

MBF Prevention Education Programs, developed by the Monique Burr Foundation for Children (MBF), are evidence-based and evidence-informed, comprehensive prevention programs that educate and empower children and teens with universal strategies and Safety Rules to prevent, recognize, and respond appropriately to the four types of child abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect), exploitation, bullying, cyberbullying, and digital dangers.

MBF is committed to ongoing research to ensure the efficacy of all programs and strives to be transparent in our explanations of MBF program efficacy or evidence base. While many organizations and programs claim they are “evidence-based,” there is no one set of guidelines or criteria that must be met to make this claim. Many think of “evidence-based” as a program listed on a registry site. While there are registries that list programs according to their level of evidence, there are many quality and effective programs not listed on any registry.

It is important for stakeholders assessing violence prevention programs to understand the components and continuum of evidence. Program users are encouraged to research programs' claims of evidence and assess their accuracy against the information provided here on Understanding Evidence.

UNDERSTANDING EVIDENCE

In assessing prevention programs, it is important to assess the strength of evidence as well as the effectiveness of a program to achieve its desired outcomes. It is equally important to know that a program will work and be successful in the particular context and setting in which it will be implemented.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, “Evidence Based Decision-Making is a process for making decisions about a program, practice, or policy that is grounded in the best available research evidence and informed by experiential evidence from the field and relevant contextual evidence.”¹

The Best Available Research Evidence enables researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers to determine whether or not a prevention program, practice, or policy is actually achieving the outcomes it aims to and in the way it intends. The more rigorous the research, the more compelling the evidence. The extent to which a prevention strategy has been replicated in multiple, applied settings with diverse populations (external/ ecological validity), and the availability and accessibility of implementation supports (implementation guidance) are also important aspects of best available research evidence.

Literature suggests that two other forms of evidence are also very important when making decisions based on evidence:

- Experiential Evidence is the collective experience and expertise of the multiple stakeholders who have practiced or lived in a particular setting and who have knowledge about the community in which a prevention strategy is to be implemented (i.e., knowledge about what has/has not worked previously in a specific setting with particular populations; insight into potential implementation challenges; insight regarding the needs and challenges of the community and those who live in it). It also includes the knowledge of subject matter experts.
- Contextual Evidence refers to information that may impact the success of a prevention strategy (e.g., community history, organizational capacity, social norms, etc.). The role that contextual evidence plays in evidence-based decision-making is to provide information to help determine whether a prevention strategy is likely to be acceptable, feasible, and useful in a particular setting.

For more information, see: https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/understanding_evidence-a.pdf.

¹ Centers for Disease Control - Understanding Evidence: Evidence Based Decision-Making Summary

BACKGROUND: MBF PREVENTION EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Based on the public health and social-ecological frameworks for prevention, MBF Prevention Education Programs were developed based on the latest research and prevention best practices. These include developmental victimology and polyvictimization research, cognitive-behavioral theory, healthy sexual development, and trauma-informed practices, with a specific focus on the developmental stages and different learning styles of children. The lessons are presented in a fun and engaging way that increase knowledge, build preventative as well as resistance skills, engage safe adults, and address risk and protective factors. Learning objectives and evaluation standards are included, as well as alignment with academic and health instruction standards. To learn more about MBF Programs, visit our website at www.mbfpreventioneducation.org.

EVIDENCE: MBF CHILD SAFETY MATTERS®

When assessed along the continuum of evidence presented by the CDC, *MBF Child Safety Matters*® is a well-supported, or evidence-based curriculum for elementary school students in grades K-5. The program is presented in two comprehensive lessons ranging from 35-55 minutes (or in four shorter lessons) by trained facilitators in classrooms. Facilitators present turnkey scripts along with engaging, interactive PowerPoints with lecture, group discussion, skills-practice activities, videos, and games.

Four independent research studies have examined the effectiveness of the program -one with long-term follow up- with positive results for both student knowledge gains and facilitator implementation fidelity. (See “Research Study Summaries” for more information.)

In addition to research evidence, MBF programs also have experiential and contextual evidence support. The process of development, review, and refinement has included both education and prevention subject matter experts as well as piloting programs within the context and settings they will be implemented in. This has allowed us to create programs that are not only effective, but acceptable and practical and being used across the U.S. by thousands of facilitators with millions of children to date.

ADDITIONAL MBF PROGRAMS

MBF has four additional comprehensive, evidence-informed programs, which were developed based on the same theoretical knowledge and research best-practices, suggesting the same quality and effectiveness.

***MBF Teen Safety Matters*® - Middle School Edition** is a curriculum for middle school students in grades 6-8. The program can be presented in two 55-minute lessons (or four shorter lessons) by trained facilitators in classrooms. Facilitators present turnkey scripts along with engaging, interactive PowerPoints with lecture, group discussion, skills-practice activities, videos, and games.

***MBF Teen Safety Matters*® - High School Edition** is a curriculum for high school students in grades 9-12. The program can be presented in two 55-minute lessons (or four shorter lessons) by trained facilitators in classrooms. Facilitators present turnkey scripts along with engaging, interactive PowerPoints with lecture, group discussion, skills-practice activities, videos, and games.

***MBF After-School Safety Matters*™** is a curriculum for after-school programs and youth-serving organizations. It is presented to youth in grade-level clusters (K-2, 3-5, and 6-8) with 6 topic-specific lessons by trained facilitators using a turnkey script. The lessons include lecture, group discussion, skills-practice activities, games, and crafts.

***MBF Athlete Safety Matters*™** is a curriculum designed to protect youth athletes, from beginning to elite level. Two lessons are presented to youth athletes in grade-level clusters (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12) by trained facilitators in youth sports settings. Facilitators present turnkey scripts along with engaging, interactive PowerPoints with lecture, group discussion, skills-practice activities, videos, and games.

Below are summaries of research studies on MBF Prevention Education Programs to date. MBF is committed to ongoing research to ensure the efficacy of all programs. Summaries and full research reports are available at <https://www.mbfpreventioneducation.org/why-use-our-programs/research/>.



2019 - Randomized Control Trial: MBF Child Safety Matters®

Sample Size:

826 Kindergarten through second grade students

Summary/Findings:

This study evaluated the ability of the *MBF Child Safety Matters®* curriculum to increase the knowledge of children in Kindergarten to 2nd grade who were exposed to it. Participants included nine Florida schools across seven counties, 54 classrooms, and 826 students (at pre-test). Classrooms were randomly assigned to receive the program using the 2-lesson format or 4-lesson format or assigned to the wait-list control group. Knowledge was assessed with a questionnaire administered prior to the curriculum and then approximately 11 weeks later. **Children who received the curriculum increased their knowledge for the kind of information included in the program, and this knowledge increased significantly compared to the control group of children who did not receive the program.**

Researchers:

- David Finkelhor, PhD – Crimes against Children Research Center, Family Research Laboratory, and Department of Sociology, University of New Hampshire
- Melissa A. Bright, PhD – Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies, University of Florida
- Mona Sayedul Huq, PhD – Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies, University of Florida
- M. David Miller, PhD – School of Human Development and Organizational Studies in Education, University of Florida



2019 - Randomized Control Trial: MBF Child Safety Matters®

Sample Size:

2,414 Kindergarten through fifth grade students

Summary/Findings:

This study evaluated the knowledge acquisition of children who were exposed to the *MBF Child Safety Matters®* curriculum. Participants included 6 Georgia schools across 3 counties, 136 classrooms, and 2,414 students at pre-test. Classrooms within each grade at each school were randomly assigned to receive the program or be in a wait-list control, and to receive the curriculum after the evaluation. Knowledge was assessed with a questionnaire administered prior to the curriculum and then approximately a month later. **Children who received the curriculum increased their knowledge for the kind of information included in the program** relative to control children ($d = .29$) who did not receive the program.

Researcher:

Daniel Whitaker, PhD - School of Public Health, Georgia State University



2018 - Randomized Control Trial: MBF Child Safety Matters®

Sample Size:

1,176 Kindergarten through fifth grade students

Summary/Findings:

This study utilized a randomized control trial (RCT) design to examine the knowledge acquisition of children who were exposed to the Monique Burr Foundation's Child Safety Matters® curriculum, a program designed to educate Kindergarten to grade 5 children about physical abuse, sexual abuse and bullying. Participants included 1176 students from 72 classrooms in 12 Florida schools across 8 counties. Schools were matched in pairs and randomly assigned to receive the program or be in a wait-list control. Knowledge was assessed with a questionnaire administered prior to the curriculum (T1) as well as approximately eight weeks (T2) and approximately seven months (T3) later. **Children who received the curriculum increased their knowledge for the kind of information included in the program, and this knowledge increased significantly and was sustained over the seven months** compared to the control group of children who did not receive the program.

Researchers:

- David Finkelhor, PhD – Crimes against Children Research Center, Family Research Laboratory, and Department of Sociology, University of New Hampshire
- Melissa A. Bright, PhD – Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies, University of Florida
- Mona Sayedul Huq, PhD – Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies, University of Florida
- M. David Miller, PhD – School of Human Development and Organizational Studies in Education, University of Florida



2015 – One Group Pre-/Post-Test Design: MBF Child Safety Matters®

Sample Size:

620 Kindergarten through fifth grade students

Summary/Findings:

Evidence from the child assessments suggest that the program is successful in educating elementary students with strategies to prevent bullying, cyberbullying, digital abuse, and all types of child abuse, **with 96% of participants achieving pre- to post-test gains** on the measures. Findings also suggest that the program is being delivered as designed and with high procedural fidelity to the prescribed curriculum, with 90% of participating facilitators adhering to program language and curriculum. The evaluation findings suggest that the quality of program delivery is adequate and that there are many positive elements of the program. The lessons are clear, easy to implement, age appropriate, and they appropriately cover a broad range of child safety issues.

Researchers:

- Ithel Jones, Ph.D., School of Teacher Education, Florida State University
- Youn Ah Jung, MS, School of Teacher Education, Florida State University