



# message in • schools

*Implementing Massage in Schools.* MISP is for primary school children, aged 4 - 12 years. The programme is introduced to the children by a trained instructor, usually over a period of 4 - 7 days, for 15 minutes a day. First thing in the morning is ideal, as it helps relax and focus the pupils. This is simply a guideline and can be altered to suit needs. It is a child to child massage done through the clothes; at no time do the teachers or instructors touch the children. The massage routine is introduced gradually to the children, all the strokes having names which the children recognise, such as, 'ice skating', 'baker' and 'climbing the rope'. The children always ask permission from each other before they begin and say thank you to each other when they finish the routine. Once the children know the routine, a 10 minute slot for the massage can be incorporated into the school day. Touch games and massage stories can be used in any part of the curriculum to help bring subjects alive for both teachers and children

For more information about the Massage in Schools Programme, contact:  
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**MESSAGE IN SCHOOLS SCOTLAND**

## *Massage in Schools Programme*

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*Our Mission Statement.* The mission of the Massage in Schools Programme is to provide high quality and professional training to all teachers and caring adults willing to bring nurturing touch into schools.

*Our Vision.* The vision of the Massage in Schools Programme is that every child attending school experience positive and nurturing touch every day... everywhere in the world.

*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 well being 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.

*The programme*, after gaining parental permission, involves the paired children learning the simple massage sequence, through the clothes, on the back, arms, shoulders and head. It is a child to child massage with an ethos of respect, as all children request permission to massage before they begin. Those who do not wish a massage can say no and sit and watch. The whole sequence takes approximately 5 minutes and then the children change places.

*Schools in Scotland* All schools are now expected to have achieved and to maintain health promoting schools status, which involves a whole school approach to promoting the physical, social, spiritual, mental and emotional wellbeing of all pupils and staff. Schools are now working towards implementing a Curriculum for Excellence, which develop the 4 capacities of: Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Effective Contributors and Responsible Citizens. The Massage in Schools Programme addresses these capacities perfectly, with its development of positive communication, its inclusive nature, its ethos of respect for self and others and its proven effect on concentration levels.

THE EFFECTS OF MASSAGE  
ARE IMMEDIATE...  
...YET LAST A LIFETIME

*Benefits of Massage in Schools.* 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

When children are asked about the massage, the comments that come up often are that it makes them feel **happy**, relaxed and it's fun to do.

Much scientific research has been done into the effects of regular massage, with the recent discovery of how the hormone, **oxytocin**, is released by both the giver and receiver of massage. This induces peaceful feelings and is linked to a decline in sleep problems, depression and anxiety.