

Name of Program/Strategy: AI's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices

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1. Overview and description

AI's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices is a school-based prevention program that seeks to develop social-emotional skills such as self-control, problem-solving, and healthy decision-making in children ages 3-8 in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade. The program fosters both the personal traits of resilience and the nurturing environments children need to overcome difficulties and fully develop their talents and capabilities. Through fun lessons, engaging puppets, original music and materials, and appropriate teaching approaches, the AI's Pals curriculum helps young children regulate their own feelings and behavior; creates and maintains a classroom environment of caring, cooperation, respect, and responsibility; teaches conflict resolution and peaceful problem-solving; promotes appreciation of differences and positive social relationships; prevents and addresses bullying behavior; conveys clear messages about the harms of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; and builds children's abilities to make healthy choices and cope with life's difficulties.

The program consists of a year-long, 46-session interactive curriculum delivered by trained classroom teachers who use AI's Pals teaching approaches to infuse the concepts into daily interactions with the children.

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2. Implementation considerations (if available)

Ongoing communication with parents is also part of AI's Pals. Teachers regularly send parents letters to update them about the skills the children are learning, suggest home activities to reinforce these concepts, and inform parents about their child's progress.

3. Descriptive Information

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|-------------------------------|--|
| Areas of Interest | Mental Health Promotion Substance abuse prevention |
| Outcomes | 1: Social competence and pro-social behaviors 2: Antisocial/aggressive behaviors |
| Outcome Categories | Mental Health Social Functioning Violence |
| Ages | 0-5 (Early childhood) 6-12 (Childhood) |
| Genders | Male Female |
| Races/Ethnicities | Black or African American Hispanic or Latino White Race/ethnicity unspecified |
| Settings | School Other Community Settings |
| Geographic Locations | Urban Suburban Rural and/or frontier |
| Implementation History | Since being pilot tested in 1993, AI's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices has been implemented in 34 States and in Ontario, Canada. The program has been implemented in approximately 4,000 early childhood classrooms in more than 700 elementary schools in more than 250 school districts. |

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| | <p>An additional 700 preschools, child care centers, Head Start programs, after-school programs, faith-based programs, and other community-based child- serving organizations have used the intervention.</p> <p>Within the United States, more than 135 evaluation studies have been conducted involving more than 24,500 children across 1,665 classrooms. The longest continuous length of implementation is 17 years, with the average length of implementation being 6 years.</p> |
| NIH Funding/CER Studies | Partially/fully funded by National Institutes of Health: No Evaluated in comparative effectiveness research studies: No |
| Adaptations | Program materials are available in Spanish. |
| Adverse Effects | No adverse effects, concerns, or unintended consequences were identified by the applicant. |
| IOM Prevention Categories | Universal |

4. Outcomes

Outcome 1: Social competence and pro-social behaviors

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| Description of Measures | <p>Social competence and pro-social behaviors were assessed using the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Behavior Rating Scale, a 30-item scale developed for these studies to measure behaviors related to the development of resiliency and pro-social behaviors. Each item was rated on a 5- point scale from 1 (almost never does) to 5 (almost always does). • Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scale's 34-item Social Skills scale, which consists of 3 subscales: Social Cooperation, Social Interaction, and Social Independence. Each item is rated on a 4-point scale from 0 (never true) to 3 (often true). • Social Interaction subscale of the Adapted Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scale, a shortened version of the Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scale. Each item is rated on a 4- point scale from 0 (never true) to 3 (often true). |
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| | Teachers completed the measures in the week prior to the introduction of the intervention (pretest) and 2 weeks after program completion (posttest). |
| Key Findings | <p>In one study, participants in the intervention group showed statistically significant improvements in pro-social behaviors and social independence from pre- to posttest compared with the assessment- only control group ($p < .01$ and $p < .05$, respectively).</p> <p>In two other studies, participants in the intervention group showed statistically significant improvements in pro-social behaviors and social interaction skills from pre- to posttest compared with the assessment-only control group ($p < .001$ for both analyses in one study; $p < .01$ and $p < .001$, respectively, in the other study).</p> |
| Studies Measuring Outcome | Study 1, Study 2, Study 3 |
| Study Designs | Experimental, Quasi-experimental |
| Quality of Research Rating | 2.9 (0.0-4.0 scale) |

Outcome 2: Normative beliefs about substance use and substance use refusal skills

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| Description of Measures | <p>Antisocial/aggressive behaviors were assessed using the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scale's 42-item Problem Behavior scale, which consists of • 5 subscales: Self-Centered/Explosive, Attention Problems/Overactive, Antisocial/Aggressive, Social Withdrawal, and Anxiety/Somatic Disorders. Each item is rated on a 4-point scale from 0 (never true) to 3 (often true). • Antisocial/Aggressive and Social Withdrawal subscales of the Adapted Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scale, a shortened version of the Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scale. Each item is rated on a 4-point scale from 0 (never true) to 3 (often true). <p>Teachers completed the measures in the week prior to the introduction of the intervention (pre-test) and 2 weeks after program completion (post-test).</p> |
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| Key Findings | In one study, participants in the intervention group showed statistically significant improvements in problem behaviors from pre- to posttest compared with the assessment-only control group ($p < .05$ for all analyses). Two other studies evaluated antisocial/aggressive and social withdrawal behaviors in an intervention group and an assessment-only control group. In one study, participants in the intervention group showed statistically significant improvements in antisocial/aggressive and social withdrawal behaviors from pre- to posttest compared with the assessment-only control group ($p < .05$ and $p < .01$, respectively). The other study found no significant differences between the two groups from pre- to posttest. |
| Studies Measuring Outcome | Study 1, Study 2, Study 3 |
| Study Designs | Experimental, Quasi-experimental |
| Quality of Research Rating | 3.0 (0.0-4.0 scale) |

5. **Cost effectiveness report** (Washington State Institute of Public Policy – if available)
6. **Washington State results** (from Performance Based Prevention System (PBPS) – if available)
7. **Where is this program/strategy being used (if available)?**

| Washington Counties | Oregon Counties |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| | |

8. Study Populations

The studies reviewed for this intervention included the following populations, as reported by the study authors.

| Study | Age | Gender | Race/Ethnicity |
|---------|-----------------------|------------------------|--|
| Study 1 | 0-5 (Early childhood) | 51% Male 49% Female | 50% White 25% Black or African American 25% Race/ethnicity unspecified |

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|----------------|---|------------------------|---|
| Study 2 | 0-5 (Early childhood) 6-12 (Childhood) | 51% Male 49% Female | 83% Black or African American 16% Race/ethnicity unspecified 1% White |
| Study 3 | 0-5 (Early childhood) | 57% Male 43% Female | 95% White 2% Hispanic or Latino 2% Race/ethnicity unspecified 1% Black or African American |

9. Quality of Research

The documents below were reviewed for Quality of Research. Other materials may be available. For more information, contact the developer(s).

Study 1

Loos, M. E. (n.d.). Addendum and clarification: Results of Michigan Study 1996-1997 as presented in "Multi-year evaluation of the effectiveness of a resilience-based prevention program for young children."

Lynch, K. B., Geller, S. R., & Schmidt, M. G. (2004). Multi-year evaluation of the effectiveness of a resilience-based prevention program for young children. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 24(3), 335-353.

Study 2

Lynch, K. B., & McCracken, K. (2001). Highlights of findings of the AI's Pals intervention: Hampton City Public Schools, 1999-2000 (with addendum and clarification for NREPP review prepared by M. E. Loos). Richmond: Virginia Institute for Developmental Disabilities, Virginia Commonwealth University.

Study 3

Lynch, K. B., & McCracken, K. (2001). Highlights of findings of the AI's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices intervention implemented in Greater Des Moines, Iowa, 1999-2000 (with addendum and clarification for NREPP review prepared by M. E. Loos). Richmond: Virginia Institute for Developmental Disabilities, Virginia Commonwealth University.

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Supplementary Materials

Lynch, K. B., Geller, S. R., Hunt, D. R., Galano, J., & Dubas, J. S. (1998). Successful program development using implementation evaluation. *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community*, 17(2), 51-64.

Quality of Research Ratings by Criteria (0.0-4.0 scale)

External reviewers independently evaluate the Quality of Research for an intervention's reported results using six criteria:

1. Reliability of measures
2. Validity of measures
3. Intervention fidelity
4. Missing data and attrition
5. Potential confounding variables
6. Appropriateness of analysis

For more information about these criteria and the meaning of the ratings, see Quality of Research.

| Outcome | Reliability of Measures | Validity of Measures | Fidelity | Missing Data/Attrition | Confounding Variables | Data Analysis | Overall Rating |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1: Social competence and pro-social behaviors | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3.0 | 2.8 | 2.3 | 3.2 | 2.9 |
| 2: Antisocial/aggressive behaviors | 3.3 | 3.3 | 3.0 | 2.8 | 2.3 | 3.2 | 3.0 |

Study Strengths

The measures used in the studies have good psychometric properties. The teachers and teacher's assistants received systematic training to implement the program, and a variety of other methods were also used to enhance the fidelity of implementation (e.g., participatory evaluation, classroom observation, teacher reports). Appropriate analyses were conducted to assess the effects of the intervention.

Study Weaknesses

In two studies, attrition rates differed between the intervention and comparison classrooms, and it is unclear how researchers accounted for this attrition. In two studies, classrooms were not randomized and pretest scores were different on some scales, which introduced potential selection bias.

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10. Readiness for Dissemination

The documents below were reviewed for Readiness for Dissemination. Other materials may be available. For more information, contact the developer(s).

Dissemination Materials

Al's Pals price list

Al's Pals Web site, http://www.wingspanworks.com/educational_programs

PRO-ED, Inc. (2002). Preschool and kindergarten behavior scales (adapted). Austin, TX.

Virginia Commonwealth University. (1997). Al's Pals, 2006-2007, child behavior rating scale. Richmond, VA.

Virginia Commonwealth University. (1997). Al's Pals, 2006-2007, implementation observation form. Richmond, VA.

Virginia Commonwealth University. (1997). Al's Pals child code numbers, 2006-2007, teacher record. Richmond, VA.

Wingspan (Producer). (2003). An introduction to Wingspan programs featuring Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices [DVD]. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (2006). Instructions for beginning of the year teacher ratings of child behavior. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (2007). Instructions for end of the year teacher ratings of child behavior. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (n.d.). Advanced training packet. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (n.d.). Al's Pals, 2006-2007, overview of forms. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (n.d.). Al's Pals, 2006-2007, teacher information sheet. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (n.d.). Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices--Online training overview. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (n.d.). Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices--Program kit. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (n.d.). Al's Pals top 10 frequently asked questions. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (n.d.). Core training packet. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (n.d.). Curriculum progress and student update form--Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices, 2006-2007. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (n.d.). For Al's Pals community coordinators - Tips for effective implementation of Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (n.d.). For Al's Pals school system coordinators--Tips for effective implementation of Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices. Glen Allen, VA.

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Wingspan. (n.d.). For principals and center directors--Tips for effective implementation of AI's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (n.d.). Information related to reliability and validity of instruments. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (n.d.). Post data instructions to site coordinators. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (n.d.). Pre data instructions to site coordinators. Glen Allen, VA.

Wingspan. (n.d.). Refresher training packet. Glen Allen, VA.

Readiness for Dissemination Ratings by Criteria (0.0-4.0 scale)

External reviewers independently evaluate the intervention's Readiness for Dissemination using three criteria:

1. Availability of implementation materials
2. Availability of training and support resources
3. Availability of quality assurance procedures

For more information about these criteria and the meaning of the ratings, see Readiness for Dissemination.

| Implementation Materials | Training and Support Resources | Quality Assurance Procedures | Overall Rating |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 |

Dissemination Strengths

The program curriculum and all accompanying audiovisual materials and teaching tools are well designed and comprehensive. The curriculum is only available upon completion of training provided by the developer. Training is offered at the developer's site, at the implementation site, and online. An outreach specialist is assigned to each implementation site to provide an array of support before, during, and after implementation. Tips for effective implementation, multiple fidelity monitoring tools, and clear data management and outcome measurement protocols are provided to support quality assurance. Implementers encountering problems with quality assurance are invited to attend free online meetings for guidance from the developer.

Dissemination Weaknesses

No weaknesses were identified by reviewers.

11. Costs

The information below was provided by the developer and may have changed since the time of review. For detailed information on implementation costs (e.g., staffing, space, equipment, materials shipping and handling), contact the developer.

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| Item Description | Cost | Required by Program Developer |
|---|--|--|
| Curriculum kit | \$685 each | Yes |
| 2-day core training at centralized location | \$300 per person | Yes (one core training option is required) |
| 2-day core training on site | \$6,500 for a group of 24, or \$8,000 for a group of 30, plus trainer travel costs | Yes (one core training option is required) |
| Seven 2-hour online core training sessions | \$325 per person or \$4,300 for a group of 15 | Yes (one core training option is required) |
| 3-hour refresher training at centralized location | \$1,500 for a group of 30 | No |
| 3-hour online refresher training | \$85 per person or \$1,250 for a group of 20 | No |
| 3-hour advanced training at centralized location | \$1,500 for a group of 30 | No |
| 3-hour online advanced training | \$85 per person or \$1,250 for a group of 20 | No |
| Ongoing technical assistance/consultation | Free | No |
| Evaluation services package | \$300 per classroom for online data entry, or \$400 per classroom for paper data entry (minimum of four classrooms required) | No |
| Monitoring observation form | Free | No |
| Quality assurance review services | Free | No |

Additional Information

Over a 5-year period, implementing AI's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices costs approximately \$9-\$15 per child, depending on the number of children in the classroom. Start-up costs include training on the intervention and the purchase of materials.

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12. Contacts

For information on research and implementation:

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