Conditions for Learning

Creating the Environments for Learning—Inside and Outside the Classroom

About AIR

Established in 1946, AIR is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts and applies behavioral and social science research both domestically and internationally in education, health, and workforce productivity, all with an emphasis on aiding the disadvantaged. AIR is dedicated to improving people's lives with the best research and with adoption of evidence-based practices.

Children and youth need safe and supportive learning environments to succeed in school. These needs are particularly great for children who are vulnerable, such as those who face trauma, the adversities of poverty, and the challenge of disability. Factors such as teacher quality, classroom size, and effective school leaders are critical, but they are only a part of what makes learning possible.

Through research and practice, American Institutes for Research (AIR) provides educators and policymakers with a better understanding of how essential conditions for learning can dramatically improve school performance and success for all students. Schools that maintain **essential conditions for learning** create an environment that is:

» **Safe.** When children feel physically and emotionally safe, they are better students. They are more likely to attend school and be academically engaged and are less likely to abuse drugs or use violence.

» **Supportive.** Students learn more when they feel connected and attached to adults in school and believe their teachers care about them and treat them respectfully.

» **Challenging.** Having high expectations for all students, establishing goals, and differentiating support helps energize students to learn and meet high expectations.

» **Socially and Emotionally Nurturing.** Developing students' abilities to cope with social and emotional challenges improves their grades, attendance, behavior, and attitudes toward school.

AIR works nationally and internationally to provide research, evaluation, survey design, and technical assistance to districts, states, federal officials, and ministries of education so that they can implement better conditions for learning and teaching.

Highlights of AIR's Work

» The **National Clearinghouse on Supportive School Discipline** supports educators in implementing essential conditions for learning and offers new data on the odds that certain racial and ethnic groups will be subjected to more disciplinary actions than other groups. These risk ratios can help educators anticipate bad behavior and adjust interventions accordingly.

Learn more at **http://supportiveschooldiscipline.org/**

» The **Good Behavior Game** is a classroom behavior management strategy that shows dramatic and long-term impact. Young adults who participated in the game in

AIR®
AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH®

first and second grades were less likely to abuse drugs; demonstrate aggressive, disruptive behavior; exhibit antisocial personality disorder; or attempt suicide later on. AIR works with schools in **Baltimore**; **Denver**; **Houston**; and **Washington, D.C.**, on all aspects of implementation, from comprehensive training and on-site coaching to program oversight and evaluation.

Learn more at www.air.org/goodbehaviorgame

> "The Game had a huge impact on my students' work ethic. I saw my students become more independent in their work, and they were more productive because of the structure put in place."
>
> Second Grade Teacher, Truesdell Education Campus,
> District of Columbia Public Schools

> "The Good Behavior Game helps teachers stay focused on managing their classrooms and children take ownership for their own behavior. If there is good behavior in the classrooms, [I don't have to] worry about disciplining children outside of the classroom."
>
> Principal, Baltimore City Public Schools

» AIR's **National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments** ensures that state and local education agencies and colleges and universities across the country have access to high-quality training, technical assistance, and resources to improve conditions for learning that contribute to academic success and career readiness.

Learn more at http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/

» The **Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs** enhances collaboration among 18 federal agencies to develop better federal youth policies. AIR created and maintains the Working Group's website, which provides strategies, tools, and resources for families, schools, and community organizations tackling youth-related challenges.

Learn more at http://findyouthinfo.gov

» AIR studied Cleveland's **PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies)** social and emotional learning program and found that, even with imperfect implementation, student outcomes improved.

Learn more at www.air.org/ClevelandPATHSFinal

» **COMING!** A new **National School Climate Survey** for the National Center for Education Statistics will expand schools' abilities to measure and improve key conditions for learning. Currently in development at AIR, the survey will be state-of-the-art in content, administration platforms, and reporting systems and will be available to any school system. We expect to produce a nationally normed, benchmarked survey in 2016.

AIR®
AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH®

1000 Thomas Jefferson Street NW
Washington, DC 20007-3835
202.403.5000
www.air.org

www.facebook.com/AmericanInstitutesforResearch

www.twitter.com/Education_AIR

3525_11/13