



# **Effectiveness of Individual Therapy in Revadim Schools**

## **Executive Summary**

January 2013

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### **Background**

One of the main tasks of Israel's education system is to provide a quality solution for pupils suffering from developmental, emotional, social, physical or cognitive difficulties. These pupils have difficulties in integrating in a school setting, which places them at high risk. The Association for Change in Education has developed an educational program designed to provide underachieving pupils in preschool and elementary school with individual therapies that are customized to meet a wide range of developmental and functional disorders. These include paramedical treatments (occupational, physical and speech therapies), emotional and social treatments (e.g. art, animal, music and drama therapies). The program, which operates within the Revadim initiative and the Milat program, assumes that systematic individual therapy that is adapted to the child's needs will lead to significant improvement in school performance and educational achievements.

### **Research Objective**

Approximately 25% of resources that are directed to schools in the Revadim Initiative are allotted to various types of individual therapies and diagnoses. This study was designed to examine the degree to which these therapies are effective as well as their impact on scholastic achievements.

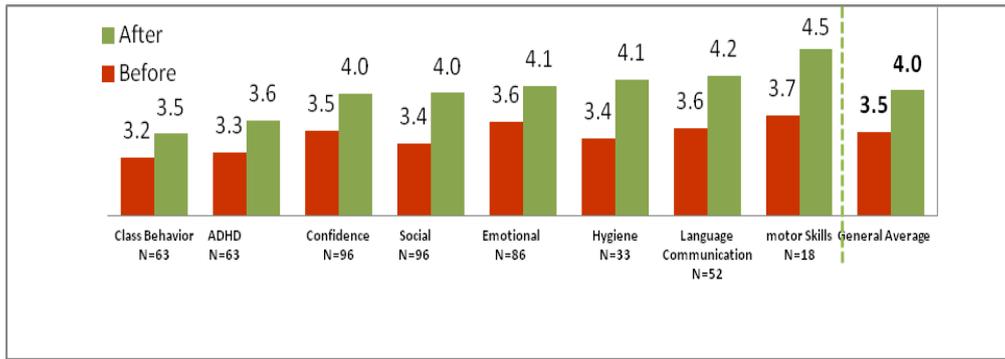
### **Methodology**

For the study, a comprehensive questionnaire was developed and given to teachers of the pupils who received therapies during the 2011/2 school year. The questionnaire examined 8 parameters of educational performance, before and after the therapy was administered (start / end of year). The research sample included 146 pupils attending 8 schools in the Revadim Initiative.

### **Main Findings**

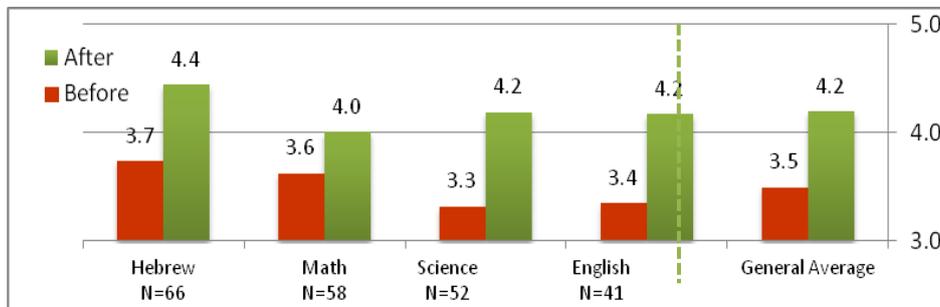
1. The average overall educational performance before therapy was 3.5, in contrast with 4 after one year of therapy. This scale of improvement is significant in these areas of therapy, where the rate of progress is very slow.
2. A statistically significant difference was found in the status of pupils before and after they received therapy in 7 of 8 parameters that were examined.

Pupils' educational performance before and after therapy (N=146)



3. The therapies showed statistically significant effect on scholastic achievements in core subjects, particularly among weaker pupils.

Achievements of weaker pupils in core subjects before and after therapy based on teacher reports (N=146)



- 83% of the children being treated showed relatively severe performance difficulties that justified receiving individual therapy. Hence the pupils who receive the therapy are generally those who need it.
- In most cases, the longer the period of therapy, the greater its effectiveness. In other words, the improvement was more pronounced in pupils who received therapy for more than two years.
- A cost-benefit analysis indicates that the therapy is effective in relation to other alternatives. The estimated average cost of therapy for a pupil per year is 528 NIS while the average improvement achieved is 12.5%.

**Recommendations**

- It is recommended to review the screening process and the amount and length of therapies, as well as the follow-up on the treatments' outcome.
- The study found that the therapies offered to pupils today are mainly art and animal therapy. Schools should receive assistance in expanding the mix of therapies by increasing accessibility of professionals, in order to better address the pupils' needs.

3. In order to improve the validity of the findings, the review of therapy effectiveness should be expanded by using additional assessment tools and including more target groups.

### **Main Conclusions**

Based on the evidence collected in the study, it appears that the therapies effectively improve the overall educational performance of most pupils. Furthermore, the improvement in overall school performance helps to increase the scholastic achievements of weaker pupils in core subjects.