

# Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS®)

Intervention Snapshot | Supportive Learning Environment Topic Area

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE™

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A supportive learning environment is one that is safe, includes effective and fair use of appropriate discipline practices, and promotes positive student outcomes and teacher practice. The *Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS®)* program is a curriculum that aims to promote emotional and social competencies and to reduce aggression and behavior problems in elementary school children. *PATHS®* is delivered through short lessons given two to three times a week over the school year. The program is based on the principle that understanding and regulating emotions are central to effective problem solving. The lessons focus on (1) self-control, (2) emotional literacy, (3) social competence, (4) positive peer relations, and (5) interpersonal problem-solving skills. There is a separate curriculum for each grade.

This What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) intervention report, part of the WWC’s Supportive Learning Environment topic area, explores the effects of the *PATHS®* program on student emotional awareness, social interactions, behavior, and

academic achievement. The WWC identified 35 studies of the *PATHS®* program. Two of these studies meet WWC standards. The evidence presented in this report is from studies of the effects of the *PATHS®* program on students—including 70% White, 11% Asian, and 8% Black students, and students with and without disabilities—spanning grades 1 through 5 in both urban and suburban districts.

Findings on *PATHS®* from two studies that meet WWC standards are shown below. The table reports an effectiveness rating, the improvement index, and the number of studies and students that contributed to the findings. The effectiveness rating is based on the quality of the designs used in studies, whether the findings are favorable or unfavorable for the intervention, and the number of studies that tested the intervention. The improvement index is a measure of the intervention’s effect on an outcome. A positive or negative improvement index does not necessarily mean the estimated effect is statistically significant.

## What Happens When Students Participate in *PATHS®*?

The WWC found that implementing the <i>PATHS®</i> program:	Effectiveness rating	Study Findings	Evidence meeting WWC standards (version 4.0)	
		Improvement index (percentile points)	Number of studies	Number of students
May result in little to no change in academic achievement	No discernible effects	-3	1	1,582
May result in little to no change in student social interaction	No discernible effects	na	1	133
May result in little to no change in observed student behavior	No discernible effects	na	1	113
May result in little to no change in student emotional status	No discernible effects	na	1	133

na = not available.

### FINDINGS ARE BASED ON:

2 studies with 1,715 students in Washington and the United Kingdom covering grades 1-5



### STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS:

Free & reduced-price lunch: 31%

Gender: 47% female

Race: 30% minority

## What Does *PATHS®* Cost?

One classroom implementation package, which provides the materials needed for a teacher to implement the program in one grade, costs \$439 to \$879, depending on grade level. Each package includes a teacher guide with scripts for each lesson, grade-level appropriate materials (such as books,

coloring books, stickers, Feeling Faces cards, and puppets), a set of classroom posters, 25 copies of materials for parents, and online access to an introductory manual for teachers, counselor materials, family communication, student materials, and teacher support materials.

## LEARN MORE



Read more about the *PATHS®* intervention and the studies that are summarized here in the [Intervention Report](#). Contact the *PATHS®* Program LLC (<http://pathsprogram.com/>) for additional information on implementing *PATHS®*.