

What We Do

American Institutes for Research (AIR) is one of the largest not-for-profit behavioral and social science research and evaluation organizations in the world. AIR has a strong foundation in education research and is a national leader in teaching and learning improvements for all students—particularly those facing historical disadvantages.

What is the Good Behavior Game?

The Good Behavior Game (GBG) is an evidence based behavior management strategy that helps children master the key task demands of the classroom and promotes positive behavior. GBG has shown beneficial short, medium and long-term impacts for students.

The strategy is engaging, and students look forward to playing the game. GBG is built around four core elements -- students learn about **teamwork**; they receive **positive reinforcement** for **meeting behavioral expectations** that supports an environment conducive to teaching and learning; and they practice **monitoring and managing their own behavior**



Figure 1. (L) GBG Coaching Team. (R) Core Elements of GBG

Our current training model incorporates high-quality professional development, including a focus on content knowledge and skills, opportunities for active learning, ongoing support that allows teachers to apply knowledge and skills in their classroom context, and frequent feedback on their implementation. AIR staff provide training for teachers and local GBG coaches who remain on site to train additional staff, guide teachers, and ensure that the game is implemented as intended.

Research

GBG is one of the few preventive interventions aimed at aggressive and disruptive behavior that has shown short- and long-term impacts in rigorous randomized field trials. Research shows that within the first year of implementing GBG, the following occur:

- Students are more focused on the task at hand.
- Classrooms have fewer interruptions from aggressive and disruptive behavior.
- Teachers have more time to devote to teaching.

Selected Outcomes	GBG	Standard Program	Risk Reduction
Drug abuse or dependence disorder (Kellam et al., 2008)			
Males	19%	38%	50%
Males highly aggressive, disruptive in first grade	29%	83%	65%
Alcohol abuse or dependence disorder (Kellam et al., 2008)			
Males and females	13%	20%	35%
Regular smoking (Kellam et al., 2008)			
Males	7%	17%	59%
Males highly aggressive, disruptive in first grade	0%	25%	100%
Antisocial personality disorder (Kellam et al., 2008)			
Males and females	17%	25%	32%
Males highly aggressive, disruptive in first grade	41%	86%	52%
Juvenile court and/or adult incarceration record for violent and criminal behavior (Petras et al., 2008)			
Males highly aggressive, disruptive in first grade	34%	50%	32%
Use of school-based services for drugs, alcohol, or mental health (Poduska et al., 2008)			
Males highly aggressive, disruptive in first grade	17%	33%	48%
Suicide attempts (Wilcox et al., 2008)			
Females	10%	20%	50%
Males	10%	18%	44%

Table 1. Select Research Outcomes

Implementation and Adaptation

GBG combines a well-documented programmatic evidence-based classroom management strategy with field-tested training. Our goal is to build local capacity for sustained implementation and long-term success.

Distance Learning Pilot: Preliminary Results

Buy-In

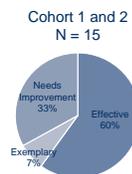
- 67% rated effective or better in Year 1
- 33% rated effective or better in Year 2

Comfort with Technology

- In Year 1, 8 out of 15 comfortable with technology at baseline
- In Year 1, 12 out of 15 comfortable with technology at the end of the year

Emotional Health

- In Year 1, at baseline 5 teachers reported feeling emotionally healthy; this grew to 11 teachers at the end of the year
- 6 out of 7 teachers who reported feeling more emotionally healthy also had high impressions of the GBG



International Collaborations

GBG would not be a success without our partners helping to research and implement the program in the field. We work with state and local education agencies, experts from universities and other entities to help spread the positive outcomes of GBG.

We have previously partnered with the United Nations Office of Drug and Crime and the Brazilian Ministry of Health. Most most recently, we are working with Mentor UK on a randomized control trial and a feasibility trial with Valbonne-Sophia Antipolis, France.



Figure 2. Top (L-R). Principal in France; UK student. Bottom (L-R). UK Coach Team; Brazilian class; UK class.

Lessons Learned

GBG can produce concrete and lasting results. It also aligns with other social-emotional learning, behavior, and school-climate initiatives. Focusing on the core elements described here ensures that coaches and teachers collaborate to implement GBG with fidelity to the research-based model.

References

1. Articles From Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 95 (Supplement 1)

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