

Title: Effects of a School-Based Social-Emotional and Character Development Program on Peer, Family, School, and Neighborhood Contexts: A Cluster-Randomized Controlled Trial

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Abstract

Aims: To evaluate the impact of a school-based social-emotional and character development program on the various socializing contexts of youth.

Methods: A matched-pair, cluster-randomized controlled trial included 1,170 students from 14, low-income, urban, Chicago Public Schools. Outcomes were assessed longitudinally for a cohort of youth followed from grades 3 to 8. Multilevel growth-curve modeling and endpoint analyses were conducted on indicators of peer, family, school, and neighborhood contexts.

Results: Students in *PA* schools had slower rates of decline and higher end-point scores than students in non-*PA* schools across all of the contexts examined. For example, impacts were observed for positive school orientation, peer victimization, parent attachment, and neighborhood context.

Conclusion: Results illustrate that school-based social-emotional and character development programs have the capacity to affect youth experiences in a range of environmental contexts that are key for youth development and functioning.

Keywords: Social-emotional and character development, social context, ecological context, adolescence, school-based, longitudinal design, cluster-randomized controlled trial