

# The effect of ZIPPYS FRIENDS IN NORWEGIAN SCHOOLS



Solveig Holen Phd, and Mette Ystgaard senior researcher

Centre for Child and Adolescent Mental Health (RBUP)

# BACKGROUND

# INTERNATIONAL EVALUATIONS (1)

The children who participated in the program in Denmark and Lithuania showed

**improved coping, social skills and less conduct disorders**

compared to a matched control group

Mishara B. L, & Ystgaard M. (2006). Effectiveness of mental health promotion to improve coping skills in young children: *Zippys Friends*. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* (21) 110-123

# INTERNATIONAL EVALUATIONS (2)

Children in Lithuania who received the program in kindergarten showed

**better emotional and behavioural adaption to school**

compared to a control group who had not received the programme

Monkeviciéne O, Mishara BL, Dafour (2006) Effects of the Zippy's friends programme on children's coping abilities during transition from kindergarten to elementary school. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 34, 1

# INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION (3)

A recent study from Irish schools shows similar results

Clarke, A., & Barry M., M. (2010). *An evaluation of the Zippy's friends emotional wellbeing programme for primary schools in Ireland*. Galway: Health Promotion Research Centre

# THE REPORT

## PREVENTIVE MEASURES IN SCHOOL

### 'Forebyggende innsatser i skolen'

In the report many school-programs were evaluated based on:

- The base of theoretical and empirical knowledge
- Implementation strategy
- Effects of the program

The Zippy program was evaluated to be in the best category and was recommended for use provided an effect evaluation in Norwegian schools

Nordahl T, Gravkrok Ø, Knudsmoen H, Larsen T M B, Rørnes K  
Utdanningsdirektoratet og Sosial- og helsedirektoratet (2006)

RESEARH ON THE ZIPPY  
PROGRAM IN NORWAY  
2007 - 2011

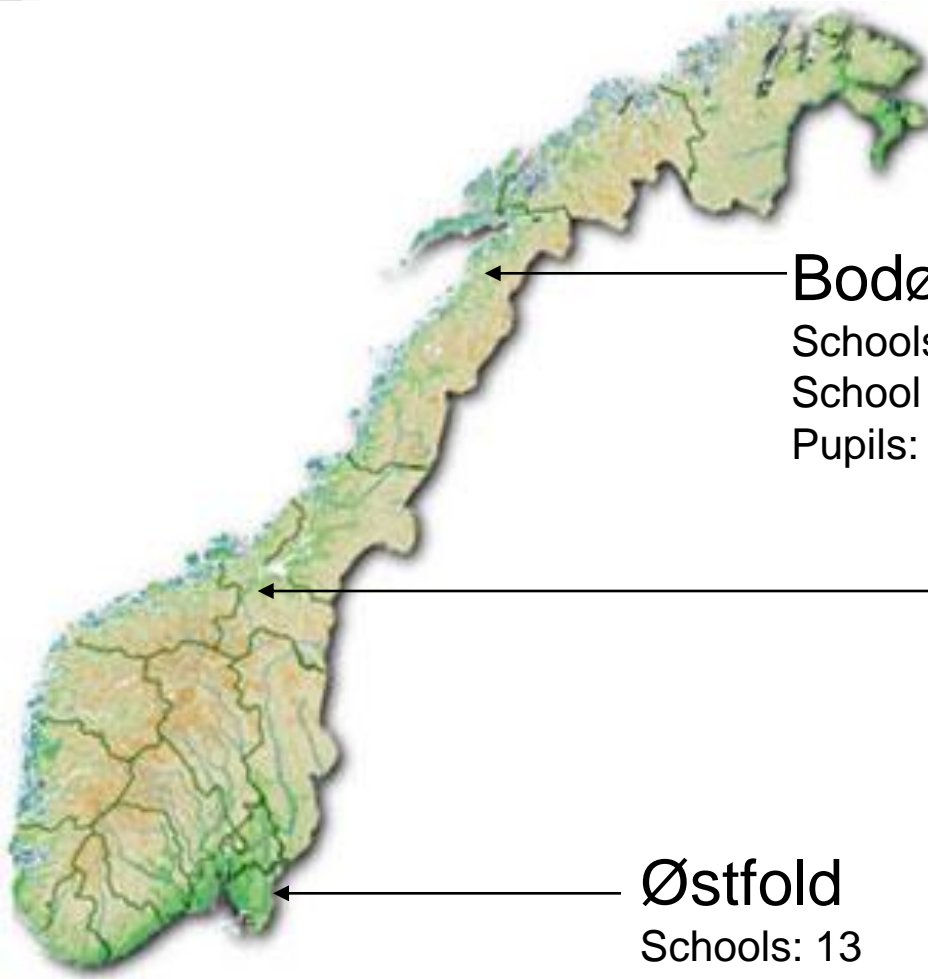
# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Is the program implemented as planned under Norwegian conditions?
- Are there effects of the program on:
  - Children's coping strategies?
  - The social climate in the classroom?
  - Academic achievement?
- Does the effects vary with
  - Socioeconomic status or
  - Gender?
- Are there any negative effects?





# SAMPLE



**Totalt:** 35 schools  
91 classes on  
2.grade level  
(1481 pupils)

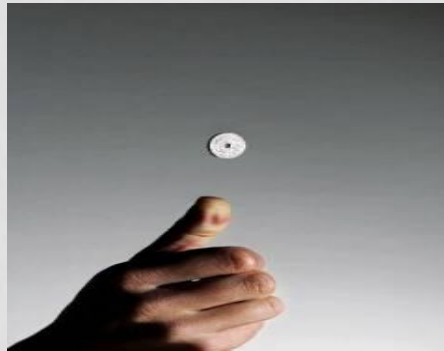
**Bodø**  
Schools: 7  
School classes: 20  
Pupils: 310

**Sør-Trøndelag**  
Schools: 15  
Classes: 44  
Pupils: 625

**Østfold**  
Schools: 13  
Classes: 27  
Pupils: 387

The schools were matched in pairs by socioeconomic status, proportion of ethnic minority and proportion of special need education

Then schools were drawn from each pair to control and intervention groups



Intervention group  
18 schools  
(47 classes)

Control group  
17 schools  
(44 classes)

# DATA COLLECTION IN THE INTERVENTION AND CONTROL GROUPS

	Intervention	Control
Sample	745	738
Informed consent	92% (686)	86% (638)



Sept 2007



June 2008



June 2009

Scales	For Parents	For Teachers	For Child
<p><b>Mental health</b>            Emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer relationship problems, prosocial behavior and impact of the problems</p> <p>Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1999)</p>	X	X	
<p><b>The child's Coping strategies</b>            Kidcope (Spirito, 1998). Adapted for parents</p>	X		X
<p><b>Social climate, integration in class and academic achievement</b>            FEES 1-2 (Rauer &amp; Schuck, 2004)</p>		X	
<p><b>Implementation assessments only in the intervention groups)</b></p>		X	

# THE DATA COLLECTION

The teachers conducted the data collection:

- They gave the necessary information to the parents and teachers
- Delivered the questionnaires and made sure of reminders
- Filled in their own forms
- Conducted the survey with the children in the classroom



# THE CHILDRENS SURVEY

- The children answered the form in class
- The teacher read the question out loud
- The children ticked off on «true» or «not true»
- An assistant were available
- The children who did not participate in the study did alternative activates





An example of one side in the children's questionnaire:



	 Stemmer ikke		 Stemmer
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----	<input type="checkbox"/>



	 Stemmer ikke		 Stemmer
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----	<input type="checkbox"/>

# PUPIL FORM, COPING:

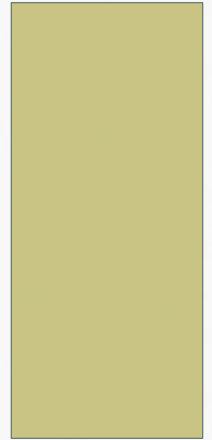
*Fancy that you had a best friend at school and had looked forward to playing and have fun in the school break. But your friend was playing with someone else. You had no one to play with and asked to be with them. Your friend said no. Also the other children in the group did not want you to play with them.*

*What would you do?*



# RESULTS

FIRST:  
WAS THE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED  
SUCCEFULLY?



# IMPLEMENTATION

To evaluate the implementation we asked the teachers to fill in forms/reports after

- the teacher training workshops
- the 24 Zippy lessons
- the programme was finished

# WORKSHOP AND SUPERVISION

## Workshop

- 44 (of 47) participated
- Was reported as good and sufficient
  - 4.5 (scale 1 – 5)

## Supervision

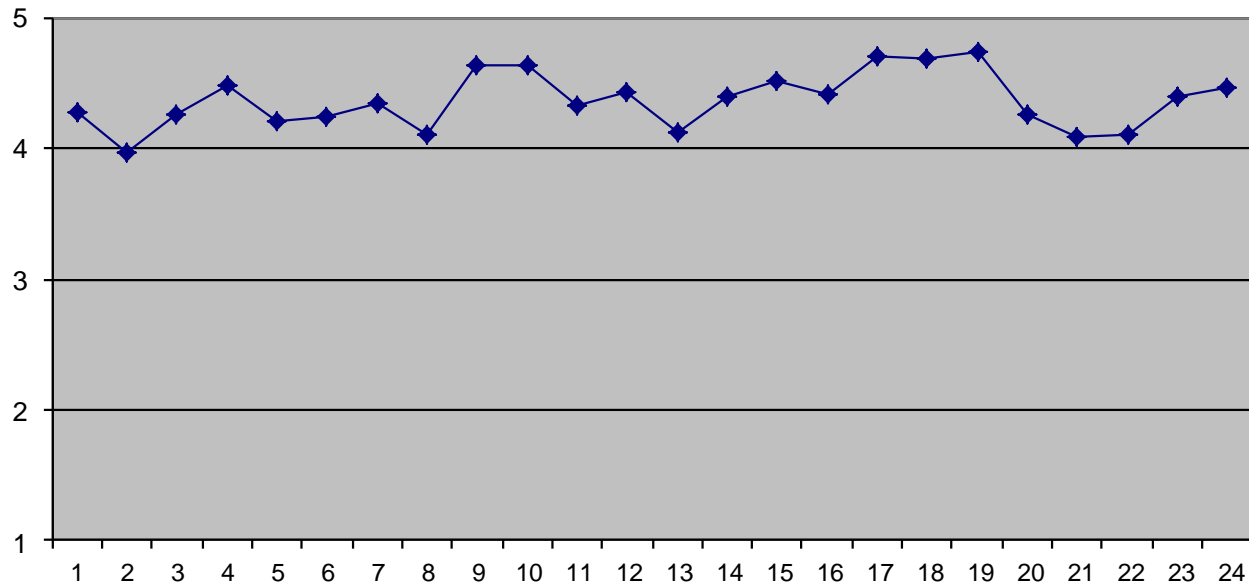
- 50% had supervision
- Was reported as good and sufficient
  - 4.3 (scale 1- 5)

# WAS THE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED AS PLANNED?

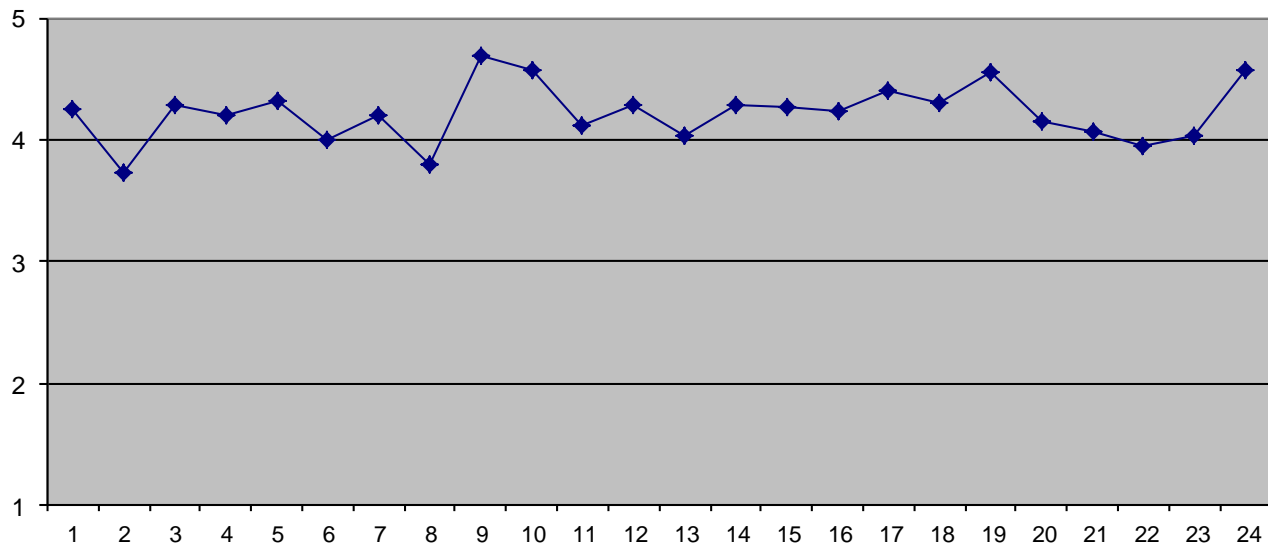
- All classes completed the program
- About 15 lessons out of 1128\* were not conducted
- 18 % report to have made minor changes
- Absence like an ordinary day at school
- The teachers were satisfied with the manual, mean 4.3 (scale 1-5)

\* 4 lessons x 6 modules x 47 classes

# WERE THE CHILDREN ACTIVE IN THE LESSONS?



# DID THE CHILDREN LIKE THE LESSONS?



THESE STATEMENTS WERE ANSWERED BY THE TEACHERS  
AFTER THE PROGRAM WAS COMPLETED

N=91

In your opinion: Does the program reach it's goals?	83%
I have got to know the children better	75%
The social climate in the class has been better	61%
We have developed a common language for talking about problems	79%
I am more confident in talking about difficult subjects with the children	61%
I have got a framework for solving problems	80%
Would you recommend the program?	84%
The structure in the program was useful	91%
All in all, are you happy with the program?	84%



# CONCLUSION SO FAR

- The program was implemented according to plan
- The teachers found it easy to use
- The children were mostly active and liked the program
- Most lessons were accomplished with few changes or adaptations

**But,** does it work also in Norway?

EFFECTS  
OF THE PROGRAM

# COPING

Based on children's questionnaire:

- Less **acting out**, less **blaming others** and less **wishful thinking**

Based on the parent's questionnaire:

- Most increase in **active problem solving** and **support seeking strategies**

# MENTAL HEALTH

*Based on the teacher's questionnaires:*

- Reduction in the **impact of mental health** problems on the school situation

No significant change in mental health symptoms

# THE SCHOOL SITUATION

*Based on the teachers answers:*

- Improved **academic achievement**
- Improved **social climate** in the classroom
  - Less **bullying**
  - Better **cohesion** and
  - less **exclusion**

## EFFECTS ON GIRLS AND BOYS AND ON CHILDREN FROM DIFFERENT SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Results from the subgroup analyses are less clear but there are some support for

- better effects on girls than boys and
- on children from low socio-economic families

More research are needed to draw safer conclusions

# SUMMING UP

- Zippy's friends is easy to implement according to plan described in the manual
- It has a positive effect on **COPING** as reported by children and parents
- Teacher also report a positive impact on the **SOCIAL CLIMATE** in class, **ACADEMIC ACHIEVMENT** and the extent to which the children's **MENTHAL HEALTH IMPACT** on the school situation.
- Some subgroup effects which needs further examination
- No negative effects

# LITERATURE

Holen, S., Waaktaar, T., Lervåg, A. & Ystgaard, M. (2012). The Effectiveness of a Universal School-based Program on Coping and Mental Health: A Randomized, Controlled Study of Zippy's Friends. *Educational Psychology, 32, 5*.

Holen, S., Lervåg, A., Waaktaar, T. & Ystgaard, M. (2011). Exploring the associations between coping patterns for everyday stressors and mental health in young schoolchildren. *Journal of School Psychology, Online ahead of print*.

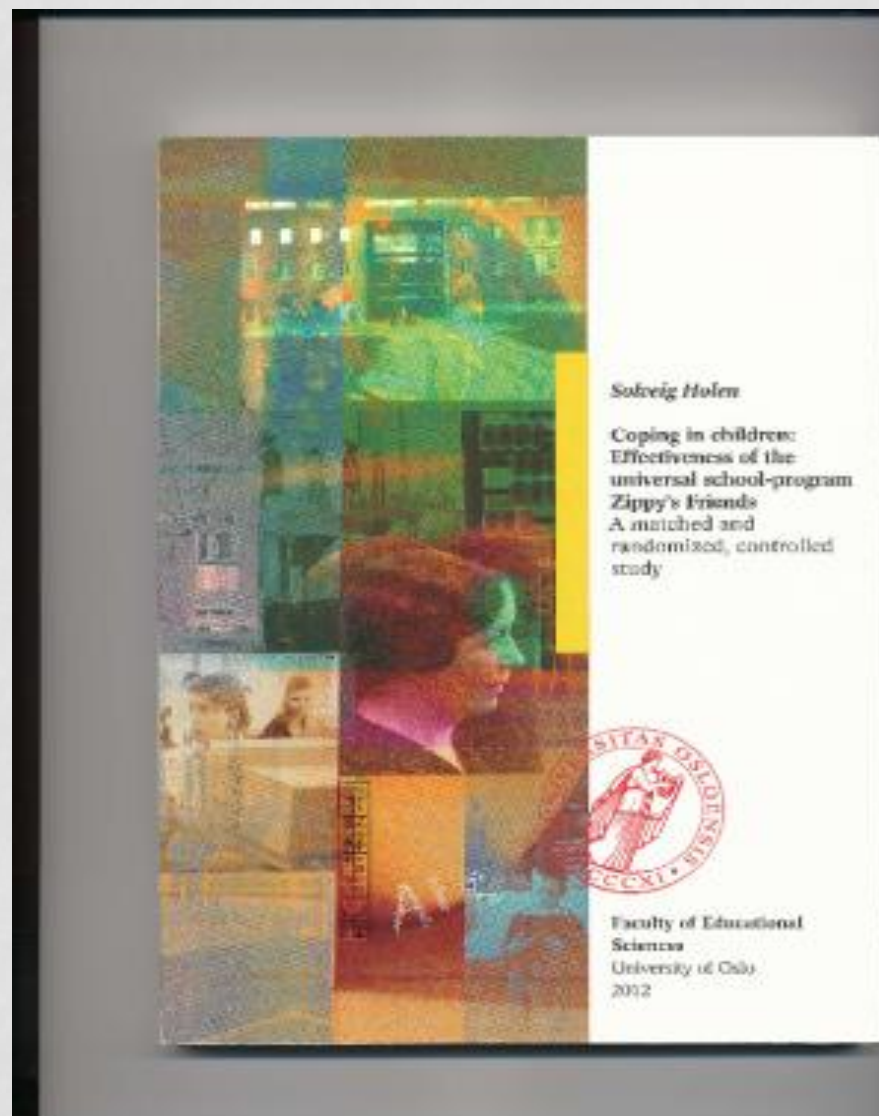
Holen, S., Lervåg, A., Waaktaar, T. & Ystgaard, M. (2012). Implementing a Universal Stress Management Program for Young School Children. Are there Classroom Climate or Academic Effects? *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, Online ahead of print*



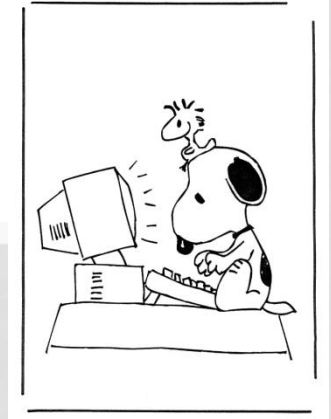
All details of the study are elaborated upon in

Solveig Holen

Coping in Children: The effectiveness of the universal school-program Zippy's Friends  
A matched and randomized, controlled study



# STATISTICAL ANALYSES



This is the first study of the Zippy-program who has used structural equation modeling (SEM, Mplus v. 6) taking into account the hierarchic structure of the sample, that is; that individual are grouped into classes. (Uses Complex Sample Analysis or Multilevel Modeling).

These are strict analyses that give reliable findings

# Groups of coping strategies

