Resolving Conflicts Creatively Program™ (RCCP)

Why Is This Strategy Useful?

The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program™ (RCCP) is a whole-school kindergarten through 12th-grade program that aims to promote social and emotional learning and character development, with a special emphasis on conflict resolution and intergroup relations. RCCP uses a multicomponent model that aims to support school staff, parents, families, and the community in creating a safe, caring, and respectful learning environment. The program is designed to promote life skills and values such as respect, cooperation, anger management, appreciation for diversity, cultural understanding, and conflict resolution skills.

Description of Strategy

The program includes three core components: (a) training and ongoing professional development for teachers, (b) the RCCP curriculum, and (c) peer mediation. Training typically begins with a 5-day introductory workshop. The workshop prepares teachers to provide direct instruction in key social and emotional competencies, model these skills in their interactions with children, infuse them into subject matter, and create safe, caring, and respectful classroom environments. RCCP also includes classroom followup visits, which may include demonstration teaching, observation and coaching, planning and problem solving, and advanced training.

The RCCP curriculum consists of 51 lessons organized into 12 units. Lessons focus on learning through experience and skill development. In a typical lesson, the teacher introduces the concept of a value or skill (e.g., respect), gives students an opportunity to practice that value or skill in action (e.g., dealing with name calling), and provides time to reflect on the lesson. There are separate versions of RCCP curriculum for kindergarten through Grade 3, and for Grades 4 through 6. The secondary school curriculum covers materials similar to those in the elementary school curriculum, but with an additional focus on deescalating volatile situations that might lead to violent confrontations. The goal of the peer-mediation component of the program is to support mediation of disputes by students so that behavior changes develop in classrooms and throughout the school community.

Research Evidence

At least one quasi-experimental study provides support for this strategy. The subjects were 11,160 children from Grades 1 through 6 in New York City. The schools selected to participate in the study were varied in their degree of the RCCP program implementation. Schools were divided into four groups: beginning stage of implementation, integration of some program components, integration of all program components, and the nonintervention group. Results indicated that instruction in RCCP resulted in (a) increasing rates of growth for outcomes such as hostile attributional bias, aggressive interpersonal negotiation strategies, and teacher-reported prosocial behavior; (b) steady rates of growth for outcomes such as conduct problems; and (c) decreasing rates of growth for outcomes such as competent interpersonal negotiation strategies, depressive symptoms, aggressive fantasies, and teacher-reported aggressive behavior. Overall, high rates of instruction in the RCCP curriculum across 2 years were significantly related to positive changes in children’s academic achievement and social and emotional developmental trajectories, reducing their risk of future school failure, aggression, and violence.
Sample Studies Supporting This Strategy


RCCP is one of the oldest and largest school-based conflict resolution programs in the United States. Beginning in 1994, a rigorous scientific evaluation of the RCCP was planned and implemented, involving more than 350 teachers and 11,000 children from 15 public elementary schools in New York City. In this chapter, the authors describe the RCCP, explain the rationale for and design of the study, summarize the major results related to the program’s impact on children’s trajectories of social and emotional learning (SEL) and academic achievement, and discuss the implications of these findings for research, practice, and policy.

Additional Resources

