



Preventing Emotional/Behavioral Disorders of Young Students with Problem Behavior

Kevin Sutherland, Virginia Commonwealth University & Maureen Conroy, University of Florida
<https://education.ufl.edu/best-in-class/>

Many young students, particularly those living in poverty, arrive at school demonstrating chronic problem behaviors such as noncompliance, defiance, and disruptive behaviors.

Research suggests that up to 1 in 5 students enter kindergarten with learning and behavior problems that place them at-risk for developing emotional/behavioral disorders (Abenavoli, Greenberg & Bierman, 2017), and teachers indicate that managing the problem behaviors of their students is a significant challenge (Reinke et al., 2011). Providing teachers with training and coaching supports to help them promote engagement and positive behaviors in classrooms is an important goal for the field and one that can change the educational trajectory of these young students.

How can research address this problem? Researchers have found that one-time training is typically not effective for ensuring teachers use of evidence-based practices in their classrooms (Becker & Domitrovich, 2011). In response, BEST in CLASS was developed to train and coach teachers to ensure their use of evidence-based practice with young students who arrive at school with elevated rates of problem behavior. Laura Simon, a first grade teacher in Richmond, VA, noted the support provided by her BEST in CLASS coach:

I have an extremely difficult class this year, and my coach has offered to help in many ways. Working with a class that has so many issues can be stressful. She helps to lift my spirits every time and helps me implement the BEST in CLASS practices with my students. Sorry, I could go on and on. ~Laura Simon, RPS

What has the research shown? Recent research in preschool classrooms found that children who received instruction from teachers trained and coached in BEST in CLASS had a 42% decrease in externalizing problem behaviors compared to children in business-as-usual classrooms, and the effect size for classroom management self-efficacy for teachers in BEST in CLASS classrooms was large ($d = .78$)(Sutherland et al., 2017; Conroy et al., 2017). We are currently testing an elementary version of the intervention with Kindergarten to 2nd grade students, and preliminary results are promising. As noted by Ms. Simon:

I have found the evidence-based practices to be very helpful. Many of them were not new, but I found I was not using them effectively or as often as I should. I have noticed positive outcomes from using the practices. ~Laura Simon, RPS

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