

The Effects of Three Lions Quest Programs on Students' Behaviors and Prosocial Attitudes

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We summarize here the results of three studies (Kidron, Garibaldi, & Osher, 2014) of the effects of the Lions Quest programs: Skills for Growing, Skills for Adolescence, and Skills for Action.¹ In each study, students in classrooms that implemented a Lions Quest program had lower rates of disruptive behavior than comparable students in classrooms that did not implement social and emotional learning programs. Students in classrooms that implemented the Skills for Growing program rated their prosocial attitudes and the social and emotional skills of their peers more highly than comparable students in classrooms that did not implement social and emotional learning programs.

Social and emotional skills are important for the psychological well-being and academic performance of students. These skills include emotional processes (e.g., emotion regulation) and social cognition (e.g., social problem solving). Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the educational process that aims to promote the development of social and emotional skills. Today, an increasing number of schools allocate time to SEL programs to promote children and youth's positive relationships with peers and adults, prosocial behavior, academic effort and persistence, and a greater sense of school safety.

Lions Clubs International Foundation offers three Lions Quest programs to promote social and emotional skills:

1. Skills for Growing (Grades K–5)
2. Skills for Adolescence (Grades 6–8)
3. Skills for Action (Grades 9–12)

The three programs offer explicit, age-appropriate SEL instruction based on evidence-based practices and expert recommendations. The programs include

- ◆ Clearly articulated learning objectives
- ◆ Detailed lesson plans
- ◆ Formal training for educators and administrators

These programs encourage active student learning, including student participation in the discussion, production, and performance of the strategies learned. Active learning strategies may include role-play, group work (e.g., small-group discussions, projects), student production of text writing and art, and service learning. Ultimately, the SEL process is expected to result in more positive teacher–student relationships and greater academic effort and achievement.

American Institutes for Research (AIR) conducted three studies—one for each of the Lions Quest programs—to assess their effect on students' behaviors and attitudes. The three studies were conducted in a school district in West Virginia.

NoVo Foundation
Latin: change, alter, invent



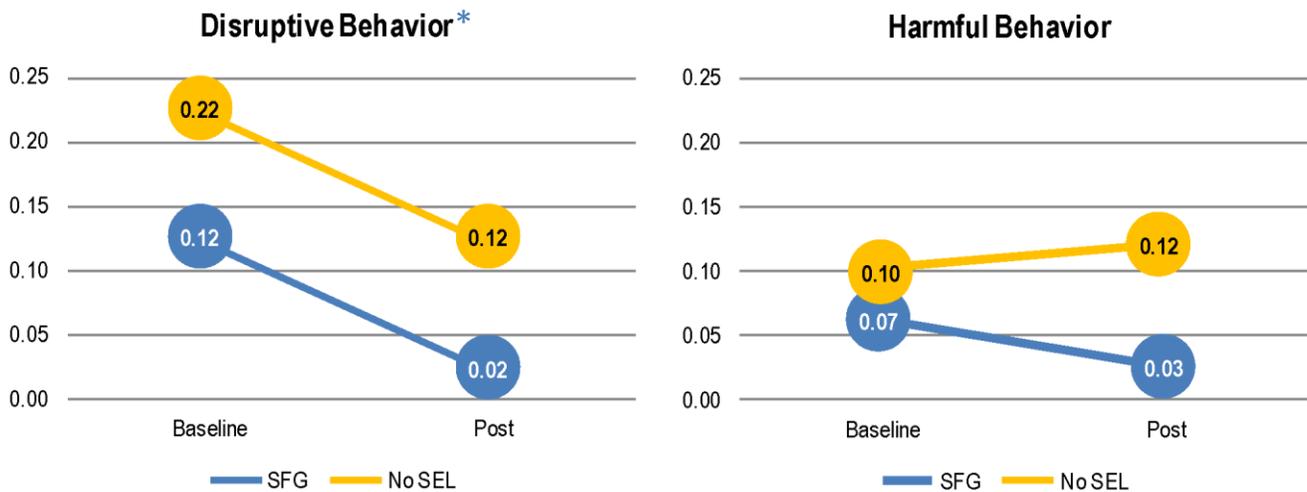
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¹Kidron, Y., Garibaldi, M., & Osher, D. (2014). *Enhancing Elementary, Middle, and High School Students' Social and Emotional Learning: Year 2 Report of the Evaluation of Lions Quest in Wood County, WV*. Washington, D.C.: American Institutes for Research.

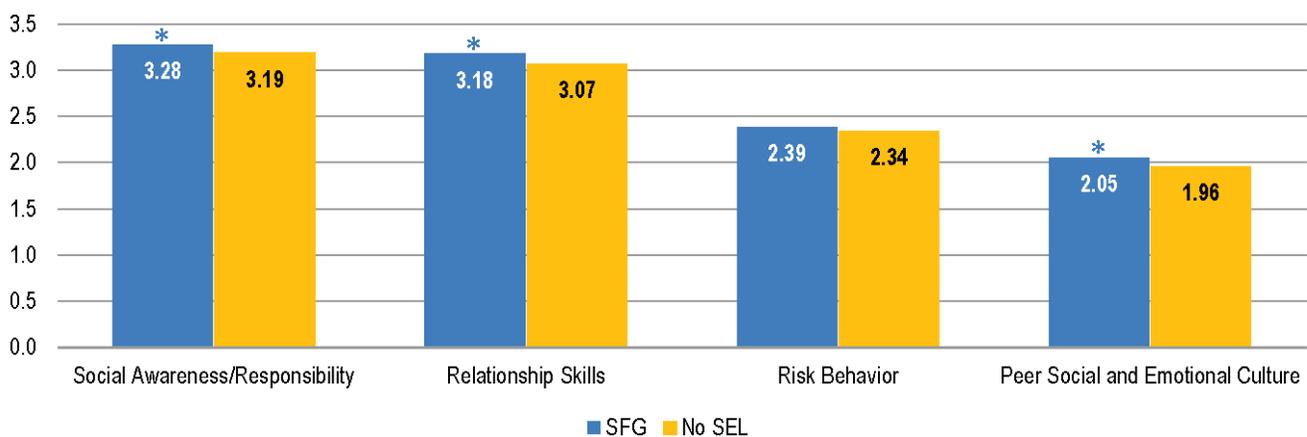
The Effects of Skills for Growing on Elementary School Students

Lions Quest Skills for Growing (SFG) includes thematic units and lesson plans that aim to build the foundational skills required for prosocial behavior, healthy decision making, and a sense of belonging to the school community. According to the study, students in SFG schools were significantly **less** likely than comparable students to behave in a disruptive and disrespectful manner at school.



Notes: An asterisk (*) denotes a statistically significant difference between the two groups (SFG = Skills for Growing; No SEL = No social and emotional learning program). This graph compares the baseline (preprogram) and most recent year of annual office disciplinary rates for 815 students in the third, fourth, and fifth grades from nine schools that implemented SFG and eight schools that did not implement a structured SEL program. According to this graph, students in SFG schools had a greater reduction in disruptive behavior than students in non-SFG schools.

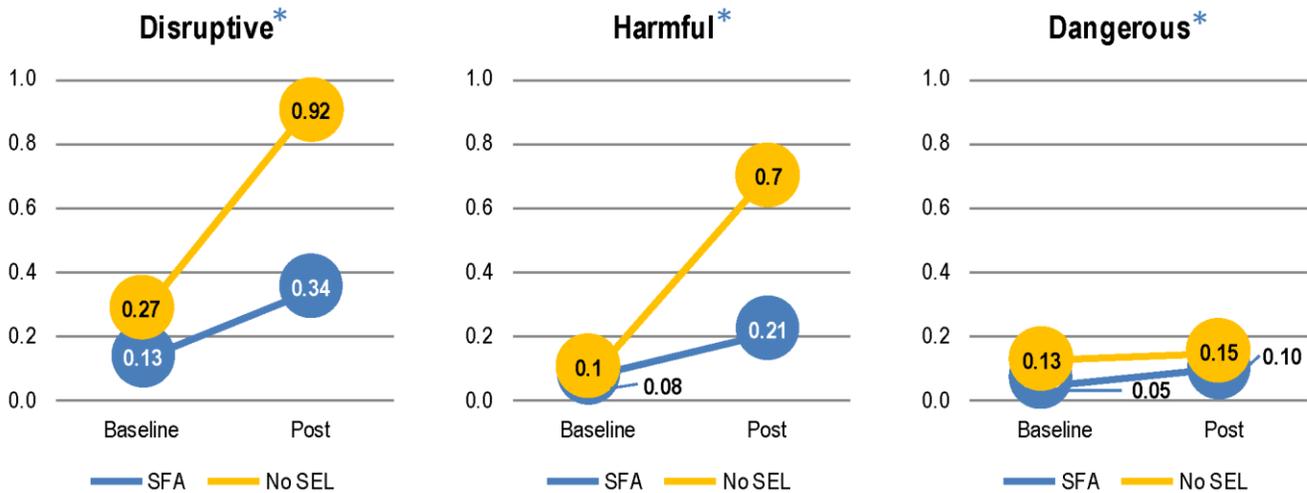
Students in schools that implemented the SFG program reported higher levels of social awareness and social responsibility, relationship skills, and social competence with their peers than comparable students in schools that did not provide a structured SEL program.



Notes: An asterisk (*) denotes a statistically significant difference between the two groups (SFG = Skills for Growing; No SEL = No social and emotional learning program). This graph compares end-of-year survey responses from 856 students in the third, fourth, and fifth grades from five elementary schools that implemented SFG and five elementary schools that did not implement a structured SEL program. According to this graph, students in SFG schools reported higher levels of social awareness and social responsibility (average rating of 3.28 on a scale of 1 to 4) than students in non-SFG schools (average rating of 3.19).

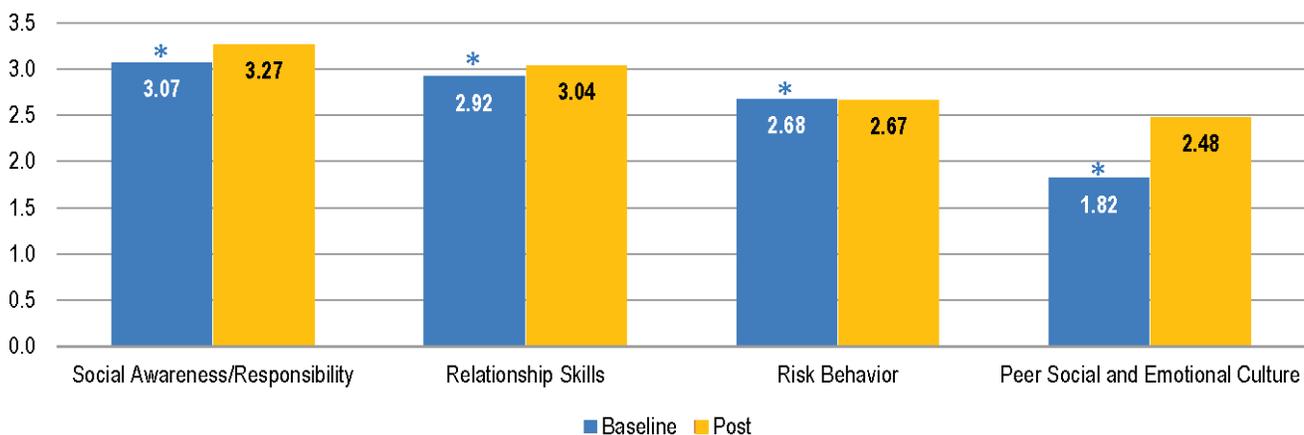
The Effects of Skills for Adolescence on Middle School Students

Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence (SFA) is designed to strengthen the skills required for self-regulation, prosocial and cooperative behaviors, self-determination, and resisting negative peer pressure. According to the study, students in schools that implemented the SFA program were significantly **less** likely than comparable students to engage in disruptive and disrespectful (e.g., defiance of authority) potentially harmful (e.g., physical fight without injury) and dangerous behaviors.



Notes: An asterisk (*) denotes a statistically significant difference between the two groups (SFA = Skills for Adolescence; No SEL = No social and emotional learning program). This graph compares the baseline (preprogram) and most recent year of annual office disciplinary referrals for 250 sixth-grade students from two schools that implemented SFA and two schools that did not implement a structured SEL program. According to this graph, students in SFA schools were less likely than students in non-SFA schools to engage in disruptive, harmful, and dangerous behaviors.

The social awareness and relationship skills of SFA participants significantly increased after a full year of program participation. In addition, their ratings of the peer group social and emotional culture at their school were significantly more positive after a full year of program participation. The level of participation in risk behavior (e.g., alcohol and drug use) did not change as a result of participation in the SFA program.



Notes: An asterisk (*) denotes a statistically significant difference between the beginning and end of the year. This graph compares baseline (preprogram) and end-of-year survey responses from 126 sixth-grade students from a middle school that implemented the SFA program. According to this graph, students in the SFA program reported a higher level of social awareness and social responsibility (average rating of 3.27 on a scale of 1 to 4) at the end of the year compared with the baseline (average rating of 3.07).

Sample Quotes From Interviews With Teachers and Counselors

“Students gained a better understanding of how to interact with their peers and others, how to be more empathetic and more understanding.”

(Elementary School Teacher)

“The school likes the material and we’ve weaved it into the general counseling services. The coordinator of Lions Quest assists teachers with delivering a lot of the material. It is pretty well entrenched in the school.”

(Elementary School Counselor)

“I believe that Lions Quest was designed so that teachers will get to know their students. I’ve seen this happen at my school.”

(Middle School Counselor)

“The program as a whole is excellent for students to find their place in the school and get to know themselves.”

(Elementary School Teacher)

“The strength of Lions Quest is in its implementation in all grade levels and the iterative teaching of the core concepts. Another strong part of Lions Quest is the Together Times magazine, which helps me structure the lessons well. Students like the activities and they like taking the magazines home.”

(Elementary School Counselor)

“Lions Quest activities and discussions are great. I’m impressed that students do their work in the workbooks and write in their journals knowing they don’t get a grade for it.”

(Middle School Teacher)

Recommendations

The studies summarized in this brief (Kidron, Garibaldi, & Osher, 2014) identified a set of recommendations to help schools promote students’ social and emotional skills through the implementation of the Lions Quest programs. District and school administrators are encouraged to follow these recommendations to enable teachers to implement the programs and promote student engagement in the learning process.

1. Conduct a needs assessment to identify areas for improvement related to SEL and positive behavioral intervention systems. Communicate the results of the needs assessment to staff.
2. Establish a school-wide vision that aligns social and emotional development and positive behavioral intervention systems while articulating how the Lions Quest programs can support these goals.
3. Communicate to teachers the relationships between the Lions Quest programs and academic performance in general and the Common Core State Standards in particular.
4. Encourage teachers to infuse across the curriculum weekly themes from the Lions Quest lesson plans.
5. Allocate resources to ensure sufficient professional development time and planning time to implement Lions Quest programs.
6. Engage students and the student government in adapting Lions Quest lesson plans to the school context.
7. Communicate with parents and community members about the school’s vision for SEL and the role of Lions Quest in achieving these goals.
8. Identify roadblocks in implementing Lions Quest programs and engage teachers in finding solutions.
9. Recognize teachers for their efforts in implementing Lions Quest with individualized feedback and discussions on progress during staff meetings.
10. Collect data to assess changes in students’ behaviors and attitudes, and then share and reflect on the outcomes with the school community. ■