

# What Works Clearinghouse



## Connect with Kids

### Program description

*Connect with Kids* aims to promote prosocial attitudes and positive behavior of elementary (grades 3–5) and secondary (grades 6–12) school students by teaching core character values. Lesson plans include videos, story summaries, discussion questions, student games, and activities for both core and supplemental character traits. The classroom curriculum is reinforced by a

website component and a schoolwide and community outreach components. The program can be incorporated into an existing curriculum or used as a standalone program. The school or teacher decides on the number of character traits covered in each session, so the program duration may vary from one semester to an entire academic year.

### Research

One study of *Connect with Kids* met the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards with reservations. This study, which included more than 800 elementary, middle, and high

school students from 46 classrooms in eight urban, suburban, and rural school districts in Kansas and Missouri, examined results on students' behavior.<sup>1</sup>

### Effectiveness

*Connect with Kids* was found to have potentially positive effects on middle and high school students' behavior.

	<i>Behavior</i>	<i>Knowledge, attitudes, and values</i>	<i>Academic achievement</i>
<b>Rating of effectiveness</b>	Potentially positive effects	Not reported	Not reported
<b>Improvement index<sup>2</sup></b>	Average: +16 percentile points Range: +10 to +23 percentile points	Not reported	Not reported

1. The evidence presented in this report is based on the available research. Findings and conclusions may change as new research becomes available.  
 2. These numbers show the average and the range of improvement indices for all findings across the two studies.

## **Additional program information**

### **Developer and contact**

Connect with Kids Network, Inc. 6285 Barfield Road, 2nd Floor, Atlanta, GA 30328. Web: [www.connectwithkids.com](http://www.connectwithkids.com). Email: [assistance@cwknetwork.com](mailto:assistance@cwknetwork.com). Telephone: 888-598-KIDS (5437).

### **Scope of use**

CWK Network, Inc., founded in 1998, produces the *Connect with Kids* television series. In 2001 *Connect with Kids* piloted educational programs focused on children's health and wellness issues in key school districts through Georgia Public Broadcasting Education Network. According to the developer, *Connect with Kids* has been implemented in hundreds of schools and districts across the country, including Washington, D.C., New York City, Los Angeles, Houston, Miami-Dade, and Broward, Florida. According to the developer, implementation sites represent a diverse student population for grade level, age, race, ethnicity, urbanicity, and socio-economic status. *Connect with Kids* may have changed since the study was conducted. The WWC recommends asking the developer for information about the most current version of this curriculum and take into account that student demographics and school context may affect outcomes.

### **Teaching**

*Connect with Kids* teaches character and life skills by incorporating peer-to-peer videos based on real stories of children and youth. Each skill is supported with grade-appropriate lesson plans based on story summaries, student activities, vocabulary, and discussion questions and is supplemented by web resources. At the elementary level there are eight units—three character traits per unit that include 48 student activities for both core and supplemental traits (two per trait). The middle/high school program has 36 lessons introducing 26 character traits that include 104 student activities for both core and supplemental traits (four per trait). The teacher resources include a teaching manual, story summaries, discussion questions, lesson plans, assessment guidelines, rubrics, and correlations between the program and national standards.

Each lesson begins with an introduction of the trait being taught followed by the *Connect with Kids* video for that trait. There are three video segments for each character trait in the middle/high school program and one video per character trait in the elementary school program. The video is followed by teacher-led discussions using questions from the teacher resource guide. One to two weeks after the video and discussion lesson a follow-up activity is taught. Students practice and demonstrate behaviors associated with the character trait being taught through cooperative learning exercises and other activities. Students are also introduced to monthly television specials aired on local stations. Parents are encouraged to view the show with their child. Some schools record the shows for classroom use, and teachers lead discussions following the airing of the shows. Teachers can access the *Connect with Kids* website to view weekly examples of the character traits being taught. Students and their parents can use the website in association with the classroom lessons.

The CWK Network offers one day of in-person or long-distance professional development for teachers. This workshop incorporates lectures, discussions, peer-to-peer interaction, and simulated activities. The CWK Network also provides ongoing technical assistance support through its toll-free hotline and dedicated email address.

### **Cost**

The *Connect with Kids* program and professional development for elementary and middle/high school students costs \$4,000 per school. This cost includes an eight-video series that teaches core character values, a curriculum guide in English or Spanish, an evaluation and assessment tool, correlations between the curriculum and national standards, a six-video series titled "Character Parent Outreach," professional development for the school staff, one-year unlimited access to Connect with Kids WebSource, and ongoing educator support through a toll-free hotline.

**Research** One study (Page & D’Agostino, 2005) reviewed by the WWC investigated the effects of the *Connect with Kids* program. This study used a quasi-experimental design that met WWC evidence standards with reservations.

The Page and D’Agostino study included more than 800 elementary, middle, and high school students from 46 classes in

12 schools (2 rural, 7 suburban, and 3 urban) in eight school districts in Kansas and Missouri. Outcomes for students participating in the *Connect with Kids* program were compared with those for students who did not use the curriculum. This study focused on *Connect with Kids* as implemented in classrooms rather than as a schoolwide intervention.

**Effectiveness Findings**

The WWC review of character education addresses student outcomes in three domains: behavior; knowledge, attitudes, and values; and academic achievement.

*Behavior.* Page and D’Agostino reported findings for four measures of student behavior related to six core character traits: honesty, kindness, perseverance, responsibility, self-control, and tolerance. The study examined students’ final scores relative to their baseline scores. The study reported statistically significant differences favoring the intervention group for middle and high school students’ reports of their own and their classmates’ behavior (middle/high school student survey part I and part II). The WWC confirmed the statistical significance of these differences. The study found no statistically significant effects

on elementary school students’ assessments of their own or their classmates’ behavior (elementary school student survey part I and part II). The average effect across all four outcome measures was positive and statistically significant.<sup>3</sup>

**Rating of effectiveness**

The WWC rates interventions as positive, potentially positive, mixed, no discernible effects, potentially negative, or negative. The rating of effectiveness takes into account four factors: the quality of the research design, the statistical significance of the findings (as calculated by the WWC), the size of the differences between participants in the intervention condition and the comparison conditions, and the consistency of the findings across studies (see the [WWC Intervention Rating Scheme](#)).

**The WWC found *Connect with Kids* to have potentially positive effects on behavior**

**Improvement index**

For each outcome domain, the WWC computed an improvement index based on the effect size (see the [Technical Details of WWC-Conducted Computations](#)). The improvement index represents the difference between the percentile rank of the average student in the intervention condition versus the percentile rank of the average student in the comparison condition. Unlike the rating of effectiveness, the improvement index is entirely based on the size of the effect, regardless of the statistical significance of the effect, the study design, or the analysis. The improvement index can take on values between -50 and +50, with positive numbers denoting favorable results. The average improvement

index for behavior is +16 percentile points, with a range of +10 to +23 percentile points across findings.

**Summary**

The WWC reviewed one study on *Connect with Kids*. This study met WWC evidence standards with reservations. Performance on two student outcome measures for middle and high school students was positive and statistically significant. The average effect size across the four student outcomes examined in this study was also positive and statistically significant. WWC found no statistically significant effects for elementary school students. The WWC rated the program as having potentially positive

3. The level of statistical significance was calculated by the WWC and where necessary, corrects for clustering within classrooms or schools, and for multiple comparisons. For an explanation, see the [WWC Tutorial on Mismatch](#). See the [Technical Details of WWC-Conducted Computations](#) for the formulas the WWC used to calculate the statistical significance. In the case of the *Connect with Kids* report, a correction was needed for multiple comparisons, but not for clustering.

effects on behavior. Character education, an evolving field, is beginning to establish a research base.

The evidence presented in this report is limited and may change as new research emerges.

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**References** **Met WWC evidence standards with reservations**

Page, B. & D'Agostino, A. (2005). *Connect with Kids: 2004–2005 Study Results for Kansas and Missouri*. Available from: Compass Consulting Group, LLC. 5726 Fayetteville Road, Suite 203, Durham, NC 27713.

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**For more information about specific studies and WWC calculations, please see the [WWC Connect with Kids Technical Appendices](#).**