



CARE for Kids at Jefferson County Public Schools



Enhancing Academic, Social, Emotional, and Ethical Learning

CARE for Kids creates supportive



To address the academic, social, emotional, and ethical needs of students, Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS)—a district of more than 99,000 students and 150 schools in Louisville, Kentucky—implemented the CARE for Kids program at the beginning of the 2008-09 school year. The program is being phased into all prekindergarten classrooms, all 90 elementary schools, and all 25 middle schools over several years.

CARE stands for Creating A Respectful Environment. On all grade levels, the program helps students develop social responsibility and positive relationships with both adults and other classmates. CARE for Kids embeds proactive social and emotional learning strategies that can be incorporated throughout the day in all academic classes.

JCPS invested significant resources to develop training and classroom materials and to offer professional development for thousands of staff members throughout the district. The first year of implementation provided significant benefits, including both improvements to school culture and increases in academic achievement.



Mission

To help students become responsible, productive adults in a democratic society, schools must focus not only on intellectual needs but also on social, emotional, and ethical development. The mission of CARE for Kids is to meet student needs in all four areas.

The program builds on the work of several leading educators and organizations, including the Developmental Studies Center, Origins, the Northeast Foundation for Children, and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). However, under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Sheldon H. Berman, founder of Educators for Social Responsibility and author of such books as *Children's Social Consciousness* and *Promising Practices in Teaching Social Responsibility*, CARE for Kids is unique. It incorporates ideas and best practices from other programs and integrates them with the work of JCPS educators who have many years of experience in the fields of social and emotional development.

The result is a program in which schools commit to providing engaging learning opportunities that advance academic achievement and create caring classroom communities. The schools are building CARE for Kids into their overall structure and pedagogy.

learning communities

Vision Statement

Each CARE for Kids school promotes social, emotional, ethical, and intellectual development in an inclusive, caring, respectful, and supportive learning community that is physically and emotionally safe for all students and engages them as active participants in the classroom, in the school, and in the larger community.

JCPS is a national leader in providing excellent educational programming to promote the social, emotional, and academic growth of students.

—Roger P. Weissberg, President
Collaborative for Academic,
Social, and Emotional Learning
(CASEL)





Components

The components of CARE for Kids include:

- Daily morning classroom meetings that set the tone for respectful learning and establish a climate of trust.
- End-of-the-day check-in meetings in which students share something about their day and what they have learned or enjoyed either academically or socially.
- Regular class meetings that promote a team spirit and encourage students and teachers to reflect, solve problems, and make group decisions.
- Activities that build a sense of community throughout the school. These activities are designed to link students, parents, teachers, and other adults through a focus on cooperating, taking responsibility, appreciating differences, and helping others.
- Developmental discipline that focuses on proactive and intervention strategies. The emphasis is on creating rapport, modeling skill development, and moving students to self-control and responsibility.

At the elementary level, additional components include:

- Buddy matches that pair every older student in the school with a younger student for a series of collaborative learning activities.

- “Homeside” activities that encourage conversations between students and their family members. These activities then bring family stories and, at times, family members into the classroom.

At the middle school level, the components meet several needs that must be fulfilled if young adolescents are to be fully engaged in social and academic learning. For example, middle school students have a powerful need to connect with others (both peers and adults), but their behavior also is driven by a need for independence. The components of CARE for Kids give teachers many opportunities to help students understand that their need for independence can be met without jeopardizing their ability to form close connections with peers, adults, and the larger community.

Another need that drives much middle school behavior is the need to experience success. Young adolescence is a time when a single instance of disrespect from a peer or a single disappointing performance on a school assignment is sometimes perceived not as a minor setback that can be overcome quickly but as evidence of a pattern of failure and defeat. CARE for Kids facilitates support from peers and adults that leads to more accurate perceptions of the opportunities that students have for success in both academic and social settings.

For students at all grade levels, the components of the program are designed to encourage a range of positive behaviors and beliefs:

- A sense of order, predictability, and trust in the classroom
- A sense of ownership in personal learning
- A sense of ownership of and commitment to the class community (voice, choice, and responsible membership in the classroom)
- An increased level of social and emotional skills that enhances self-control, the ability to take the perspective of others, and the ability to resolve conflicts positively
- An understanding of how students' own sense of fairness and kindness can shape school rules and expectations that enhance their personal growth and the sense of community and collaboration in the classroom and school
- A willingness, and perhaps even an eagerness, to use constructive feedback to improve performance
- An understanding that classmates are colleagues, not competitors
- An interest in exploring ideas and focusing on purposeful learning





The Six Principles

The following principles are the foundation of CARE for Kids:

1 Respectful, supportive relationships are the heart of the school community. Trust among adults, between adults and students, and between students and other students is critical for academic, social, and emotional learning. Trusting relationships enable students from diverse backgrounds to bring their personal experiences into the classroom comfortably. Trust also enables students to feel safe and respected when they offer opinions, when they tackle new subjects, and even when they make mistakes. Respectful and supportive relationships among educators help them deal with the daily demands of their work and the risks and stresses of changing professional practice. Respectful and supportive relationships help parents—especially those who otherwise might feel vulnerable or ill-at-ease—feel welcomed and valued so they are more likely to take active roles in the school and in their children’s education.

2 Learning becomes more connected and meaningful for students when social, emotional, and ethical development is an integral part of the classroom, school, and community experience. Students need to experience respect, fairness, helpfulness, responsibility, kindness, and consideration from adults and peers in order to reciprocate such behavior.

Students also need guidance in reflecting on the importance of these values, understanding how they relate to specific behaviors, and applying the values broadly within and beyond the classroom. Developing a student’s social, emotional, and ethical skills results in a positive attitude, self-confidence, and healthy interpersonal relationships that include sensitivity to the feelings of others. Students demonstrate basic courtesy in social situations, work well with others, resolve conflicts fairly, and have a sense of obligation to do the right thing.

3 Significant and engaging learning takes place when students are able to construct a deep understanding of broad concepts and principles through an active process of exploration, discovery, and application. The curriculum is focused on important questions that challenge students’ thinking. Students have many opportunities to engage in active learning processes, such as observation and description, collaborative dialogue, prediction, discovery, ongoing questioning, reflection, and self-assessment. Understanding is scaffolded, supported, or nudged by connecting new learning to students’ lives, past experiences, and current understandings. The students are encouraged to express their thinking in multiple ways (e.g., writing, participating in drama activities, and creating pictures, graphs, and diagrams).

“By taking a proactive approach and meeting the social and emotional needs of our students, we lose less instructional time because students are able to solve their own conflicts if they arise.”

—Alicia Averette, Principal
Breckinridge-Franklin
Elementary School

4 **Community is strengthened when there are frequent opportunities for students to exercise their voice, make choices, and work together for the common good.** Teachers invite students to participate in setting goals, establishing classroom procedures and norms, and choosing learning activities. When students genuinely have a say in the life of the classroom, they begin to understand interdependence and the responsibilities they have for themselves and others. They are committed to the decisions they have been trusted to make and feel responsible for the community they have helped shape.





5 Classroom community and learning are maximized by opportunities for collaboration and service. Through group work, community service, tutoring, and mentoring, students often collaborate with and help others. As the students reflect on the successes and challenges of their collaborations, they learn both teamwork and leadership skills and they learn how to put their concern for the welfare of others into practice.

6 Effective classroom communities help students develop their intrinsic motivation by meeting their basic needs (e.g., the need for safety, autonomy, and a sense of belonging) rather than by seeking to control students with extrinsic motivators (rewards and punishment). CARE for Kids activities help students develop the internal motivation to learn and act responsibly. Human beings are pre-wired to seek a safe, orderly environment as well as a sense of belonging, success, importance, autonomy, and fun. CARE for Kids provides opportunities for these needs to be met in JCPD classrooms and schools so that students can discover the intrinsic value of learning and of being a contributing member of a caring community.

Although there are six separate principles, in practice they are interdependent and interrelated. For example, working in small groups not only helps students build relationships but also encourages them to work together for the common good.

All of the principles are integrated with every aspect of a CARE for Kids school, including all curricular programs. Students quickly learn how effective the principles can be when they also are applied to life outside of school.

Implementation

JCPD invested significant resources, including a substantial amount of staff time, to implement CARE for Kids. Nearly 500 district staff members who provide support to schools—including resource teachers, content specialists, computer specialists, and instructional coaches—received professional development that focused on embedding and modeling the CARE for Kids principles and practices in their work.

Professional development for early childhood, elementary, and middle school principals, teachers, and other school staff included summer workshops and five-, two-, one-, and half-day sessions as well as after-school workshops. Overall, more than 3,000 school-based staff members have received CARE for Kids training, and the district has provided more than 5,400 copies of support materials.

Additional support for the program includes:

- Evaluation and advice from external consultants.
- Ongoing site visits by CARE for Kids resource teachers to support teachers and principals.

- Ongoing postings on the JCPS Online site to offer new resources and provide a venue for shared discussions.
- CARE for Kids professional development during new-teacher induction.
- Ongoing follow-up professional development for all educators.

JCPS has also provided professional development and overviews of the program to staff members at community organizations and agencies, and the district is in the process of developing a CARE for Kids partnership with the University of Louisville.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Elementary and middle school principals report that CARE for Kids has had a significant impact on their students. “With the implementation of schoolwide CARE for Kids, respectful relationships between staff and students are stronger and more evident,” says Pat Gausepohl, principal at Carrithers Middle School. “When issues arise, teachers and students are taking ownership of situations by being proactive and reflective in their groups. This, in turn, has led to a decrease in our suspensions and ISAP [In-School Adjustment Program] assignments. By keeping students in the classrooms, we are experiencing more student success.”





Alicia Averette, principal at Breckinridge-Franklin Elementary, says, "We've seen a tremendous improvement in the respect our students have for each other and adults as a result of CARE for Kids. This is due to the merging of the social, emotional, ethical, and intellectual development of the students. By taking a proactive approach and meeting the social and emotional needs of our students, we lose less instructional time because students are able to solve their own conflicts if they arise."

Averette also points out that "CARE for Kids has allowed all adults in our building to be able to reflect on their interactions with students and be intentional with utilizing inclusive, supportive, and respectful language. We have noticed that students are listening to each other effectively, along with being aware of others' feelings, praising them, and asking them how they are feeling. The overall adult-to-student and student-to-student relationships have improved. The students appear happier in a calm, safe, inclusive, and supportive learning community."

Surveys and test data also indicate that CARE for Kids is having a positive impact on both school culture and achievement.

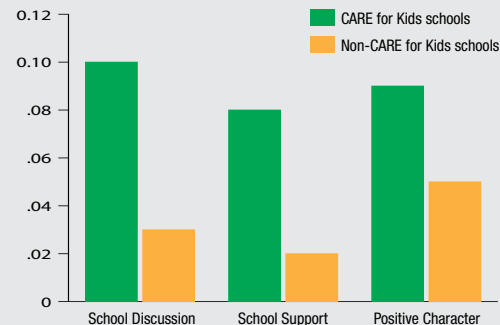
Impact on School Culture

The JCPS Research Department administered surveys to all Intermediate students (fourth and fifth graders) in February of 2009. A total of 13,255 student surveys were returned for a response rate of 90 percent. Response rates did not differ between CARE for Kids and non-CARE for Kids schools.

CARE for Kids schools showed significant gains in three areas:

- **School Discussion:** Students at CARE for Kids schools responded more positively to such

2008 to 2009 Increase in Positive Student Survey Responses



This chart reflects the 2008 to 2009 increase in positive student responses in three survey categories. Student responses to survey statements were ranked on a scale of 1 point (strongly disagree) to 4 points (strongly agree).

survey statements as “I can give opinions in class that disagree with the opinions of other students,” “My teachers respect my opinion in class even if it disagrees with their opinions,” and “I feel I can disagree openly with my teachers about events in the news.”

- **School Support:** CARE for Kids students responded more positively to such statements as “I feel my teachers really care about me,” “I believe I can talk with my counselor,” and “My school has a caring and supportive environment for students.”
- **Positive Character:** CARE for Kids students responded more positively to such statements as “I care about the feelings of others,” “I try to help when I see people in need,” and “I always try to tell the truth.”

During focus groups at CARE for Kids middle schools, students reported that the program:

- Builds a greater sense of community within their school.
- Gives them more input into school and classroom decisions made during the school day.
- Helps them get to know other students and their teachers better.
- Gives them a safe place within the school to resolve problems.





- Helps reduce the number of discipline problems because issues that may have led to problems in the past (issues that first arose in the students' neighborhoods, for example) are often resolved before the school day begins.

Overall, students have reported that CARE for Kids increases their motivation to attend school and to work at becoming part of the school community.

Compared to the 2007-08 school year (the year before CARE for Kids began), schools that implemented the program showed more improvement in student attendance during 2008-09 than schools that did not implement the program. CARE for Kids schools also had higher teacher attendance.

A survey of teachers found that 83 percent enjoyed learning and implementing CARE for Kids and would recommend the program to other schools. Approximately 80 percent of teachers believed that CARE for Kids made a positive difference in the social and emotional development of their students and the climate in their classroom.

Impact on Achievement

JCPS researched the implementation level of CARE for Kids in relation to elementary student achievement from 2008 to 2009. *Implementation level* was defined as teachers' implementation of

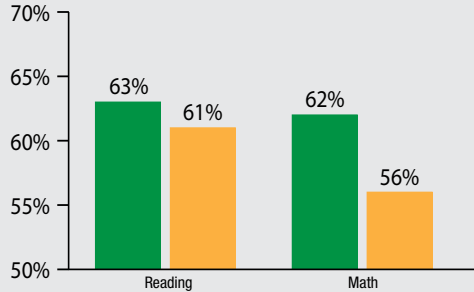
morning meetings, class meetings, end-of-day meetings, partner work, and small-group work. Partial correlations, controlling for school demographics, were performed. Results showed that a higher implementation of CARE for Kids was related to the following:

- A higher percentage of students scoring Proficient or Distinguished in reading on state tests (high implementers: 63%, low implementers: 61%)
- A higher Reading Index score (high implementers: 86.9, low implementers: 83.6)
- A higher percentage of students scoring Proficient or Distinguished in math (high implementers: 62%, low implementers: 56%)
- A higher Math Index score (high implementers: 89.0, low implementers: 82.6)
- A lower percentage of students scoring Novice in math (high implementers: 15%, low implementers: 18%)
- A higher Science Index score (high implementers: 80, low implementers: 78)
- A higher Social Studies Index score (high implementers: 76.6, low implementers: 70.1)
- A decrease in the overall percentage of students scoring on the Novice level (high implementers decreased by 0.5%, low implementers increased by 1.7%)

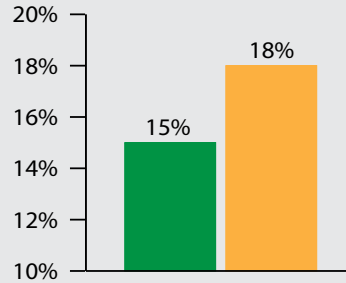
CARE for Kids Implementation Level in Relation to Elementary Achievement (2008 to 2009)

High Implementers Low Implementers

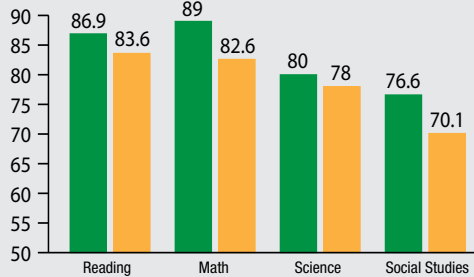
Students Receiving Proficient or Distinguished Scores



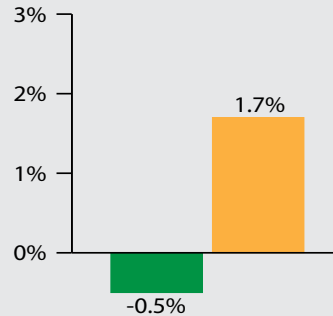
Students Receiving Novice Scores in Math



Academic Index Scores



Changes in Novice Scores Overall





Expanding and Enhancing CARE for Kids

JCPS has developed plans to begin implementing CARE for Kids in the remainder of its elementary schools (33 additional schools) at the beginning of the 2010-11 school year. The district's middle schools will begin implementing the program in eighth-grade classrooms.

JCPS foresees a six- to seven-year timetable for full, in-depth, districtwide implementation and sustainability. Throughout this period, the district will provide ongoing support, researchers will continue to evaluate effectiveness, and educators will continue to look for ways to enhance the program to ensure that it meets all developmental needs.

By meeting social and emotional needs in supportive school communities, CARE for Kids is helping students build communication and conflict-resolution skills and the students are becoming adept at interacting with others. By meeting ethical needs, the program is helping students become principled and self-disciplined. By meeting intellectual needs, the program is helping students develop not only the breadth and depth of knowledge that enable them to succeed academically but also the critical-thinking and decision-making skills that will benefit them in college, in their careers, and ultimately in every other aspect of their lives.



Kids



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—Pat Gausepohl, Principal
Carrithers Middle School



Sheldon H. Berman, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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