

What is Massage in Schools?

The Massage in Schools Programme (MISP) was introduced to the UK in 2000 by its founders, Mia Elmsater and Sylvie Hetu. Using their experience and knowledge in both education and massage, they created this highly successful programme which aims to promote the wellbeing of children in the knowledge that nurturing touch is a basic need and a powerful tool to help children develop into healthy, well balanced human beings.

The programme is well structured, yet simple, making it easy for teachers to incorporate into the daily routine of the classroom. This is a peer massage programme, in which only children massage children, whilst the adults (teacher/assistant) observe and facilitate the routine. It intends to give children the chance to experience nurturing touch at school in a safe and creative way.

MISP routine consists of 15 strokes on the back, neck, shoulders, head, arms and hands. Children sit on their chairs at their desks to carry out the routine safely.

Pupils learn to be respectful to their peers by asking for permission before being allowed to touch their partners and learn to say thank you after completing the massage routine.

Who is it for?

This programme is for children 4 to 12 years of age.

Benefits of the Programme

The benefits of MISP are many. Schools throughout the UK who have implemented the Massage in Schools Programme have noticed the following benefits to children and the school in general:

- Improved **concentration**
- Improved **co-operation**
- Increased self-esteem/ **confidence**
- Reduction in aggressive **behaviour and bullying**
- **Calmer classroom environment**
- Children, especially those with ADHD, develop better motor **skills**
- Greater **ability to work independently and in groups**
- A feeling of being individually **acknowledged**
- Empathy and respect in **communicating**
- Ability to **recognise difference between good and bad touch**
- More relaxed and **focused feeling in the school generally**
- Children enjoy the routine
- Calms the reptilian part of the brain to allow children to access learning
- Produces Oxytocin

- Brings balance to the nervous system and reduces high levels of adrenalin and cortisol

EAST Support

Training for Schools

- Referral/request to EAST
- Support once per week for 5/6 sessions
- Children learn the routine and staff learn to facilitate using the massage picture cards
- Children and staff involved in 'touch and move to learn activities' to promote integrated learning which engages brain and movement simultaneously
- Parents can also learn the routine to carry out with children at home – helps with bonding and the bedtime routine as it produces Melatonin (sleep hormone)

Training for adults

- 2 day training course to become an MISP Instructor – able to teach the children
- Parent sessions/family support sessions
- Touch and move to learn activities for staff to be creating active learning opportunities for children
- Links between the importance of touch and the curriculum

- TLC sessions for all trained Instructors

Parent/Carer Links

East Ayrshire Support Team staff adopt an holistic approach to support. Close links are established with the families/carers of children who take part in MISP. An information letter and leaflet are shared with parents/carers permission before children take part and are invited to attend the celebration session at the end of the programme to join in the massage routine. Parents/carers are invited to complete an evaluation form to comment on the impact of the programme in relation to their child's health and wellbeing.

Useful links

<http://www.misascotland.org.uk>



For further information:

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EAST AYRSHIRE SUPPORT TEAM

Information Leaflet

Massage in Schools Programme (MISP)

**Incorporating 'touch
and move to learn'
activities**

Updated September 2022