

Full source reference:

Cordier, R., Speyer, R., Mahoney, N., Arnesen, A., Mjelve, L. H., & Nyborg, G. (2021). Effects of interventions for social anxiety and shyness in school-aged children: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Plos one*, 16(7), e0254117.

Free access link:

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0254117>

Article Overview:

This systematic review identified interventions aimed at shy children and evaluating their effectiveness in reducing psychosocial difficulties and other impacts. Twenty-five studies included in the final analysis. Most studies were conducted within the school context

Sample: School-aged children between six and twelve years of age

Key take home messages:

1. Findings suggest that interventions had a large effect in reducing shyness and negative consequences of shyness. Across all studies, reductions were reported in anxiety, social phobia and internalising behaviours.
2. Most interventions were delivered weekly, conducted in group sessions, based in the school, and involved activities such as play, modelling and reinforcement, and clinical methods such as social skills training, psychoeducation, and exposure.
3. Clinic-based, child-focused (vs focusing on parents alone or combination of parent and child), and combining individual and group interventions resulted in most benefits in reducing shyness. However, there was a large effect size for school-based interventions ← ecological validity as advantage.
4. Results suggested that school-age is an ideal developmental stage to target shyness and interventions can be effective when used in a school-based setting, facilitating interaction with peers.
5. None of the interventions were delivered in a classroom setting → unable to compare out vs in-class interventions.