Title: Social Information-Processing Skills Training to Promote Social Competence and Prevent Aggressive Behavior in the Third Grade

Authors: Fraser, M. W., Galinsky, M. J., Smokowski, P. R., Day, S. H., Terzian, M. A., Rose, R. A., and Guo, S.

Research Design:
Program: Making Choices taught in-class to all students by an outside expert, 22 lessons, 18 hours
Setting: Two rural/suburban elementary schools
Classrooms: 29 third-grade classes, totaling 14 teachers, 548 students
Cohort Design:
- Year 1: routine services (9 classrooms)
- Year 2: Making Choices only (9 classrooms)
- Year 3: Making Choices Plus (11 classrooms)

FINDINGS
Significant positive effects of
- Making Choices only (year 2) on
  - Social Competence
  - Social Aggression
  - Social Contact
  - SIP – encoding, goal formulation
- Making Choices Plus (year 3) on
  - Social Competence
  - Social Aggression
  - Cognitive Concentration
  - SIP – encoding, hostile attribution, goal formulation, and response decision

The intended outcomes of the Making Choices curriculum are to increase social competence, increase contact with prosocial peers, decrease peer rejection, and disrupt the chain of risk linking early aggressive behavior to later maladjustment, including poor academic achievement.

This study of third-grade children found that Making Choices is effective in promoting social competence and reducing both overt and social aggression. Teachers rated the skills and behaviors of 548 third-graders over three years: year 1 without the program, year 2 with the Making Choices program, and year 3 with the Making Choices Plus program. Making Choices had a positive impact on the children’s skills of encoding social cues, formulating goals, and interpreting the intent of others. Perhaps because of these new skills, teachers observed that
children increased their social competence and their network of friends, while reducing both physical and social aggression.

**Source:** *Journal of Primary Prevention, 25*(2) (2004)

**Title:** Preventing Youth Violence: A Single-Blind, Randomized Trial of a Multi-Element Program for Aggressive, Rejected Children in Elementary School

**Authors:** Smokowski, P.R., Fraser, M.W, Day, S. Galinsky, M. and Bacallao, M.

**Design:**
- **Program:** *Making Choices* taught in-class to all students by an outside expert, 25 lessons, approximately 19 hours
- **Sample:** All third-grade students in one suburban elementary school
- **Classrooms:** Four classrooms randomly assigned to intervention (n=51) or routine services (n=50)

**Findings:**
- Significant (p>.05) positive effects on
  - Social Competence
  - Social Contact
  - Cognitive Concentration
  - Oppositional Behavior (p>.10)

This paper reports findings from an evaluation of *Making Choices* utilized as a school-based prevention program. Using a pre- to posttest control group design, 51 third-grade students received the intervention program and 50 students received the no-intervention control condition. Controlling for pretest scores, children who received the *Making Choices* intervention scored significantly higher in areas of social contact and cognitive concentration, as well as displaying significantly lower overt aggression. Important moderating effects surfaced that indicate the intervention differentially benefited high-risk children; that is, students with weaker social skills at the beginning of the program showed more improvement, while other students maintained their skills and behaviors.

Title: Conduct Problems and Peer Rejection in Childhood: Randomized Trial of the Making Choices and Strong Families Programs

Authors: Fraser, M. W., Day, S., Galinsky, M. J., Hodges, V. G., & Smokowski, P. R.

Design
Program: Making Choices, taught to mixed groups of aggressive and prosocial children (28 hours of service) in an after-school setting, and Strong Families, an in-home family intervention for parents of referred youth (26 hours of service).
Sample: Aggressive, rejected children ages 8 to 11 years
Design: Children randomly assigned to intervention (n=45) or wait list control (n=41)

Findings
Significant (p>.05) positive effects on
- Social Competence
- Social Contact
- Cognitive Concentration
- Relational Aggression

This study examined the effectiveness of Making Choices and Strong Families, an in-home parent-education program, as a multicomponent intervention designed to disrupt developmental processes associated with conduct problems and peer rejection in childhood. Children referred for aggressive behavior and social rejection were randomized to a wait list control condition (n=41) or an intervention condition (n=45) in which they received Making Choices in after-school sites. At the same time, intervention condition parents participated in Strong Families.
Compared with control group children, intervention children demonstrated significant improvements on five of six outcome measures as reported by regular classroom teachers. Differences between the experimental and control groups suggest the programs strengthen children’s prosocial behavior, promote their ability to regulate emotions, and increase social contact with peers. Intervention also was associated with significant improvements in classroom comportment and decreases in relational aggression, a measure of coercion in peer relationships.