

Research Reports that Social Skills Instruction Improves Students' Academic Outcomes

In a research report published in the journal *Child Development*, a group of researchers reported the results of an analysis of 213 studies involving over 270,000 students in Kindergarten through Grade 12. Investigating the impact of programs that taught students social, emotional, and behavioral skills, the study found that students who took part in these programs improved in their grades and standardized-test scores by 11 percentile points when compared with nonparticipating students.

According to the researchers, the impact of social, emotional, and behavioral instruction was equivalent to moving a student currently in the middle of his or her class academically to the top 40 percent of his or her peers.

In addition, when compared with their peers, the students involved in social, emotional, and behavioral instruction significantly improved in five additional key areas: (a) they demonstrated greater social skills, (b) less emotional stress, (c) better attitudes, (d) fewer conduct problems (such as bullying and suspensions), and (e) more prosocial behavioral--such as cooperating with and helping other students.

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by Sarah D. Sparks (February 4, 2011)