

## Research Evidence Linking School Success to Effective Prevention Programs

Research shows that social and emotional learning is a key to academic achievement. Social, emotional, and cognitive development are interdependent,<sup>1</sup> and twenty years of research have shown that children need social and emotional competence to succeed in school.<sup>2</sup>

Students who are socially and emotionally skilled score higher on standardized tests,<sup>3</sup> and social and emotional competence leads to greater academic competence over time<sup>4</sup>.

Children who have high levels of emotional understanding at age five are more likely than other children with the same verbal abilities to show academic gains at age nine<sup>5</sup>.

Among students with the same academic test scores in elementary school, those who develop better social and problem-solving skills by middle school attain higher test scores and grades in high school<sup>6</sup>.

The social and emotional skills that support healthy relationships are needed for school and life success.

When children have friends they are happier, get in less trouble, achieve better grades and higher test scores, and are more involved in school activities.<sup>7</sup>

Socially competent children and youth get along better with their teachers, who tend to like them and provide them with more support,<sup>8</sup> which improves their school performance.<sup>9</sup>

Students with a large social network and good relationships with peers and teachers are also connected to school.<sup>10</sup> Students who feel connected to school are more motivated to succeed academically, more engaged in class,<sup>11</sup> have higher test scores and grades, behave better in school, and are less likely to repeat a grade.<sup>12</sup>

School connectedness is also stronger for students in organized and well-managed classrooms where they feel supported and respected,<sup>13</sup> and classroom management is an easier task with children who are socially and emotionally competent.

A SAMHSA review of the impact of prevention programs on school success found that effective programs resulted in improved standardized test scores; higher GPAs; increased reading, math and writing skills; improved graduation rates; and increased credits earned. Effective prevention programs not only increased academic success, they also improved attendance; decreased dropout; increased parental involvement in school; and reduced suspensions, grade retentions, special education referrals, and school behavior problems<sup>14</sup>.

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