

# Modifying an Evidence-based Summer Treatment Program for Use in a Summer School Setting

## Abstract

► The Summer Treatment Program (STP) is an evidence-based behavioral treatment for children with ADHD which has been supported in the literature as an effective treatment for many years (e.g., Pelham & Hoza, 1996; Pelham & Fabiano, 2008). The current presentation reports the results of an evaluation of a modified version of the STP as an afternoon adjunct to a mandatory summer school curriculum offered by an inner city school district. Findings indicate a general trend that parents, teachers, and staff found the program to be more beneficial to the students than the activities offered in comparison schools. In addition, the benefits to the high school and junior high school students working as counselors in the program demonstrated a trend towards improved functioning.

## Introduction

- Given the high concentration of children with behavioral needs in the school system, recent efforts have focused on expanding the use of evidence based clinical practices into school systems (Evans et al., 2007; Smith et al., 2007).
- The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a modified version of the STP in a summer school setting, through a collaboration between the Center for Children and Families at the University of Buffalo and the Closing the Gap Initiative of United Way of Buffalo and Erie County.
- The primary goal of the Buffalo Public Schools Summer Recreational Program was, like its parent program (STP), to promote development of social and sports skills to enhance social development.
- The program was structured to allow the students to practice peer relationship skills through brief instruction, staff modeling, role-playing, team membership, problem solving, and on-line feedback during daily recreational activities.
- Following the procedures used in the STP, sports fundamentals were emphasized through the teaching of skills, strategies, and rules.
- The program was modified from the STP to be led by community providers in the schools and staffed by a college intern and high school and junior high school students as counselors. Thus, secondary benefits of the BPS SRP included training and employment opportunities for BPS junior high and high school students and training of agency and school personnel who work with the children during the school year.
- Evaluation measures were collected at the three intervention schools, as well as at two additional comparison schools that ran afternoon programs with a different structure. Measures of program effectiveness were collected from parents, teachers, staff members, and the students themselves.
- Due to the volume of data collected, not all findings are presented here. Contact the first author for more information.

## Method

### Participants

► Following the mandatory Extended Learning Opportunity Program (morning summer academics for students below benchmark), 5 elementary schools supported by the Closing the Gap Initiative of United Way of Western New York also offered afternoon programming (11:30AM-2:30PM). At 3 of these schools, the intervention described above was implemented (approximately 467 students). The remaining two schools served as the comparison (approximately 334 students).

### Measures

- Parent Satisfaction Questionnaires were sent home with all students at all participating schools. The results reported represent only those forms that were returned.
- Teachers at all participating schools completed a Teacher Satisfaction Questionnaire. In addition, a Teacher Rating of Students was completed for each child.
- At the intervention schools, senior staff members (e.g., school personnel and highly trained undergraduates) completed improvement ratings for each child (Staff Rating of Students), as well as Senior Counselor (college or higher) Ratings of Junior Counselors to assess the impact of the program on the high school and junior high school students working as counselors.
- At comparison schools, only a shortened version of the Staff Rating of Students was administered.
- All staff members completed a Staff Satisfaction Questionnaire.
- All students present at the time of administration at the intervention schools, and a random subset at the comparison schools, completed a Student Satisfaction Questionnaire.
- Observations were conducted to assess fidelity of program implementation at intervention schools, as well as to assess program components at the comparison schools. Staff interactions with students were assessed (see graph), as well as student behaviors (not shown-contact first author for information).

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## Results

Table 1

Evaluation of the impact of the BPS SRP on the students

Measure or Item	Intervention Schools	Comparison Schools	ES
	(N = 166)	(N = 27)	
Parent			
Overall Parent Evaluation	5.95 (1.15)	5.39 (1.10)	0.49**
Satisfaction with home-school communication	4.83 (2.16)	3.85 (2.26)	0.45**
Student			
Overall Student Evaluation	5.99 (1.07)	5.37 (1.55)	0.50*
How did the afternoon program help you get along with other children?	5.67 (1.79)	4.94 (2.11)	0.39*
Teacher			
How much effort did the students put toward behaving appropriately & following classroom rules?	5.56 (1.13)	4.70 (1.64)	0.63**
How much effort did the students put forth on academic tasks?	4.85 (1.37)	4.52 (1.53)	0.23
Staff			
Overall student improvement & benefit	5.10 (1.40)	Not Asked	n/a
How well did you know this student	5.69 (1.32)	4.90 (1.39)	0.54*

ES = Effect Size; \*p<.001; \*\*p<.05

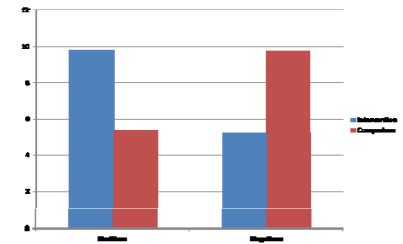
All ratings were completed on a Likert-scale of 1 to 7, with 1 anchored at "Not at all", 4 at "Somewhat", and 7 at "Very much"

Table 2

Sample Items of Ratings of Benefit to High School and Junior High School Student Counselors: Self-Report and Supervisor's Ratings

Measure or Item	Self-Report	Supervisor's Rating
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Overall, how much did you/he/she benefit from participating in this program	5.84 (1.56)	5.39 (1.43)
How effectively do you think you/he/she implemented the program?	5.82 (1.11)	4.06 (1.84)
How much did you/he/she understand the program?	6.20 (1.09)	4.42 (1.65)
From participating in this program how much did you/he/she learn		
How to function independently at work	5.82 (1.41)	4.73 (1.61)
How to respond appropriately to feedback from a supervisor	4.92 (1.57)	5.87 (1.36)
How to be responsible at work (e.g., arriving on time, working hard, etc.)	5.09 (1.62)	6.00 (1.52)
How much did participating in this program contribute to your/his/her career/academic goals?	5.99 (1.34)	n/a

## Ratio of Positives to Negatives Per Child Per Day



## Conclusion

- The chief finding of this study is that the adapted Summer Treatment Program was a successful addition to the summer academic curriculum. Thus, an evidence-based, University-conducted practice could be implemented by community staff as part of a summer school curriculum in a difficult school setting.
  - Parents tended to rate the program at the intervention schools higher on overall satisfaction, as well as on home-school communication.
  - Students reported enjoying the program more at the intervention schools, and reported a higher sense of self-benefit (e.g., learning to get along with others).
  - Teachers at the intervention schools reported that having a classroom behavioral aide was helpful in improving students' behavior.
  - Ratings of students by the staff members who worked most directly with them in the afternoon suggested that students in the intervention schools showed greater improvement in social domains.
  - Staff at intervention schools reported knowing the students significantly better than those at the comparison schools.
  - High school and junior high school students on the staff at the intervention schools benefited in many job-oriented domains.
  - Observational data suggests that staff at intervention schools were significantly more positive and less negative in their interactions with the children.
- Limitations
- Differences between schools could not be investigated due to the small sample sizes.
  - Parent information was limited to those parents that chose to return the forms.
  - Methods of data collection were not consistent at comparison schools.
  - Assignment to intervention or comparison school was not random.
  - Future research should explore differences due to demographic makeup of the students, variations in staff implementation, and other potentially important variables.

## References

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