



Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility

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The 4Rs Program: **Research Findings**

The 4Rs Program (Reading, Writing, Respect & Resolution) integrates social and emotional learning and language arts for pre-kindergarten to middle school. Through the program Morningside Center provides training and coaching to prepare teachers to teach weekly lessons based on The 4Rs curriculum. The 4Rs uses high-quality children's literature and engaging interactive activities to develop students' skills and understanding in seven areas: building community, feelings, listening, assertiveness, problem-solving, diversity, and cooperation.

Rigorous scientific research has demonstrated that The 4Rs Program makes a significant difference for young people. The program has been the subject of a gold-standard study conducted by top researchers at New York University and Fordham University and funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the federal Centers for Disease Control, and the W.T. Grant Foundation.

For three years, the researchers tracked the development of children in nine New York City public elementary schools that implemented The 4Rs compared to the development of children in nine control schools. Findings are now official for the first and second years of the study. Children in the 4Rs schools showed lower rates of depression and hostile attribution bias (the tendency to ascribe hostile motives to others in ambiguous social situations) than children in the control schools. Teachers in the 4Rs schools reported declines in children's attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms compared to increases among children in control schools, and increases in children's social competence, compared to declines among children in the control schools. Teachers in the 4Rs schools also reported significantly slower growth in children's aggression—compared to steep increases for children in the control schools.

Significantly, after one year of participation, children in 4Rs schools judged by their teachers to be at greatest behavioral risk had better attendance than their counterparts in the control schools, and teachers gave them higher ratings for academic progress. After two years of participation, the high-risk students receiving the 4Rs scored significantly higher on standardized reading and math achievement tests compared with their high-risk peers in the nine control schools.

At the end of the first year, independent (“blind”) observers assessed the quality of classroom climate in all third grade classrooms in the 18 schools using a research-based observational instrument called the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). These observations showed significantly higher levels of overall classroom quality among classrooms in the 4Rs schools compared to classrooms in the control schools at the end of the first year. Specifically, classrooms in 4Rs schools had significantly higher levels of emotional and instructional support compared to classrooms in control schools. Other research has shown a strong correlation between higher levels on the CLASS and more positive social and emotional development and higher academic achievement.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that The 4Rs Program is an evidence-based approach to promoting social and emotional learning that should be available to schools everywhere.

For more information on The 4Rs research findings, contact Morningside Center’s Executive Director Tom Roderick at TRoderick@MorningsideCenter.org.

Visit our website at www.morningsidecenter.org.