

SAFE HAVEN PROGRAM EVALUATION (1995-96)

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INTRODUCTION

During the 1994-95 and 1995-96 school years, the City of Madison operated Safe Haven after-school programs in schools serving the Broadway-Simpson (Glendale Elementary), Glendale Townhouse (Glendale Elementary), Darbo-Worthington (Lowell Elementary), and Vera Court (Mendota Elementary) neighborhoods. The programs were developed so that beneficial after-school experiences could be provided to children who were at risk for academic and social difficulties. Specific objectives of the programs included enhancing children's physical and cognitive skills, teaching conflict resolution strategies to children, and helping children learn how to interact positively and effectively in groups.

KDV Associates (Deborah Lowe Vandell and Kim Pierce, Co-Principal Investigators) was asked by the City of Madison and the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) to evaluate the Safe Haven after-school programs during the 1995-96 (Year 2) academic year. This evaluation had several components:

1. A determination of a profile of children who attended the Safe Haven programs, including demographic, academic, behavioral, and attitudinal characteristics. Children who attended the programs during Year 2 were contrasted with (a) all other children in their respective elementary schools and (b) other children in the targeted neighborhoods who did not participate in the programs. The purpose of these comparisons was to ascertain if the Safe Haven programs were successful in identifying and serving children who were at risk for academic and social problems.
2. A limited examination of children's Safe Haven experiences in Year 2. This included a determination of how often the children actually attended the programs, ratings of the quality of the programs in term of their activities, physical facilities, and staff-child interactions, and how the children perceived the programs.
3. A stringent test of program effects on children's development in Year 2. Six aspects of child adjustment were investigated: academic grades, conduct grades, school absences, conflict resolution strategies, social skills, and problem behaviors. We sought to determine if program attendance was associated with these adjustment indices.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Children in Grades 3-5 at Glendale, Lowell, and Mendota elementary schools participated in the study.¹ Demographic characteristics of the 624 children who participated during Year 2 are summarized in the first column of Table 1. As this table shows, children were evenly distributed across the three grades. Similar numbers of boys and girls were assessed. The majority of the children in the schools were White (55%), although a substantial proportion of children were Black (36%). The remainder of the sample belonged to other ethnic minority

¹The Safe Haven programs served children in Grades 1-5 at each of the schools. Younger children in Grades 1 and 2 were not included in this evaluation because of the difficulties inherent in group administration of measures with children of this age.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Study Children in Year 2

	Targeted schools <u>N</u> = 624	Targeted neighborhoods <u>N</u> = 214	Safe Haven programs <u>N</u> = 171	Targeted neighborhoods, Safe Haven programs <u>N</u> = 122
GRADE				
Third	214	73	65	45
Fourth	227	79	59	43
Fifth	177	62	45	34
SEX				
Boys	302	105	82	66
Girls	313	109	85	56
RACE/ETHNICITY				
White	325	47	21	10
Black	211	142	118	95
Other minority	54	25	24	17
LUNCH SUBSIDY				
Yes	332	190	150	117
No	258	24	13	5
FAMILY STRUCTURE				
Two parents	315	71	56	40
One parent	244	130	97	75
EEN				
Yes	123	44	34	28
No	496	170	135	94

Note. Grade was unknown for 6 children; sex was unknown for 9 children; demographic data were missing for 34 children; and EEN status was missing for 5 children. Within the family structure section, children who lived in unclear home situations (e.g., foster parent, relative) are not shown.

groups (American Indian, Asian, and Hispanic, 9%). More than half of the children (56%) received free or reduced-price school lunch. Nearly half of the children's households (44%) consisted of single-parent families. One hundred twenty-three children (20%) were reported by either the MMSD or classroom teachers to have exceptional education needs (EEN): 65 were learning disabled, 12 were cognitively disabled, 24 received speech and language services, 11 were hearing impaired, 1 was visually impaired, 8 were emotionally disturbed, and 2 children were multi-handicapped.

As shown in Table 1, 214 children (34%) lived in the targeted neighborhoods, as reported by MMSD (111 in Broadway-Simpson and Glendale Townhouses, 60 in Darbo-Worthington, and 43 in Vera Court). Of these children, 122 (57%) were enrolled in the Safe Haven after-school programs.

A total of 171 children were enrolled in the Safe Haven programs: 69 at Glendale, 36 at Mendota, 36 at Lowell, and 30 at the program operated by the Atwood Community Center for Lowell children. It appears that 49 children who did not live in the target neighborhoods were enrolled in the programs.²

One hundred eight children participated in Club programs operated at Lowell Elementary, but did not participate in Safe Haven during Year 2.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Three sets of assessments were conducted. The first set comprised assessments of all the children at the targeted schools. These data were collected at two points in time during Year 2, in December 1995 and May 1996.³ At each time, children's school performance was assessed in terms of academic grades, conduct grades, and school absences. In addition, children's reports of how they would respond to different types of peer conflicts were obtained. These data also were available from a May 1995 (end of Year 1) assessment.

The second set of assessments included data collected for program children only. Safe Haven staff provided two measurements of program children's social skills and problem behaviors during Year 2, in January and May 1996.

The third set of assessments pertained to the after-school programs. Independent assessments of the quality of the individual after-school programs were obtained on two occasions during Year 2. Child attendance figures at the Safe Haven programs were recorded. Program children provided reports about their perceptions of the programs in May 1996.

²Accurate residence data were difficult to obtain because a significant proportion of children in the targeted schools move frequently. Residence data made available to the study were accurate as of January 1996. It likely is the case that many of the non-neighborhood children who were enrolled in the after-school programs did in fact reside in one of the targeted neighborhoods at the time of program recruitment.

³Data were not collected at Glendale Elementary in December 1995.

The basic research strategy adopted in this evaluation was a pre-test / post-test comparison of an experimental and control group. Children's scores from the end of the 1994-95 school year (Time 1) were used as the pre-test assessments. The assessment in May 1996 comprised the post-test (Time 2). This strategy allowed an examination of changes in children's scores from the end of one school year to the end of the next school year as a consequence of enrollment in the Safe Haven programs during the second year. For these analyses, data were available for those children who were in the third and fourth grades in Year 1, and then the fourth and fifth grades in Year 2.

The evaluation did not adhere to a strict experimental design in that children were not randomly assigned to the experimental (i.e., Safe Haven experience) and control (no Safe Haven experience) conditions. As a result, particular attention was paid to the Time 1 (May 1995) assessments in order to identify pre-existing differences between children who participated in Safe Haven the following year and those who did not; it would be necessary to control for any differences in determining program effects.

It should be noted that assessments of conflict resolution strategies were conducted by project staff who were not aware of which children attended the Safe Haven programs, thereby minimizing the likelihood of halo effects. Program observations were conducted by City of Madison staff who were not aware of the children's performance on the child assessments.

Child Assessments

Academic grades. Elementary schools within the MMSD do not use a standardized report card. Consequently, it was necessary to have classroom teachers complete a "mock" report card for all study children. Teachers evaluated each child's reading, oral language, written language, and math performance using 5-point ratings (1 = failing, 5 = excellent). Appendix 1 contains a copy of this mock report card. Composite scores were created for the four academic subject areas together.

Conduct grades. The mock report card also included teacher ratings of children's work habits and ability to work well with others in the classroom. These conduct marks were made using the same 5-point ratings as were used for academic grades (see Appendix 1).

School absences. The MMSD reported number of excused and unexcused school absences, in half days, for each study child during Semester 1 and Semester 2 of Year 1. In Year 2, the MMSD reported the number of full days that children were absent from school with and without excuses. These numbers for Year 2 were multiplied by 2 so that they could be compared to those of Year 1.

Conflict resolution strategies. Conflict resolution strategies were assessed with School Stories, a paper-and-pencil measure in which children reported how they would respond to four hypothetical peer conflict situations that can occur at school (see Appendix 2). This measure has been used in published studies of elementary school children's conflict resolution skills (e.g., Crick & Dodge, 1996).

The hypothetical vignettes were administered to children in their school classrooms. The vignettes were read aloud to children as they followed along with a written copy. There was a minimum of three staff members present during each administration: One staff person read the stories, while the others circulated the classroom to ensure that children were on the correct page of the protocol, and to answer questions that the children may have had.

In the hypothetical stories, children were presented with four difficult situations: (1) the child is ignored by other children at the lunch table, (2) another child cuts in line in front of the child, (3) another child takes the child's seat at lunch, and (4) the child overhears other children making fun of him/her. For each story, four kinds of conflict management strategies were assessed: assertive friendliness (e.g., "I would go up to the two kids and say, 'Please be quiet, I don't like it when people talk about me like that'"), overt aggression (e.g., "I would walk up to the two kids and push them down"), relational aggression (e.g., "I would say mean things about the two kids back in class"), and avoidance (e.g., "I wouldn't do anything, I'd just walk away"). Children were asked which of the four strategies they would use if the situation presented in the story happened to them (response decision, yes or no), how often they would use each of the four strategies if the situation happened frequently (strategy use, 5-point scale ranging from "never" to "all the time"), and how good or bad it is to use each strategy (strategy evaluation, 4-point scale ranging from "bad" to "good").

From the vignettes, it was possible to derive three sets of scores. The first set of scores indicated the proportion of stories for which children reported their most likely response being assertive friendly, overt aggressive, relationally aggressive, or avoidant (response decision). The second set of scores indicated how likely the children would be to use each of the four types of responses if the situation occurred frequently (strategy use). The final set of scores reflected how good it would be to use each of these four strategies (strategy evaluation).

Social skills. Program children's social skills were assessed with the teacher form of the Social Skills Questionnaire (Gresham & Elliott, 1990; see Appendix 3). Social skills were rated on a 3-point scale (0 = never, 2 = very often). Higher scores indicate better social skills.

Problem behaviors. Program children's problem behaviors also were assessed two times with the Social Skills Questionnaire, on a 3-point scale ranging from 0 = never to 2 = very often (see Appendix 3). Higher scores indicate a greater number and severity of problem behaviors.

Child and Family Demographic Information

The MMSD provided demographic data on the study children. These data included children's birthdate, sex, ethnicity, household type, receipt of subsidized school lunch, and neighborhood of residence. A description of how this information was coded for data analyses is included in Appendix 4.

Safe Haven Assessments

Program quality. Data about the programs were provided by City of Madison and Safe

Haven staff. A City of Madison staff member observed each of the four programs two times, during Fall 1995 and Spring 1996, and rated them with the School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS; Harms, Jacobs, & White, 1996). This measure uses a 7-point rating scale, ranging from 1 = inadequate to 7 = excellent, to assess school-age care programs in terms of space and furnishings, health and safety policies and practices, available activities, interactions between children and staff, program structure, and staff development.

Attendance. Safe Haven staff provided reports of the number of days that enrolled children attended the programs.

Psychosocial climate. Several aspects of the psychosocial climate in the Safe Haven programs were measured with the After-School Environment Scale (Rosenthal & Vandell, 1996; see Appendix 5). Children reported their enjoyment of the programs, the supportiveness of Safe Haven staff, their beliefs that staff were overcontrolling or intrusive, and opportunities for peer affiliation on a 4-point scale (1 = never, 4 = almost always). An overall psychosocial climate score (for which staff control was reverse coded) was computed also.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics Summarizing Results of the Child Assessments

Table 2 summarizes the means and standard deviations at Times 1 (May 1995) and 2 (May 1996) for the first set of assessments, those completed for all children in the targeted schools. This table shows that the mean academic grade at Time 1 and at Time 2 fell between "average" and "very good", with the full range of grades represented. Conduct grades also exhibited the full range; both work habits scores and ratings of ability to work well with others averaged between "average" and "very good" at Times 1 and 2. There was considerable variability across children, with some children exhibiting academic and conduct problems and other children exhibiting strong academic and conduct records as measured by teacher report.

Table 2 also shows that the number of school absences, both excused and unexcused, ranged widely, with some children never absent from school and other children missing as much as half the school year. There was more of each type of school absence during the second semester of Year 1 than during the second semester of Year 2. The decline during Year 2 is consistent with MMSD's district-wide focus on reducing school absences.

Table 2 contains summary descriptive statistics for the conflict resolution vignettes as well. Mean scores for each type of strategy within the three types of scores show that children were more likely to respond to each vignette with assertive friendliness or avoidance than with overt aggression or relational aggression. Children also indicated that they would use assertive friendliness and avoidance more often than overt and relational aggression if the presented conflict situations occurred frequently, and they evaluated assertive friendliness and avoidance more positively than the two types of aggression. There was, however, considerable variation in children's responses. Each type of conflict resolution score showed the full range of possible scores, meaning that each of the four types of strategies was chosen exclusively by some children.

Table 2

Summary Statistics for the Sample as a Whole

	Range of scores	Time 1 mean (<u>SD</u>)	Time 2 mean (<u>SD</u>)
SCHOOL VARIABLES			
Academic grades	1-5	3.52 (0.99)	3.52 (1.03)
Work habits	1-5	3.56 (1.16)	3.58 (1.15)
Works well with others	1-5	3.70 (1.14)	3.69 (1.11)
Excused absences, number half days	0-58	8.31 (7.84)	7.25 (6.92)
Unexcused absences, number half days	0-176	3.13 (9.94)	2.23 (5.59)
CONFLICT RESOLUTION VARIABLES			
Response decision			
Assertive friendliness	0-1	0.42 (0.30)	0.41 (0.30)
Overt aggression	0-1	0.16 (0.27)	0.16 (0.28)
Relational aggression	0-1	0.07 (0.13)	0.07 (0.14)
Avoidance	0-1	0.36 (0.26)	0.37 (0.27)
Strategy use			
Assertive friendliness	1-5	3.36 (0.93)	3.30 (0.97)
Overt aggression	1-5	2.32 (1.23)	2.22 (1.19)
Relational aggression	1-5	2.54 (1.10)	2.44 (1.12)
Avoidance	1-5	3.25 (0.97)	3.17 (0.94)
Strategy evaluation			
Assertive friendliness	1-4	3.46 (0.62)	3.48 (0.62)
Overt aggression	1-4	1.53 (0.81)	1.52 (0.80)
Relational aggression	1-4	1.80 (0.78)	1.83 (0.80)
Avoidance	1-4	3.23 (0.71)	3.21 (0.73)

Table 3 shows summary statistics at Time 2 for the second set of assessments, those collected for program children only (social skills and problem behaviors). As shown on the table, mean item scores for program children's social skills and behavior problems in May 1996 indicated that the children were in the middle of the range. They were rated as having some positive social skills, yet they also evidenced problem behaviors.

Table 3 also shows mean scores for the children's reports of psychosocial climate in the programs. The children rated the Safe Haven programs as enjoyable "most of the time", the program staff as supportive "most of the time", and the staff as overcontrolling and intrusive "sometimes". The children also reported that they experienced positive peer affiliation in the programs "most of the time".

Contrasts of the Demographic Characteristics of Study Children

There were significant demographic differences between children living in the targeted neighborhoods and other children at the three schools. Chi-square analyses indicated that the children who lived in the Broadway-Simpson, Glendale Townhouse, Darbo-Worthington, and Vera Court neighborhoods were more often Black (66%) whereas students living outside of the targeted neighborhoods were more often White (74%; $X^2_{(2)} = 155.9, p < .001$). Children in the targeted neighborhoods were more likely to live in single-parent households and receive lunch subsidies (65% single parents versus 32% single parents for children living outside of the targeted neighborhoods, $X^2_{(1)} = 56.7, p < .001$; 89% subsidized school lunch in the targeted neighborhoods versus 37% subsidized lunch for children in non-targeted neighborhoods, $X^2_{(1)} = 145.8, p < .001$). Similar proportions of boys and girls, and EEN children, resided in the targeted and non-targeted neighborhoods.

Approximately 29% of the children who were enrolled in the Safe Haven programs did not live in the targeted neighborhoods. Comparisons of children who were enrolled in Safe Haven with other students in the targeted elementary schools indicated significant differences. Safe Haven children were more likely to be Black (72%), whereas 22% of the non-program children were Black ($X^2_{(2)} = 165.0, p < .001$). Approximately 92% of the program children received lunch subsidies; 43% of the non-program children received subsidies ($X^2_{(1)} = 117.0, p < .001$). Sixty-three percent of the program children resided in single-parent households, whereas 36% of the non-program children lived in one-parent families ($X^2_{(1)} = 33.4, p < .001$). There were no differences in terms of sex and EEN status between program and non-program children.

A final set of Chi-square analyses determined whether the children who lived in the target neighborhoods and who were enrolled in the after-school programs differed demographically from neighborhood children who were not enrolled in the programs. These results indicated that, within the targeted neighborhoods, Black children were relatively more likely (67%) and White children were relatively less likely (20%) to be enrolled in Safe Haven ($X^2_{(2)} = 33.6, p < .001$). Approximately 96% of the neighborhood children attending Safe Haven received lunch subsidies, whereas 80% of the neighborhood children who did not attend the programs received these subsidies ($X^2_{(1)} = 14.0, p < .001$). There were no differences between neighborhood children who were enrolled in the program and those who were not in terms of household type, sex, and EEN status.

Table 3

Summary Statistics for Program Children

	Possible range of scores	Attained range of scores	May 1996 mean (<u>SD</u>)
PROGRAM STAFF REPORTS			
Social skills	0-2	0.07-2.00	0.87 (0.30)
Behavior problems	0-2	0-1.89	0.99 (0.37)
CHILD REPORTS			
Psychosocial climate			
Overall climate	1-4	1.93-3.72	2.79 (0.46)
Program enjoyment	1-4	1.67-4.00	3.01 (0.63)
Staff supportiveness	1-4	1.17-4.00	3.01 (0.80)
Staff control	1-4	1.58-3.83	2.59 (0.53)
Peer affiliation	1-4	1.20-4.00	3.16 (0.66)

These results confirm that the Safe Haven programs were successful in enrolling substantial numbers of children who might benefit from special after-school programs.

Description of the Safe Haven Programs

Program quality. Program quality data obtained by City of Madison staff revealed that the four Safe Haven programs varied somewhat in quality (Table 4). Mean scores on the SACERS across the two observations in Year 2 indicated that two of the programs (Programs 1 and 4) were rated as having higher quality than Programs 2 and 3. Programs 1 and 4 had total scores representing developmentally appropriate care that approached excellence in expanding children's experiences and extending their learning. Total scores for Programs 2 and 3 indicated that basic developmentally appropriate care was being provided.

Child participation. There was substantial variability in how often children actually participated in the Safe Haven programs. The number of days that children attended the after-school programs varied from a single day to 159 days (median = 63 days). Table 5 shows the distribution of participation. Fourteen percent of the program enrollees attended the programs 10 or fewer days across the school year; half the children attended 62 or more days. Twenty percent of the children attended the programs 100 or more days, and 10% attended 121 or more days.

Psychosocial climate. Children's reports of the psychosocial climate at the Safe Haven programs were somewhat variable. Table 6 shows the mean item scores for psychosocial climate at each of the programs. Program 3 was perceived by children as having the best overall climate, followed by Program 1. Program 3 scored the best on each of the components of psychosocial climate as well (children's enjoyment of the program, supportiveness of the staff, staff control and intrusiveness, and peer affiliation). However, there were only two statistically significant differences in mean scores: The overall psychosocial climate of Program 3 was perceived significantly more positively than that of Program 4 (overall $F_{(3)} = 4.02$, $p < .05$), and the staff at Program 3 were perceived as significantly less controlling and intrusive than the staff at Program 4 (overall $F_{(3)} = 4.37$, $p < .01$).

Comparisons of Safe Haven and Non-Safe Haven Children's Academic Performance, Conduct Grades, School Absences, and Conflict Resolution Strategies

A major focus of the Safe Haven evaluation was a determination of program effects on children's academic performance, conduct grades, school absences, and conflict resolution strategies. A critical decision was a determination of which children should be included in these analyses. For all analyses reported here, children who were identified by the MMSD or by classroom teachers as having exceptional education needs (EEN) were excluded from the computations, because of our concern that these children had difficulty understanding the conflict resolution measure, and because many of the classroom teachers indicated that they use a different grading scale for their EEN students.

A second decision reflected a need to determine which program and non-program children should be included in the analyses. Two approaches were taken. First, analyses were conducted which focused only on the children who resided in the targeted neighborhoods, so that

Table 4

Mean Quality Scores for Safe Haven After-School Programs in Year 2

	Program 1	Program 2	Program 3	Program 4
Mean item score				
Total score	5.8	5.1	4.7	6.1
Space and furnishings	5.6	4.7	4.4	6.0
Health and safety	6.1	4.9	4.4	6.1
Activities	5.4	4.7	4.6	5.6
Interactions	5.7	5.7	5.3	6.3
Program structure	6.5	6.0	4.6	6.6
Staff development	6.3	5.7	4.8	6.2

Note. The possible score range was 1 to 7.

The SACERS provides the following descriptors for the odd-numbered rating scale points:

- 1 = inadequate; a lack of care that compromises children's development
- 3 = minimal; a custodial level of care
- 5 = good; basic dimensions of developmentally appropriate care
- 7 = excellent; high-quality care that expands children's experiences, extends their learning, and provides warm and caring support

Table 5

Distribution of Number of Days Children Attended Safe Haven Programs in Year 2

# days	# children	# days	# children	# days	# children	# days	# children
1	3	37	2	68	2	104	2
2	2	38	2	70	2	105	1
3	3	39	1	72	1	106	2
4	4	40	1	73	1	107	1
5	1	42	1	74	1	109	2
6	2	43	1	75	3	111	1
7	3	47	1	76	4	113	1
8	2	48	1	77	1	117	3
9	1	49	1	78	2	120	1
10	2	50	1	79	1	121	2
11	2	52	1	80	1	123	3
12	2	53	2	81	3	126	1
13	2	54	1	82	2	128	1
16	2	55	3	83	1	134	1
18	1	56	1	84	2	135	1
19	1	57	1	85	4	137	1
20	1	59	3	86	1	138	1
21	6	60	4	87	1	140	1
22	1	61	1	89	2	141	2
23	1	62	3	93	1	142	1
26	2	63	3	94	1	146	1
29	2	64	2	96	2	153	1
30	2	65	2	97	1	159	1
32	4	66	1	98	1		
35	2	67	1	103	1		

Note. Attendance data were missing for two children who were enrolled in Safe Haven programs.

Table 6

Mean Psychosocial Climate Scores for Safe Haven After-School Programs in Year 2

	Program 1 mean (SD)	Program 2 mean (SD)	Program 3 mean (SD)	Program 4 mean (SD)
Mean item score				
Overall psychosocial climate	2.9 (0.4)	2.6 (0.5)	3.1 (0.4) _a	2.6 (0.5) _b
Program enjoyment	3.0 (0.5)	2.8 (0.8)	3.4 (0.6)	2.9 (0.6)
Staff supportiveness	3.3 (0.7)	2.9 (0.9)	3.3 (0.6)	2.6 (0.9)
Staff control ¹	2.4 (0.4)	2.8 (0.6)	2.3 (0.2) _a	2.9 (0.7) _b
Peer affiliation	3.0 (0.7)	3.1 (0.6)	3.4 (0.8)	3.2 (0.7)

Note. The After-School Environment Scale was administered to a total of 56 children who were present at the programs on the day of administration. Subscripts denote statistically significant differences in mean scores.

¹A lower score on Staff Control represents a more positive perception.

comparisons could be made between target neighborhood children who were enrolled in the Safe Haven after-school programs, and target neighborhood children who were not enrolled. As demonstrated in the demographic analyses, a substantial majority of these children were Black, and resided in low-income, single-parent households. The second approach contrasted all children who were enrolled in the Safe Haven programs with the performance of all other children at the targeted elementary schools (66% of these children did not live in the targeted neighborhoods). Results from these two types of analyses are reported below.⁴

Neighborhood program and non-program children at Time 1. Between-group t-tests focusing on Time 1 (May 1995) adjustment were used to contrast program and non-program children who lived in the targeted neighborhoods during Year 2. These tests were conducted to determine if there were pre-existing differences between the two groups of neighborhood children at Time 1. As shown in Table 7, numerous Time 1 differences were found. At the end of Year 1, program children who lived in the targeted neighborhoods, compared to neighborhood children who did not attend the programs in Year 2:

- had poorer academic grades and work habits
- received lower ratings on working well with others
- had fewer excused absences from school
- chose an assertive friendly strategy less often, and an overt aggressive strategy more often, in response to the presented conflict situations
- indicated they would use overt aggressive and relational aggressive responses more often if the presented conflicts happened frequently
- evaluated the assertive friendly strategy less positively, and the overt aggressive and relational aggressive responses more positively

These Time 1 analyses suggest that the children in the targeted neighborhoods who subsequently participated in Safe Haven programs had substantially poorer performance in school and poorer conflict resolution skills than neighborhood children who did not participate in the programs during Year 2.

Safe Haven versus non-Safe Haven children at Time 1. When children who attended Safe Haven were contrasted with all other children at their elementary schools, pre-existing differences at Time 1 were found (see Table 7). Children who were subsequently enrolled in Safe Haven during Year 2, compared to children who did not enroll in the programs:

⁴In all of the analyses that follow, children who were enrolled in the Club programs at Lowell but who did not attend Safe Haven programs were excluded. This allowed us to make comparisons only between children who received Safe Haven intervention and those who received no intervention during the after-school hours.

Table 7

Time 1 T-Test Comparisons of Mean Scores

	Neighborhood residents			All children		
	Program mean (SD)	Non-program mean (SD)	Sig. level	Program mean (SD)	Non-program mean (SD)	Sig. level
SCHOOL VARIABLES						
Academic grades	2.87 (0.68)	3.90 (0.80)	***	3.08 (0.84)	4.05 (0.84)	***
Work habits	2.95 (1.03)	3.85 (1.15)	***	3.15 (1.12)	4.02 (1.02)	***
Works well with others	2.95 (1.16)	3.85 (1.13)	***	3.13 (1.24)	4.15 (0.94)	***
Excused absences, half days	5.88 (6.49)	10.26 (9.41)	*	7.31 (8.60)	7.80 (7.46)	ns
Unexcused absences, half days	6.00 (9.27)	3.26 (5.62)	ns	5.05 (8.37)	1.32 (4.17)	**
CONFLICT RESOLUTION						
Response decision						
Assertive friendliness	0.34 (0.29)	0.48 (0.27)	*	0.35 (0.30)	0.45 (0.29)	*
Overt aggression	0.20 (0.28)	0.04 (0.15)	**	0.18 (0.27)	0.07 (0.22)	**
Relational aggression	0.10 (0.16)	0.05 (0.12)	ns	0.10 (0.19)	0.03 (0.10)	*
Avoidance	0.37 (0.27)	0.43 (0.26)	ns	0.40 (0.27)	0.45 (0.28)	ns
Strategy use						
Assertive friendliness	3.39 (1.03)	3.49 (0.66)	ns	3.36 (1.04)	3.40 (0.90)	ns
Overt aggression	2.73 (1.25)	1.95 (1.14)	**	2.65 (1.32)	1.96 (1.18)	***
Relational aggression	2.88 (1.28)	2.22 (1.05)	*	2.84 (1.27)	2.22 (1.04)	***
Avoidance	3.50 (0.99)	3.48 (0.85)	ns	3.31 (1.06)	3.46 (0.89)	ns
Strategy evaluation						
Assertive friendliness	3.18 (0.83)	3.69 (0.35)	***	3.23 (0.80)	3.55 (0.57)	**
Overt aggression	1.76 (0.88)	1.31 (0.74)	*	1.73 (0.91)	1.33 (0.71)	**
Relational aggression	2.13 (0.92)	1.57 (0.73)	**	2.02 (0.89)	1.57 (0.68)	**
Avoidance	3.20 (0.79)	3.47 (0.64)	ns	3.16 (0.81)	3.36 (0.69)	ns

ns = not significant * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

- earned lower grades, and lower ratings for work habits and working well with others at school
- had more unexcused absences from school
- chose an assertive friendly strategy less often, and overt aggressive and relational aggressive strategies more often, in response to the presented conflict situations
- indicated they would use overt aggressive and relational aggressive strategies more often if the presented conflicts happened frequently
- evaluated the assertive friendly strategy more negatively, and the overt aggressive and relational aggressive strategies more positively

These differences suggest that children targeted for the Safe Haven programs did evince considerable behavioral difficulties (reflected in academic and conduct grades, unexcused absences, and endorsement of overt and relational aggression) relative to other children who were enrolled at their elementary schools. The differences also indicate that Safe Haven was successful in enrolling children who would benefit from a program designed to improve conflict resolution skills.

Comparisons of neighborhood program and non-program children over time. The next issue to be evaluated was whether participation in Safe Haven was associated with changes in children's school performance and conflict resolution strategies over time. This issue was first investigated for children in the targeted neighborhoods. Mixed model analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to determine the effects of program participation on children's academic grades, conduct grades, school absences, and conflict resolution strategies. The results of these 2 (program participation) by 2 (time) repeated measures ANOVAs are reported on Table 8. Also included in the table are mean scores at Times 1 and 2 for the children who participated in the study in both years. Significant statistical interactions between participation and time indicate that participation in the Safe Haven programs during Year 2 had a differential effect over time on child adjustment.

As indicated in the Time X Program column of Table 8, three statistical interaction effects were obtained. The first was for work habits ratings. Target neighborhood children who participated in the Safe Haven programs during Year 2 showed improved classroom work habits relative to their work habits at the end of Year 1; neighborhood children who did not participate in the programs had poorer work habits at Time 2.

The other Time X Program interactions concerned children's responses to the hypothetical peer conflict situations. Target neighborhood children who participated in Safe Haven chose overt aggression less often at Time 2 relative to Time 1, whereas children who did not participate in Safe Haven chose this response more often. There was a statistical trend for program neighborhood children to choose assertive friendliness more often, and non-program neighborhood children to choose this strategy less often, than they had at the end of Year 1.

Table 8

Repeated Measures Analyses of VarianceComparing Target Neighborhood Program and Non-Program Children

	Target neighborhood children				Significance level		
	Program mean (<u>SD</u>)		Non-program mean (<u>SD</u>)		Time	Program	Time x Program
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2			
SCHOOL VARIABLES							
Academic grades	2.78 (0.71)	3.03 (0.74)	3.98 (0.83)	3.89 (0.94)	***	ns	ns
Work habits	2.97 (1.00)	3.30 (0.99)	4.00 (1.21)	3.78 (1.20)	**	ns	*
Works well w/others	3.13 (0.94)	3.33 (0.92)	3.96 (1.07)	3.83 (1.03)	**	ns	ns
Excused absences	5.73 (6.29)	4.68 (5.61)	10.58 (9.66)	7.19 (8.72)	*	*	ns
Unexcused absences	4.93 (7.94)	4.05 (5.39)	2.97 (5.47)	3.71 (10.51)	ns	ns	ns
CONFLICT RESOLUTION							
Response decision							
Assertive friendliness	0.36 (0.30)	0.44 (0.31)	0.49 (0.29)	0.41 (0.31)	ns	ns	+
Overt aggression	0.18 (0.26)	0.13 (0.20)	0.04 (0.16)	0.16 (0.30)	ns	ns	*
Relational aggression	0.10 (0.17)	0.07 (0.13)	0.05 (0.13)	0.06 (0.13)	ns	ns	ns
Avoidance	0.38 (0.27)	0.36 (0.26)	0.42 (0.28)	0.37 (0.26)	ns	ns	ns
Strategy use							
Assertive friendliness	3.31 (1.08)	3.30 (0.89)	3.48 (0.68)	3.39 (0.80)	ns	ns	ns
Overt aggression	2.63 (1.28)	2.58 (1.11)	1.78 (1.01)	1.96 (1.23)	**	Ns	ns
Relational aggression	2.80 (1.30)	2.74 (1.16)	2.09 (0.93)	2.34 (1.17)	*	Ns	ns
Avoidance	3.29 (1.05)	3.19 (0.92)	3.41 (0.86)	3.12 (1.12)	ns	Ns	ns
Strategy evaluation							
Assertive friendliness	3.10 (0.88)	3.35 (0.65)	3.74 (0.32)	3.71 (0.38)	***	ns	ns
Overt aggression	1.72 (0.93)	1.90 (0.91)	1.26 (0.70)	1.39 (0.77)	*	ns	ns
Relational aggression	2.14 (0.93)	2.18 (0.85)	1.55 (0.67)	1.59 (0.82)	**	ns	ns
Avoidance	3.10 (0.83)	3.28 (0.76)	3.37 (0.67)	3.34 (0.59)	ns	ns	ns

ns = not significant + $p < .07$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Examination of the Program column of Table 8 shows that there were almost no significant differences between neighborhood program and non-program children. This is in contrast to the numerous differences found in the comparison of Time 1 mean scores (see Table 7). On many of the variables, program children's scores improved and non-program children's scores declined from the end of Year 1 to the end of Year 2. Although these changes and the interactions of time and program were not significant for these other variables, if the direction of the score changes continued into the next school year, significant differences would be expected.

Comparisons of all children over time. The next step in data analyses was to determine the effects of program enrollment for the sample as a whole on children's academic grades, conduct grades, school absences, and conflict resolution strategies. In these analyses, it was necessary to statistically control for demographic characteristics because of the differences between children who were enrolled in Safe Haven programs and the other children at their schools (race, receipt of lunch subsidy, family structure). Therefore, simultaneous multiple regressions were conducted which enabled us to determine the effects of enrollment in the Safe Haven programs after controlling for child demographic characteristics. The child's performance at Time 1 for a given assessment was included in the regression equation so that we could ascertain changes in children's behavior over time associated with Safe Haven participation. The regressions allowed us to determine the influence of the demographic variables and program enrollment on the Time 2 scores when each of the other variables was statistically controlled. Separate regression equations were tested for each Time 2 score.

Only one significant difference was evident in these analyses: Children who were enrolled in the Safe Haven programs reduced their number of excused absences from school relative to the number of these absences during the second semester of Year 1. One possible explanation for the limited findings is that some children who were enrolled in the programs attended only a few days (see Table 5).

All analyses reported thus far have contrasted children who participated in Safe Haven programs with children who did not participate. Because of the substantial variation in children's program participation within the Safe Haven group, the next set of analyses focused on the effects of these attendance variations on children who were enrolled in the Safe Haven programs. Simultaneous multiple regressions were conducted to determine if children's Time 2 adjustment could be predicted by (a) residence in the targeted neighborhoods, (b) the comparable Time 1 child measure, and (c) number of days that the child attended the Safe Haven program. Neighborhood residence was included as a proxy variable for demographic differences between neighborhood program children and non-neighborhood program children. As shown on Table 9, three effects were found to be associated with number of program attendance days. The greater the number of days that children participated in the program during Year 2, the more their work habits and their ability to work well with others at school improved from the end of Year 1, and the fewer the number of excused absences from school relative to the second semester of Year 1. These analyses also demonstrate some stability of children's behavior over time. Behavior at Time 1 predicted behavior at Time 2 on most of the measures.

Because of the lack of concomitant measures at Time 1 for social skills and problem behaviors as rated by Safe Haven staff in May 1996, Pearson correlations were computed to

Table 9

Simultaneous Multiple Regressions on Time 2 Scores with Program Attendance Predictors

	Predictors (betas)			Adj. R ²
	Neighborhood residence	Time 1 control	Number of days attended	
SCHOOL VARIABLES				
Academic grades	-.18	.40*	.07	.22**
Work habits	-.17	.36*	.30*	.25**
Works well w/others	-.11	.33*	.30*	.21**
Excused absences	-.18	.44***	-.25*	.33***
Unexcused absences	.21	.43***	-.02	.22**
CONFLICT RESOLUTION				
Response decision				
Assertive friendliness	.20	.39*	.12	.16*
Overt aggression	-.21	.53***	-.08	.25**
Relational aggression	-.07	.09	-.12	-.05
Avoidance	.04	.47**	.01	.15*
Strategy use				
Assertive friendliness	-.02	.53***	-.01	.22**
Overt aggression	.11	.31*	-.02	.04
Relational aggression	.16	.20	-.13	.01
Avoidance	-.08	.34*	.14	.10
Strategy evaluation				
Assertive friendliness	-.11	.19	-.01	-.01
Overt aggression	.21	.44**	.08	.18*
Relational aggression	.11	.43**	.07	.17*
Avoidance	-.12	.15	.17	-.01

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

determine if there was any association between these variables and the number of days that children attended the programs. Significant associations were found: Number of program days was associated with social skills ratings, $r_{(50)} = .29$ ($p < .05$), and with problem behavior ratings, $r_{(50)} = -.35$ ($p < .05$). These correlations indicate that children who attended the programs more days were rated as having better social skills and fewer problem behaviors than children who attended fewer days. The associations were stronger when the scores of target neighborhood children only were correlated with number of days attended: $r_{(32)} = .38$ ($p < .05$) for social skills, and $r_{(32)} = -.46$ ($p < .01$) for problem behaviors.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Safe Haven (a joint effort of the City of Madison and the Madison Metropolitan School District) successfully targeted children who were at risk for academic and social difficulties. Recruitment strategies resulted in the programs enrolling primarily low-income minority children who lived in single-parent homes. These program children, in comparison to non-program children, evidenced poorer academic grades, more school conduct problems (in terms of work habits, ability to work well with others, and unexcused absences from school) and poorer conflict resolution strategies (greater selection of and more positive views of aggressive strategies, and less selection and poorer evaluation of more positive strategies). The majority of the children who were enrolled appeared to be at high risk.
2. The Safe Haven programs were of good quality, providing developmentally appropriate care that in some programs approached excellence. Efforts at improving quality should continue, especially in terms of space and furnishings, health and safety, and activities offered to children.
3. Children who participated in the Safe Haven programs rated them as enjoyable. The children believed the staff to be supportive, and they reported that the programs provided positive affiliation with peers. The children also, however, believed the staff to be somewhat controlling and intrusive.
4. There were positive effects of participation in the Safe Haven programs on children's conduct in school and conflict resolution strategies in comparisons between May 1995 and May 1996. Children who participated in the programs during the 1995-96 school year improved their work habits at school, whereas the work habits of children who did not participate in the programs became poorer. Program participants also were absent from school less frequently.

Improvements in conflict resolution strategies were found for Safe Haven participants as well. Children who were enrolled in the programs reduced the frequency of selection of overt aggression in response to hypothetical peer conflicts from May 1995 to May 1996, whereas other children chose this response more often in May 1996. There also was a statistical trend toward program children choosing an assertive friendly response more often, and non-program children choosing this response less often. Other differences in the same direction were evident, but they were not statistically significant.

5. Safe Haven program participation varied, with some children attending only a few days throughout the 1995-96 school year and others attending nearly every day. These variations were associated with children's adjustment: Children who attended the programs more days experienced greater improvements in school conduct grades (work habits, ability to work well with others) and a lower number of excused absences from school compared to children who attended the programs fewer days. Efforts should be made to encourage more frequent participation by all children, so that maximum benefits can be achieved.

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Appendix 4

Data Coding Scheme for Statistical Analyses

The Madison Metropolitan School District provided data on the study children's gender, ethnicity, household type, receipt of subsidized school lunch, and neighborhood of residence. These data were dummy coded for data analyses as follows.

Sex

0 = male, 1 = female. In data analyses, positive associations indicated that girls scored higher on the pertinent variables, and negative associations indicated that boys scored higher.

Ethnicity

0 = White, 1 = minority (American Indian, Asian, Black, Hispanic). In data analyses, positive associations indicated that minority race children scored higher on the pertinent variables, and negative associations indicated that White children scored higher.

Household Type

0 = two-parent family, 1 = single-parent family. In data analyses, positive associations indicated that children from single-parent families scored higher on the pertinent variables, and negative associations indicate that children who live in two-parent families scored higher.

Receipt of Subsidized School Lunch

0 = did not receive subsidized school lunch, 1 = received free or reduced-price school lunch; proxy variable for poverty status. In data analyses, positive associations indicated that poor children scored higher on the pertinent variables, and negative associations indicated that non-poor children scored higher.

Neighborhood of Residence

0 = did not reside in one of the targeted neighborhoods, 1 = resided in a targeted neighborhood. In data analyses, positive associations indicated that children who lived in the targeted neighborhoods scored higher on the pertinent variables, and negative associations indicated that children who did not live in these neighborhoods scored higher.