

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin's Social Emotional Competencies

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT(PK-5 th Grade)					
Understand and manage one's emotions					
No.	CASEL Domain	CASEL Domain	PK-5K	1st-3rd	4th-5th
1		Self-Awareness	Learners will be able to demonstrate awareness of their emotions and how they may be the same or different from others. Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) Domain II A EL.1	Learners will be able to recognize and label a variety of their own basic emotions.	Learners will be able to recognize and label a variety of complex emotions in self and others.
2		Self-Management	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, use verbal and nonverbal language to demonstrate a variety of emotions. WMELS Domain II A EL.1	Learners will be able to use verbal and nonverbal language to demonstrate a variety of increasingly complex emotions.	Learners will be able to express their emotions to self and others in respectful ways.
3		Self-Management	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, display age appropriate self-control. WMELS Domain II A EL.1	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, demonstrate a variety of strategies to manage strong emotions.	Learners will be able to, with minimal adult guidance, manage emotions (e.g., stress, impulses, motivation) in a manner sensitive to self and others.
4		Focus Attention	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance and engaging activities, attend for longer periods of time and show preference for some activities. WMELS IV.A.EL.1	Learners will begin to be able to, with adult guidance, focus their attention by demonstrating a variety of strategies to tolerate distractions.	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, use organizational skills and strategies to focus attention in order to work toward personal and academic goals.
5		Social Awareness	Learners will be able to recognize the feelings of another child and respond with basic comfort and empathy. WMELS Domain II A EL.2	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, identify how others are feeling, based on their verbal and nonverbal cues, and respond with compassion.	Learners will be able to identify others' need for empathy and respond in respectful ways.
6		Social Awareness	Learners will be able to associate words and gestures with a variety of emotions expressed by others. WMELS Domain II A EL.2	Learners will be able to predict how someone else may feel in a variety of situations.	Learners will be able to use perspective-taking to predict how their own behavior affects the emotions of others.

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SELF-CONCEPT (Pre K - 5th Grade)					
Develop positive self-identity and recognize self as a lifelong learner					
No.	CASEL Domain	CASEL Domain	PK-5K	1st-3rd	4th-5th
7		Self-Awareness	Learners will be able to exhibit positive self-concept and confidence in their abilities. WMEELS Domain II B EL.1	Learners will be able to identify and describe skills and activities they do well and those for which they need help.	Learners will be able to use a "growth mind set" in order to recognize and build on their strengths.
8		Self-Awareness	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, recognize and share independent thoughts. WMEELS Domain II B EL.1	Learners will be able to identify and explore their own beliefs.	Learners will be able to reflect on similarities and differences between their personal beliefs and those of others.
9		Self-Awareness Social-Awareness	Learners will be able to show awareness of being part of a family and a larger community. WMEELS Domain II B EL.2	Learners will be able to define the role family and culture play in their identity and beliefs.	Learners will be able to identify their role in their family and community and how those roles impact their identity.
10		Self-Management	Learners will be able to display curiosity, risk-taking, and willingness to engage in new experiences. WMEELS Domain IV A. EL 1	Learners will be able to identify simple goals for personal and academic success.	Learners will be able to assess their level of engagement in their own learning for the achievement of personal goals.
11		Self-Awareness Self-Management	Learners will be able to engage in meaningful learning through attempting, repeating, and experimenting with a variety of experiences and activities. WMEELS Domain IV A EL 2	Learners will be able to, with encouragement, persist toward reaching a goal despite setbacks.	Learners will be able to identify strategies to persist and maintain motivation when working toward short- and long-term goals.

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SOCIAL COMPETENCE (Pre-K - 5th Grade)

Establish and maintain positive relationships by respecting others, practicing social skills, and making responsible choices while recognizing and connecting to the community at large

No.	CASEL Domain	CASEL Domain	PK-5K	1st-3rd	4th-5th
12		Social Awareness	Learners will be able to demonstrate awareness of self as a unique individual. WMELS Domain II B EL.2	Learners will be able to present their own point of view.	Learners will be able to appreciate diversity by recognizing multiple points of view and perspectives of others across cultural and social groups.
13		Social Awareness	Learners will be able to reflect their family, culture, and community when engaged in play and learning. WMELS Domain IV C EL.2	Learners will be able to identify commonalities they share with peers.	Learners will be able to build relationships between diverse groups of people.
14		Social Awareness	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, begin to notice that other children and families do things differently. WMELS Domain IV C EL.2	Learners will be able to recognize and respect that individual differences are important to self and others.	Learners will be able to demonstrate respect for others by discussing how stereotypes affect self and others.
15		Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to engage in healthy and rewarding social interactions and play with peers. WMELS Domain II C EL.2	Learners will be able to identify the different relationships they have with others.	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, recognize, establish, and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships.
16		Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, initiate conversations, listen attentively, respond to conversation, and stay on topic for multiple exchanges (especially with adults). WMELS Domain III B EL.2C	Learners will be able to describe in simple terms how words, tone, and body language are used to communicate with others.	Learners will be able to effectively communicate clearly, listen well, and cooperate with others to build healthy relationships.
17		Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to adapt behavior based on adult directives.	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, adapt behavior based upon peer feedback and environment cues.	Learners will be able to independently adapt behavior based upon peer feedback and environmental cues.

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SOCIAL COMPETENCE (Pre-K - 5th Grade)					
18		Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to participate in cooperative play with peers. WMELS Domain II C EL.2	Learners will be able to demonstrate listening skills, start and stop conversations, and take turns in conversations.	Learners will be able to work cooperatively and productively in a group to accomplish a set goal.
SOCIAL COMPETENCE (Pre-K - 5th Grade continued)					
Establish and maintain positive relationships by respecting others, practicing social skills, and making responsible choices while recognizing and connecting to the community at large					
No.	CASEL Domain	CASEL Domain	PK-5K	1st-3rd	4th-5th
19		Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, identify and communicate needs in conflict situations. WMELS Domain II C EL.4	Learners will be able to understand the perspective of others in a conflict situation.	Learners will be able to identify cause and effect of a conflict.
20		Decision Making	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, recognize that they have choices in how to respond to situations.	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, generate possible choices and actions they could take in a given situation, including positive and negative options.	Learners will be able to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interaction in order to evaluate the consequences of various actions with consideration of well-being for oneself and others.
21		Social Awareness	Learners will be able to follow simple group rules. WMELS Domain II C EL.3	Learners will be able to demonstrate positive behaviors as established in classroom and school-wide expectations.	Learners will be able to identify and respect social norms for behavior and safe interactions across different settings.
22		Decision Making Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to demonstrate understanding of simple rules related primarily to personal health and safety. WMELS Domain II C EL.3	Learners will be able to describe ways to promote personal safety.	Learners will be able to honor social norms with respect to safety of oneself and others.

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SOCIAL COMPETENCE (Pre-K - 5th Grade)					
23		Social Awareness Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to attempt a new skill when encouraged and supported by a safe and secure environment. WMELS Domain IV A EL.2	Learners will be able to identify how to get help from a trusted adult in a variety of situations.	Learners will be able to identify when and how to offer help to others.
24		Decision Making Social Awareness Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to show awareness of being part of a family and a larger community. WMELS Domain II A EL.2	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, identify classroom, school, and community needs.	Learners will be able to identify actions that would positively impact change in a classroom, school, and community.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program: Rationale, Research, Competencies, and Implementation Practices

Submitted by Howard M. Knoff, Ph.D., NCSP

Project ACHIEVE's Positive Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional Learning Model

Project ACHIEVE's Behavioral Instruction and Intervention (PBSS/SEL) Component focuses on implementing a comprehensive positive behavioral support and social-emotional learning system within a school. This component is guided by Project ACHIEVE's evidence-based Positive Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional Learning model (PBSS/SEL).

Many districts and schools are particularly interested in this multi-tiered school-wide model to address the following issues:

- School safety and prevention,
- Positive school culture and classroom climate,
- Classroom discipline and management,
- Student engagement and self-management,
- Teasing, taunting, and bullying,
- Harassment, hazing, and physical aggression,
- Office discipline referrals and suspensions/expulsions,
- Disproportionality and effective approaches to replace zero tolerance policies,
- Strategic and intensive/crisis management services, supports, strategies, and interventions
for behaviorally challenging and unresponsive students, and
- Preventing and responding to students' mental health status and needs.

Implementation here starts by emphasizing (a) effective school discipline, classroom management, and student self-management processes and strategies; that extend to (b) the development of strategic social, emotional, and behavioral interventions for challenging and non-responsive students; and that (c) utilize intensive and crisis management approaches for the most seriously-involved students—approaches that include comprehensive school-based mental health systems of services, supports, strategies, and programs (see Appendix B for the PBSS/SEL Implementation Evaluation protocol).

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Overall, the PBSS/SEL model uses a whole-school approach that includes students, staff, administration, and parents to teach and reinforce (a) students' interpersonal, problem-solving, and conflict resolution skills and interactions; (b) establish positive, safe, supportive, and consistent school climates and settings; and (c) build school and district capacity such that the entire process becomes an inherent part of the district and school's strategic and continuous improvement process.

Project ACHIEVE's Positive Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional Learning (PBSS/SEL) Goals

While the ultimate goal of Project ACHIEVE's PBSS/SEL model is the development of sustained and independent social, emotional, and behavioral competence and self-management for all students, there are a number of complementary student, staff, and school goals.

In total, they involve the following:

Student Goals:

Student social, emotional, and behavioral competency and self-management as demonstrated by:

- High levels of effective interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional coping skills and behaviors by all students;
- High levels of critical thinking, reasoning, and social-emotional application skills and behaviors by all students; and
- High levels of academic engagement and academic achievement for all students.

Staff Goals:

- High levels of effective instruction and classroom management across all teachers and instructional support staff; and
- High levels of teacher knowledge, skill, and confidence relative to analyzing why students are academically and behaviorally underachieving, unresponsive, or unsuccessful, and to implementing strategic or intensive academic or behavioral instruction or intervention to address their needs.

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School Goals:

- High levels of positive school and classroom climate, and low levels of school and classroom discipline problems that disrupt the classroom and/or require office discipline referrals, school suspensions or expulsions, or placements in alternative schools or settings;
- High levels of the consultative resources and capacity needed to provide functional assessment leading to strategic and intensive instructional and intervention services, supports, strategies, and programs to academically and behaviorally underachieving, unresponsive, or unsuccessful students;
- High levels of parent and community outreach and involvement in areas and activities that support students' academic and social, emotional, and behavioral learning, mastery, and proficiency; and, ultimately,
- High levels of student success that result in high school graduation and post-secondary school success.

Project ACHIEVE's Positive Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional Learning (PBSS/SEL) Components

There are five critical components in Project ACHIEVE's PBSS/SEL that facilitate school discipline, classroom management, and students' social, emotional, and behavioral self-management (see Figure 1 below; Knoff, 2012):

- Positive School and Classroom Climate, and Staff and Peer Relationships;
- Explicit Prosocial Behavioral Expectations in the classrooms and common school areas and Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skill Instruction;
- Student Motivation and Accountability
- Consistency relative to the implementation of all of the above components; and
- The Application of the above to all school settings and all peer interactions (including those that prevent teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and physical aggression)

These components are briefly described below. The implementation of these components is typically guided by the School Discipline or PBSS Committee comprised of teacher representatives from every grade level, as well as others representing the different instructional support groups in the school, related services and special education personnel, the administration, and selected others.

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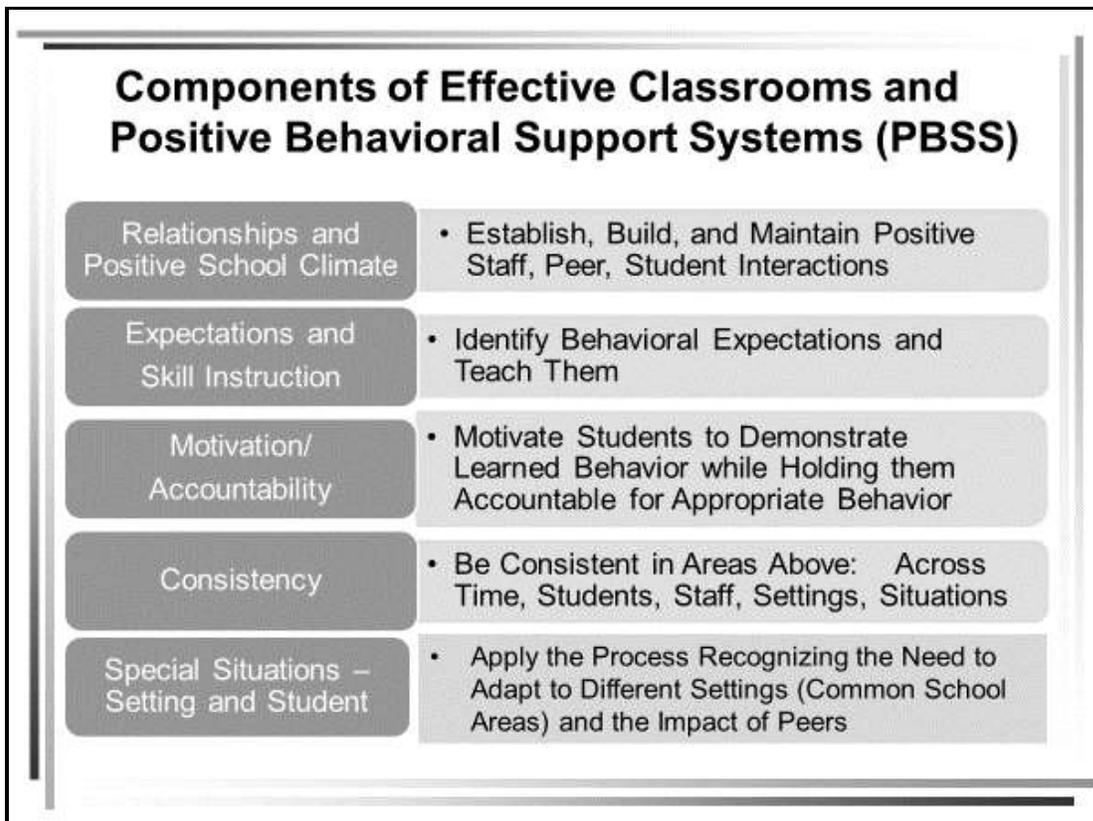


Figure 1. Source: Project ACHIEVE Press, 2011.

Component 1: Positive School and Classroom Climate, and Staff and Peer Relationships

If anyone has lived in or experienced a toxic environment—at home, in the workplace, at school—then you know the impact of climate on learning, behavior, attitudes, social interactions, and your own mental health. Many times, these environments exist because of the relationships within them.

Effective schools work consciously, planfully, and on an on-going basis to develop, reinforce, and sustain positive and productive relationships so that their cross-school and in-classroom climates mirror these relationships.

Critically, however, these relationships include the following: Students to Students, Students to Staff, Staff to Staff, Students to Parents, and Staff to Parents.

But functionally, the collaboration required involves training, implementation, and reinforcement. For example, students need to learn the social and interactional skills needed to build positive relationships with others, and the peer group has to “buy into” the process.

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Similarly, teachers need to recognize the importance of committing to effective communication, collaboration, and collegial consultation. But, they also need to have the skills to accomplish these. . . in good times and bad.

Component 2: Explicit Prosocial Behavioral Expectations and Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills Instruction

Students—from preschool through high school—need to know the explicit social, emotional, and behavioral expectations in the classrooms and across the common areas of the school. These expectations need to be communicated as “what they need to do,” rather than “what they do not need to do.” More specifically, teachers and administrators need to teach students to (a) walk down the hallway, rather than not run; (b) raise your hand and wait to be called on, rather than don't blurt out answers; (c) accept a consequence, rather than don't roll your eyes and give me attitude.

In addition, student expectations need to be behaviorally specific. It is not instructionally helpful to talk to students in constructs—telling students that they need to be “Respectful, Responsible, Polite, Safe, and Trustworthy.” This is because each of these constructs involve a wide range of behaviors, and students do not necessarily know which behaviors different adults want at any particular point in time.

Thus, we need to describe exactly what we want the students to do (e.g., in the hallways, bathrooms, cafeteria, and on the bus). And we teach students specific behaviors, rather than constructs (e.g., “Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible”).

Said a different way: You can't teach a behavioral construct; we need to teach the behaviors that **represent** the construct.

But we also must **teach** students the social, emotional, and behavioral skills we expect. This instruction is exactly the same as when we teach a football team, an orchestra, a drama club, or an academic task. Specifically, we need to teach the skills and their steps, demonstrate them, give students opportunities to practice and receive feedback, and then apply their new skills to “real-world” situations.

This all means that we need to communicate our behavioral expectations to students, and then teach them. Functionally, this means that our schools need to consciously and explicitly set aside time for social skills instruction (see below), and then embed the application of this instruction into their classrooms and group activities—for example, during cooperative and project-based instruction.

A crucial “anchor” to this component is a preschool through high school social skills curriculum that is taught to all students in their general education classrooms. The ultimate goal of a social skills program is to teach the interpersonal, prosocial problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional control and coping skills that students need to be

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socially, emotionally, and behaviorally successful. Conversely, when we teach students prosocial skills, they are then unlikely to engage in inappropriate internalizing or externalizing behaviors. Relative to externalizing behaviors, for example, good social skills help students to prevent, respond to, and/or de-escalate situations that might—in their absence—result in serious levels of aggression and/or violence.

While this PBSS/SEL component can use any well-designed, evidence-based social, emotional, and/or behavioral skills program, Project ACHIEVE typically uses the evidence-based Stop & Think Social Skills Program which was designed to address all of the characteristics above. Organized in four age- and developmentally-sensitive levels (from Preschool through Middle/High School), this program is ready-made for this multi-tiered PBSS/SEL component. More specifically, at a primary prevention level, the Stop & Think Social Skills are taught to all students focusing on practical skills that help all students to be successful in most situations and settings. Among these skills are: Listening, Following Directions, Asking for Help, Ignoring Distractions, Dealing with Teasing, Accepting a Consequence, Dealing with an Accusation, Setting a Goal, and Understanding Your Own or Someone Else’s Feelings.

At the secondary and tertiary prevention levels, the Stop & Think Social Skills Program is used more strategically, and it is connected to other needed behavioral interventions, self-control and anger management strategies, and behavior therapy interventions. For example, for situations where there is significant bullying and aggression, the social skills can be organized into strategic skill clusters (a) for aggressive and violent students: Relationship skills (e.g., Asking for Help, Apologizing, Dealing with Peer Pressure), Emotional Control skills (e.g., Understanding your Feelings, Dealing with Anger, Avoiding Trouble), and Consequence/Response skills (e.g., Dealing with Fear, Failure, and Accusations); (b) for victims: Prevention skills (e.g., Avoiding Trouble, Evaluating Yourself), Problem-Solving skills (e.g., Asking for Help, Dealing with Peer Pressure), and Protection skills (e.g., Dealing with Fear, Standing Up for Your Rights, and Walking away from a Fight); and (c) for peer on-lookers or by-standers: Recognition skills (e.g., Understanding your Feelings, Evaluating Yourself), Response skills (e.g., Being a Good Leader, Dealing with Peer Pressure), and Resolution skills (e.g., Problem Solving, Dealing with Consequences).

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program is the primary focus of this document. We will discuss it and its research bases and rationale in a later section.

Component 3: Student Motivation and Accountability

Accountability: Implementation and Research. Even when students have mastered their social skills, they still need to be motivated to use them. And when the peer group (who says, “Be cool”) competes against teachers and other educators (who say, “Focus on school”), the importance of school-wide accountable approaches is apparent. School accountability processes consist of meaningful incentives and consequences that motivate students to use their prosocial skills. These processes are important because (a) socially skilled students still need motivation to use their skills, (b) some students (called performance deficit students) lack this motivation,

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and (c) some students are more reinforced by demonstrating or the outcomes of inappropriate behavior than appropriate behavior.

This PBSS/SEL component helps schools establish and implement grade-level and building-wide accountability systems that include progressively tiered and developmentally-appropriate and meaningful incentives and consequences that motivate and reinforce students’ appropriate interactions. This is accomplished by creating, formalizing, and implementing a “Behavioral Matrix” that establishes a set of behavioral standards and expectations for all students. Created predominantly by staff and students, this matrix explicitly identifies, for all grade levels, behavioral expectations in the classroom and in other common areas of the school (connected with positive responses, incentives, and rewards), and different “intensities” levels of inappropriate student behavior (connected with negative responses, consequences, and interventions as needed). Relative to the latter, Intensity I (Annoying) behaviors involve “routine” discipline problems that teachers handle with corrective prompts; Intensity II (Classroom Disruption) behaviors involve more challenging behaviors that teachers handle with prompts plus classroom-based consequences; Intensity III (Major Disruption/Antisocial) behaviors are more serious, usually involving office referrals and strategic intervention; and Intensity IV (Severe or Dangerous/Code of Conduct) behaviors are the most serious, generally involving office-based consequences and intensive interventions.

Critically, because the behaviors at each intensity level are agreed upon by staff, and then taught and communicated to students, student behavior is evaluated against a set of explicit “standards” (rather than individually or capriciously by teachers or administrators); staff responses to both appropriate and inappropriate student behavior are more consistent and expected; and students know, in advance, what will occur for incidents of, for example, teasing through physical aggression. All of this facilitates an atmosphere that reinforces student responsibility and self-management.

With the Behavioral Matrix as the primary school-wide accountability vehicle, a number of “evidence-based principles” (Kazdin, 2000; Kerr & Nelson, 2002) are fused into staff practice: (a) all students in the school experience five positive interactions (collectively, from adults, peers, or themselves) for every negative interaction; (b) students are largely motivated through positive, proactive, and incentive-oriented means; (c) when consequences are necessary, the mildest possible consequence needed to motivate students’ appropriate behavior is used; (d) consequences, not punishments, are used; (e) when consequences are over, students must still practice the previously-expected prosocial behavior at least three times under simulated conditions; (f) staff differentiate and respond strategically to skill-deficit versus performance-deficit students; and (g) staff recognize that incentives and consequences must remain stable because previous inconsistencies may have strengthened some students’ inappropriate behavior.

All students—at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels—are held accountable to the Behavioral Matrix. However, as students engage in Intensity III and IV behaviors, the need for functional assessment and strategic intervention becomes more apparent.

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Too often, schools create “motivational programs” for students that involve incentives and consequences that the students couldn’t care less about. Thus, it looks good “on paper,” but it holds no weight in actuality- - from the students’ perspectives.

At other times, schools forget that they need to recognize, engage, and activate the peer group in a motivational program. This is because, at times, the peer group is actually undermining the program by negatively reinforcing those members (on the playground, after school, on social media) who are “playing up to the adults” through their appropriate behavior.

On a functional level, both incentives and consequences result in positive and prosocial behavior. The incentives motivate students toward the expected behaviors, and the consequences motivate students away from the inappropriate behaviors (and toward the expected ones).

But critically, educators need to understand that you can only create motivating conditions. That is, we can’t force students to meet the behavioral expectations. When we force students to do anything, we are managing their behavior, not facilitating self-management. While we have to do some management to get to self-management. . . if we only manage students’ behavior, then they will not (know how to) self-manage when the adults are not present.

Component 4: Consistency

Establishing and sustaining positive school and classroom settings, Stop & Think Social Skills instruction, and the implementation of the Behavioral Matrix and other student motivation and accountability processes are necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for effective, safe, and self-managing schools. Interdependently, staff need to establish and maintain positive school and classroom climates; teach, apply, and reinforce their social skills program; and implement meaningful incentives and consequences in a consistent manner.

Thus, in order to be successful, staff need to (a) demonstrate consistent prosocial relationships and interactions—resulting in consistently positive and productive school and classroom environments; (b) communicate consistent behavioral expectations, while consistently teaching them; (c) use consistent incentives and consequences, while holding student consistently accountable for appropriate behavior; and then (d) apply all of these components consistently across all of the settings and peer groups in the school.

When staff are consistent, individual students, and small and large groups of students learn, use, and value the behavioral expectations within a school.

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When staff are inconsistent, however, students feel that they have been treated unfairly; they sometimes behave in different ways for different staff or in different settings; they become manipulative—pitting one staff member against another; and they often emotionally react—some getting angry when inconsistency occurs, and others simply withdrawing because they feel powerless to change it.

Thus, staff (perhaps through the School Discipline/PBSS Committee) need to observe and monitor their consistency in real time; evaluate how they are implementing different facets of the PBSS/SEL component; and formally and informally survey staff communication, collaboration, trust, commitment, and cohesion in this regard.

Staff also need to empower students to become part of the process. For example, students need to contribute to their school’s prosocial atmosphere of prevention, while also communicating a “no-tolerance” attitude for inappropriate peer behavior. In this way, the students can help their school create conscious and explicit prosocial values, expectations, norms, procedures, and interactions that, for example, can help prevent or respond to such antisocial (but prevalent) behaviors as teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and aggression. This can be done both during the school day, as well as during extracurricular, sports, club, and after-school music and art activities.

Consistency is a process. It can’t be downloaded onto a computer, or including in staff’s annual flu shots. Instead, it needs to be “grown” experientially over time, and then sustained in an ongoing way. It is grown through effective strategic planning with explicit implementation plans, good communication and collaboration, sound implementation and evaluation, and consensus-building coupled with constructive feedback and change.

It’s not easy. . . but it is necessary both for PBSS/SEL and school success.

Component 5: Applying the Process to All Settings and Across Different Peer Groups

The last component of the school PBSS/SEL blueprint focuses on the application of the previous four components across all of the settings and peer interactions in the school. This involves a recognition that the classroom-based PBSS/SEL strategies need to be transferred into the common areas of the school, and that the student-centered strategies need to factor in the significant influence of different peer groups.

Relative to the former area, it is important to understand that the common areas of a school are more complex and dynamic than the classroom settings. Indeed, in the hallways, bathrooms, buses, cafeteria, and on the playground (or playing fields), there typically are more multi-aged or cross-grade students, more interactions, more space or fewer physical limitations, fewer staff and supervisors, and different social demands. As such, the positive social, emotional, and behavioral interactions that occur in the classroom need a more strategic approach to generalize them into the common school areas.

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Accordingly, students need to be taught how to demonstrate their interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional control and coping skills beyond their classrooms and in every common school area. Critically, this training needs to be tailored to the social demands and expectations of these settings.

Relative to the latter area, it is important to understand that the peer group is often a more dominant social and emotional “force” in a school than the adults. As such, the PBSS/SEL blueprint is consciously applied (relative to climate, relationships, expectations, skill instruction, motivation, and accountability) to help prevent peer-to-peer teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and physical aggression.

This is done by involving the different peer groups in a school in group “prevention and early response” training, and motivating them—across the entire school—to take the lead relative to prosocial interactions. When the peer groups in a school are trained, motivated, and reinforced to do “the heavy prosocial lifting,” the more successful the staff and the school will be relative to maintaining a positive school climate and a consistently safe school.

At times, however, the preventative approach within this component does not work. When this occurs, there are persistent or significant setting-specific problems in the common areas of the school, or across different peer groups relative to teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and physical aggression.

In order to develop strategic interventions for these situations, the School Discipline/PBSS Committee is taught to how to conduct a “Special Situation Analysis”—a functional and ecological assessment of a specific common area or peer-related situation that investigates the following domains: (a) Student Characteristics, Issues, and Factors; (b) Peer Group Characteristics, Issues, and Factors; (c) Teacher/Staff Characteristics, Issues, and Factors; (d) Environmental Characteristics, Issues, and Factors such as the physical plant and logistics within the specific setting; (e) Staff and Student Incentives and Consequences; and (f) Resources and Resource Utilization. The peer group part of the analysis is especially important as many incidents that occur in the common areas of a school are often peer-mediated (e.g., Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999; Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999; Rigby, 2000), and thus, understanding the presence and potential involvement of student “perpetrators,” “victims,” and “by-standers” becomes essential.

Once the functional assessment is completed, its results are linked to relevant interventions that are resourced, implemented, and evaluated.

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Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills: An Introduction

It is a simple fact that how students feel, feel about themselves, behave, and get along with others strongly predicts their interactions and even their achievement in school. Indeed, if students are feeling pressured, bullied, or unsafe, they focus more on these emotional conditions than on academic instruction and learning. If they are unsure of themselves, lack self-confidence, or are self-conscious, they may not believe that they can succeed. If they do not have the behavioral skills to pay attention, work independently, or organize themselves, their academic work may suffer. If they cannot relate to others, work cooperatively in a group, and prevent or resolve conflicts, they will not socially survive (Knoff, 2012).

We have known for decades that students' social, emotional, and behavioral competency and self-management in school is essential to their academic and interpersonal success (Cawalti, 1995; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993/1994, Ysseldyke & Christenson, 2002). While a strong academic program with effective instruction and a focus on real-world knowledge and skills is essential to student achievement and understanding, it is evident that (a) a positive and supportive school and classroom climate, (b) with positive and productive student and teacher interactions, and (c) effective classroom management also are necessary. Indeed, these components are among the top six predictors of students' academic achievement (Goodman & Schaughency, 2001; McNeely, Nonemaker, & Blum, 2002; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004).

More specifically, reviews of over 200 studies of school-based programs (Durlak, et al., 2011; Payton, et al., 2008) revealed that classroom time spent on addressing the social, emotional, and behavioral skills and needs of students helped to significantly increase their academic performance and their social and emotional skills, and that the students involved were better behaved, more socially successful, less anxious, more emotionally well-adjusted, and earned higher grades and test scores. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2002), all of this contributes to and enhances students' time-on-task and their academic success:

“Improving the social and emotional climate of schools, and the social and emotional soundness of students, advances the academic mission of the schools in important ways. . . Satisfying the social and emotional needs of students does more than prepare them to learn. It actually increases their capacity to learn.” (p. 10)

And so, social skills training is essential for all students in the schools—a primary setting in their lives where they can learn, practice, and master some of the interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict resolution, and emotional coping skills and strategies that become foundational to their physical and mental health and wellness (Knoff, 2000a, 2000b). Critically, these skills also are essential to all teachers as a necessary part of classroom management. And, as noted above, these prosocial skills are needed by students to facilitate both their social and academic progress, development, and proficiency.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin’s Social Emotional Competencies

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program

While there are hundreds of social skill programs available and marketed to educators and schools, less than ten of these social skills programs are either evidence-based or well-researched (Arkansas Department of Education, 2009). This brief overview focuses on one of these programs, the Stop & Think Social Skills Program (Knoff, 2001), and summarizes the research on the characteristics of successful social skills instruction by using this Program as an exemplar.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program is written for classroom teachers with implementation at the preschool to Grade 1, Grades 2/3, Grades 4/5, and Grades 6 through 12. At the same time, the Program has been implemented strategically at the secondary level, in alternative and juvenile justice facilities with students who are 18 years old and beyond, and in residential and day treatment programs for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities. There also is a Stop & Think Program for parents—to help guide them on how to teach and reinforce prosocial skills at home from preschool through early adolescence.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program was designated an evidence-based and national model prevention program by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service’s Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in 2000. It was designated a “Promising Program” relative to its research efficacy and clinical implementation by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in 2003 (see also Quinn, Osher, Hoffman, & Hanley, 1998). And, it was designated a “Select” program by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL; www.casel.org) in 2002. The Stop & Think Program, as an embedded component to Project ACHIEVE, is now included in the registry of SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices.

From a research perspective, the Stop & Think Social Skills Program is based on the ecological work of Bronfenbrenner (1977); the strategic planning approaches of Cook (1990), Valentine (1991), and Knoff (2007); the cognitive and social learning theory research of Meichenbaum (1977) and Bandura (1977); and the social skills research of Goldstein (1988) and Cartledge and Milburn (1995). The Stop & Think Social Skills Program also is the anchor of Project ACHIEVE’s Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS; Knoff, 2009, 2012) which has been implemented in over 2,500 schools nationwide since 1989.

From a practical perspective, everything about the Stop & Think Social Skills Program is about the development of all students’ social competency and social, emotional, and behavioral self-management.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin’s Social Emotional Competencies

Social Competency and Student Self-Management Defined

Because of genetic, biological, and developmental factors, students’ social, emotional, and behavioral competency and self-management look different across the age span. Nonetheless, these two areas are collectively defined as a child or adolescent’s ability to:

- Be socially, emotionally, and behaviorally aware of themselves and others;
- Demonstrate successful social, emotional, and behavioral interactions and skills; and
- Effectively control their own emotions, so that appropriate proactive and/or prosocial behavior independently occurs.

Critically, competency and self-management exist along a continuum from social-emotional competency and self-management (i.e., how students feel) to cognitive-behavioral competency and self-management (i.e., what they think and then what they do). In the former areas, students’ emotional control, as well as positive feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and attributions represent essential goals and outcomes. In the latter areas, these goals and outcomes are extended—both in the classroom and across the common areas of a school—to include students’ positive interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and social-emotional coping skills.

More specifically, on a social level, important self-management skills include those that contribute to effective (a) listening, engagement, and responding; (b) communication and collaboration; (c) social problem-solving and group process; and (d) conflict prevention and resolution. On an emotional level, important self-management skills include (a) the awareness of one’s own and others’ feelings, (b) the ability to manage or control those feelings and other emotions, as well as the ability (c) to use coping skills to minimize the emotional effects of previous situations, and (d) to demonstrate appropriate behavior even under conditions of emotionality. Finally, on a behavioral level, important self-management skills include those that help students to demonstrate appropriate behavior in the classroom and across the common areas of the school, and to be actively engaged in their own learning—whether in the classroom or on a more independent level.

The Scientific Foundations of the Stop & Think Social Skills Program

Before any social skills or social emotional learning program is adopted and implemented in a school, it must demonstrate its evidence-based capacity to be successful—relative to objectively measured student outcomes—across a wide variety of settings, students, staff, and implementation conditions. While the Stop & Think Social Skills Program has demonstrated its evidence-based success (hence, its SAMHSA designation), it still is important to clearly identify its scientific foundations. To this end, the research-based characteristics of the Stop & Think Social Skills Program are cross-walked below with the seven primary characteristics of an effective social skills program.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin's Social Emotional Competencies

Characteristic 1. Social skills programs teach sensible and pragmatic interpersonal, problem solving, and conflict resolution skills that are needed by today's students and that can be applied, on a daily basis, by preschool through high school students.

Social skills are behaviors that students learn—just like they learn academic skills. While we often focus on what we don't want students to do ("don't fight," "don't talk back," "don't interrupt," "don't tease or taunt other students"), social skills focus on the behaviors that we want students to do. Significantly, when students perform desired behaviors, they rarely do inappropriate behaviors at the same time.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program is organized in four age- and developmentally-sensitive levels: Preschool through Grade 1, Grades 2 and 3, Grades 4 and 5, and Middle/High School/Grades 6 through 12 (which is often adapted upwards to the high school level). As part of a school-wide Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS) approach, Stop & Think social skills are designed to be taught in ALL regular classroom settings in a school by general education teachers. For students with greater need and more challenging behaviors, the social skills also can be taught in more targeted social skills training groups by special education teachers, related services, and mental health support professionals.

At each school-aged level, the Stop & Think process focuses on ten core skills and ten advanced skills. In addition, the Stop & Think process also helps educators to teach students classroom and building routine skills and other behaviors that increase students' self-management and academic engagement.

Below are the core and advanced skills at the preK to Grade 5 levels of the Stop & Think Social Skills Program.

At the preschool to the Grade 1 level, the ten primary skills are:

Listening	Waiting for an Adult's Attention-
Following Directions	How to Interrupt
Using Nice Talk	Ignoring
Asking for Help	Dealing with Teasing
Waiting for Your Turn	Dealing with Losing
	Dealing with Consequences

At the preschool to the Grade 1 level, the ten advanced skills are:

Ignoring Distractions	Joining an Activity
Rewarding Yourself	Using Brave Talk
Sharing	Dealing with Being Left Out
Deciding What to Do	Dealing with Anger
Asking for Permission	Apologizing

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin's Social Emotional Competencies

At the Grade 2 through Grade 3 level, the ten primary skills are:

Listening	Waiting for an Adult's Attention-
Following Directions	How to Interrupt
Asking for Help	Dealing with Losing
Ignoring Distractions	Apologizing
Dealing to Teasing	Dealing with Consequences
Contributing to Discussions/ Answering Classroom Questions	

At the Grade 2 through Grade 3 level, the ten advanced skills are:

Deciding What to Do	Avoiding Trouble
Asking for Permission	Dealing with Anger
Joining an Activity	Dealing with Being Rejected or Left Out
Giving/Accepting a Compliment	Dealing with Accusations
Understanding Your/Others' Feelings	Dealing with Peer Pressure

At the Grade 4 through Grade 5 level, the ten primary skills are:

Listening	Apologizing
Following Directions	Dealing with Consequences
Asking for Help	Dealing with Anger
Ignoring (Distractions)	Dealing with Being Rejected or Left Out
Dealing with Teasing	Walking Away from a Fight

At the Grade 4 through Grade 5 level, the ten advanced skills are:

Setting a Goal	Understanding Your/Others' Feelings
Evaluating Yourself	Dealing with Accusations
Responding to Failure	Dealing with Fear
Beginning/Ending a Conversation	Dealing with Peer Pressure
Giving/Accepting a Compliment	Dealing with Another Person's Anger

Characteristic 2. Social skills programs address problem situations, as identified by both adults and students, that occur in classrooms and common areas of the school on an almost every day basis (Kerr & Nelson, 2002).

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program also provides skills to teach classroom and building routines. In the classroom, these routines help students to be prepared and ready to participate in academic activities. Across the common areas of a school, these routines help students to interact positively and safely, and to manage their behavior more responsibly and independently.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin's Social Emotional Competencies

Some of the classroom and building routines in the Stop & Think Social Skills Program include:

Entering class	Bringing the right materials to class
Hanging coats and backpacks	Lining up to leave school
Walking in line	The Dismissal skill
Bathroom behavior	Walking safely in the hall
Getting on the bus	Riding on the bus
Contributing to discussions	Answering questions during lessons
Completing seatwork or independent assignments	Knowing when to tell an adult about a school safety issue

Characteristic 3. Social skills programs provide a defined, progressive, yet flexible, sequence of social skills that recognizes that some prerequisite skills must be mastered before other, more complex skills are taught. The program also must plan for ongoing social skills practice and reinforcement that occurs throughout the school year (Cartledge & Milburn, 1995).

As shown above, the Stop & Think Social Skills Program does have a preferred sequence of ten core skills and ten advanced skills that are field-tested and teacher-friendly. While this sequence is preferred, it is not absolute. As long as teachers are mindful that some social skills prerequisite to later skills, they can re-sequence skills to respond to specific behavioral goals, challenging classroom problems, or desired curricular or character education themes.

Beyond this, the Stop & Think Social Skills Program integrates the learning principles of “massed” and “distributed” practice into its process by reviewing and revisiting many social skills at the preschool to elementary to middle/high school levels. In doing this, the Program is able to teach the “same” skill with higher, more developmentally appropriate expectations over time, and ensure that the skills are applied in situationally appropriate ways.

Characteristic 4. Social skills programs use a universal language that is easy for students to learn, facilitates cognitive scripting and mediation, and facilitates the conditioning or reconditioning of prosocial behaviors and choices leading to more and more automatic behavior (Ladd & Mize, 1983; Meichenbaum, 1977).

Social skills in the Stop & Think Social Skills Program are taught using two essential processes: (a) a universal language or set of steps that facilitate the cognitive and physical conditioning of new behavior, and (b) a pedagogical approach that uses behavioral/social learning theory strategies to guide effective instruction.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin's Social Emotional Competencies

(a) The Stop & Think Social Skills Program uses a universal five-step language whenever a social skill is taught, reinforced, or implemented. The five steps are:

- Stop and Think!
- Are you going to make a Good Choice or Bad Choice?
- What are your Choices or Steps?
- Do It!
- Good Job!

The Stop and Think! step is a self-control, impulse-control, and/or self-management step designed to classically condition students to take the time necessary to calm down and think about how they want to handle a situation.

The Good Choice or Bad Choice? step is an operant conditioning step that motivates students toward the choices they make and the behaviors they exhibit. Typically, teachers prompt students as to the positive outcome(s) or reinforcement(s) that will result when they make a Good Choice. Conversely, students are guided to consider the negative outcome(s) or consequence(s) that will occur if they make a Bad Choice. These potential positive or negative reinforcements are designed to motivate students to “Make a Good Choice.”

The What are your Choices or Steps? step uses cognitive behavioral psychology and mediational learning strategies to help organize, prepare, and guide students to think about appropriate behavior before enacting it. This is where teachers teach the specific “skills scripts” for each Stop & Think skill so that students learn and are able to demonstrate (in the next step of the process) their “Good Choices”—that is, their prosocial skills. There are two types of skill scripts—scripts that teach social skills in a step-by-step sequential fashion (“Step” skills), and scripts where students consider and select one of a number of possible good choices (“Choice” skills).

For example, the Following Directions skill script below is an example of Step skill because there is only one correct sequence that will result in successful behavior:

1. Listen to the Direction.
2. Ask yourself if you Understand the Direction (if not, Ask a question).
3. Repeat the steps of the Direction silently to yourself.
4. Get ready to Follow the Direction.

The Dealing with Teasing skill script below demonstrates the elements of a Choice skill where students learn to evaluate different interpersonal situations so that they can strategically choose the best choice:

1. Take deep breaths and count to five.
2. Think about your good choices. You can:
 - a. Ignore the teasing.

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- b. Ask the person to stop.
 - c. Walk away.
 - d. Find an adult for help.
3. Choose and Act Out your best choice.

Once students have thought about the good social skill choices or steps needed for a particular situation, they then are prepared to behaviorally demonstrate them.

Thus, in the Do It! step, students behaviorally carry out their plan, implement the social skill chosen, and evaluate whether or not it has worked. With younger elementary school-aged students, teachers may need to repeat the skill steps as their students follow them, and they might even need to physically guide students through some skills. Older students, with prompting, will repeat the Stop & Think steps silently to themselves, performing the prosocial behaviors more independently and automatically.

If the Do It! step works, students then are ready to go on to the last step. If a Step Skill doesn't work, students simply go back over the scripts in Step 3 and practice them more carefully. If a Choice Skill doesn't work, students are prompted to identify another possible social skill or to move to another good choice option. For example, if Ignoring does not stop a peer's teasing, then a student might decide to directly ask the peer to stop the teasing, telling how the teasing is making him or her feel. Once successful, it's on to the last step.

The Good Job! step uses the cognitive/behavioral skill of self-reinforcement such that students reinforce themselves for successfully using a social skill, responding appropriately to a situation or request. This step is important because students do not always reinforce each other for making good choices and doing a good job, and thus, they need to learn how to self-reinforce. Indeed, over time, students need to learn how to recognize when they are successful and how to reinforce themselves for a job well done. This is an essential step in the self-management process.

Characteristic 5. Social skills programs systematically use a social learning theory model that includes teaching, modeling, role-playing, and providing performance feedback as part of the instructional process (Bandura, 1977; Goldstein, 1988). Such programs overtly plan and transfer students' use of social skills into different settings, with different people, at different times, and across different situations and circumstances (Stokes & Baer, 1988).

The evidence-based behavioral/social learning teaching process used by the Stop & Think Social Skills Program involves the following five components:

- Teaching the steps of the desired social skill.
- Modeling the steps and the social skills language (or script).
- Roleplaying the steps and the script with students.

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- Providing Performance Feedback to the students relative to how accurately they are verbalizing the skill script and how successfully they are behaviorally demonstrating the new skill.
- Applying the skill and its steps as much as possible during the day to reinforce the teaching over time, in different settings, with different people, and in different situations.

When Teaching the steps of a desired social skill, teachers use the Stop & Think Program's universal language. As noted earlier, when they get to the What are your Choices or Steps? step, students are taught the specific choices or steps for the skill they are focusing on.

When Modeling a social skill, teachers verbalize the steps to a particular social skill while showing their students how to perform the associated behavior(s). Typically, this is done by having teachers re-create an actual classroom or school situation where the particular social skill is needed. For example, in modeling the Dealing with Teasing social skill, a teacher would have a student "tease" the teacher in front of the class. The teacher then would "talk through" the "script"—the universal Stop & Think language with the skill steps of the Dealing with Teasing social skill—while performing the appropriate behavior. Thus, during Teaching, teachers provide a context for and instruction in performing social skill behaviors. During Modeling, teachers show how to implement the skill, verbally and behaviorally, in a simulated situation.

After a teacher models a specific social skill, students are given opportunities to Roleplay or act out the social skill in re-created situations that are both relevant to the classroom and the social skill. Roleplays may be done in front of the class or in small or controlled group settings. Similar to directing a scene from a school play, the teacher focuses on having students accurately verbalize the social skill "script" that is being taught and performing the corresponding behavior(s) during every roleplay.

While students are roleplaying their social skills, teachers provide Performance Feedback. This feedback positively reinforces students when they correctly (a) verbalize the social skills steps, (b) demonstrate the appropriate skill or behavior, and (c) review their performance after the roleplay or practice session is over. This feedback also occurs when roleplays get "off script." Here, the teacher may "freeze" the actors, provide corrective feedback to bring students back "on script," and resume the "scene" so that students practice only accurate and appropriate behavior.

After the modeling and roleplay (with performance feedback) steps, teachers provide as many practice (or application) opportunities for students in the classroom so that they transfer the training and master the skill under more realistic circumstances. This occurs as teachers set up situations in the classroom that require students to apply, under controlled and supervised conditions, their new social skills. It also occurs as teachers prompt the use of different social skills as much as possible from day-to-day, hour-to-hour, and minute-to-minute in the classroom.

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Over time, all of this teaching, practice, application, and infusion help students to understand the importance of using specific social skills, and to master and use their prosocial skills more quickly and independently.

In summary:

When Teaching and Modeling: Teachers need to make sure that students:

- have the prerequisite skills to be successful
- are taught using language that they can understand
- are taught in simple steps that ensure success
- hear the social skills script as the social skills behavior is demonstrated

When Practicing or Roleplaying: Teachers need to make sure that students:

- verbalize (or repeat or hear) the steps to a particular social skill as they demonstrate its appropriate behavior
- practice only the positive or appropriate social skill behavior
- receive ongoing and consistent practice opportunities
- use relevant practice situations that simulate the “emotional” intensity of the real situations so that they can fully master the social skill and be able to demonstrate it under conditions of emotionality
- practice the skills at a developmental level that they can handle

When Giving Performance Feedback: Teachers need to make sure that the feedback is:

- specific and descriptive
- focused on reinforcing students' successful use of the social skill, or on correcting an inaccurate or incomplete social skills demonstration
- positive--emphasizing what was done well and what can be done well (or better) next time

When Transferring or Applying Social Skills after Instruction: Teachers need to make sure that they reinforce students' prosocial skills steps and behavior when students:

- have successfully demonstrated an appropriate social skill
- have made a “bad” choice, demonstrating an inappropriate social skill
- are faced with a problem or situation but have not committed to, nor demonstrated, a prosocial skill
- must use the skill in situations that are somewhat different from those used when the skill was originally taught and practiced

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin's Social Emotional Competencies

Characteristic 6. Social skills training is an integral part of a building- or grade-level positive discipline and behavior management system that holds students accountable for their behavior and provides for consistency and implementation integrity (Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998; Kerr & Nelson, 2002; Knoff, 2000a).

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program is the anchor of Project ACHIEVE's comprehensive School-wide Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS; Knoff, 2002, March; 2012). The PBSS, one of seven Project ACHIEVE components (see www.projectachieve.net for more information), focuses on the organizational requirements and processes that result in effective building-wide prosocial behavior management processes and positive, skills-oriented student discipline procedures (Dwyer & Osher, 2000; Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998; Knoff, 2000b, 2012). At a functional level, the desired outcomes of this school-wide approach include: maximizing students' academic achievement, creating safe school environments and positive school climates, building effective teaching and problem solving teams that speed successful interventions to challenging students, increasing and sustaining effective classroom instruction, increasing and sustaining strong parent involvement, developing and implementing effective strategic plans, organizing building committees and student learning clusters, and developing effective data management systems for outcome evaluations.

While research has addressed many of these issues in a somewhat independent fashion, rarely have these factors been integrated into a unified, multi-dimensional process. When implemented effectively, three levels of self-management are addressed: (a) students are taught the self-management skills (at appropriate developmental levels) that they need for self-control and independent learning, (b) school staff are taught the self-management skills that they need to run positive, effective classrooms that result in student learning and behavioral growth, and (c) school buildings or districts are taught the self-management skills that allow them to identify resources and build capacity such that they can independently sustain a successful building-wide system of prevention, strategic intervention, and intensive needs services for all students and, especially, those with behavioral and mental health concerns.

In total, there are five primary areas needed for any successful school-wide Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS; see Figure 2 below): (a) positive school and classroom climates, along with positive relationships across staff, students, and parents; (b) explicit classroom and common area behavioral expectations and social skills training—as recommended here, using the Stop and Think Social Skills Program; (c) the development of teacher, grade-level, and building-wide motivation and accountability processes that provide students meaningful incentives and consequences to motivate students' interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional coping skills, and to hold students accountable when they make “bad choices;” (d) consistency in the implementation and status of all three of the processes; and (e) the application of the four processes above relative to every setting in a school, and peer interactions—which including the prevention of teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and fighting.

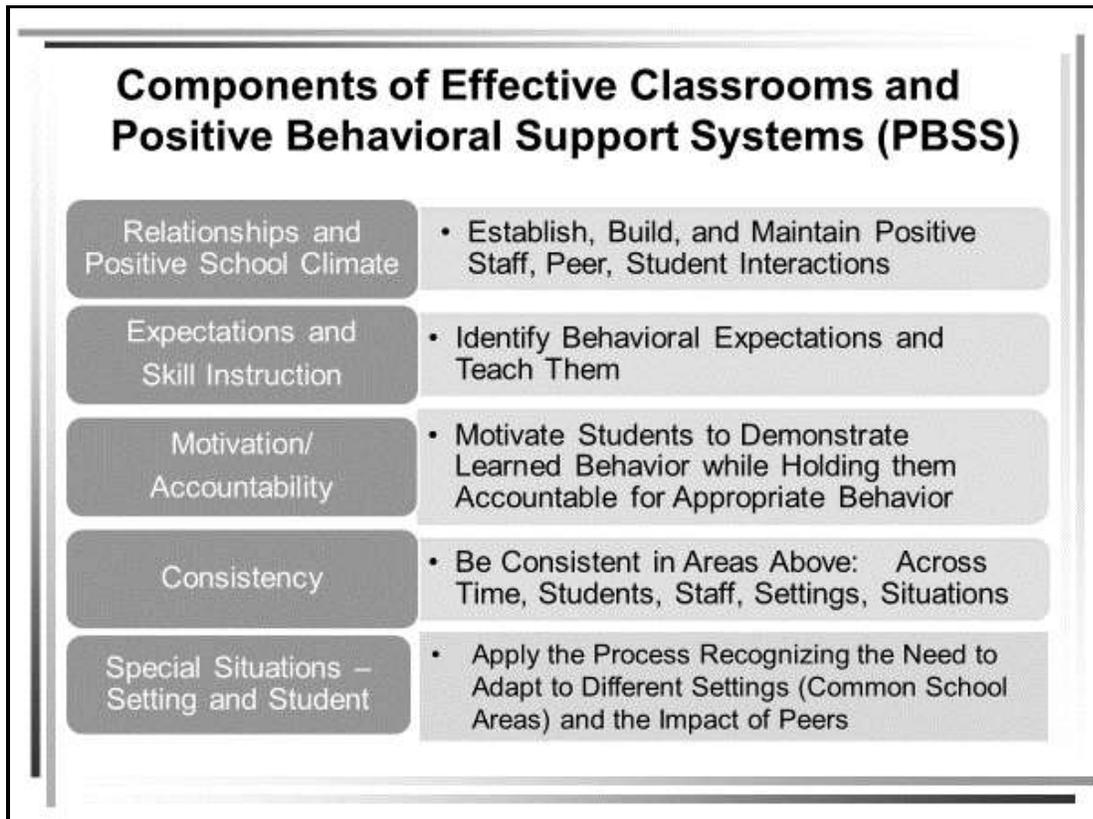


Figure 2

Beyond these preventative areas, an effective PBSS extends along a multi-tiered continuum that includes strategic and intensive social, emotional, and/or behavioral interventions, respectively, when students demonstrate either serious or persistent challenges. Anchored by a data-based functional assessment problem-solving process that determines the underlying reasons for the students' challenges, this continuum includes classroom-based interventions, as well as school-based mental health services, supports, strategies, and programs when necessary.

Critically, these five PBSS areas are interdependent. Thus, the presence of a well-implemented social skills program will not typically result in students' social, emotional, and behavioral self-management. Indeed, in the absence of a consistent positive school and classroom climate; consistently positive staff, student, and parent relationships; consistent student motivation and accountability; and the consistent application of these areas across all school settings and the various peer groups—it is unlikely that the social skills that are taught will actually be consistently demonstrated.

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Characteristic 7. Social skills programs teach specific behaviorally-oriented skills (not constructs of behavior) in explicit and developmentally appropriate ways, and they are able to flexibly adapt to student differences in language, culture, socioeconomic level, and behavioral need (Cartledge & Milburn, 1996).

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program has been successfully implemented in rural, urban, and suburban schools elementary through high schools across the country. It has been implemented in schools with diverse, multi-cultural and multi-national groups of students; in a range of communities with students from severe levels of poverty to high levels of affluence; and in schools with significant numbers of students who do not have English as their primary language. In addition, the Program has been used in schools with students who come from largely Native American backgrounds (e.g., Navajo, Shoshoni, Arapaho, Alaskan native); and in schools with students with African-American, African, Asian, and Hispanic backgrounds.

In contrast with character education programs (Knoff, 2005), social skills programs directly teach interpersonal, problem solving, and conflict resolution behaviors using a social learning theory approach. As social skills are taught, they are developmentally and cognitively matched to the age and maturity level of the student. And, they are taught within the context of a PBSS approach that is school wide and continually evaluated. Most character education programs, in contrast, talk about (rather than teach and practice) skills, they discuss constructs of behavior (e.g., respect, responsibility, cooperation) at times (e.g., preschool and at the elementary school level) when students do not have the higher order thinking skills to understand either the constructs or their associated behaviors, and they are not able to vary their “instruction” for diverse learners or learners from diverse backgrounds.

Summary

All school-based programs need to be evidence- or research-based. This technical assistance paper has described the primary self-management outcomes of a social skills and Positive Behavioral Support System program, the research-based principles that make social skills programs work, and the Stop & Think Social Skills Program—demonstrating how these principles and programs can be result in meaningful outcomes for children and adolescents. In the end, it is critical to begin the journey with an evidence-based program.

But, it is more important to demonstrate, with evidence, that the journey was successful, reaching its intended destination.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin’s Social Emotional Competencies

National Evidence-based Designations for the Stop & Think Social Skills Program

- The Stop & Think Social Skills Program was designated an evidence-based and national model prevention program by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service’s Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in 2000.
- It was designated a “Promising Program” relative to its research efficacy and clinical implementation by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in 2003.
- It was designated a “Select” program by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL; www.casel.org) in 2002.
- The Stop & Think Social Skills Program, as an embedded component to Project ACHIEVE, is now included in SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices.

Stop & Think Social Skills Materials Available

All of the materials below can be found on the Project ACHIEVE website: www.projectachieve.info. Most of the materials are available directly on the website for sale; a few are available from other publishers.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program for Schools (PreK through Middle/High School)

Four Separate Levels:

Pre-K through Grade 1, Grades 2-3, Grades 4-5, Grades 6-12

Classroom Kits and Individual Support Materials Available

Recognized as an Evidence-Based Prevention Program by:

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (SAMHSA)

U.S. Department of Justice (OJJDP)

Collaborative for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning (CASEL)

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin’s Social Emotional Competencies

The nationally-acclaimed, evidence-based Stop and Think Social Skills Program is one of the top social skill/SEL programs in the country! It has been implemented in thousands of schools nationwide (and internationally) since 1990—primarily by classroom teachers (Tier I), and by counselors, psychologists, and other mental health professionals (Tiers II and III).

Focused on teaching students interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional control and coping skills, the four Stop & Think levels (preK through Middle/High School) ensure that all skills are taught in appropriate, developmentally-sensitive ways.

Each level concentrates on 10 Core and 10 Advanced Skills. These are practical skills that help students to manage their own behavior and to successfully interact with others: Listening, Following Directions, Asking for Help, Ignoring Distractions, Accepting Consequences, Apologizing, Dealing with Teasing, Handling Peer Pressure, How to Set Goals.

The Stop & Think Social Skills kit comes with everything that teachers and support staff need to implement the program—Manual, Reproducible Forms, Posters, Cue Cards, and Stop & Think signs that remind students to use their social skills. An essential part of every teacher's classroom management program, the Stop & Think Program has consistently demonstrated its ability to decrease discipline referrals to the Office, increase positive classroom interactions, and help students and teachers to be more productive and successful.

Training available.

The Stop & Think Parenting Book and DVD: A Guide to Children’s Good Behavior

This book is based on the nationally-acclaimed and evidence-based Stop & Think Social Skills Program. Accompanied by its 75-minute demonstration DVD, this program teaches parents how to teach their children the interpersonal, problem solving, and conflict resolution skills that will help them succeed in all settings.

Focusing on the preschool to late elementary school age span, this step-by-step book teaches children over 20 important behavioral skills—Listening, Following Directions, How to Interrupt, Accepting Consequences and Apologizing, Dealing with Teasing, How to Handle Peer Pressure—and how to use them in real life.

Teaching Students Classroom and School Routines: From Preschool to High School

There are literally hundreds of social skills that can be taught in a classroom, across a school, or even at home. Many of these are taught in The Stop & Think Social Skills Program (purchased separately) at the preschool through secondary levels. For classroom or school building routines, however, different skills and skill scripts are needed.

Given this, this E-book focuses on: (a) an overview of Project ACHIEVE's Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS), (b) an overview of the Stop & Think Social Skills process; and (c) the specific skill scripts needed to teach over 25 Classroom and Building Routines at the prekindergarten to Grade 1, Grades 2 and 3, Grades 4 and 5, and Middle/High School levels.

The Stop & Think Early Childhood Songbook: Teaching Social Skills through Music

This fun-filled CD has FIFTEEN lively and engaging original songs that help teach your child the most important Stop & Think social skills at the preschool through Grade 1 levels. Designed to reinforce the Stop & Think approach, these memorable songs help children to learn the steps to each social skill in a fun and exciting way. Complete with a children's chorus and talented assortment of musicians, this CD is the perfect way to begin your "Circle Time" at school or to put your children to bed at night.

The Stop & Think Songbook can be used with EITHER the Stop & Think Social Skills Program (for school) or the Stop & Think Parenting Book (for home). Your children will love this CD! (The fact that they are also learning social skills will be "our little secret!")

The Stop & Think Early Childhood Social Skills Posters

These FOURTEEN FULL COLOR posters show pictures of children modeling the fourteen different Stop & Think social skills at the preschool through Grade 1 levels. Complete with the specific steps needed to teach each skill, these posters are printed on durable, coated card stock for years of use in your classroom or home.

As an added BONUS: The back of each poster has the lyrics to the corresponding song on the **The Stop & Think Songbook CD**. This way, both teachers and parents can teach children their Stop & Think social skills while singing along with the CD.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin's Social Emotional Competencies

The Core Knowledge Social Skill Posters can be used with EITHER the Stop & Think Social Skills Program (for school) or the Stop & Think Parenting Book (for home). Your children will really “connect” with these pictures !!! This will help them to learn their Stop & Think social skills just that much faster!

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program: Exploring its Research Base and Rationale

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program (published by Voyager/Sopris Learning) is one of the top prekindergarten through middle/high school social skills curricula in the country today. Designated an evidence-based program by the federal government in 2000, this Document describes the underlying scientific principles that explain why it works, and provides specific examples from the curriculum for each principle. The Document concludes by discussing how school districts should review, evaluate, and select their social skills programs.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin's Social Emotional Competencies

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