



Resolving Conflict Creatively Program: Summary of Evaluations

There have been a number of research studies and evaluations of the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP). Here are highlights from the findings of those studies.

National Center for Children in Poverty

NCCP conducted an intensive two-year research study of RCCP in participating schools in New York City during the 1994-95 and 1995-96 school years. It was supported with funding from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the William T. Grant Foundation. The research assessed the impact of RCCP on 5,000 children in 15 New York City elementary schools. The study, directed by J. Lawrence Aber, was conducted by the National Center for Children in Poverty at the Mailman School of Public Health of Columbia University.

Overall, the study found that children receiving substantial RCCP instruction from their classroom teachers developed more positively than their peers. They saw their social world in a less hostile way, saw violence as an unacceptable option, and chose nonviolent ways to resolve conflict. They also scored higher on standardized tests in reading and math. More specifically, NCCP's evaluation found that RCCP had a significant positive impact when teachers taught a high number of lessons from the RCCP curriculum (on average, 25 lessons over the school year). Researchers compared groups of children on their rate of change in the targeted outcomes over the course of the first year of the evaluation. Independent of their participation, it is important to note that children's aggressive thoughts and behaviors increase over time. However, children receiving a high number of lessons demonstrated the following:

- Significantly slower growth rate in self-reported hostile attributions
- Significantly slower growth rate in aggressive fantasies
- Significantly slower growth rate in aggressive problem-solving strategies
- Significantly slower growth rate in teacher-reported aggressive behavior

In addition, children in the high lessons group (compared to those receiving a low number of lessons or no lessons) received increased ratings from their teachers on:

- Positive social behaviors and emotional control
- Greater improvement on standardized academic achievement

Results also indicate that RCCP benefits all children, regardless of gender, grade, or risk-status.

According to analyses, each year that a student participates in RCCP has an additive effect on slowing rates of many of the risk factors for aggression and violence.

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Metis Associates, WestEd, and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

Metis Associates of New York City carried out evaluations of RCCP implementation in Anchorage, Atlanta, Newark, and New York City. WestEd, based in San Francisco, conducted an evaluation of RCCP in Phoenix, and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory located in Portland, OR, evaluated RCCP in Lincoln County, OR.

Among the findings, when teachers implement RCCP, students:

- Feel better about themselves.
- Indicate increased awareness of feelings and verbalization of feelings.
- Show more caring behavior toward other students.
- Exhibit more acceptance of differences.
- Develop improved listening, communication, and anger management skills.
- Understand and use effective conflict resolution strategies.
- Feel an increased sense of empowerment.
- Have better relations with their teachers and other students.

Moreover, the majority of teachers who implement RCCP in their classrooms indicate they notice changes in their own attitudes and behaviors. Teachers say as a result of participation in RCCP they listen better to children and have more positive attitudes toward conflict and the possibilities of resolving conflicts in mutually satisfying ways. Most note positive classroom climate changes. Teachers also describe the creation of a common language throughout the school for understanding and managing conflict, the development of a sense of community among staff members, and the growth of skills that support them in forging positive relationships with students.

Data collected across a number of professionally conducted studies shows that RCCP also has the following impact in schools:

- Improved rates of attendance
- Reduced drop-out rates
- Decreased levels of disciplinary referrals and rates of suspension
- Less violence in the classroom
- Reduction in the number of reported violent incidents among students on campus

In addition, parents report an increase in their own communication and problem-solving skills.

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