School-wide Discipline, Behavior Management, and Student Self-Management: Focusing on Social Skills Instruction and Selecting an Evidence-based Social Skills Program

A State Personnel Development Grant Technical Assistance Report[1,2,3]

Arkansas Department of Education
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Background

Research has consistently identified a number of critical factors as being most highly

correlated with academic achievement (e.g., Berliner, 1988; Cawalti, 1995; Wang, Haertel, &

Walberg, 1993-1994; Ysseldyke & Christenson, 2002). These factors include:

1. A positive classroom climate that is conducive to learning,
2. A peer culture that is supportive of academic achievement,
3. The use of cooperative learning strategies complemented by positive and productive student and teacher interactions,
4. Effective classroom management,
5. High levels of academic engaged time coupled with a high percentage of teacher time focused on instruction, and
6. Teaching students to understanding of the underlying processes of what they are learning (metacognitive understanding).

In reviewing this list, it becomes clear that positive school and classroom climates; teachers'

classroom management skills; students' interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict resolution,

and coping skills; and a school-wide system that encourages student accountability and self-

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[2] Primary Authors: Dr. Howard M. Knoff, Lisa Johnson, Dr. Randall Glenn, Lisa Haley, and Loretta Wallace
[3] Much of the content of this technical assistance report, and all of the tables and graphics have been previously copywritten by Project ACHIEVE Press, 2007, 2009.

management significantly contribute to the overall learning environment. These factors contribute

to and enhance students' on-task behavior and academic engagement and, relatedly, their

academic achievement and success.

Focusing especially on school climate and students' social, emotional, and behavioral skills,

the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2002) has noted that:

> "Improving the social and emotional climate of schools, and the social and
> emotional soundness of students, advances the academic mission of the schools in
> important ways….Satisfying the social and emotional needs of students does more
> than prepare them to learn. It actually increases their capacity to learn." (p. 10)

This sentiment has been echoed by others (Fraser, 1991; Goodenow & Grady, 1993; McNeely,

Nonemaker, & Blum, 2002) who have emphasized that students' progress in school occurs most

often in classrooms where students feel connected, supported, and interpersonally close to their

teachers and peers.

All of this points to the need for and importance of school-wide <u>Positive Behavioral Support</u>

<u>Systems</u> (Knoff, 2007, and other references at end of paper). Significantly, when schools teach

and reinforce positive and appropriate interpersonal, problem solving, conflict resolution, and

coping skills, and students demonstrate these skills, teachers and students are more engaged in

academic instruction, and incidents of teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, aggression, apathy,

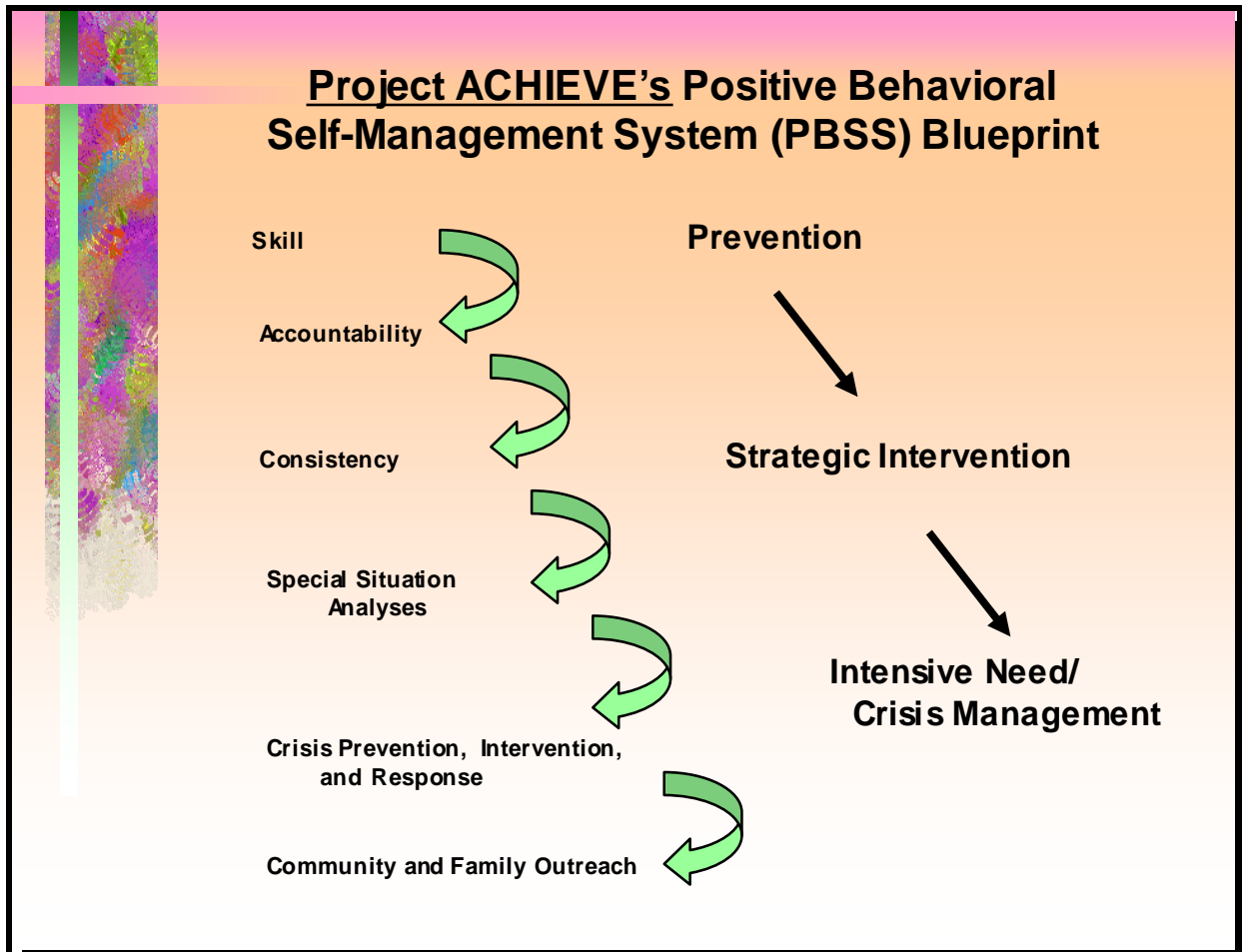defiance, and intolerance decrease.

This paper first discusses the evidence-based components of Positive Behavioral Support

Systems, including the characteristics of effective social skills programs. It then describes how to

teach social skills in the classroom, and reviews eight notable research-based social skills

programs. The paper concludes with recommendations on ways for districts to select a social

skills program for use across all of its schools.

An Evidence-Based Blueprint for Positive Behavioral Support System Success

From the small number of school-wide Positive Behavioral Support Systems (PBSSs) available

nationally, the Arkansas Department of Education has chosen to use an explicit PBSS blueprint as

part of its State Improvement Grant for the past six years (Knoff, 2002). This blueprint includes

six interdependent components across the three intervention tiers: prevention (Tier 1), strategic

intervention (Tier 2), and intensive/crisis management services (Tier 3; see figure below). The

key components embrace the need for student (a) Skills—social skills instruction for all students;

(b) Accountability—the establishment of building-wide accountability processes; and (c)

Consistency—staff and administrative consistency.

The next two blueprint components include (d) Special Situations Analyses—a "special

situations" focus on student behavior in the common areas of a school and relative to teasing,

taunting, bullying, harassment, and physical aggression; and (e) Crisis Prevention, Intervention,

and Response—strategic or intensive interventions for the more challenging or challenged

students who are not responding to the more preventive approaches, along with school-based

crisis intervention and response strategies and approaches as needed. The last component, (f)

Community and Family Outreach, includes planned outreach activities to involve or train parents

and other relevant community agency and support system stakeholders in the other five

components, encouraging them to reinforce these components' activities and processes in their

respective settings.

Project ACHIEVE's Positive Behavioral Self-Management System (PBSS) Blueprint

Skill

Accountability

Consistency

Special Situation Analyses

Crisis Prevention, Intervention, and Response

Community and Family Outreach

Prevention

Strategic Intervention

Intensive Need/ Crisis Management

Most of these six PBSS components are guided by the School Discipline Committee. At times, however, this committee may collaborate with other school-level committees to accomplish specific goals. Below, each of these PBSS components is described in greater detail.

Social Skills Instruction. The ultimate goal of a social skills program is to teach students needed interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict resolution, coping and self-control, and academic support (self-management) skills and how to use them during actual peer and adult interactions (Knoff, 2001). In general, students with good social skills contribute to positive and safe classroom and school settings, and they are unlikely to engage in inappropriate behaviors.

Relative to research and practice, an effective social skills program:

- 1. Is based on a social learning theory model that uses teaching, modeling, role-playing, providing performance feedback, and an active focus on the transfer of training across time, setting, people, places, and circumstances for instruction;

- 2. Uses a core (universal) language that facilitates cognitive behavioral scripting and mediation, and conditions self-control and self-managed behavior;

- 3. Is explicit and developmentally appropriate, yet flexible and adaptive to students' individual communication skills, cultures, maturational levels, and needs;

- 4. Provides a defined, progressive, yet flexible, sequence of behaviors that recognizes that some prerequisite skills must be mastered before more complex skills are introduced;

- 5. Employs an evidence-based pedagogical approach to instruction that sequences instruction, application, and teachable moments;

- 6. Was designed for implementation by regular classroom teachers as the primary instructors; and

- 7. Has been demonstrated to be acceptable, socially valid, and easy to implement—thereby facilitating implementation integrity (see figure below for more characteristics of effective social skills programs).

While many social skills curricula have been marketed, very few have been designated as "evidence-based." An evidence-based program is one that has (a) demonstrated consistent positive, data-based effects across multiple settings, students, circumstances, implementations, and implementers; (b) demonstrated its effectiveness under controlled and/or comparison

conditions; and (c) been externally and independently evaluated by peer experts, usually convened

by a federal agency or its designee. In contrast, a research-based program may be based on

previously published research or theory, but it has not demonstrated consistent and pervasive

student-related outcomes, nor been independently reviewed and evaluated.

THE EVIDENCE-BASED CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE SOCIAL SKILLS PROGRAM

1. The social skills program is evidence-based. It has been empirically demonstrated to be effective in controlled and independent studies in real schools and school situations-- and independently evaluated as such.

2. The social skills program connects the skill training with students to a building- and grade-level "Positive Behavioral Support System" (PBSS) that includes a focus on student accountability, staff and student consistency, common area and peer interactions, crisis prevention, and community and parent outreach and involvement.

3. The social skills and PBSS components have evaluation components that assess treatment and implementation integrity; as well as relevant student, staff, and school outcomes.

THE EVIDENCE-BASED CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE SOCIAL SKILLS PROGRAM

4. Teaches classroom- and school-relevant interpersonal, social problem-solving, academic-supporting, conflict resolution, and coping skills (behaviors) that are needed by students to be successful in classroom and school, social and academic, individual and group, and peer and adult situations.

5. Is instructionally and pragmatically sensitive to the developmental , language, cultural, and other differences of children and adolescents—from preschool to elementary to middle and to high school.

6. Is designed for use by classroom teachers as the primary instructors.

7. Provides a specific, yet flexible, year-long sequence of skills that move from basic, foundational skills to complex, situational skills.

THE EVIDENCE-BASED CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE SOCIAL SKILLS PROGRAM

8. Teaches social skills in the same manner as teachers teach academic skills:
    -- Using Verbal Scripts that Guide Overt Behavior
    -- Using a Social Learning Theory approach to instruction:
        [Teach, Model, Role-Play, Performance Feedback, and Transfer of Training]
    -- Using a Teach, Apply, Infuse "rotation"

9. Addresses the emotional nature of skill instruction and behavior.

10. Can be used both to teach and guide skills proactively or to respond to or correct inappropriate behavior reactively.

Accountability. Even when students have mastered their social skills, they still need to be motivated to use them. Moreover, when peer pressures encourages students to behave in ways that are inconsistent with teachers' expectations, the importance of school-wide accountability and positive, prosocial student interactions is apparent. School accountability processes consist of explicit behavioral expectations, and meaningful incentives and consequences that motivate students to use their prosocial skills. Accountability is strengthened (see below) by consistent teacher and administrative responses when students consciously choose inappropriate over appropriate behavior or exhibit increasing levels of inappropriate behavior.

Schools, then, need to establish and implement grade-level and building-wide accountability systems that include progressively tiered and developmentally appropriate and meaningful incentives, consequences, and strategic teacher and administrative responses. This can be accomplished by creating, formalizing, and implementing a "Behavioral Matrix" that establishes these behavioral standards and expectations for all students (Knoff, 2007). Created predominantly by staff and students, this Matrix explicitly identifies behavioral expectations in the classroom and in other common areas of the school for all grade levels. These expectations are connected with positive responses, incentives, and rewards. The Matrix also delineates four different intensity levels of inappropriate student behavior, connecting them with progressively more serious responses. Intensity I behaviors involve routine discipline problems that teachers respond to with corrective prompts. Intensity II behaviors involve more challenging or disturbing behaviors that teachers respond to with corrective prompts plus classroom-based consequences. Intensity III behaviors involve serious disruptive or defiant behaviors that typically result in office referrals and administrative responses. Finally, Intensity IV behaviors involve the most serious antisocial or dangerous behaviors that generally require code of conduct administrative responses

(e.g., suspension), parental involvement, and interventions implemented through the multidisciplinary early intervention team process (see the Behavioral Matrix example below).

The ultimate goal of the Behavioral Matrix is to establish, increase, and/or positively reinforce students' prosocial behavior while preventing, strategically responding to, and/or decreasing and eliminating students' inappropriate behavior. Because staff has agreed on the behaviors and responses across its different domains, the Behavioral Matrix represents an explicit set of behavioral standards that are communicated and taught to all students, and that all students are evaluated against and held accountable to. Thus, the Matrix allows students to know, in advance, what behaviors are expected in the classroom and across the school, and what differential responses will occur for different types and intensities of behavior. All of this increases staff consistency, while reinforcing student responsibility, accountability, and self-management.

Consistency. While the social skill and accountability components are necessary, they are not sufficient for effective, safe, positive, self-managing schools. Indeed, staff needs to teach, apply, and reinforce the social skills program and implement meaningful incentives and consequences in a consistent manner in order to have the highest probability of success. Moreover, consistency is needed not just for individual students, but across different student groups, as well as across staff, settings, and different situations and circumstances.

4ᵗʰ Grade

Expected Classroom Behaviors:
Follow directions the first time given
Speak only with permission
Leave seat only with permission
Complete all assignments
Show respect (use positive words, treat people and property with respect, etc)

Incentives & Rewards:
Gold cards   Verbal praise
Lunch in the classroom   Marble/Compliments Jar
Extra recess
Good notes home
Treasure box

Intensity 1 Behaviors:
Passive off-task behaviors   Not listening/not paying attention
Talking out of turn   Non-speech noises that disrupt
Not following directions   Rocking, tilting, falling out of seat
Name calling   Talking without permission
Leaving seat without permission Teasing
Running in class   Tattling

Corrective Responses:
Visual, non-verbal, physical prompt
Proximity
Redirection
Warning
"Stop and Think" prompt
Folder mark
Move student to another seat
Note sent home

Intensity 2 Behaviors:
Continuing Intensity 1 Behaviors
Not following directions (passive or active defiance)
Arguing with teacher/talking back Lying
Chronic socializing with peers   Inappropriate language
Poor attitude/rudeness   Swearing

Consequences:
Move student to another seat
Loss of privileges
Loss of recess
Time-out in class
Phone contact with parent
Parent/teacher conference

Intensity 3 Behaviors:
Continuing Intensity 2 Behaviors
Not following directions/significant defiance
Throwing furniture/dangerous materials
Physical aggression/fighting with intent to cause bodily harm
Taunting
Vandalism
Cheating
Bullying/verbally threatening behavior
Physically threatening behavior
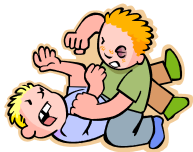
Consequences:
Office referral

Critically, consistency is more of a process than something that teachers explicitly teach (as in skills) or provide (as in incentives and consequences). Thus, schools implementing PBSSs must address the consistency of (a) social skills instruction by evaluating treatment and implementation integrity; (b) school-wide accountability by continuously monitoring the behavioral matrix's implementation and outcomes; and (c) staff consistency by empowering the School Discipline Committee to nurture and reinforce staff communication, collaboration, trust, commitment, and self-evaluation. Consistency also necessarily involves the students, as they also contribute to a school's positive, prosocial atmosphere by, for example, communicating a no-tolerance attitude for inappropriate peer behavior. Thus, consistency here may include the formal and informal involvement of student clubs and organizations, along with social marketing (e.g., public relations) approaches that reinforce positive staff-to-staff, staff-to-parent, staff-to-student, and student-to-student interactions.

Consistency, then, embodies a whole-school, whole-community commitment to creating conscious and explicit positive values, expectations, norms, procedures, and interactions. Consistency involves proactive processes that prompt and reinforce appropriate interactions and behaviors, and responsive processes that address inappropriate behaviors. Finally, consistency results in an implicit set of behavioral standards that is fair, predictable, progressive, and focused on creating positive, safe, and productive school settings and classroom climates.

Special Situations. Two types of special situation analyses are used to prevent or address behavioral issues that transcend school settings and/or large groups of students: (a) Setting-specific situations for the school, cafeteria, hallways, buses, and other common areas of the school; and (b) Student-specific situations for the teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, and fighting that often occur in the presence of the peer group. In order to develop plans or

interventions for these situations, School Discipline Committees need to functionally analyze why they are occurring using an ecological perspective that considers the impact of (a) student characteristics, issues, and factors; (b) staff characteristics, issues, and factors; (c) environmental or setting characteristics, issues, and factors; (d) student and staff incentives and consequences; and (e) the use and availability of resources that might prevent or resolve the problem. For student-specific special situations, the peer group and its contribution to the problem also are analyzed.

Once completed, the results of these functional assessments are linked to interventions that, like the assessments themselves, are multifaceted and focused on addressing or remediating the underlying issues of concern. Critically, when a school has its PBSS skill, accountability, and consistency components successfully in place, special situation interventions often are implemented for fewer students and without the need for more specialized (e.g., bullying) school-wide programs. When these three "core" components do not exist, their absence sometimes explains why a school is experiencing high levels of student-specific special situations.

Strategic and Intensive Interventions. When students do not respond, behaviorally, to the Tier 1 prevention strategies described in the four domains above, student-focused functional assessments linked to strategic (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3) behavioral interventions are needed.

At the Tier 2 level, this PBSS component includes interventions for students exhibiting nonresponsive, challenging, resistant, or persistently inappropriate behaviors (Kazdin, 2000; Kerr & Nelson, 2002; Stoner, Shinn, & Walker, 2002). It also addresses the behavioral intervention needs of students who, for example, are demonstrating the precursor behaviors predictive of more serious internalizing (e.g., pervasive anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or suicide) or externalizing (e.g., oppositional defiance, bullying, violence, other conduct disordered) concerns, or are

involved with peer groups known to have histories of antisocial, violent, or other more serious psychopathological behaviors.

At the Tier 3 level, this component includes the comprehensive interventions needed for students with extreme behavioral or emotional concerns and/or those who are in crisis. These students often have pervasive clinical problems that are chronic, highly resistant to change, and that threaten the welfare of the student and/or others. Interventions here may require school-based mental health services, or comprehensive wraparound or system of care services. These services are described in multilevel intervention plans that coordinate and integrate treatments across school, home, and community settings (Knoff, 2007).

The figures below provide some concrete examples of the specific processes and interventions needed at the Tier 1 (positive prevention approaches for all students), Tier 2 (strategic behavioral intervention approaches for nonresponsive, challenging, resistant, or persistently inappropriate students), and Tier 3 (intensive behavioral intervention approaches for highly involved or crisis-bound students) levels of a comprehensive PBSS. While the interventions may move fluidly from one tier to the next, they have been placed in the figures below at the tier or level that most reflects their actual implementation in PBSS schools nationwide.

Prevention Services for All Students

What is the Problem?

Is it working?

Why is it occurring?

What are we going to do about it?
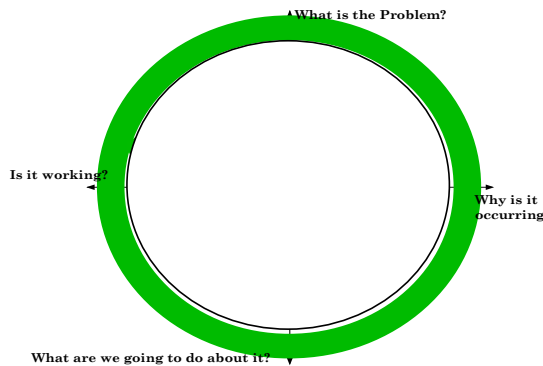
Positive School and Classroom
   Climates
Effective Classroom Instruction
Effective Instructional Grouping
Effective Classroom Management
Student Instruction in "Zones of
   Success"
Social Skill Instruction and Use
Well-Designed and Implemented
   Accountability Systems
Consistency
Student Modifications &
   Accommodations
Early Intervention

Strategic Intervention Services for Some Students

What is the Problem?

Is it working?

Why is it occurring?

What are we going to do about it?
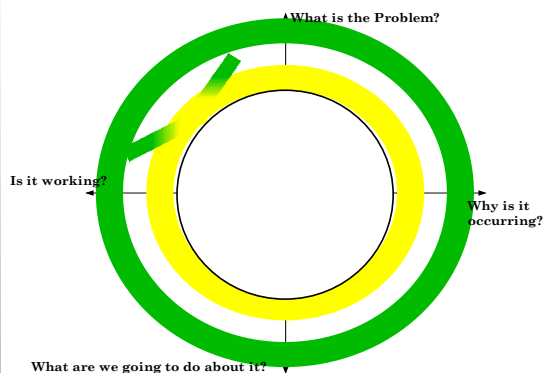
Peer/Adult Mentoring Programs
Peer/Adult Mediation Programs

Strategic Behavioral Interventions
(Behavioral Matrix Intensity II and III)
[Response Cost, Positive Practice/
Restitutional Overcorrection, Group
Contingencies, Cognitive-Behavioral
Strategies, etc.]

Small Group Social Skills/
   Socialization Training
Anger-/Emotion-/Self-Control Training
Attention-Control Training

Special Situation Groups: Ex.
Divorce, Loss, PTSD, Self-Concept

Crisis Management/Intensive Need Services for Few Students

What is the Problem?

Is it working?

Why is it occurring?

What are we going to do about it?

Individual Counseling/Behavior Therapy
(Behavioral Matrix Intensity III and IV)
[Relaxation Therapy, Desensitization, Cognitive-Behavioral Strategies, etc.]

School-Based Mental Health Services

Intensive Wrap-Around/ Continuum of Care Programming

Crisis Intervention and Response. This second part of the Strategic/Intensive Intervention component above involves preparing students, staff, and schools to effectively implement intervention procedures to stabilize settings affected during and immediately after a crisis, and then to attend to the needs of anyone experiencing residual or long-term impact due to that crisis. While the social skills, accountability, consistency, and special situation components prevent or avert most crises, schools still must have crisis teams and procedures available in the event of possible, but unforeseen, events (c.f., Dwyer & Osher, 2000; Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998).

Community and Family Outreach. This component involves reaching out to parents, community leaders, and other constituencies in the community (e.g., social service agencies, medical and mental health personnel, business and law enforcement leaders) to help them understand, support, and extend the activities and initiatives within the other six PBSS

components above. Thus, this is not the "last" component in a linear sequence. It is a

foundational or "anchor" component whereby parents and community leaders help to support and

reinforce the social skills, accountability, and consistency processes and are involved in special

situation, strategic or intensive intervention, and crisis intervention and response planning and

treatment activities. This reinforces the comprehensive nature of positive behavioral support

systems. It also highlights the principles that problem solving and consultation should not be

limited by the physical structure of the school building, and that anyone in a school, district,

community, or beyond could be used as an intervention consultant or resource.

The Importance of Social Skills Instruction as an Anchor to the PBSS

Students' self-esteem, self-management, and self-efficacy skills and status significantly predict

their academic engagement and academic achievement (Goodman & Schaughency, 2001; Levitt,

2000; McNeely, Nonemaker, & Blum, 2002; Payton et al., 2008; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, &

Walberg, 2004). Clearly, the connection between academic and social behaviors appears to be

reciprocal, with failure in one precipitating failure in the other. Indeed, if a student cannot stay in

his or her seat, work independently, or cooperate in a project-based learning group, academic

achievement will be more challenging. Conversely, if a student is not academically successful

over time, this may result in withdrawal or frustration, and behavior problems.

Within the context of a Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS), social skills instruction

has been especially highlighted as an essential component for teaching students the cognitive-

behavioral steps needed to master interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict resolution, and

coping skills. The remainder of this paper describes how to teach social skills in the classroom,

and reviews eight notable research-based social skills programs. The paper concludes with

recommendations that districts can use when selecting a social skills program for its schools.

Students' Social-Emotional/Behavioral Skills Facilitate their Academic Achievement

Research over the past 20 years indicates that students' social and emotional learning and skills, at the elementary- and middle-school levels, helps to:

* Reduce problem behaviors,
* Promote positive adjustment, and
* Enhance academic performance

Students' Social-Emotional/Behavioral Skills Facilitate their Academic Achievement

Teaching students social-emotional/behavioral skills and positive attitudes leads to (improved) adjustment and (enhanced) academic performance as reflected in:
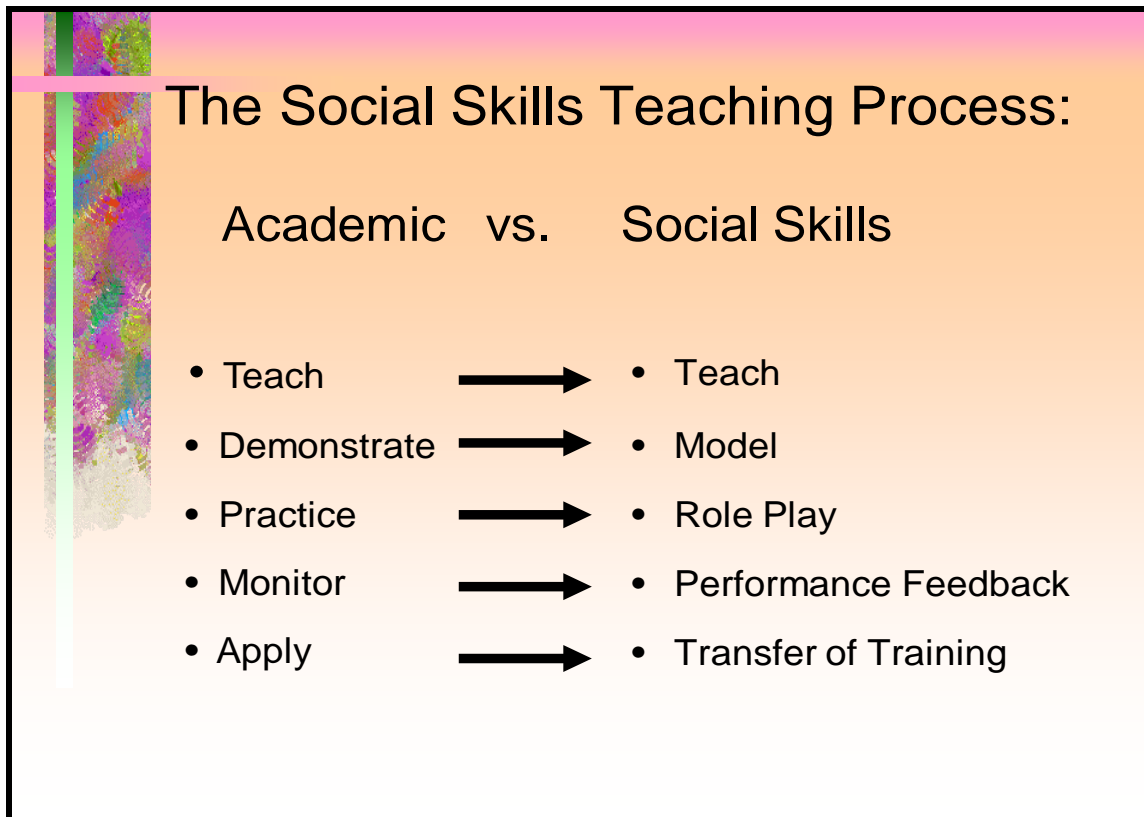
* More positive social behaviors,
* Fewer conduct problems,
* Less emotional distress, and
* Better grades and achievement test scores

(CASEL, 2005; Diekstra, 2008; Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnik, & Elias, 2003; Payton, Weissberg, Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor, Schellinger, & Pachan, 2008; Wilson, Gottfredson, & Najaka, 2001; Weissberg, Kumpfer, & Seligman, 2003; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004)

How Social Skills are Taught in the Classroom. From a teaching perspective, the most

successful social skill programs use a cognitive (through "scripts")—behavioral (demonstrating

"skills") social learning approach involving the following five components:

- Teaching the steps of the desired social skill.
- Modeling the steps and the social skills language (or script).
- Roleplaying the steps and the script with students.
- Providing Performance Feedback to the students relative to how accurately they are verbalizing the skill script and how successfully they are behaviorally demonstrating the new skill.
- Applying the skill and its steps as much as possible during the day to reinforce the teaching over time, in different settings, with different people, and in different situations.

When Teaching the steps of a desired social skill, students are taught the specific choices or

steps for the skill they are learning. This is done by teaching them the verbal steps or "scripts" of

the skill and the corresponding behaviors such that the skill is physically demonstrated.

The Social Skills Teaching Process:

Academic   vs.   Social Skills

Academic	Social Skills
• Teach ⟶	• Teach
• Demonstrate ⟶	• Model
• Practice ⟶	• Role Play
• Monitor ⟶	• Performance Feedback
• Apply ⟶	• Transfer of Training

When Modeling a social skill, teachers verbalize the steps to a particular social skill while showing their students how to perform the associated behavior(s). Typically, this is done by having teachers re-create an actual classroom or school situation where the particular social skill is needed. For example, in modeling the Dealing with Teasing social skill, a teacher would have a student "tease" the teacher in front of the class. The teacher then would "talk through" the "script"—the skill steps of the Dealing with Teasing social skill—while performing the appropriate behavior. Thus, during Teaching, teachers provide a context for and instruction in performing specific social skill behaviors. During Modeling, teachers demonstrate how to implement the skill, verbally and behaviorally, in a simulated situation.

After a teacher models a specific social skill, students are given opportunities to Roleplay or act out/practice the social skill in re-created situations that are both relevant to the classroom and the social skill. Roleplays may be done in front of the class, in small instructional groups, or separately with individual students depending on teachers' instructional decisions and/or students' social-emotional or behavioral needs. Similar to directing a scene from a school play, the teacher focuses on having students accurately verbalize the social skill "script" that is being taught and performing the corresponding behavior(s) during every roleplay.

While students are roleplaying their social skills, teachers provide Performance Feedback. This feedback positively reinforces students when they correctly (a) verbalize the social skills steps, (b) demonstrate the appropriate skill or behavior, and (c) review their performance after the roleplay or practice session is over. This feedback also occurs when roleplays get "off script." Here, the teacher may "freeze" the actors, provide corrective feedback to bring students back "on script," and resume the "scene" so that students practice only accurate and appropriate behavior.

After the modeling and roleplay (with performance feedback) steps, teachers provide as many practice (or application) opportunities for students in the classroom so that they master and begin to automatically and independently <u>transfer the training</u>—demonstrating or using their social skills in actual, real-life situations. This occurs as teachers set up situations in the classroom that require students to apply, under controlled and supervised conditions, their new social skills. It also occurs as teachers strategically prompt the use of different social skills <u>as much as possible</u> from day-to-day, hour-to-hour, and minute-to-minute in the classroom. Over time, all of this <u>teaching, practice, application, and infusion</u> helps students to understand the importance of using specific social skills, and to master and use their prosocial skills more quickly and independently.

In summary:

<u>When Teaching and Modeling</u>: Teachers need to make sure that students:

☐ have the prerequisite skills to be successful
☐ are taught using language that they can understand
☐ are taught in simple steps that ensure success
☐ hear the social skills script as the social skills behavior is demonstrated

<u>When Practicing or Roleplaying</u>: Teachers need to make sure that students:

☐ verbalize (or repeat or hear) the steps to a particular social skill as they demonstrate its appropriate behavior
☐ practice only the positive or appropriate social skill behavior
☐ receive ongoing and consistent practice opportunities
☐ use relevant practice situations that simulate the "emotional" intensity of the real situations so that they can fully <u>master</u> the social skill and be able to demonstrate it <u>under conditions of emotionality</u>
☐ practice the skills at a developmental level that they can handle

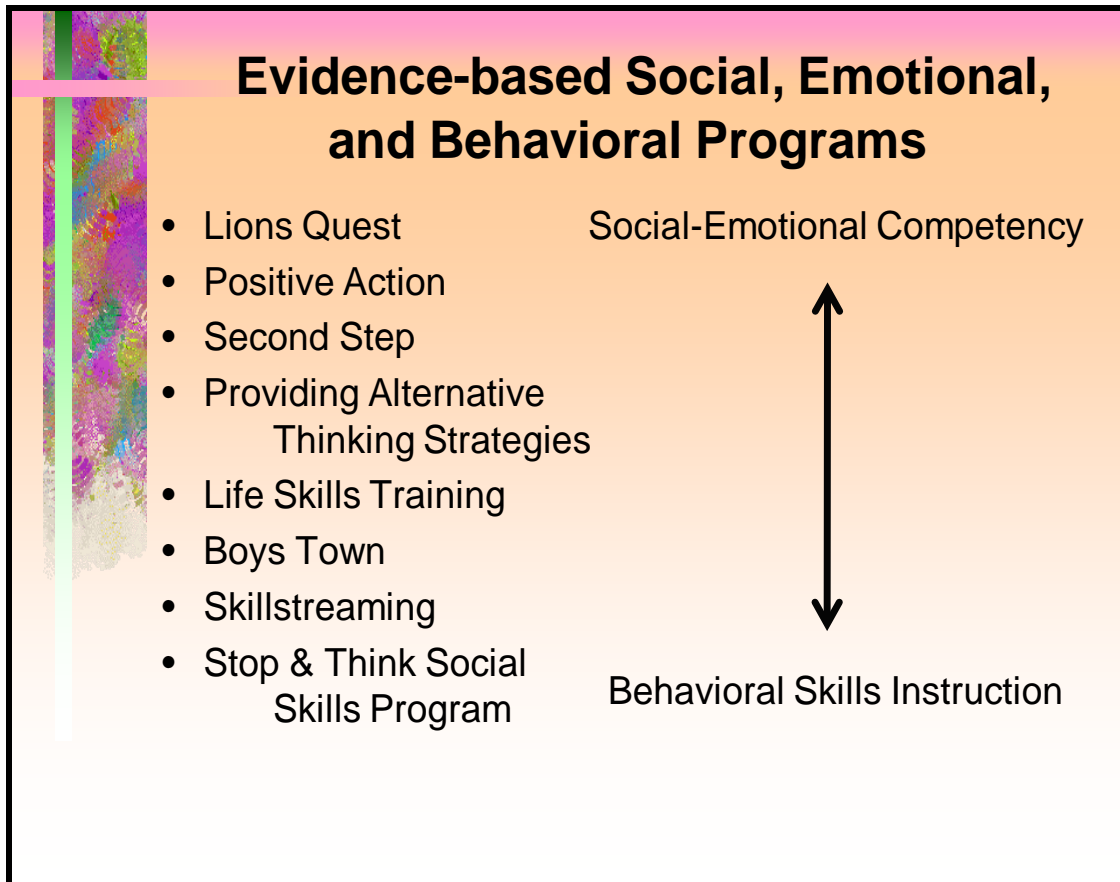When Giving Performance Feedback: Teachers need to make sure that the feedback is:

- ☐ specific and descriptive
- ☐ focused on reinforcing students' successful use of the social skill, or on correcting an inaccurate or incomplete social skills demonstration
- ☐ positive--emphasizing what was done well and what <u>can be</u> done well (or better) next time

When Transferring or Applying Social Skills after Instruction: Teachers need to make sure that they reinforce students' prosocial skills steps and behavior when students:

- ☐ have successfully demonstrated an appropriate social skill
- ☐ have made a "bad" choice, demonstrating an inappropriate social skill
- ☐ are faced with a problem or situation but have not committed to, nor demonstrated, a prosocial skill
- ☐ use the skill in situations that are somewhat different from those used when the skill was originally taught and practiced

A Brief Review of Some Notable Social Skills Programs

There are eight published programs that focus on teaching students social, emotional, and/or behavioral skills that meet many of the ten characteristics of effective social skills programs discussed earlier (see the series of tables that follow). Six of these programs have been identified as evidence-based programs through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). All of these programs can be arranged along a continuum that ranges from programs that focus more on social-emotional learning (SEL) to programs focusing more exclusively on behavioral skills instruction. The figure below organizes the eight programs reviewed in this section along this SEL to behavioral skills instruction continuum.

Evidence-based Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Programs

- Lions Quest
- Positive Action
- Second Step
- Providing Alternative Thinking Strategies
- Life Skills Training
- Boys Town
- Skillstreaming
- Stop & Think Social Skills Program

Social-Emotional Competency

↕

Behavioral Skills Instruction

Title:
Lion's Quest

Publisher:
Lions Clubs International Foundation
300 W. 22nd Street
Oak Brook, IL 60523-8842
Phone: 630-571-5466
Fax: 630-571-5735

Website:
www.lions-quest.org

General Information:

K-12 curriculum divided into three levels: K to Grade 5, Grade 6 to 8, and Grade 9 to 12.

The K through Grade 5 curriculum focuses on character education, social and emotional learning, and service-learning using 6 topics and 24 skill-building lessons. The Grade 6 to 8 program focuses on character development, communication and decision-making skills, and service-learning, guiding young people toward healthy choices and drug- and violence-free lifestyles. This curriculum contains 8 topical units and 102 skill-building lessons. The Grade 9 to 12 level focuses on cultural awareness, interpersonal communication, personal management and responsibility, and study and writing skills through more than 100 life skills lesson plans organized in 4-year, 1-semester, or 9-week program options.

Some materials are available in Spanish.

Important Note: In order to purchase any of the curricula at any level, teachers/schools must first purchase and participate in Lion's Quest training (two or three day workshops) at a cost of $4,500 to $7,500 for up to 36 participants for a district/school, or $425 to $500 per individual/teacher if they attend a pre-arranged regional workshop made available by Lion's Quest. Additional workshop topics are also available.

Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence (Grades 6 through 8; see below) has been rated a "**Model**" program by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an **"Effective"** program by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), and a "**Promising**" program by the U.S. Department of Education's Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools expert panel. All three Lions Quest programs are considered "**Select**" programs by the Collaborative for Academic and Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL).

Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence

LIONS QUEST SKILLS FOR ADOLESCENTS (SFA) goal is to help young people develop positive commitments to their families, schools, peers, and communities and to encourage healthy, drug-free lives.

- Designed for school wide and classroom implementation in Grades 6 to 8, the program works to unite educators, parents, and community members in utilizing social influence and social cognitive approaches in developing the following skills and competencies in young adolescents: (1) essential social/emotional competencies, (2) good citizenship skills, (3) strong positive character, (4) skills and attitudes consistent with a drug-free lifestyle and (5) an ethic of service to others within a caring and consistent environment.

- The learning model uses inquiry, presentation, discussion, group work, guided practice, service-learning, and reflection. The program is comprised of a series of 80 45-minute sequentially developed skill-building sessions, based on a distinct theme, that may be adapted to a variety of settings or formats.

Title:
Positive Action

Publisher:
Positive Action, Inc.
264 4th Ave. South
Twin Falls, ID 83301
Phone: 800-345-2974
Fax: 208-733-1590

Website:
www.positiveaction.net

General Information:

This program consists of five components in a K-12 curriculum: Self-Concept, Physical and Intellectual Positive Actions, and Social/Emotional Positive Actions.   Each Kit contains an instructor's manual with scripted 15-minute lessons, along with prepared materials. Included are student activity booklets, journals (for Grade 4 to 12), and other hands-on materials for 30 students.

The lessons contain activities that address academic standards and some lessons are aligned with states' standards.

Positive Action is based on the concept that "positive thoughts lead to positive actions, positive actions lead to positive feelings about yourself and positive feelings lead to more positive thoughts". It aims to teach positive actions for the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional areas of the self.

This program has been rated a "**Model**" program by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an "**Exemplary**" program by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), and a "**Promising**" program by the U.S. Department of Education's Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools expert panel. This program was reviewed in the publication An Educational Leader's Guide to Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs by the Collaborative for Academic and Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2003). This program also received a "**Positive Effects**" rating from the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse in 2007.

Positive Action

POSITIVE ACTION is a character education program for improving character, behavior, and academics.

- The program works by teaching and reinforcing an "intuitive philosophy" that students feel good about themselves when they do positive actions in a positive way. The program teaches the positive actions for the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional areas of the self.

- The philosophy is illustrated by the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle where positive thoughts lead to positive actions, positive actions lead to positive feelings about self, and positive feelings lead to more positive thoughts.

- The K-12 curricular kits contain an instructor's manual with scripted 15-minute lessons, along with completely prepared materials. Included are student activity booklets, journals (4-12), and other hands-on materials for 30 students.

Title:
SECOND STEP

Publisher:
Committee for Children, Dept. WEB
568 First Avenue South, Suite 600
Seattle, WA 98104-2804
Phone: 800-634-4449, ext. 6223
    Seattle area: 206-343-1223, ext. 6223
Fax: 206-343-1445

Website:
www.cfchildren.org

General Information:
Second Step is a violence prevention program that teaches social skills such as empathy, emotion management, problem solving, and cooperation. It is divided into three sections: Preschool/ Kindergarten, Grades 1 to 5, and Middle School.

For the two younger groups, the program uses lesson cards with photographs that prompt discussions about real-life situations. These lesson cards include objectives, scripts, discussion questions, role-plays, and other activities. The Preschool/Kindergarten level also incorporates puppets and songs on a CD. The Grades 1 to 5 level has an accompanying video. For Middle School students, a DVD provides informational video clips, dramatic vignettes, skill-practice demonstrations, and interviews with real students as teachers use fully-scripted lessons that incorporate group discussion; individual, partner, and group activities; and interactive exercises, games, and skill practice.

There is a separate parent program available.

Some materials (K-5) are available in Spanish.

This program has been rated a "**Model"** program by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an "**Effective"** program by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), an "**Exemplary"** program by the U.S. Department of Education's Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools expert panel, and a "**Select"** program by the Collaborative for Academic and Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL).

Second Step

SECOND STEP is a violence prevention program that integrates social and emotional learning with academics.

- The program uses teaching and learning strategies, such as stories and class discussion, role play, teacher modeling, coaching and cueing, and behavior reinforcement.

- Preschool through Grade 8 students learn and practice social skills, such as empathy, emotion management, problem solving, and cooperation to help them, in the classroom, on the playground, and at home.

- The engaging photo-lesson cards show adults and children expressing emotions and solving problems in real-life situations. Lessons include objectives, scripts, discussion questions, role plays, and other activities facilitating students' learning of important social and emotional skills.

Title:

PATHS (Providing Alternative THinking Strategies)

Publisher:
Channing Bete Company
One Community Place
South Deerfield, MA 01373-0200
Phone: 877-896-8532
Fax: 800-499-6464

Website:
 www.channing-bete.com/prevention-programs/paths

General Information:
The PATHS (Providing Alternative THinking Strategies) curriculum is a program for educators and counselors that is designed to facilitate the development of self-control, emotional awareness, and interpersonal problem-solving skills. The curriculum consists of an Instructional Manual; six volumes of lessons, pictures and photographs; and additional materials. A research book is also available. PATHS is designed for use with elementary school-aged children. The purpose of the PATHS Curriculum is to enhance the social competence and social understanding of children, as well as to facilitate educational processes in the classroom.

This program has been rated a "**Model"** program by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a "**Promising"** program by the U.S. Department of Education's Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools expert panel, and a "**Select"** program by the Collaborative for Academic and Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL). The PATHS program has also been recognized for its effectiveness by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Providing Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)

PATHS is a violence-prevention curriculum that promotes social and emotional learning (SEL), character development, and bullying prevention by building students' problem-solving abilities and other life skills required for positive relationships.

- PATHS facilitates the development of self-control, positive self-esteem, emotional awareness, and interpersonal problem-solving techniques -- skills that work to reduce classroom disruptions caused by bullying and other hostile behavior.

- This K to Grade 6 program works by teaching children how to label their feelings and apply self-control strategies. This leads to improvements in coping skills, classroom behavior, and verbal fluency.

- There are six curricular manuals with over 100 interactive lessons that move children along a continuum of emotional competency.

Title:

Botvin's "Life Skills Training"

Publisher:

Princeton Health Press
711 Westchester Avenue
White Plains, NY 10604
Phone: 914-421-2525 or 800-293-4969
Fax: 914-421-2007

Website:
www.lifeskillstraining.com

General Information:
Promoted as a program to help elementary, middle, and high school students develop skills to reduce tobacco, drug and alcohol abuse, and violence, Life Skills Training focuses on three primary learning objectives: drug resistance skills, personal self-management skills, and general social skills. The program begins at Grade 3 and extends into high school. The entire elementary section (Grades 3/4, 4/5, 5/6) features 24 sessions that are 30 to 35 minutes in length. For the Middle School, there are 30 sessions divided between Grades 6 to 9, and the High School consists of 10 sessions that are 40 to 45 minutes in length for Grades 9 and 10.

Life Skills Training is classroom-based and features lecture, discussion, coaching, and practice as instructional methods. The curriculum sets include a teacher's manual and 30 student guides. An elementary-level sample lesson is available on-line, providing a large number of worksheets. It features a decision-making model called the "Stop-Think-Go" method.

There is a parent guide and DVD (available in Spanish), and a workshop kit available for parent trainers. It addresses adolescent drug use and the development of student personal self-management and social skills. Additional resources are listed as available.

This program has been rated a "**Model"** program by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an "**Exemplary**" program by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), and an "**Exemplary"** program by the U.S. Department of Education's Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools expert panel. This program was reviewed in the publication An Educational Leader's Guide to Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs by the Collaborative for Academic and Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2003).

The program states that it also has been selected for excellence by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, American Psychological Association, and National Centers for Disease Control.

LifeSkills Training

LIFESKILLS TRAINING (LST) is a school-based program focused on preventing alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use and violence by targeting the major social and psychological factors that promote the initiation of substance use and other risky behaviors.

- LST addresses multiple risk and protective factors and teaches personal and social skills that build resilience and help youth navigate developmental tasks, including the skills necessary to understand and resist pro-drug influences.

- Facilitated discussion, structured small group activities, and role playing scenarios are used to stimulate participation and promote the acquisition of skills. Separate LST programs are offered for elementary school (Grades 3-6), middle school (Grades 6-9), and high school (Grades 9-12).

Title:
Tools for Teaching Social Skills in School
Lesson Plans, Activities, and Blended Teaching Techniques to Help Your Students Succeed

Publisher:
Boys Town Press
14100 Crawford Street
Boys Town, NE 68010
Phone: 800-282-6657 M-F, 8 to 5, CST
Fax: 402-498-1310

Website:
www.boystownpress.org   (General website address)
http://www.boystownpress.org/Scripts/prodView.asp?sku=45-013
        (Link directly to book listed above)

General Information:
This workbook is a series of instructional lesson plans for teaching 28 social skills including Following Instructions, Staying on Task, Working with Others, Accepting Criticism, Listening, Ignoring Distractions, Making a Good Choice, Sharing, and Showing Respect. Lesson plans have activities that use discussion, activities, journaling, role play, and reading.

The workbook also includes reproducible skill pages, techniques to blend social skills into academic lessons, ideas for bulletin board displays and student motivators, and it provides strategies for increasing parent support.

The book also has chapters explaining the role of social skills in the classroom, how to task-analyze skills, how to set behavioral expectations for students, and how to use consequences to teach social skills.

Boys Town Press offers a second volume, More Tools for Teaching Social Skills in School, with 35 additional lesson plans and accompanying activities.

This program has not been reviewed or listed in any national evidence-based registry, directory, or authority.

Boys Town

Boys Town provides two books to guide the teaching of approximately 50 specific social skills to students.

- The materials provide lesson plans with activities to help teach a range of social skills, from basic (Following Instructions and Listening to Others) to complex.   Social skills include: expressing empathy, going to an assembly, accepting defeat or loss, using anger control strategies, responding to inappropriate talk/touch, resisting negative peer pressure.

- Written to be adaptable for Kindergarten through Grade 12, the lessons provide a format with talking points that define and explain each skill and guide students through a skill-related activity. At the end of each lesson is a *Think Sheet* for students with questions about how to use a skill in different settings and situations. Role play scenarios and classroom activities also are provided so students can practice each skill's behavioral steps. Some of the activities blend the teaching of social skills into academic lessons in math/science, language arts, social science, and physical education.

Title:
Skillstreaming

Publisher:
Research Press
Dept. 29W
P.O. Box 9177
Champaign, IL 61826
Phone: 217-352-3273 or 800-519-2707
Fax: 217-352-1221
www.researchpress.com

Website:
www.skillstreaming.com

General Information:
Skillstreaming is a prosocial skills training program available for three instructional levels: Early Childhood - Preschool through Grade 1, Elementary School - Grades 2 to 5, and Adolescent - Grades 6 to 12. It focuses on addressing the social skill needs of students who display aggression, immaturity, withdrawal, or other problem behaviors. It is designed to help youngsters develop competence in dealing with interpersonal conflicts, learn to use self-control, and contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere.

The program uses a four-part training approach:

- Teacher Modeling

- Student Role Playing

- Group Performance Feedback

- Transfer Training (practicing the skills at home and in the community)

Skillstreaming also offers two staff training video programs in DVD or VHS: The Skillstreaming Video, a 26-minute overview on the implementation of the program; and Teaching Prosocial Behavior to Antisocial Youth, a 5-hour workshop divided into a 6-part videotape instructional session.

This program has not been reviewed or listed in any national evidence-based registry, directory, or authority.

Skillstreaming

SKILLSTREAMING addresses the social skill needs of students who display aggression, immaturity, withdrawal, or other problem behaviors. It is designed to help youngsters develop competence in dealing with interpersonal conflicts, learn to use self-control, and contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere.

- Skillstreaming teaches specific social skills using a process that involves modeling, role playing, performance feedback, and transfer (homework). Students develop competence in dealing with interpersonal conflicts and learn to use self-control.

- The curriculum, which is published at the Early Childhood, Elementary, and Adolescent levels, contains up to 60 skill lessons each arranged in five skill groups: Classroom Survival Skills, Friendship-Making Skills, Dealing with Feelings, Alternatives to Aggression, and Dealing with Stress.   Video examples and lesson plan resource materials are available.

Title:
The Stop and Think Social Skills Program (School and Home/Parents)

Publisher (School materials):
Cambium Learning/Sopris West Educational Services
4093 Specialty Place
Longmont, CO 80504
Phone: 800-547-6747
FAX: 888-819-7767
www.sopriswest.com

Publisher (Home/Parent materials):
Project ACHIEVE Press
49 Woodberry Road
Little Rock, AR 72212
Phone: 501-312-1484
FAX: 501-312-1493
www.projectachieve.info

Website:
School:
www.projectachieve.info/productsandresources/thestopthinksocialskillsprogramschool.html

Home/Parents: www.projectachieve.info/productsandresources/parentstopthinkbook.html

General Information:
The Stop & Think Social Skills Program has manuals and materials for both school and home/parent instruction and implementation. The program focuses on teaching students interpersonal, problem-solving, conflict resolution, coping, academic supporting, and classroom/building routine skills by using classroom or home lessons that involve teaching, modeling, roleplay, performance feedback, and transfer of training activities. Each social skill is taught in a two-week cycle that includes teaching each social skill's "step-by-step scripts and accompanying prosocial behaviors," engaging students in systematic "application" activities, and taking advantage of teachable moments to facilitate skill "infusion." The manuals guide teacher and parents through the two-week instructional cycle, and they contain scripts, activities, and suggestions for different roleplays, application activities, and opportunities to infuse each skill into naturally-occurring classroom or home experiences.

There are four levels of the Stop & Think school program: Preschool to early elementary (PreK to Grade 1), Early to middle elementary school (Grades 2 to 3), Middle to late elementary school (Grades 4 to 5), and Middle school (Grades 6 to 8). The parent/home manual focuses on Preschool to early elementary (PreK to Grade 1), Early to middle elementary school (Grades 2 to 3), and Middle to late elementary school (Grades 4 to 5) social skills.

In both school and home programs, students are first taught the universal "Stop and Think" language, which then integrates each social skill's specific steps into the third "What are your Choices or Steps?" step. Each level teaches 10 core social skills and 10 advanced social skills. Up to 20 additional classroom or building routines also are taught. The program comes in classroom kits that include a manual; reproducible form book with social skill calendars, lesson plan forms, and cue cards; small Stop and Think stop signs; and five large posters with each of the Stop and Think steps. The Parent manual comes with a 75-minute instructional DVD that is connected with specific skills or discussions. Other support materials (e.g., a preschool to Grade 1 music CD and posters, an Electronic book with classroom and building routines) are also available.

This program has been rated a "**Model**" program by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a **"Promising"** program by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), and a "**Select**" program by the Collaborative for Academic and Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL). Project ACHIEVE, which integrates the Stop & Think Social Skills Program, received the 2003 SAMHSA Administrators Award for School-Based Mental Health Services, and it was cited as an Exemplary Mental Health Program in Exemplary Mental Health Programs: School Psychologists as Mental Health Service Providers by the National Association of School Psychologists.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Programs

THE STOP & THINK SOCIAL SKILLS PROGRAMS help school staff and parents teach preschool through middle school students interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict resolution, academic supporting, and classroom/school routine skills to help them get along with peers and adults, make good choices, and demonstrate prosocial behaviors. Explicitly connected to a Positive Behavioral Support System, the goal is to teach, condition, and reinforce self-management skills.

- The Stop & Think programs teach specific social skills using (a) an instructional process that involves modeling, role playing, and performance feedback; (b) a transfer of training process where students are guided through systematic "application" activities; and (c) an infusion process that takes advantage of "teachable moments." For each skill, students learn the internal language script that is linked with the "Good Choice" behavior or skill.

- The school curriculum has four levels—from preschool through middle school, and the home/parent curriculum has two levels from preschool through late elementary school. In total, up to 80 skills are covered. A music CD (for preschool through Grade 1), and training DVD (for parents), and other materials and electronic books support the program.

Recommendations for Districts on How to Select a Social Skills Program

A social skills program should be selected as part of a district's commitment to teaching

social, emotional, and behavioral skills to all of its students, from preschool through high school.

As such, similar to the process used when districts choose a new reading or math series for their

schools, it is recommended that districts identify a representative Selection Committee that will

make the following decisions or complete the activities/actions below prior to recommending a

district-wide social skills curriculum:

- Identify and analyze the current skill status of elementary, middle school, and high school students, respectively, relative to their interpersonal, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and coping skills in the classroom and common areas of the school.

- Identify and analyze the respective patterns of elementary, middle school, and high school students' disciplinary referrals to the office and suspensions/expulsions, and how (or if) they relate to social skills problems or deficits.

- Identify and analyze, at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels, respectively, where and by whom social skills are currently being taught; where and by whom other health, mental health, and "wellness" skills and content are being taught; and whether or not the instruction is meeting the needs of students and staff, and accomplishing their desired outcomes.

- Identify and analyze the degree of teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, and fighting at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels, respectively, and how (or if) they relate to social skill problems or deficits.

- From the above analyses, determine the social, emotional, and/or behavioral needs, goals, and objectives for the district, at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels, respectively.

- Review three or more social skill curricula relative to their adherence or consistency with the characteristics of effective social skills programs, and to the social, emotional, and/or behavioral needs, goals, and objectives for the district, at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels, respectively.

Summary

Responding to the need for social skills instruction for all students, this report outlined the components of a Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS), described the evidence-based characteristics of successful social skills programs, and briefly reviewed the most relevant evidence-based programs as identified through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and other federal and/or relevant national organizations. Ending with recommendations for how to choose a district-wide social skills program, districts are encouraged both to choose an evidence-based program that will be used in all schools and at all levels, and to choose a program that best meets the needs, goals, and objectives of the district as determined by a data-based assessment and critical analysis.

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