



Evaluation of the MBF Child Safety Matters® Program: A Randomized Controlled Trial

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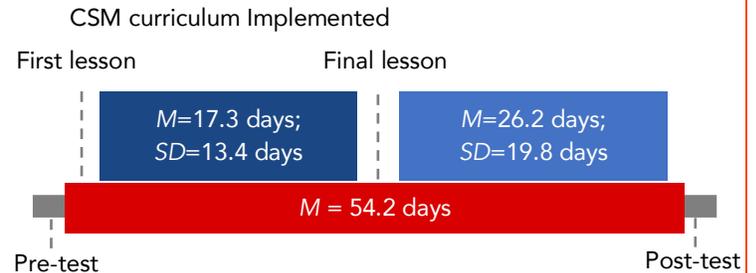
BACKGROUND Many states mandate child abuse prevention in schools to address child victimization and safety. However, few evidence-based and developmentally appropriate prevention programs for elementary schools exist. Of those in existence, few have been scientifically evaluated. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the knowledge and skills acquired by students in grades K-5 who received the MBF Child Safety Matters® curriculum using a randomized control design – the gold standard in assessing the effectiveness of an intervention.

METHOD The Institutional Review Board at the University of Florida and participating Florida public school districts approved this study. Schools that never implemented the curriculum and were not currently using another child abuse prevention program were invited to participate. Schools were randomly assigned to a treatment or control (delayed treatment) group from matched pairs or within strata. One classroom per K – 5th grade was randomly selected to participate in the study. Opt-out forms were sent home to parents. Children with parental consent in both the treatment and control group were given a 14-item pre-test of their knowledge of risky situations. Children in the treatment group received the MBF Child Safety Matters curriculum during the 2017 – 2018 school year by a trained facilitator (the school counselor). Both the treatment and control groups completed post-tests.

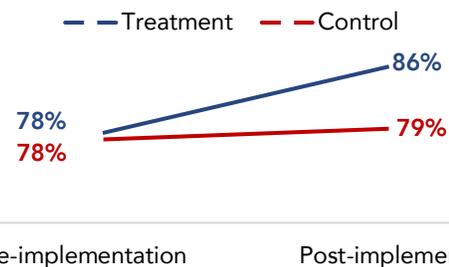
Participants included:

- 8 COUNTIES
- 12 SCHOOLS
- 12 FACILITATORS
- 72 CLASSROOMS
- 72 TEACHERS
- 1,176 STUDENTS

RESULTS



- The study sample size at pre-test was N=1,176 (592 Control and 584 Treatment). At post-test, sample size decreased to N=1,121 (562 Control and 559 Treatment).
- At pre-test, there was no difference between condition groups in students’ knowledge of potentially risky or unsafe situations.
- After receiving the MBF Child Safety Matters lessons, students in the treatment group had significantly higher scores than students in the control (delayed treatment) group.



- Growth in knowledge was similar for all grades. Questions about secrets, getting away, and self-blame showed higher knowledge growth.

SUMMARY Compared to children who did not receive the MBF Child Safety Matters curriculum, children who received the program demonstrated an increase in their knowledge of potentially risky or unsafe situations. A follow-up to measure children’s knowledge retention is currently being conducted.

The Monique Burr Foundation for Children is committed to ongoing research to evaluate the effectiveness of their Prevention Education Programs.