the community and places where this could be done were mentioned, not just 'referral' but also self referral and longevity to include follow-up meetings and courses.

4. Report Conclusion

In summary, the findings from the analysis of questionnaires to referring agencies show that the agencies regard the effects of the programme on the parents to be unerringly positive. Perceived benefits for the teenagers were not as great, but we all still significantly positive. Long term outcomes were thought to have been improved, with 77% of respondents indicating an increased likelihood of the teenagers' development moving towards a fulfilment of potential.

The report into the distance travelled data provided by parents before and after completion of the courses again demonstrates that participants regarded the effects of the programme to be positive. The data shows a consistent trend that indicates parents felt better after the course, most notably in relation to handling teenagers' behaviour with more success with the consequence that relationships between them improved.

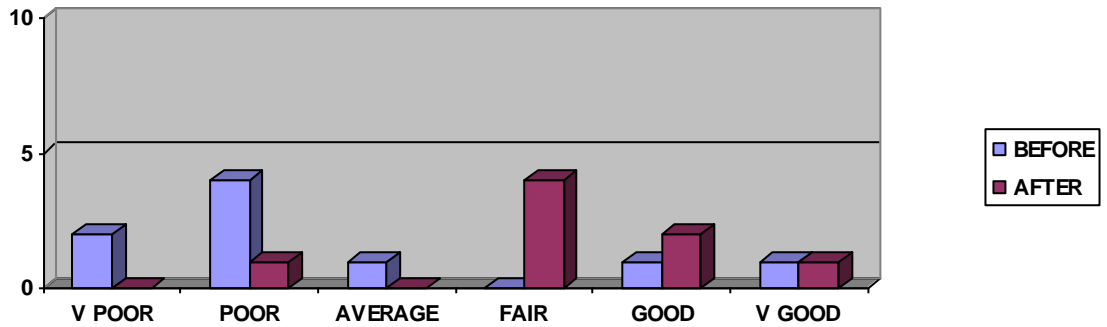
Finally, in bringing the findings from the two focus groups together, it is concluded that an overall majority of participants found the courses a positive experience. Participants' initial fear or nervousness about the course was soon changing through the skills and empathy of the course tutor. Being part of a group and coming together to share experience and realise that you are not necessarily a bad parent was important to participants.

Participants saw a positive impact of the course on their own behaviour and responses, citing improved behaviour from the children and an increase in confidence and assertiveness. Participants learned new skills and were more able to reflect upon their own behaviour to avoid flash points and became more able to handle difficult situations. Participants felt the course should be available to many more parents and it should be easier to know about such courses. Participants said they would value follow-on courses to enable them to continue to develop and reflect upon their skills and experiences as parents/carers.

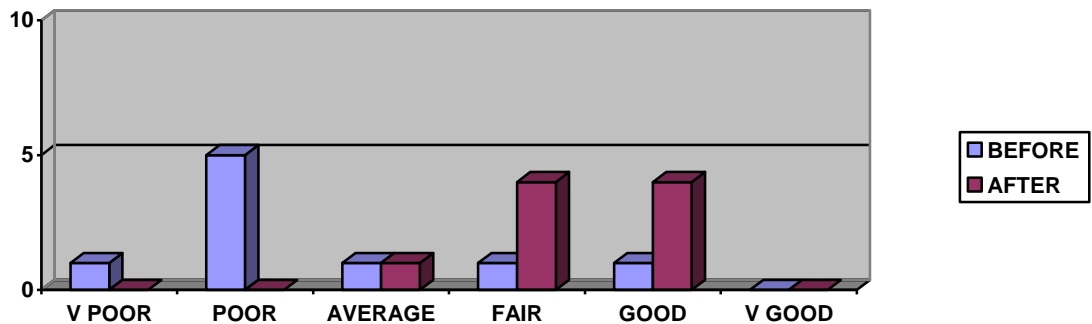
APPENDICES

Report on distance travelled data – cohort A (December 2009)

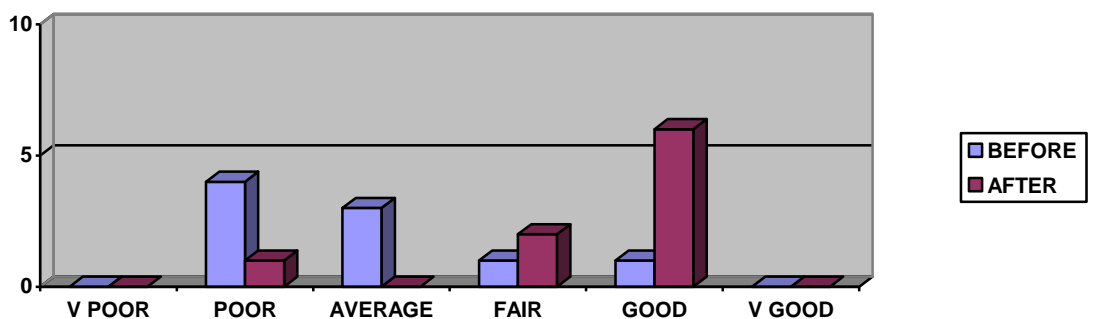
How would you rate your abilities at generally handling your teenager's behaviour?



Please rate how successfully you feel you discipline your teenager.



How would you describe your relationship with your teenager?



Comparative questionnaires

1. How would you rate your abilities at generally handling your teenager's behaviour?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	2	4	1	0	1	1
After	0	1	0	4	2	1

* no scores remained the same

2. Please rate how successfully you feel you discipline your teenager?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	1	5	1	1	1	0
After	0	0	1	4	4	0

3. What rating would you give yourself as a parent?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	0	3	1	1	3	1
After	0	0	2	3	3	1

4. How are you at spending time with your teenager?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	0	1	5	2	1	0
After	0	1	3	0	4	1

5. How would you rate your levels of praise and positive encouragement to your teenager?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	0	1	5	1	1	1
After	0	0	0	2	6	1

6. Please rate how effective you are at looking after your own needs?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	1	5	1	1	0	1
After	0	1	2	3	2	1

7. How would you rate level of team work, if applicable, with other carers of your teenager?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	1	1	3	3	1	0
After	0	1	1	2	3	2

8. How would you describe your relationship with your teenager?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	0	4	3	1	1	0
After	0	1	0	2	6	0

Please rate the service between 1 and 10 (1=awful, 10=superb)

1	2	3	4	5
0 people	0 people	0 people	0 people	0 people

6	7	8	9	10
0 people	1 people	0 people	1 people	7 people

Population: 17 parents were referred and were offered places, on the first session 12 parents attended out of these only 9 completed the course. Of the nine who completed the course:

78% were complete satisfaction

11% were very satisfied

11% were satisfied

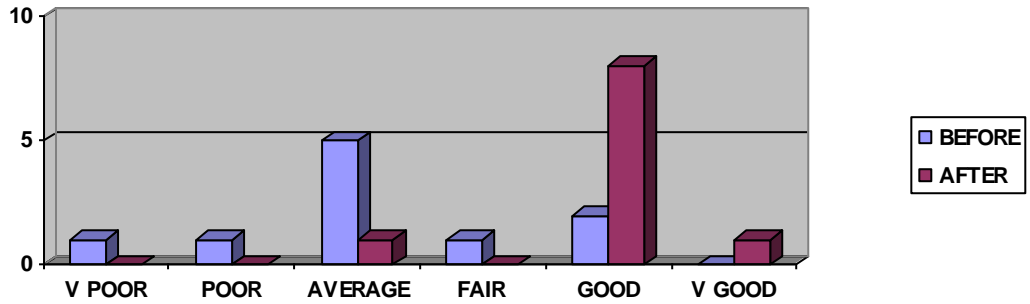
100% of participants who completed the course said they would attend other groups or courses running at the Children's Centre again.

Other comments:

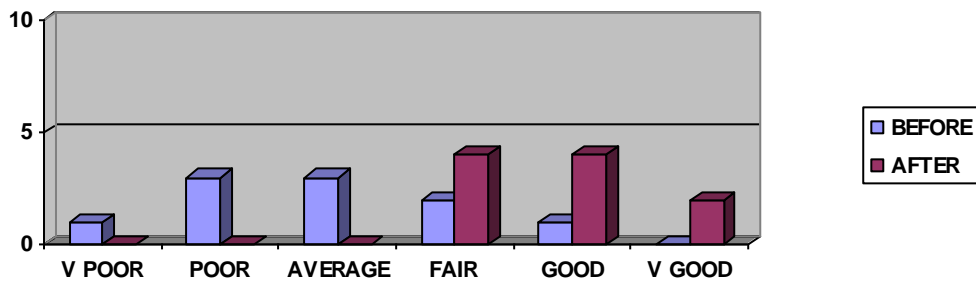
- Course was very useful
- Would like course to be more available to other parents by having better marketing schemes
- Excellent course
- Wish it was longer
- Participants gave each other a support system
- Course was most enjoyable
- Helped parent to realize not to shout at child and that staying calm and being positive is more effective
- Well taught
- Friendly teachers
- Excellent facilitator

Report on distance travelled data – cohort B (April 2010)

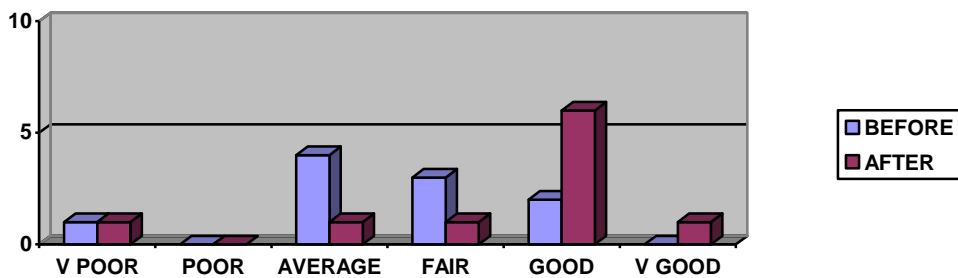
How would you rate your abilities at generally handling your teenager's behaviour?



Please rate how successfully you feel you discipline your teenager.



How would you describe your relationship with your teenager?



Comparative questionnaires

1. How would you rate your abilities at generally handling your teenager's behaviour?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	1	1	5	1	2	0
After	0	0	1	0	8	1

* no scores remained the same

2. Please rate how successfully you feel you discipline your teenager?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	1	3	3	2	1	0
After	0	0	0	4	4	2

3. What rating would you give yourself as a parent?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	0	0	4	3	2	0
After	0	0	1	2	6	1

4. How are you at spending time with your teenager?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	1	2	2	2	2	1
After	0	0	1	4	3	2

5. How would you rate your levels of praise and positive encouragement to your teenager?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	1	2	0	3	2	2
After	0	0	1	0	7	2

6. Please rate how effective you are at looking after your own needs?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	1	4	2	1	0	0
After	1	0	2	4	3	0

7. How would you rate level of team work, if applicable, with other carers of your teenager?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	2	0	3	2	3	0
After	0	0	0	5	5	0

8. How would you describe your relationship with your teenager?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	1	0	4	3	2	0
After	1	0	1	1	6	1

Please rate the service between 1 and 10 (1=awful, 10=superb)

1	2	3	4	5
0 people	0 people	0 people	0 people	0 people

6	7	8	9	10
0 people	0 people	0 people	1 people	9 people

Population: Number of parents referred and offered places are not known. Ten participants completed the questionnaire at the end of the course.

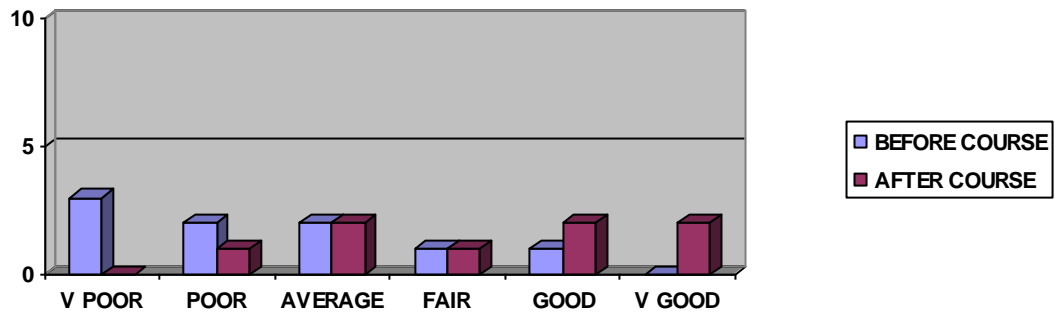
90% of participants who completed the course said they would attend other groups or courses running at the Children’s Centre again. One person did not answer this question.

Other comments:

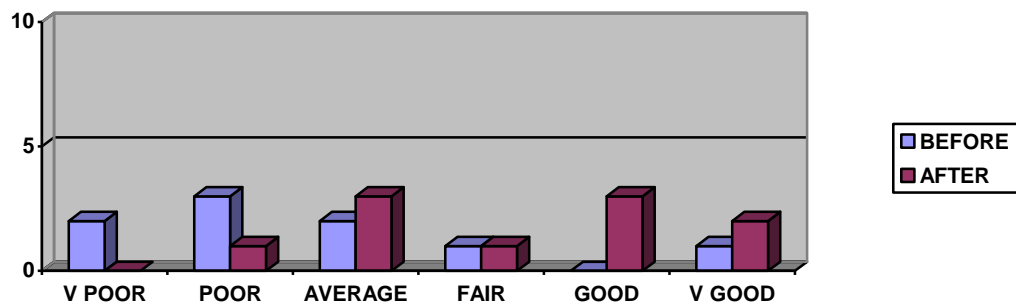
- Helped me understand my children a lot more and I now have a better relationship with them
- The group has been somewhere that parents can express themselves and learn that there are other parents going through similar experiences
- Made me a better parent
- Parents have learned a lot
- The course gave parents a reason to feel good about themselves and made for a happier home life
- Course has helped build a bond between parent and teenager
- Course made a huge difference on parenting of teenager

Report on distance travelled data – cohort C (May 2010)

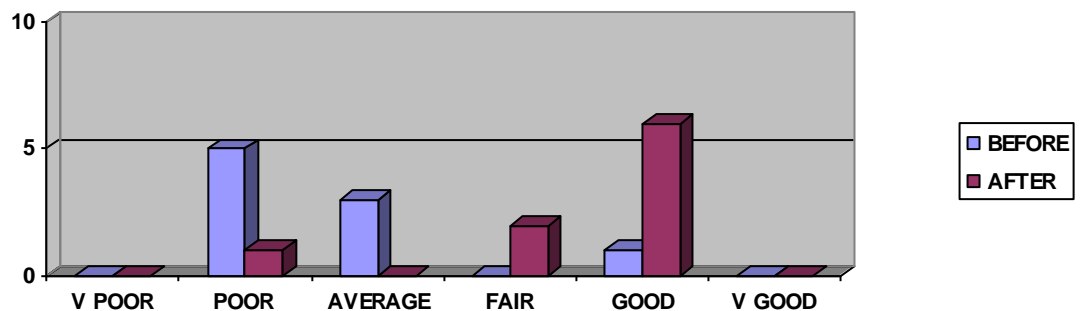
How would you rate your abilities at generally handling your teenager's behaviour?



Please rate how successfully you feel you discipline your teenager.



How would you describe your relationship with your teenager?



Comparative questionnaires

1. How would you rate your abilities at generally handling your teenager's behaviour?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	3	2	2	1	1	0
After	0	1	2	3	1	2

* no scores remained the same and one showed a decrease

2. Please rate how successfully you feel you discipline your teenager?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	1	3	3	1	0	1
After	0	1	3	1	3	1

* one score decreased and one remained the same

3. What rating would you give yourself as a parent?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	0	3	2	0	3	1
After	0	0	0	3	3	3

* one score decreased and one remained the same

4. How are you at spending time with your teenager?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	0	2	2	3	2	0
After	0	1	2	1	5	0

* one score decreased and four remained the same

5. How would you rate your levels of praise and positive encouragement to your teenager?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	0	1	2	1	3	2
After	0	0	2	1	5	1

* one score decreased and four remained the same

6. Please rate how effective you are at looking after your own needs?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	1	4	2	1	1	0
After	0	2	2	2	2	1

* three scores remained the same

7. How would you rate level of team work, if applicable, with other carers of your teenager?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	1	0	2	1	3	1
After	0	0	0	2	5	2

* one participant did not answer question before the course and one remained the same

8. How would you describe your relationship with your teenager?

	V POOR	POOR	AVERAGE	FAIR	GOOD	V GOOD
Before	0	6	2	0	1	0
After	0	1	0	4	4	0

* Two scores remained the same