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“Findings from a Randomized Experiment of Playworks”

What is the study about?

This randomized controlled trial examined the effects of offering Playworks—a program in which full-time coaches provide opportunities for organized play during recess and class time—on school climate, student behavior, and other disciplinary and developmental outcomes. Using data from about 2,000 students and 250 teachers in 25 urban, low-income elementary schools across the United States, the authors compared outcomes from schools that offered Playworks to outcomes in schools that were not offering the program.

What did the study report?

The authors found no differences between Playworks and non-Playworks schools for any of the 11 measures of school discipline. In addition, the authors found no differences in 30 outcomes measured by student survey responses. Finally, the authors found that four of the 30 outcomes measured by teacher survey responses were more favorable in the Playworks schools: fewer incidents of bullying, improved transitions to learning after recess, greater student enjoyment of adult-organized activities, and improved feelings of inclusion and safety at recess.

How does the WWC rate this study?

The portion of the study that estimates the impact of Playworks on disciplinary outcomes *meets WWC evidence standards*, because it is based on a randomized controlled trial with low attrition. The portion of the study that estimates the impact of Playworks on outcomes

The New Quick Review

In March 2012, the WWC began using a new format for quick reviews to allow for a faster release. When a more complete review is conducted for the study described here, this information will be updated.

Handy Definitions

- ▼ *quick review*
- ▼ *study rating*
- ▼ *meets evidence standards*
- ▼ *meets evidence standards with reservations*
- ▼ *does not meet evidence standards*

See the *full glossary* ►

measured by student and teacher surveys may *meet WWC evidence standards with or without reservations*. A more thorough review is forthcoming.

Citation

Bleeker, M., James-Burdumy, S., Beyler, N., Dodd, A. H., London, R. A., Westrich, L., Stokes-Guinan, K., & Castrechini, S. (2012). *Findings from a randomized experiment of Playworks: Selected results from cohort 1*. Report prepared for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation by Mathematica Policy Research and Stanford University's John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities.

Absence of conflict of interest: This study was conducted by staff from Mathematica Policy Research. Because Mathematica operates the WWC, this study was reviewed by staff from subcontractor organizations.

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