

# Efficacy of Schoolwide Programs to Promote Social and Character Development and Reduce Problem Behavior in Elementary School Children



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# Efficacy of Schoolwide Programs to Promote Social and Character Development and Reduce Problem Behavior in Elementary School Children

Report From the Social and Character Development Research Program

**OCTOBER 2010**

Social and Character Development Research Consortium

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The SACD Research Consortium would also like to remember Dr. Victor Battistich from the College of Education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Dr. Battistich, who passed away on June 20, 2008, served as a consultant to MPR during this project and was a leading researcher in children's social development and school-based programming.

The mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations in the description of the projects, or the reporting of study findings, does not imply endorsement by the U.S. government.

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## Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest

The Social and Character Development (SACD) Research Consortium consists of research teams (principal investigators and co-principal investigators from each grantee site); Institute of Education Sciences (IES) staff; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) staff; and the evaluation contractor, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR). Except for the three exceptions described in the paragraph below, the grantee research teams, IES staff, CDC staff, and contractor staff from MPR have no interests that could be affected by findings from the evaluation of the intervention programs that are described in this report.

Three of the SACD program research teams were led by and/or included personnel who had developed the intervention programs implemented at their respective research sites. Dr. William E. Pelham, Jr. and his colleagues developed the *Academic and Behavioral Competencies Program*, which was implemented in elementary schools in New York. The *Competence Support Program*, implemented in North Carolina schools, is made up of three distinct interventions (*Making Choices*, *Competence Enhancement Behavior Management*, and *Classroom Social Dynamics Training*). Dr. Mark W. Fraser and his colleagues developed the *Making Choices* program. Dr. Thomas W. Farmer and his colleagues developed the *Competence Enhancement Behavior Management* and the *Social Dynamics Training* programs. The *Positive Action* program was developed by Carol G. Allred, who is a member of the research team that implemented the program in schools in Illinois and is married to Dr. Brian R. Flay, the leader of that team.

All seven teams of researchers were selected to receive funding for their SACD research projects in a competitive grant application process. Each research team implemented its intervention and conducted site-specific analysis examining the effects of these interventions on student outcomes. MPR, the evaluation study contractor, conducted independent evaluations of all the intervention programs that were included in the SACD study. A data collection team from MPR independently collected the data for the evaluation presented in this report with the exception of the fidelity of implementation data, which were collected by the seven teams. The MPR data analysis team completed all descriptive and impact analyses. The developers/implementers of these interventions did not conduct the impact analyses that are summarized in this report.



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## Glossary

4Rs—*The 4Rs Program (Reading, Writing, Respect, and Resolution)*

ABC—*Academic and Behavioral Competencies Program*

ADHD—attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

CDC—Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

combined-program—all seven programs together

CR—Child Report

CSP—*Competence Support Program*

DIR—Decision Information Resources, Inc., a subcontractor to Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), the contractor selected to do the independent evaluation of the SACD programs

ES—effect size

HHS—U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

HLM—hierarchical linear model

ICC—intraclass correlation

IES—Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education

LBW—*Love In a Big World*

leavers—students who left schools that were participating in the study before the study was completed

MANOVA—multivariate analysis of variance

MDES—minimum detectable effect size

middle childhood—the developmental period from 6 to 12 years of age

MPR—Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., the contractor selected to do the independent evaluation of the SACD programs

multiprogram evaluation—the evaluation of the impact of the seven SACD programs on students' social and character development. The evaluation looked at the average impact of all seven SACD programs combined and the average impact of each SACD program individually.

named activities—activities carried out in the context of a named SACD program to support students' social and character development

named program—a specific SACD program

new entrants—students who entered schools participating in the study after the study had begun

outcome domain—a set of outcomes grouped together because they measure a similar school activity, teacher instructional behavior, or student behavior

## Glossary

outcomes—what the SACD programs were expected to change regarding school activities, teacher instructional behavior, or student behavior

PA—*Positive Action*

PATHS—*Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies*

PCR—Primary Caregiver Report

SACD—social and character development

SACD activities—activities to support students' social and character development

SACD goals—six specific goals defined by the SACD Research Program and promoted through the use of SACD activities to support students' social and character development. The goals are (1) violence prevention and peace promotion, (2) social and emotional development, (3) character education, (4) tolerance and diversity, (5) risk prevention and health promotion, and (6) civic responsibility and community service.

SACD program—a specific program that has the purpose of improving the social and character development of students

SACD Research Consortium—the researchers responsible for the SACD Research Program. These include staff at the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in the U.S. Department of Education; the Division of Violence Prevention in the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), the contractor, selected to do the independent evaluation of the SACD programs; as well as the seven research teams that received funding under cooperative agreements to evaluate one SACD program of their choosing under an experimental design.

SACD Research Program—a collaboration between the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in the U.S. Department of Education and the Division of Violence Prevention in the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its purpose is to evaluate multiple universal, elementary school-based programs that target student social development and behavior outcomes.

SACD training—professional development for teachers on instructional methods to promote student social and character development

school-based program—a program delivered in a school setting

site—the set of schools, both treatment and control, specific to each individual SACD program evaluation

SS—*Second Step*

stayers—students who were in schools participating in the study for the entire study

targeted school-based programs—programs that are designed to address the needs of a subset of the children in a school

TRCS—Teacher Report on Classroom and School

TRS—Teacher Report on Student

universal programs—programs that are designed to address the needs of all children in a school

WWC—the What Works Clearinghouse

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