

ALTERNATIVES TO DISCIPLINE EXCLUSIONARY

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Council for
Children's
Rights

Peer Reviewed Literature

Citation	Source	Summary	Recommendations
<p>Bradshaw, C.P., Mitchell, M.M., & Leaf, P.J. (2010). Examining the effects of schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports on student outcomes. <i>Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions</i>, 12(3), 133-148</p>	<p>Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions: peer reviewed journal</p>	<p>This study uses a randomized control trial (RTC) to examine the impact of PBIS on student suspensions and academic achievement. Findings indicated that schools utilizing SVVPBIS experienced significant reductions in student suspensions and office discipline referrals. Though academic achievement scores did not differ significantly, scores at PBIS schools trended higher than those at comparison schools.</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>Bruns, E. J., Moore, E., Stephan, S. H., Pruitt, D., & Weist, M. D. (2005). The Impact of School Mental Health Services on Out-of-School Suspension Rates. <i>Journal of Youth and Adolescence</i>, 34(1), 23-30.</p>	<p>Journal of Youth and Adolescence: peer reviewed journal</p>	<p>This study examined the impact of school level expanded mental health services on suspension rates in Baltimore City schools. Forty-one elementary schools with expanded mental health services were compared to 41 similar elementary schools without expanded mental health services. Regression analyses found that presence of school mental health clinicians was not a significant predictor of OSS rates. Several possible reasons were given for this finding: a) students were not being referred to mental health clinicians prior to being suspended, b) there was no explicit strategy in place to address OSS, or c) it could have been a function of the quasi-experimental research design.</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>Chin, J. K., Dowdy, E., Jimerson, S. R., & Rime, W. J. (2012). Alternatives to suspensions: Rationale and recommendations. <i>Journal of School Violence</i>, 11(2), 156-</p>	<p>Journal of School Violence: peer reviewed journal</p>	<p>In this study, alternatives to suspensions (ATS) were offered in one elementary school. The school already had a schoolwide PBIS program in place, and the ATS was added for students who were referred for significant behavioral infractions (n=9). ATS interventions were individualized to meet the needs of each student and were based on skill building and proactive learning. In order to move away from “one size fits all” discipline, a decision making guide was utilized to choose</p>	<p>NA</p>

173.		interventions. First the function of the problem behavior was assessed; interventions were then selected to match the function of the behavior.	
Cornell, D. & Allen, K. (2011). Development, evaluation, and future directions of the Virginia student threat assessment guidelines. <i>Journal of School Violence</i> , 10(1), 88-106	Journal of School Violence: peer reviewed journal	Multiple evaluations of the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines have found positive results. Students who went through threat assessment procedures evidenced a reduction in discipline referrals. In a comparison of schools utilizing the threat assessment guidelines and those that did not, researchers found that those using the guidelines reported less bullying, more positive perceptions of climate, and fewer long term suspensions. A Randomized Control Trial (RCT) is currently underway.	NA
Cornell, D., Sheras, P., & Kaplan, S. (2004). Guidelines for student threat assessment: Field-test findings. <i>School Psychology</i> , 33(4), 527-546.	School Psychology: peer reviewed journal	This study examines the results of a field test of a set of guidelines for schools to use in responding to possible student threats of violence. A decision tree was developed to guide school officials through the threat assessment process. Steps included gathering information, analyzing the type and seriousness of the threat, and a mental health evaluation. Of 188 threats made, only 30% were judged through threat assessment to be serious. Only 3 students were expelled and no threats were carried out. Under zero tolerance policies a much higher number of students would have been subject to expulsion.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate the rates of reported and unreported student threats. 2. Identify methods (e.g., mediation, individual counseling, disciplinary consequences) that are most effective for each kind of threat. 3. Identify the key systems variables that contribute to the successful implementation of a threat assessment program.
Durlak, J. A., & Wells, A. M. (1997). Primary prevention mental health programs for children and adolescents: A meta-analytic review. <i>American journal of community psychology</i> , 25(2), 115-152.	American Journal of Community Psychology: peer reviewed journal	This meta analysis examined the impact of primary prevention programs on children's outcomes. Outcomes were discussed by setting. In the school setting, primary prevention efforts had an effect size (ES) of .35 with most studies focusing on creating a more supportive classroom environment. Programs focusing on school transitions had an ES of .39. Affective education and problem solving programs were most effective for younger children (ES=.70 and .93 respectively). Programs using behavioral and cognitive-behavioral techniques had an ES of .49. Most	NA

		preventative programs worked by both reducing problem behaviors and increasing competencies.	
Fenning, P, Pulaski, S., Gomez, M., Morello, M., Maciel, L., Maroney, E., Schmidt, A., et al. (2012). Call to action: A critical need for designing alternatives to suspension and expulsion. <i>Journal of School Violence, 11</i> (2), 105-117	Journal of School Violence: peer reviewed journal	Researchers conducted a content analysis of 120 written school discipline policies drawn from six states. They rated the severity of behavior and then whether the consequence was proactive (i.e., peer mediation, parent conference, community service), or reactive (mild, moderate, or severe). For all states, a high percentage of policies listed suspension as an option for a range of behavioral infractions, including minor infractions such as tardies. Proactive responses were present in less than 5% of policies.	1. Review and revise current written school discipline policies to include more proactive responses to behavioral infractions.
Gagnon, J. C., & Leone, P. E. (2001). Alternative strategies for school violence prevention. <i>New Directions for Youth Development, 92</i> , 101-125.	New Directions for Youth Development: peer reviewed journal	Universal interventions are those that attempt to create school climates that foster social and academic growth and a sense of community. These approaches train, monitor, and reinforce appropriate behavior. Examples given include PBIS, Project ACHIEVE, and the Resolving Conflicts Creatively Program (RCCP). Five components that are common to these programs include 1) initial school-wide functional behavioral assessment/needs assessment and intervention planning, 2) teacher, administrator, and parent support and education, 3) clear rules, consequences, and conflict resolution and social skills training for students 4) effective instruction, 5) monitoring of student behavior. Targeted approaches are interventions aimed at students exhibiting aggressive behavior or who are at risk of doing so. Positive Adolescent Choices Training (PACT) is a cognitive behavioral intervention aimed at African American adolescents with a focus on modeling appropriate behavior, resolving conflicts, and anger management. First Step to Success is aimed at kindergarten students who display aggressive behavior and uses skills training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policies: clearly stated rules and consequences for students, teachers, and administrators. 2. Structures: principal support for prevention program, ongoing support to staff, parent and community involvement. 3. Routines: needs assessments and functional behavioral assessments, staff acceptance, staff training, conflict resolution and social skills training, program monitoring and effective implementation.

		<p>and a reward system. Common components of these interventions include problem solving, self expression, and positive interactions. Intensive interventions are necessary for approximately 3-5% of students.</p> <p>Functional behavioral assessment (FBA) in which observation and interviews are used to identify and describe problem behavior and the contexts in which it occurs, and alternative educational programs are two promising intensive interventions that are discussed.</p> <p>Though these are listed as promising intensive interventions, research on the effectiveness of these interventions is scarce. School security measures (e.g., cameras, metal detectors) are also widely used but there is little research supporting this use. Higher levels of school security is actually associated with lower levels of perceived school safety.</p>	
<p>Gottfredson, G. D., & Gottfredson, D. C. (2001). What Schools Do to Prevent Problem Behavior and Promote Safe Environments. <i>Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation</i>, 12(4), 313-344.</p>	<p>Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation: peer reviewed journal</p>	<p>A survey of approximately 650 school principals found that on average, principals reported implementing 14 prevention programs in their schools. Rural schools generally implement fewer interventions than urban schools. It is possible that by attempting so many different activities, schools spread their efforts too thin, diminishing the quality of each program.</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>Greenberg, M. T., Weissberg, R. P., O'Brien, M. U., Zins, J. E., Fredericks, L., Resnik, H., & Elias, M. J. (2003). Enhancing school-based prevention and youth</p>	<p>American Psychologist: peer reviewed journal</p>	<p>In this article authors argue that that school-based prevention and intervention programs should both enhance students' personal and social assets and improve the climate of schools in which students are educated. Many prevention programs are ineffective because they short-term, fragmented, and not linked to the central mission of the school (academic performance). Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)</p>	<p>NA</p>

<p>development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 58(6-7), 466-474.</p>		<p>includes recognizing and managing emotions, problem solving, and establishing positive relationships with others. SEL strategies work to reduce risks while enhancing children’s competencies and connections to others. Students learn SEL skills in the same way that they learn academic skills- by learning, practicing, and applying them in and out of the classroom. SEL instruction should begin in preschool and continue through high school. In reviewing the literature on prevention programs that utilize SEL strategies, researchers found that person-centered affective education and interpersonal problem-solving training, as well as school/environment change strategies, produced mean effect sizes ranging from .24 to .93, with the strongest benefits occurring for children ages 2 to 7. Interventions using behavioral approaches produced larger effects than those using nonbehavioral approaches. Additional research found that longer interventions are more effective than short interventions, prevention programs should focus on multiple domains (child, school, family), and interventions should try to foster positive school climate. Authors assert that we need to go beyond questions of “Which program works?” and examine questions such as “Which combinations or sequences of strategies work best?”.</p>	
<p>Horner, R., & Sugai, G. (2009). A randomized, wait-list controlled effectiveness trial assessing school-wide positive behavior support in elementary schools. <i>Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions</i>, 11(3),</p>	<p>Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions: peer reviewed journal</p>	<p>This study examined the impacts of PBIS in 60 schools compared to 60 waitlist schools. Findings indicated that schools implementing SWPBS were perceived as safer environments. Small but non-significant differences in academic achievement were also seen.</p>	<p>NA</p>

133-144.			
<p>Karp, D. R., & Breslin, B. (2001). Restorative justice in school communities. <i>Youth and Society</i>, 33(2), 249-272.</p>	<p>Youth and Society: peer reviewed Journal</p>	<p>Restorative justice is defined as an approach that “links crime to a break down in social relationships and hence prescribes a reintegrative response to crime focused on attempts to repair, rebuild and enhance bonds or ties between young offenders and their communities”. School based restorative justice focuses on misconduct as harmful to relationships and works to restore the school-student relationship/school community. This study examined a cluster of schools (Minnesota’s statewide system, 15 schools in Denver, and 6 alternative schools in Pennsylvania). Early reports find that schools that implemented restorative justice interventions in Minnesota evidenced a reduction in suspensions. No outcome data was reviewed for the other 2 sites. The following three areas are problematic for implementation of restorative justice practices 1) they are time intensive 2) they are difficult to implement within the current system of retributive justice 3) there is often tension internally (principals, teachers) between restorative and retributive practices.</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>Osher, D., Bear, G. G., Sprague, J. R., & Doyle, W. (2010). How can we improve school discipline? <i>Educational Researcher</i>, 39(1), 48-58.</p>	<p>Educational Researcher: Peer reviewed journal</p>	<p>This article examines three approaches to school discipline: ecological approaches to classroom management, school-wide positive behavior supports (SWPBS) and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). Ecological approaches to classroom management aim to increase the strength and quality of classroom activities. While there are no efficacy studies of this specific approach, classroom management has been linked to academic achievement. SWPBS communicate, teach rules, reward students for positive behavior, and provide function based interventions. Studies have found reductions in discipline referrals, aggression, and antisocial behaviors. SEL programs promote student self- awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.</p>	<p>NA</p>

		<p>Studies of specific SEL programs such as PATHS (Providing Alternative Thinking Strategies), Second Step, Steps to Respect, and Caring School Communities (formerly the Child Development Project) found reductions in aggression and disruptive behavior, decreases in antisocial behavior and increases in socially competent behavior, and less bullying and argumentative behavior. Authors assert that combining these approaches may be the best way to improve student behavior.</p>	
<p>Teske, S. C. (2011). A study of zero tolerance policies in schools: A multi-integrated systems approach to improve outcomes for adolescents. <i>Journal of child and adolescent psychiatric nursing</i>, 24(2), 88-97.</p>	<p>Journal of child and adolescent psychiatric nursing: peer reviewed journal</p>	<p>Clayton County GA enacted efforts to reduce suspensions and arrests in district schools. “By 2003, with referrals, probation caseloads, and recidivist rates increasing, and graduation rates decreasing, the system was under stress. It was time to evaluate how the system should respond to disruptive students in light of the research indicating that punishment alone, whether by suspension, expulsion, or arrest, exacerbates the problem for the students, schools, and the community.” First the “School Referral Reduction Protocol” aimed to reduce arrests by enacting a 3 tiered process: 1) student and parent receive a warning on first offense, 2) student is referred to a conflict resolution workshop on the second offense, 3) referral to the court on 3rd offense. They also created a multi-disciplinary panel to serve as the point of entry for all children at risk of court referral. The panel recommends an integrated service action plan for each child, to address disruptive behavior. The panel developed an array of evidence- based treatment programs such as functional family therapy, multisystemic therapy, cognitive behavioral programming, and wrap-around services. After implementing the School Referral Reduction Protocol, referrals to the court were reduced by 67%. Middle school OSS was decreased by 8%. Gradual increases in</p>	<p>NA</p>

		graduation rates were seen; by 2009 the graduation rate had increased 20%.	
Wilson, S. J., & Lipsey, M. W. (2007). School-Based interventions for aggressive and disruptive behavior: Update of a meta-analysis. <i>American journal of preventive medicine</i> , 33, 1-29.	American Journal of Preventative Medicine: peer reviewed journal	The goal of this meta-analysis was to identify characteristics of successful school based intervention programs for aggressive and disruptive behaviors. Researchers examined data from 249 studies and focused on the outcomes of aggressive and disruptive behavior. Findings indicated that the most effective approaches are universal programs delivered to all the students in a classroom or school and targeted programs for selected/indicated children who participate in programs outside of their regular classrooms. The mean effect sizes were .21 and .29 respectively. Cognitively oriented approaches behavioral, social skills, and counseling treatment were equally effective within these formats (universal and targeted approaches). Within the universal format, larger effect sizes were seen for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and within the targeted approach format, larger effect sizes were seen for students already exhibiting problematic behavior. Small effect sizes were seen for special school settings and small insignificant effects were seen for more comprehensive long-term programs.	NA

Grey Literature

Citation	Source	Summary	Recommendations
Bergquist, C., Bigbie, C., Groves, L., & Richardson, G. (2005). <i>Evaluation report for the study of alternatives to suspension</i> (Vol. 9504). Retrieved from http://www.esdi.cc/Alternatives to suspension-Final Report-2005.pdf	Evaluation Systems Design, Inc.: private consulting firm that provides assistance in assessing, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating programs in education and human services.	The goals of this study were to identify essential components of effective interventions, and to develop an array of programs that can be used by school districts as alternatives to suspension. Key components of effective interventions included: proactive intervention for small groups of targeted students, using individual or small group counseling, redirecting behaviors before they became severe, parent involvement, and strong classroom instruction. Authors suggest providing a continuum of services, beginning with school-wide prevention programs aimed at establishing whole school culture, setting expectations for teacher and student behavior, emphasizing positive behavior, adult modeling of behavior, using data.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concentrate resources on prevention programs that will keep most students from needing more intensive interventions. 2. Promote and support functional behavioral analysis models and student intervention teams as methods of identifying student behavioral issues.

		Examples of prevention programs include PBIS, Safe and Civil Schools, Developmental Guidance Program. The next step in the continuum is to implement programs that address students at risk of behavior problems. These programs should address root causes of behavioral problems, provide counseling and emotional support, utilize a multidisciplinary intervention team, track and use data to make treatment decisions, and involve parents. Examples given include school based behavioral support specialists, Strengthening Families, Second Step, Here's Looking at You, mentoring, teen court, classroom management strategies for teachers.	
Boccanfuso, C. & Kuhfeld, M. (2011). Multiple responses, promising results: Evidence-based, nonpunitive alternatives to zero tolerance. <i>Child Trends (March 2011)</i> . Retrieved from http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/AbstractDB/AbstractDBDetails.aspx?id=256221	Child Trends: independent, non-partisan research center dedicating to improving the lives of children and families	<p>Researchers review existing research on implementation and effects of zero tolerance and then highlight rigorously evaluated alternatives to zero tolerance. While there is a lack of rigorous research on the effects of zero tolerance, existing data suggest that these policies are not deterring misbehavior. Further, suspension and expulsion are linked to a host of negative outcomes from risk of subsequent suspensions to lowered school-wide achievement and higher dropout rates. Several non-punitive alternative approaches to school discipline have been shown to positively impact student behavior and academic achievement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Targeted behavioral supports for at-risk students: a) social skills building, b) individualized behavior supports c) family involvement. Reconnecting Youth, Cognitive-Behavioral Training Program for Behaviorally Disordered Adolescents 2) Character Education and Social-Emotional Learning Programs: a) social skills building, b) self-management skills, c) decision making skills, d) interactive teaching strategies (Positive Action, Too Good for Violence, Connect with Kids, School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support, PeaceBuilders) 	NA
Sumner, M. D., Silverman, C. J., & Frampton, M. L. (2010). <i>School-based restorative justice as an alternative to zero-tolerance policies : Lessons from West Oakland</i> . Berkeley, CA: Thelton E Henderson Center for Social Justice.	Thomas E Henderson Center for Social Justice: university based law research center	This report examines a pilot program of restorative justice in one middle school serving low income, minority students. Suspensions decreased by 87%, and expulsions decreased to 0.	NA