

Excerpts from:

Building on the Best, Learning from What Works: A Few Promising Discipline and Violence Prevention Programs

American Federation of Teachers (2000).

Full document is available in pdf format at the following website address:

<http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/downloads/teachers/wwdiscipline.pdf>

“Before deciding whether to adopt one of these programs, we recommend that schools conduct a careful audit (self-study) to gain a better understanding of what is working and what needs to be improved. For the vast majority of students and schools, attention to the basic steps described above – effective interventions for troubled students, and the ability to remove the few violent and chronically disruptive students from the classroom – will be enough to restore order.

“Schools and classrooms with persistent problems and/or in which a high proportion of students need behavioral support should consider their options carefully – particularly the trade-offs involved in adopting an extensive intervention program. Is the percentage of students with behavior problems high enough to warrant using the class time of all students to teach social and behavioral skills? Would the school’s time and resources be better spent in improving the quality of the targeted interventions provided to individual students? Could this be a sign of widespread academic difficulties, signaling the need for more remedial services and a revamped academic program?

“In deciding which additional steps must be taken, school staffs are encouraged to ask themselves these and several similar questions:

- Will this help address the school’s most urgent needs, as identified by the audit?
- Will this help us spot and respond to problems earlier and more effectively?
- Will this help prevent problems from occurring (or recurring)?
- Do we have adequate resources and staff/administrative support to implement this well?
- Is this likely to help us use existing personnel and resources more effectively?
- Is this a good fit with the school’s goals and academic program?
- Is this likely to result in more class time to spend on teaching and learning, or less?”

On the following pages are brief descriptions of:

- *Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)*
- *Consistency Management & Cooperative Discipline (CMCD)*
- *The Good Behavior Game (GBG)*
- *I Can Problem Solve (ICPS)*

***Promoting Alternative
Thinking Strategies
(PATHS)***

Targeted Grades: Kindergarten through grade 5

Materials: Materials include six volumes of PATHS lessons and an instruction manual to assist with implementation.

Instructional Support/ Professional Development: Teachers, support personnel, and administrative staff receive training, which initially includes a two- to three-day workshop, preferably given just before the beginning of the school year. Additional professional development, in the form of observation and feedback from program consultants, is ongoing, either weekly or bi-weekly.

Results: There have been four clinical trials of PATHS, two involving children with disabilities and two involving regular education students. In each case, the program was shown to improve positive indicators (Social cognition, social and emotional competencies) and reduce behavioral risk factors (aggression and depression) across a wide variety of elementary school-aged children.

For More Information

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***Consistency Management
&
Cooperative Discipline
(CMCD)***

Targeted Grades: Available to schools in geographic feeder patterns preK-12, moving with students at each level over a three-year period, starting with the elementary schools, then middle, and finally the high school.

Materials: Materials focus on building self-discipline in students, but also cover several other topics, such as writing, conflict resolution, time management, and job training skills (including resume writing, interviews, and team building).

Instructional Support/ Professional Development: CMCD includes four phases of professional development: awareness, implementation, follow-up, and sustaining support. The implementation phase typically consists of two on-site training sessions led by CMCD staff during the spring prior to implementation. These are followed by a two-day academy that is held before the next academic year. During the follow-up phase-which lasts for the initial year of implementation - CMCD holds a series of workshops (Usually six), held on site or at a neighboring school. Sustaining support is provided in years two and three, during which an orientation training session and occasional workshops are provided for new teachers. During this phase, veteran teachers from the school are also selected to become program facilitators, providing additional training and support to new staff. CMCD staff members are also available to conduct additional schoolwide training, if needed. This program depends upon the commitment, collaboration, and support of school staff. Thus, CMCD hosts awareness workshops for schools and districts, then requires that 70 percent of the school staff vote to approve the program's adoption. In addition, the program requires one full-time facilitator for every three CMCD elementary schools and one facilitator for every CMCD secondary school in the district.

Results: Evaluations indicate that CMCD schools have from 72 percent to 78 percent fewer discipline referrals to the principal's office. Research also indicates increases in student attendance, teacher attendance, and student achievement, as well as improvements in classroom climate reported by students, teachers, and principals. In addition, research suggests that the program can help to increase instructional time-that is, time not lost to handling discipline problems.

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The Good Behavior Game ***(GBG)***

Targeted Grades: Grades 1 and 2

Materials: A detailed manual (available on the Internet at <http://www.bppjhu.edu>) provides an overview of the program, an explanation of the theoretical basis for the design, instructions for putting the game into effect, and evaluation forms to use during and after implementation.

Instructional Support/ Professional Development: GBG is a simple behavior management tool, requiring little or no technical assistance for implementation. At present, the primary means disseminating the game is through the manual (See above). Interested schools are advised to look at the manual, then consider what (if any) additional implementation support may be necessary. Contact the Prevention Research Center at Johns Hopkins University to explore the possibilities for consultations, implementation support, and advice.

Results: After one year of implementation, teachers reported a reduction in first-grade students' shy and aggressive behaviors, with the most significant effects observed in students initially considered most aggressive. These effects also appeared to be sustained, with boys considered to be the most aggressive in first grade showing reduced aggression at the end of sixth grade.

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I Can Problem Solve (ICPS)

Targeted Grades: Pre-K through grade 6.

Materials: The program is based around a number of scripted lessons - 59 for use during preschool, 83 for kindergarten and the primary grades, 77 for the intermediate elementary grades-that teachers can use to help children learn to resolve problems peacefully. The lessons consist of games, stories, and/or dialogues that last up to 20 minutes each and are implemented in small groups over a period of about three months. The lessons are contained in three separate training manuals, one for each of the age groups. (See the "Resources" section for ordering information.)

Instructional Support/ Professional Development: In addition to the formal lessons, the program helps teachers acquire an informal style of communication, called "problem solving dialoguing," which helps children learn to apply their problem-solving skills to non-classroom situations. The training manuals also provide examples of the use of ICPS dialogue techniques in real-life situations.

Results: Evaluations indicate that ICPS children demonstrate less impulsive and less inhibited classroom behavior and better problem-solving skills than do students in comparison groups. One longitudinal study followed a group of poor, inner-city students who had received ICPS in kindergarten and first grade, and found that benefits, as measured by improved classroom behavior and problem-solving skills, were sustained for as long as four years after the intervention. A study that looked at the use of the program with fifth- and sixth-graders also found that ICPS students showed more positive, pro-social behaviors, fewer negative behaviors, healthier peer relationships, and better problem-solving skills.

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