SAFE HAVEN PROGRAM EVALUATION (1996-97)

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Madison and the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) operate 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 are at risk for academic and social difficulties. Specific objectives of the programs include enhancing children's 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 and MMSD to evaluate the Safe Haven programs during the 1994-95, 1995-96, and 1996-97 academic years. During the 1996-97 year, the focal year of this report, the evaluation had several components:

1. A determination of a demographic profile of children who attended the Safe Haven programs. Children who attended the programs were contrasted with (a) all other children in their schools and (b) other children who resided in the target neighborhoods but 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. This included ratings of the quality of the programs, a determination of how often the children actually attended the programs, and how the children perceived the programs.

3. Tests of program effects on children's development. Five aspects of child adjustment were investigated: academic grades, conduct grades, school absences, misconduct, and conflict resolution strategies. We sought to determine if program attendance was associated with these adjustment indices. We examined this issue across one-year and two-year time periods.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Children in Grades 3-5 at Glendale, Lowell, and Mendota elementary schools participated in the study.[1] Demographic characteristics of the 622 children who participated during 1996-97, provided by MMSD, are summarized in the first column of Table 1. As the table shows, children were evenly distributed across the three grades. Similar percentages of boys and girls were assessed. The majority of the children in the schools were White, although a substantial proportion were of minority race (American Indian, Asian, Black, and Hispanic). More than half of the children received free or reduced-price school lunch. A large number of the children lived in single-parent families.

[1] The Safe Haven programs serve 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 the 1996-97 School Year

	Target schools $N = 622$	Target neighborhoods $N = 206$	Safe Haven programs $N = 144$	Target neighborhoods, Safe Haven programs $N = 93$
GRADE				
Third	33.1%	33.5%	34.0%	31.2%
Fourth	32.6%	33.0%	35.4%	35.5%
Fifth	34.3%	33.5%	30.6%	33.3%
SEX				
Boys	49.4%	45.1%	44.4%	41.9%
Girls	50.6%	54.9%	55.6%	58.1%
RACE/ETHNICITY				
White	55.1%	26.2%	22.2%	10.8%
Minority	44.9%	73.8%	77.8%	89.2%
LUNCH SUBSIDY				
Yes	56.0%	85.4%	86.8%	93.5%
No	44.0%	14.6%	13.2%	6.5%
FAMILY STRUCTURE				
Two parents	56.3%	37.0%	43.0%	39.5%
One parent	43.7%	63.0%	57.0%	60.5%

Note. *N* refers to sample size, or the number of study participants.

As shown on Table 1, 206 children (33% of the sample) lived in the target neighborhoods, as reported by MMSD (100 in Broadway-Simpson and Glendale Townhouses, 60 in Darbo-Worthington, and 46 in Vera Court). Large proportions of these children were of minority race, received a school lunch subsidy, and resided in a single-parent home. Of the 206 target neighborhood children, 93 (45%) were enrolled in the Safe Haven programs.

A total of 144 children were enrolled in Safe Haven: 52 at Glendale, 35 at Mendota, 37 at Lowell, and 20 at the program operated by the Atwood Community Center for Lowell children. It appears that 51 children who did not live in the target neighborhoods were enrolled in the programs. However, residence data made available to the study showed children's addresses at the end of the school year. A significant proportion of the children in the target schools move frequently, and it is likely that most of the apparently non-neighborhood children who were enrolled in the programs did in fact reside in one of the target neighborhoods at some point during the school year.

Ninety-seven children (16% of the total sample) participated in Club programs operated at Lowell Elementary, but did not participate in Safe Haven.

Contrasts of the Demographic Characteristics of Study Children

Chi-square (χ) analyses were conducted to determine if there were demographic differences between (a) children who were enrolled in the Safe Haven programs and other children in the target schools, and (b) Safe Haven children who resided in the target neighborhoods and other children in the neighborhoods. These analyses examined proportions of children within demographic categories to determine if there were statistically significant differences in demographic characteristics between these groups of children.[2]

Children who were enrolled in the Safe Haven programs, compared to other children in their schools who were not enrolled, were more likely to be of minority race (78% vs. 38%; $\chi_1 = 68.8$, $p < .001$), to receive a lunch subsidy (87% vs. 50%; $\chi_1 = 62.5$, $p < .001$), and to live in a single-parent home (57% vs. 43%; $\chi_1 = 8.2$, $p < .004$). There was no difference in the proportions of boys and girls who were enrolled in the programs or not.

Among children who resided in the target neighborhoods at the end of the school year, those who attended the Safe Haven programs, compared to neighborhood children who were not enrolled in the programs, were more likely to be of minority race (89% vs. 59%; $\chi_1 = 24.0$, $p < .001$) and to receive a lunch subsidy (94% vs. 77%; $\chi_1 = 11.5$, $p < .001$). There were no significant differences between neighborhood program children and the other children in their neighborhoods in terms of sex and family structure.

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[2] Statistical significance is defined by *p* values. *p* is the probability that a difference in scores (or proportions, in the case of Chi-square) occurred by chance. A *p* value of .05 means that there was a 5% chance that an attained difference was random or due to measurement error; a value of .01 means there was a 1% chance, and a value of .001 means there was a 0.1% chance. Therefore, the smaller the *p* value, the greater the confidence that attained differences are real and not due to chance. A value of .05 is the commonly accepted marker of statistical significance.

The results of the Chi-square analyses show that the Safe Haven programs were successful in enrolling children who were at risk for academic and social difficulties. This was true even within the neighborhoods themselves; among the children in this disadvantaged group, those who were the most at risk were enrolled in the programs.

CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES IN THE SAFE HAVEN PROGRAMS

Children's experiences in the Safe Haven programs were examined through assessments of the quality of the programs, the frequency with which children attended the programs, and children's perceptions of the psychosocial climate in the programs.

Program Quality

Data about the quality of the programs were provided by the City of Madison's Office of Community Services. A City staff member observed the programs during Spring 1997 and rated each 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 staff and children, program structure (e.g., schedule, free choice time, use of community resources), and staff development (e.g., frequency and content of staff meetings, supervision of staff).

Table 2 lists the quality scores for each program during Spring 1997. Quality scores from the previous year are included for comparison purposes. During Spring 1997, the four Safe Haven programs varied in quality. Although differences between programs cannot be examined statistically because only a single observation was conducted of each program, it appears that Program 4 was of higher quality than the other programs. Program 4 was rated as providing overall good-quality care (total SACERS score) that approached excellence in expanding children's experiences and extending their learning. Programs 1, 2, and 3 were rated in Spring 1997 as providing care that approached good quality overall.

Child Participation

Safe Haven staff provided reports of the number of days that children attended the programs. Table 3 shows the means, standard deviations, ranges, and medians for attendance days. There was substantial variability in how often children participated in the Safe Haven programs during the 1996-97 school year, both overall and between programs. Overall, attendance varied from a single day to 148 days.

Differences in attendance at the programs were examined statistically with analysis of variance (ANOVA; *F*). In an ANOVA, it is determined if group averages (or means) are

Table 2

SACERS Quality Scores for Safe Haven Programs

	1995-96					Spring 1997				
		Program					Program			
	Overall mean	1	2	3	4	Overall mean	1	2	3	4
Total SACERS score	5.4 (0.6)	5.8	5.1	4.7	6.1	4.7 (0.7)	4.6	4.3	4.3	5.7
Space and furnishings	5.2 (0.7)	5.6	4.7	4.4	6.0	5.0 (0.7)	4.6	4.6	4.5	6.1
Health and safety	5.4 (0.8)	6.1	4.9	4.4	6.1	4.3 (0.9)	4.8	3.1	4.0	5.3
Activities	5.0 (0.5)	5.4	4.7	4.6	5.6	4.3 (0.8)	3.9	4.5	3.5	5.4
Staff-child interactions	5.8 (0.4)	5.7	5.7	5.3	6.3	5.0 (0.4)	5.1	4.6	4.9	5.4
Program structure	5.9 (0.9)	6.5	6.0	4.6	6.6	4.6 (1.0)	4.3	4.5	3.8	6.0
Staff development	5.8 (0.7)	6.3	5.7	4.8	6.2	5.1 (0.6)	5.0	4.7	4.7	6.0

Notes. (1) Numbers shown in parentheses in the overall mean column are standard deviations. (2) Scores could range from 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 3

Number of Days that Children Attended Safe Haven Programs

	1995-96			1996-97		
	Mean (*SD*)	Range	Median [1]	Mean (*SD*)	Range	Median [1]
Overall	67 (43)	1-159	63	85 (48)	1-148	94
Program 1	93 (45) $_a$	6-154	106	117 (24) $_a$	64-145	125
Program 2	58 (42) $_b$	1-159	53	71 (51) $_b$	1-146	69
Program 3	61 (43) $_b$	1-128	59	66 (48) $_b$	2-148	52
Program 4	65 (23) $_b$	4-85	72	97 (42)	7-141	119

Note. Different subscripts denote statistically significant differences ($p < .05$ or better) in mean number of attendance days within columns (within years).

[1] Half the children attended the programs fewer days than the median number, and half attended more days.

significantly different across groups. When an overall difference is detected, Scheffe analyses are then conducted to determine if differences in pairs of means are significant. We found the ANOVA examining the overall difference in the number of attendance days between the four programs to be significant ($F_{3, 140} = 11.15$, $p < .001$). Scheffe analyses indicated that attendance during the 1996-97 school year was significantly greater at Program 1 than at Programs 2 and 3. There was no statistical difference in the number of days that children attended Program 4 compared to the other programs during 1996-97.

Figures are shown on Table 3 for the 1995-96 school year also. Compared to that year, during the 1996-97 year the children increased the number of days that they attended the programs. These increases were most evident for Programs 1, 2, and 4. In Program 3, there was a slight increase in the mean number of days that children attended the programs, but a slight decrease in the median number of days.

Psychosocial Climate

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

The ASES was administered during May 1997 to a total of 80 children who were present at the programs on the days that the measure was administered (27 at Program 1, 23 at Program 2, 15 at Program 3, 10 at Program 4, and 5 whom we were unable to identify), representing 56% of the Safe Haven enrollees. Table 4 shows mean scores for the overall May 1997 sample and for each program. Overall, 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 "some of the time." The children also reported that they experienced positive peer affiliation in the programs "most of the time."

As can be seen in Table 4, the scores for individual programs were somewhat variable. The children perceived Program 3 as having the best overall climate during May 1997, as well as being the most enjoyable, having the most supportive staff, and offering more opportunities for positive peer affiliation. However, other programs, 1 and 4 in particular, scored about the same as Program 3. Differences in mean scores between programs were analyzed statistically with ANOVA, followed by Scheffe tests if significant. Significant ANOVAs were found for program enjoyment ($F_{3, 71} = 8.96$, $p < .001$), staff supportiveness ($F_{3, 71} = 2.82$, $p < .05$), and staff overcontrol ($F_{3, 71} = 6.13$, $p < .001$). Two statistically significant differences in mean scores were found in the follow-up Scheffe tests: Enjoyment of the program was greater at Programs 1, 3, and 4 in comparison to Program 2, and the staff at Program 2 were perceived as more controlling and intrusive than the staff at the other programs.

Mean scores on the ASES in May 1996 are shown on Table 4 as well. It can be seen on the table that scores are, for the most part, similar across years. There were, however, fewer

Table 4

Psychosocial Climate in the Safe Haven Programs

	May 1996					May 1997				
		Program					Program			
	Overall	1	2	3	4	Overall	1	2	3	4
Overall climate	2.8 (0.5)	2.9 (0.4)	2.6 (0.5)	3.1 $_a$ (0.4)	2.6 $_b$ (0.5)	2.8 (0.3)	2.7 (0.3)	2.7 (0.3)	2.9 (0.3)	2.7 (0.3)
Program enjoyment	3.0 (0.6)	3.0 (0.5)	2.8 (0.8)	3.4 (0.6)	2.9 (0.6)	2.9 (0.7)	3.0 $_a$ (0.6)	2.4 $_b$ (0.8)	3.4 $_a$ (0.4)	3.3 $_a$ (0.5)
Staff supportiveness	3.0 (0.8)	3.3 (0.7)	2.9 (0.9)	3.3 (0.6)	2.6 (0.9)	3.0 (0.8)	3.0 (0.7)	2.7 (0.8)	3.4 (0.5)	2.7 (1.2)
Staff control[1]	2.6 (0.5)	2.4 (0.4)	2.8 (0.6)	2.3 $_a$ (0.2)	2.9 $_b$ (0.7)	2.4 (0.5)	2.3 $_a$ (0.4)	2.8 $_b$ (0.6)	2.3 $_a$ (0.5)	2.1 $_a$ (0.4)
Peer affiliation	3.2 (0.7)	3.0 (0.7)	3.1 (0.6)	3.4 (0.8)	3.2 (0.7)	3.0 (0.6)	3.0 (0.6)	2.9 (0.8)	3.3 (0.5)	3.3 (0.7)

Notes. (1) Numbers shown are means and standard deviations (in parentheses). (2) Scores could range from 1 to 4. (3) $N = 56$ in May 1996, $N = 80$ in May 1997. (4) Different subscripts denote statistically significant differences ($p < .05$ or better) in mean scores across rows within years.

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

statistically significant differences between scores in 1996. This likely was due to the smaller number of children who completed the measure during that year, which resulted in less statistical power to detect differences.

SAFE HAVEN PROGRAM EFFECTS ON CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

Five types of adjustment outcomes were examined to determine if there were effects of the Safe Haven programs on children's development. The adjustment indicators included academic grades, conduct grades, school absences, conflict resolution strategies, and misconduct. These data were collected during May 1997. The data also were available from assessments conducted in May 1996 and May 1995, except that the misconduct measure was not administered in 1995.

The basic research strategy adopted in this evaluation was a pretest/posttest comparison of an experimental (i.e., Safe Haven experience) and control (i.e., no Safe Haven experience) group. This strategy allowed an examination of changes in children's adjustment as a consequence of enrollment in the Safe Haven programs. Comparisons were made for two different time periods: across one year (May 1996 to May 1997) and across two years (May 1995 to May 1997). In all analyses of program effects, children who participated in the Club program at Lowell Elementary 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 known intervention during the after-school hours.[3]

The evaluation did not adhere to a strict experimental design in that children were not randomly assigned to the experimental and control conditions. As a result, particular attention was paid to the pretest assessments (May 1995 and May 1996) in order to identify pre-existing adjustment differences between children who participated in Safe Haven and those who did not.

It should be noted that assessments of conflict resolution strategies and misconduct were conducted by evaluation staff who were not aware of which children attended the Safe Haven programs, thereby minimizing the likelihood of halo effects.

Measures

Academic grades. Classroom teachers completed a "mock" report card (see the appendix) on which they provided children's academic grades. Each child's reading, oral language, written language, and math performance was evaluated using 5-point ratings (1 = failing, 5 = excellent). A composite score was created that combined grades in the four subject areas.

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 that were used for academic grades.

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[3] There was at least one other program available to some of the children that was not part of the Safe Haven project. However, we do not know which children attended that program, nor how often the program was offered.

School absences. MMSD reported the number of school absences for each study child.

Conflict resolution strategies. Conflict resolution strategies were assessed with School Stories, a paper-and-pencil measure on which children reported how they would respond to four hypothetical peer conflict situations that can occur at school (see the appendix). 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. Evaluation staff members were present during each administration to circulate the classroom and 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 for each strategy), 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 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 peer conflicts occurred frequently (strategy use). The final set of scores reflected how good the children thought it would be to use each of the four strategies (strategy evaluation).

Misconduct. Children reported how often during the past month they engaged in each of 11 problem behaviors, ranging from "never" to "almost every day" (see the appendix). The measure was adapted from Brown, Clasen, and Eicher's (1986) Self-Reported Behavior Index. Example behaviors are "Broke something on purpose," "Got into a fight at school," and "Did something your parents told you not to." We have used this measure in other research on after-school programs, including with low-income third, fourth, and fifth graders in Milwaukee and middle-class third and fourth graders in Dane County. The measure was administered to the children in their school classrooms, following completion of the measure of conflict resolution strategies.

Descriptive Statistics Summarizing Results of the Child Assessments

Table 5 summarizes the means and standard deviations during all three assessment years for the measures of children's adjustment, for all children in the target schools. In May 1997, the mean academic

grade was between "average" and "very good"; the attained range was 1.25 to 5. The ratings of work habits and ability to work well with others also averaged between "average" and "very good"; both ratings had an attained range of 1 to 5. 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.

The number of school absences during the 1996-97 school year also was variable, with an attained range of 0 to 140 half days. This indicates that some children were absent from school as many as 70 full days during the school year. The average number of absences was close to 9 full days.

The children, as a group, reported engaging in little misconduct; the mean item score shown on Table 5 for misconduct at the May 1997 assessment was between "never" and "1-2 times." The attained range for these scores was 1 to 5, indicating that some children reported that they had not engaged in any misconduct during the prior month, whereas other children reported that they had engaged in all of the measured behaviors almost every day.

Table 5 also contains summary descriptive statistics for the conflict resolution vignettes. Mean scores indicated that in May 1997, 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 peer conflicts 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. For each type of conflict resolution score, with the exception of the relational aggression response decision (range = 0 to 0.75), the full range of possible scores was attained, meaning that each of the strategies was chosen exclusively by some children in May 1997.

Safe Haven Program Effects over Time

The next issue to be evaluated was whether participation in Safe Haven was associated with changes in children's adjustment over time. We first examined whether there were pre-existing adjustment differences between the children who participated in the Safe Haven programs and other children in their schools. Then, we examined program effects on children's adjustment. Both sets of analyses were conducted for one-year and two-year periods of time. Sample sizes (*N*s) for the analyses are shown on the tables reporting results. Differences in sample sizes across measures are due to some children being absent from school when measures were administered, and some mock report card forms not being returned by classroom teachers.

Table 5

Summary Statistics for the Samples as a Whole

	May 1995 mean (*SD*)	May 1996 mean (*SD*)	May 1997 mean (*SD*)
Academic grades [1]	3.52 (0.99)	3.52 (1.03)	3.58 (0.94)
Work habits [1]	3.56 (1.16)	3.58 (1.15)	3.60 (1.13)
Works well with others [1]	3.70 (1.14)	3.69 (1.11)	3.71 (1.09)
School absences, half days	20.19 (19.89)	18.31 (15.60)	17.62 (16.10)
Misconduct [1]	--	1.55 (0.49)	1.52 (0.51)
Conflict resolution: Response decision [2]			
Assertive friendliness	0.42 (0.30)	0.41 (0.30)	0.43 (0.30)
Overt aggression	0.16 (0.27)	0.16 (0.28)	0.13 (0.25)
Relational aggression	0.07 (0.13)	0.07 (0.14)	0.06 (0.13)
Avoidance	0.36 (0.26)	0.37 (0.27)	0.38 (0.26)
Conflict resolution: Strategy use [1]			
Assertive friendliness	3.36 (0.93)	3.30 (0.97)	3.15 (0.93)
Overt aggression	2.32 (1.23)	2.22 (1.19)	1.84 (1.09)
Relational aggression	2.54 (1.10)	2.44 (1.12)	2.06 (0.90)
Avoidance	3.25 (0.97)	3.17 (0.94)	2.95 (0.87)
Conflict resolution: Strategy evaluation [3]			
Assertive friendliness	3.46 (0.62)	3.48 (0.62)	3.39 (0.63)
Overt aggression	1.53 (0.81)	1.52 (0.80)	1.37 (0.67)
Relational aggression	1.80 (0.78)	1.83 (0.80)	1.68 (0.66)
Avoidance	3.23 (0.71)	3.21 (0.73)	3.03 (0.75)

Note. School absences are for entire school years.

[1] Scores could range from 1 to 5. [2] Scores could range from 0 to 1. [3] Scores could range from 1 to 4.

Comparisons of program and non-program children across a one-year period. Safe Haven program effects on children's adjustment were first examined for the time period between May 1996 (pretest) and May 1997 (posttest). These analyses involved children who were in the fourth and fifth grades during the 1996-97 school year. Pretest data were not available for the third graders because they did not participate in the study during the 1995-96 school year, when they were in second grade.

Prior to investigating program effects, we conducted *t*-tests in which we examined differences in the May 1996 (pretest) scores of children who subsequently were enrolled in the Safe Haven programs during the 1996-97 school year and children who did not enroll. A number of pre-existing adjustment differences were found between program and non-program children, as shown on Table 6. On the table, asterisks in the column labeled "Sig. of *t* value" indicate statistically significant differences in mean scores. At the pretest, children who subsequently were enrolled in Safe Haven during the 1996-97 year, compared to children who were not enrolled:

- earned lower grades, and lower ratings for work habits and working well with others at school
- reported engaging in more misconduct
- chose an overt aggressive strategy more often in response to the hypothetical peer conflicts
- indicated they would use overt aggressive and relational aggressive strategies more often if peer 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 who were enrolled in the Safe Haven programs did evince considerable academic, behavioral, and social difficulties relative to other children at their elementary schools. This underscores that Safe Haven was successful in enrolling children who would most benefit from a program designed to improve cognitive, social, and conflict resolution skills.

Because of the pre-existing differences in children's adjustment prior to Safe Haven participation, it was necessary to control for pretest adjustment and demographic characteristics in the substantive analyses of program effects over time on children's academic grades, conduct grades, school absences, misconduct scores, and conflict resolution strategies. Consequently, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA; *F*) was used. In the ANCOVAs, fourth- and fifth-grade children's May 1997 (posttest) performance scores were adjusted for the influence of the covariates (May 1996 pretest scores and demographic characteristics). The mean adjusted scores then were examined with *t*-tests to determine if they were significantly different.

Results of the ANCOVA analyses (adjusted means and standard errors) for the one-year

Table 6

Children's Pretest (May 1996) Adjustment, Prior to Safe Haven Participation during 1996-97

	Program		Non-program		
	Mean (*SD*)	*N*	Mean (*SD*)	*N*	Sig. of *t* value
Academic grades	2.95 (0.87)	61	3.64 (1.04)	149	***
Work habits	3.07 (1.01)	61	3.69 (1.16)	149	***
Works well with others	3.26 (1.00)	61	3.65 (1.23)	149	*
School absences, half days	20.20 (15.64)	80	18.33 (16.05)	192	ns
Misconduct	1.80 (0.55)	65	1.50 (0.47)	165	***
Conflict resolution: Response decision					
Assertive friendliness	0.37 (0.28)	67	0.44 (0.31)	167	ns
Overt aggression	0.19 (0.28)	67	0.12 (0.24)	167	*
Relational aggression	0.06 (0.13)	67	0.05 (0.12)	167	ns
Avoidance	0.37 (0.26)	67	0.38 (0.27)	167	ns
Conflict resolution: Strategy use					
Assertive friendliness	3.30 (0.95)	67	3.35 (0.91)	166	ns
Overt aggression	2.57 (1.22)	67	2.06 (1.17)	167	**
Relational aggression	2.78 (1.10)	67	2.37 (1.13)	167	*
Avoidance	3.17 (0.86)	67	3.26 (0.91)	167	ns
Conflict resolution: Strategy evaluation					
Assertive friendliness	3.32 (0.68)	67	3.53 (0.53)	166	*
Overt aggression	1.66 (0.84)	67	1.43 (0.76)	167	*
Relational aggression	2.08 (0.86)	67	1.72 (0.77)	167	**
Avoidance	3.20 (0.73)	67	3.29 (0.70)	167	ns

Note. Sample sizes (*N*) shown are the number of children enrolled in the target schools during the 1996-97 school year for whom May 1996 (pretest) data were available.

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

comparison are reported on Table 7.[4] An asterisk in the column labeled "Sig. of *t* value" indicates a statistically significant difference in mean scores; a plus sign indicates a difference that approached significance. As shown on the table, children who were enrolled in the Safe Haven programs during the 1996-97 school year outperformed children who were not enrolled in the programs on five adjustment indices. At the posttest, program children, compared to other children in their schools:

- were absent from school less often
- reported engaging in less misconduct
- selected an avoidance response to the hypothetical peer conflict situations more often
- indicated that they would use an avoidance strategy more often if peer conflicts happened frequently
- evaluated the avoidance strategy more positively

Comparisons of program and non-program children across a two-year period. Safe Haven program effects on children's adjustment next were examined for the time period from May 1995 to May 1997. These analyses involved children who were in the fifth grade during the 1996-97 school year and were enrolled in the Safe Haven programs during both the 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years, and fifth-grade children were not enrolled in the programs during these years. Younger children were not included because they did not participate in the study during the 1994-95 school year (and therefore, pretest data were not available).

Prior to examining program effects, we conducted *t*-tests of differences in the May 1995 pretest scores of children who subsequently were enrolled in the Safe Haven programs during the following two school years, and children who were not enrolled. Table 8 shows the results of these analyses. Asterisks in the column labeled "Sig. of *t* value" indicate a statistically significant difference in mean scores; a plus sign indicates a difference that approached significance. At the pretest, children who later were enrolled in Safe Haven, compared to children who did not enroll:

- earned lower grades, and lower ratings for work habits and working well with others at school
- chose an overt aggressive strategy more often, and an avoidance strategy less often, in response to the hypothetical conflicts
- indicated they would use overt aggression and relational aggression more often if peer conflicts happened frequently

[4] All of the overall *F* tests were significant at $p < .05$ or better except one, which approached significance. In this latter case, the test of means was not significant.

Table 7

Children's Posttest (May 1997) Adjustment, After Safe Haven Participation during 1996-97

(One-Year Comparison)

	Program		Non-program		
	Adjusted mean (*SE*)	*N*	Adjusted mean (*SE*)	*N*	Sig. of *t* value
Academic grades	3.48 (0.09)	45	3.57 (0.06)	93	ns
Work habits	3.43 (0.14)	45	3.54 (0.09)	92	ns
Works well with others	3.54 (0.14)	45	3.70 (0.09)	95	ns
School absences, half days	14.84 (1.64)	80	19.13 (0.99)	191	*
Misconduct	1.37 (0.07)	54	1.57 (0.04)	148	*
Conflict resolution: Response decision					
Assertive friendliness	0.41 (0.05)	56	0.40 (0.03)	149	ns
Overt aggression	0.12 (0.04)	56	0.17 (0.02)	149	ns
Relational aggression	0.05 (0.02)	56	0.09 (0.01)	149	ns
Avoidance	0.43 (0.04)	56	0.35 (0.02)	149	+
Conflict resolution: Strategy use					
Assertive friendliness	3.09 (0.12)	56	3.06 (0.07)	148	ns
Overt aggression	1.88 (0.15)	56	2.02 (0.09)	149	ns
Relational aggression	2.15 (0.14)	56	2.25 (0.08)	149	ns
Avoidance	3.11 (0.12)	56	2.77 (0.07)	149	*
Conflict resolution: Strategy evaluation					
Assertive friendliness	3.46 (0.09)	56	3.43 (0.05)	148	ns
Overt aggression	1.58 (0.10)	56	1.40 (0.06)	149	ns
Relational aggression	1.73 (0.10)	56	1.77 (0.06)	149	ns
Avoidance	3.21 (0.10)	56	2.94 (0.06)	149	*

Note. Sample sizes (*N*) shown are the number of children for whom data were available from both the May 1996 (pretest) and May 1997 (posttest) assessments.

ns = not significant $^{+}p < .10$ $^{*}p < .05$

Table 8

Children's Pretest (May 1995) Adjustment, Prior to Safe Haven Participation in 1995-96 and 1996-97

	Program		Non-program		
	Mean (*SD*)	*N*	Mean (*SD*)	*N*	Sig. of *t* value
Academic grades	2.88 (0.71)	23	3.87 (0.94)	75	***
Work habits	3.22 (1.04)	23	3.99 (1.03)	74	**
Works well with others	3.39 (1.34)	23	4.11 (0.99)	75	**
School absences, half days	16.17 (15.64)	23	17.38 (16.68)	77	ns
Misconduct	--		--		
Conflict resolution: Response decision					
Assertive friendliness	0.39 (0.34)	20	0.43 (0.27)	70	ns
Overt aggression	0.19 (0.29)	20	0.06 (0.19)	70	+
Relational aggression	0.08 (0.14)	20	0.05 (0.13)	70	ns
Avoidance	0.35 (0.27)	20	0.46 (0.25)	70	+
Conflict resolution: Strategy use					
Assertive friendliness	3.24 (1.18)	20	3.55 (0.86)	70	ns
Overt aggression	2.89 (1.33)	20	2.01 (1.21)	70	**
Relational aggression	2.83 (1.23)	20	2.34 (1.11)	70	+
Avoidance	3.36 (1.20)	20	3.57 (0.87)	70	ns
Conflict resolution: Strategy evaluation					
Assertive friendliness	3.13 (0.88)	20	3.55 (0.53)	70	*
Overt aggression	1.75 (1.06)	20	1.31 (0.64)	70	+
Relational aggression	2.25 (0.97)	20	1.59 (0.65)	70	**
Avoidance	2.90 (0.82)	20	3.47 (0.58)	70	**

Note. Sample sizes (*N*) shown are the number of children enrolled in the target schools during the 1996-97 school year for whom May 1995 (pretest) data were available.

ns = not significant $^{+}p < .10$ $^{*}p < .05$ $^{**}p < .01$ $^{***}p < .001$

- evaluated the assertive friendly and avoidance strategies more negatively, and the overt aggression and relational aggression strategies more positively

ANCOVAs were conducted to examine program effects on children's academic grades, conduct grades, school absences, and conflict resolution strategies over the two-year period. Because of the pre-existing differences in May 1995 (pretest) adjustment, children's May 1997 (posttest) scores were adjusted for the influence of prior adjustment and demographic characteristics. The mean adjusted scores then were examined with *t*-tests to determine if they were significantly different.

Results of the two-year ANCOVA analyses (adjusted means and standard errors) are shown on Table 9.[5] An asterisk in the column labeled "Sig. of *t* value" indicates a statistically significant difference in mean scores; a plus sign indicates a difference that approaches significance. As shown on the table, fifth-grade children who were enrolled in the Safe Haven programs during both the 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years exhibited better performance on three measures of adjustment at the posttest than children who were not enrolled in the programs during these years. Program children, compared to other children in their schools who were not enrolled in the programs:

- were absent from school less often
- selected an overt aggressive strategy less often in response to the hypothetical peer conflicts
- evaluated avoidance more positively

The smaller number of children available for the two-year analyses resulted in less statistical power to detect differences than in the one-year analyses. Inspection of the mean scores on Table 9 shows that some of the nonsignificant score differences were about the same magnitude as the significant differences in the one-year comparison (Table 7), particularly for the assertive-friendly response decision; strategy use of overt aggression, relational aggression, and avoidance; and evaluation of the avoidance strategy. Had the two-year comparison sample sizes been larger, it is likely that these differences would have been statistically significant.

Effects of Safe Haven Attendance Days on Child Adjustment

All analyses of child adjustment 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 (see Table 3), the next set of analyses focused on the effects of these attendance variations. Pearson product-moment correlations were computed between adjustment scores in May 1997 and the number of

[5] Nearly all of the overall *F* tests were significant at $p < .05$ or better. Where these tests were not significant (two cases) or only approached significance (one case), the tests of means were not significant.

Table 9

Children's Posttest (May 1997) Adjustment, After Safe Haven Participation in 1995-96 and 1996-97

(Two-Year Comparison)

	Program		Non-program		
	Adjusted mean (*SE*)	*N*	Adjusted mean (*SE*)	*N*	Sig. of *t* value
Academic grades	3.70 (0.16)	19	3.85 (0.10)	39	ns
Work habits	3.59 (0.28)	19	3.84 (0.18)	38	ns
Works well with others	3.99 (0.22)	19	4.08 (0.14)	39	ns
School absences, half days	8.14 (4.33)	23	20.08 (2.06)	76	*
Misconduct	--		--		
Conflict resolution: Response decision					
Assertive friendliness	0.46 (0.09)	16	0.36 (0.04)	66	ns
Overt aggression	0.01 (0.06)	16	0.16 (0.03)	66	*
Relational aggression	0.04 (0.04)	16	0.08 (0.02)	66	ns
Avoidance	0.49 (0.09)	16	0.41 (0.04)	66	ns
Conflict resolution: Strategy use					
Assertive friendliness	3.14 (0.24)	16	2.93 (0.11)	66	ns
Overt aggression	1.48 (0.28)	16	1.87 (0.12)	66	ns
Relational aggression	1.73 (0.27)	16	2.13 (0.12)	66	ns
Avoidance	3.24 (0.26)	16	2.88 (0.11)	66	ns
Conflict resolution: Strategy evaluation					
Assertive friendliness	3.54 (0.13)	16	3.53 (0.06)	66	ns
Overt aggression	1.31 (0.16)	16	1.32 (0.07)	66	ns
Relational aggression	1.59 (0.19)	16	1.66 (0.08)	66	ns
Avoidance	3.47 (0.19)	16	3.05 (0.08)	66	+

Note. Sample sizes (*N*) shown are the number of children for whom data were available from both the May 1995 (pretest) and May 1997 (posttest) assessments.

ns = not significant $^{+}p < .10$ $^{*}p < .05$

days that children attended the programs during the 1996-97 school year only, and during the 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years combined. These analyses were not restricted to children who were enrolled in the programs during both these years; rather, children could have participated in either or both years. The correlations are shown on Table 10. A negative correlation indicates that the more days that children attended the programs, the lower the score on the adjustment measure. A positive correlation means that more attendance days were associated with higher scores.

Effects of the number of Safe Haven attendance days during 1996-97. As shown on the left side of Table 10, the more days that children attended the Safe Haven programs during the 1996-97 school year:

- the better the teachers' ratings of children's work habits and ability to work well with others at school in May 1997
- the fewer the number of absences from school
- the less misconduct the children reported engaging in
- the less likely children were to respond to the hypothetical peer conflicts with relational aggression, and to indicate that they would use this strategy if peer conflicts happened frequently

Effects of the number of Safe Haven attendance days during 1995-96 and 1996-97 combined. The right side of Table 10 shows correlations between children's adjustment scores and the number of days that children attended the Safe Haven programs during the 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years combined. As shown on the table, program attendance across the two years was significantly associated with six adjustment measures in May 1997. A greater number of attendance days was associated with:

- better work habits ratings
- fewer absences from school
- less misconduct
- a smaller likelihood of choosing a relational aggression response to the hypothetical peer conflicts, less indication that relational aggression would be used if peer conflicts happened frequently, and a more negative evaluation of relational aggression

SUMMARY AND 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-

Table 10

Correlations of Number of Safe Haven Attendance Days and Child Adjustment in May 1997

	Number attendance days, 1996-97 only	Number attendance days, 1995-96 and 1996-97 combined
Academic grades	.06	.05
Work habits	.19 *	.18 *
Works well with others	.19 *	.09
School absences	-.25 **	-.27 ***
Misconduct	-.17 +	-.24 **
Conflict resolution: Response decision		
Assertive friendliness	.08	.06
Overt aggression	.03	-.06
Relational aggression	-.20 *	-.16 *
Avoidance	-.04	.10
Conflict resolution: Strategy use		
Assertive friendliness	.02	-.02
Overt aggression	-.05	-.12
Relational aggression	-.17 +	-.21 **
Avoidance	-.04	.10
Conflict resolution: Strategy evaluation		
Assertive friendliness	.10	.06
Overt aggression	.00	-.05
Relational aggression	-.11	-.19 *
Avoidance	.11	.10

$^{+}$ $p < .07$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

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 absences from school), greater engagement in misconduct, 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) prior to involvement with the Safe Haven programs. The majority of the children who were enrolled appeared to be at high risk for academic and social difficulties as evidenced by their poorer adjustment and demographic characteristics.

2. Children who participated in the Safe Haven programs rated them as enjoyable most of the time. The children believed the staff to be mostly supportive, and they reported that the programs provided positive affiliation with peers most of the time. The children also, however, believed the staff to be somewhat controlling and intrusive, particularly at one program where children reported less enjoyment. Ratings of program quality by the City of Madison's Office of Community Services indicated that the programs approached good overall quality. Efforts at improving quality should be undertaken, especially in terms of health and safety policies and practices, program structure, and available activities.

3. There were positive effects of participation in the Safe Haven programs on children's school attendance, conduct, and conflict resolution strategies. One-year comparisons between adjustment in May 1996 and in May 1997 revealed that children who participated in the programs during the 1996-97 school year improved their attendance at school and engaged in less misconduct compared to children who did not attend the programs. Improvements in conflict resolution strategies also were found for Safe Haven participants. Children who were enrolled in the programs increased their endorsement of an avoidance strategy for dealing with peer conflicts.

   Positive effects of participation in the Safe Haven programs for a two-year period were evident as well. Comparisons of adjustment in May 1995 and in May 1997 showed that children who were enrolled in the programs during both the 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years reduced their selection of overt aggression in response to hypothetical peer conflicts and improved their attendance at school. Program children also evaluated an avoidance strategy for dealing with peer conflicts more positively than non-program children did following their participation in the programs.

4. Safe Haven program participation varied, with some children attending only a few days throughout the 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years and others attending nearly every day. These variations were associated with children's adjustment: Children who attended the programs more days were rated as having better work habits at school and greater ability to work well with others compared to children who attended the programs fewer days. A greater number of attendance days also was associated with less misconduct. Additionally, children who attended the programs more days were less likely to endorse relational aggression as a strategy for managing peer conflicts than 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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