

AL's Pals

Evaluation

SUMMARY REPORT



Conducted by:
Newport News Office on Children, Youth and Families

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Introduction

The AL's Pals curriculum, developed by Wingspan Inc., is designed to offer a "systematic approach to teach children social and emotional skills." The lessons focus on teaching children: how to express feelings appropriately, care about others, make and keep friends, stop and think, gain self control, accept differences, peaceful conflict resolution, safety, and using kind words. Alternatives Inc. with grant funding from the Virginia Tobacco Settlement Foundation implemented the AL's Pals curriculum with 348 preschool age children at 6 centers and 22 classrooms. The six (6) centers were the Downtown Hampton Child Development Center, Moton Early Childhood Center, IN Coretta's Care, Hidenwood Presbyterian and Dresden Drive Preschool.

For the purposes of this report the following findings are based upon the 248 children who successfully completed both a pre and posttest assessment. The assessment instrument utilized was the "Pre-school and Kindergarten Behavior Scales" (PKBS-2) developed by Pro Ed Incorporated. The PKBS-2 is designed to evaluate the social skills and problem behaviors of children (ages 3-6 years old). The form can be completed by a parent or guardian at home or by a school teacher. The instrument is divided into two sections: the Social Skills Scale and the Problem Behavior Scale. The three central components of the Social Skills Scale are social cooperation, social interaction and social independence. The following is a brief summary of the three components of the scale.

Social Cooperation: Includes 12 items that reflect behaviors and characteristics that reflect a child's ability to follow instructions from adults, cooperate and compromise with peers, and demonstrating appropriate self-restraint.

Social Interaction: Includes 11 items that reflect behaviors and characteristics that are important in gaining and maintaining friendships.

Social Independence: Includes 11 items that reflect the behaviors and characteristics that are important in achieving social independence within the peer group domain. Examples include showing positive assertiveness, and self-confidence.

The Problem Behavior Scale is divided into two subsections: Externalizing Problems and Internalizing Problems. Externalizing Problems includes 27 items that describe acting out and disruptive behavior, under-controlled behavior and overactive behavior.

Internalizing the problems includes 15 items that describe over-controlled emotional and behavioral problems such as inappropriate fear, anxiety and withdrawal.

For each of the scale components, several indicators are collected to include the raw score, standard score, percentile rank and risk level. In addition a composite score, composite percentile rank and composite risk level are reported for the Social Skills scale and the Problem Behavior Scale.

For the purposes of this evaluation, mean is defined as the sum of all scores in a particular category divided by the total number of participants or responses in that category. Risk level is a part of the PKBS survey and is defined by the percentile rank and raw score. The PKBS-2 risk level is "a simplified version of the interpretive level system...scores at the most problematic end of the distributions are placed either in high risk or moderate risk."

The pre and posttests for Alternatives Inc. AI's Pals Program were completed by teachers in the classroom. The tests were completed prior to implementation of the curriculum and after completion of the AI's Pals curriculum.

It is important to note that there was no comparison or control group utilized for this evaluation. Therefore, there can be no correlations made between the results of the surveys and the AI's Pals program.

SOCIAL COOPERATION COMPONENT

The following table presents the differences between pre and posttest assessments for the social cooperation component. The data was analyzed by comparing mean scores from pre and posttests.

Table 1: Social Cooperation Means (All Participants n= 248)

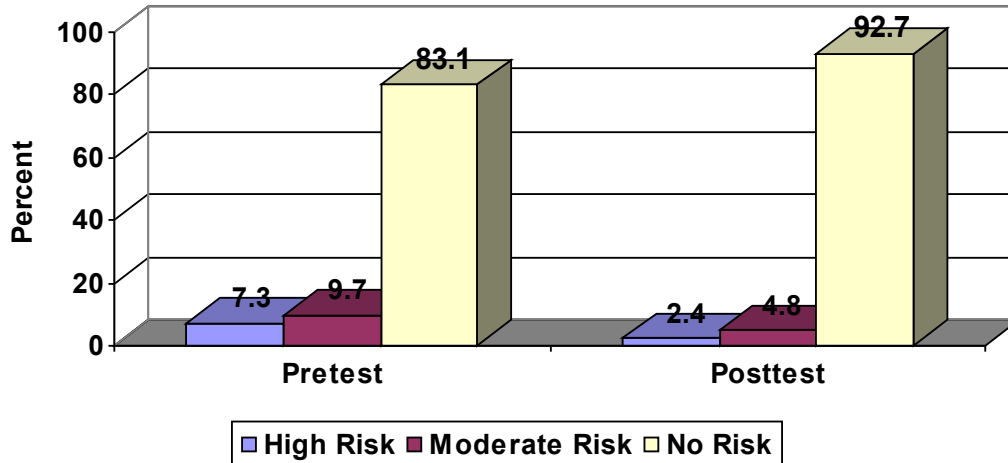
Social Cooperation	Pretest	Posttest	Difference
Raw Score Mean*	27.78	29.76	+1.98
Standard Score Mean*	98.14	103.37	+5.23
Percentile Rank Mean**	47.61%	56.83%	+9.22%

*** Statistically Significant at .001 level, ** statistically significant at .005 level**

Table 1 indicates that all scores for social cooperation were increased from pre to posttest assessments. The 9.22% increase in percentile rank is an important indicator of program participant improvement. In addition, the PKBS-2 uses the percentile rank to determine if

a participant is at moderate risk, high risk or no risk. The following graph shows the results for risk level for social cooperation.

Graph 2: Social Cooperation and Risk Levels (All Participants n= 248)



***Statistically Significant at the .005 level**

Graph 2 shows that 17% (42) of participants were at high or moderate risk regarding their social cooperation skills at the pretest assessment. The posttest assessments indicated a 9.8% decrease in moderate or high risk participants (7.2%).

Social Cooperation by School

SOCIAL INTERACTION COMPONENT

The following table presents the differences between pre and posttest assessments for the social interaction component. The data was analyzed by comparing mean scores from pre and posttests.

Table 2: Social Interaction Means (All Participants n= 248)

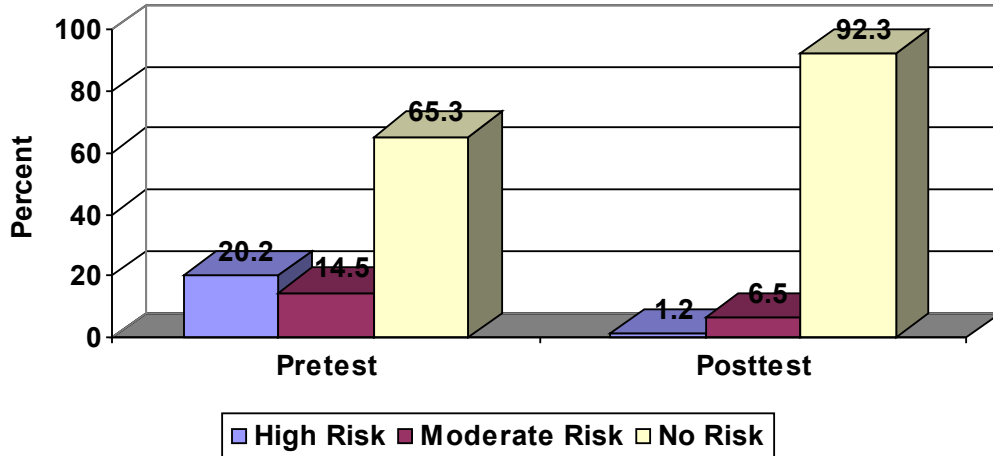
Social Interaction	Pretest	Posttest	Difference
Raw Score Mean	20.29	26.54	+6.25
Standard Score Mean	89.36	104.36	+15.0
Percentile Rank Mean	34.23%	58.5%	+24.27%

*** Note all Social Interaction Indicators were statistically significant at the .0005 level**

Table 2 indicates that there were statistically significant positive changes in all social interaction indicators. An important indicator of improvement is the 24.27% increase in percentile rank from pre to posttest assessment.

The following graph shows the results for risk level for social interaction.

Graph 3: Social Interaction and Risk Levels (All Participants n= 248)



***Statistically Significant at the .0005 level**

Graph 3 indicates statistically significant changes in risk level for the social interaction category. High risk participants decreased 19% and moderate risk participants decreased 8% from pre to posttest assessments. There was also a 27% increase in the number of students who had “no risk” from pre to posttests.

Social Independence by School

The following tables and graphs show the same social cooperation indicators by preschool.

SOCIAL INDEPENDENCE COMPONENT

The following table presents the differences between pre and posttest assessments for the social interaction component. The data was analyzed by comparing mean scores from pre and posttests.

Table 3: Social Independence Means (All Participants n= 248)

Social Independence	Pretest	Posttest	Difference
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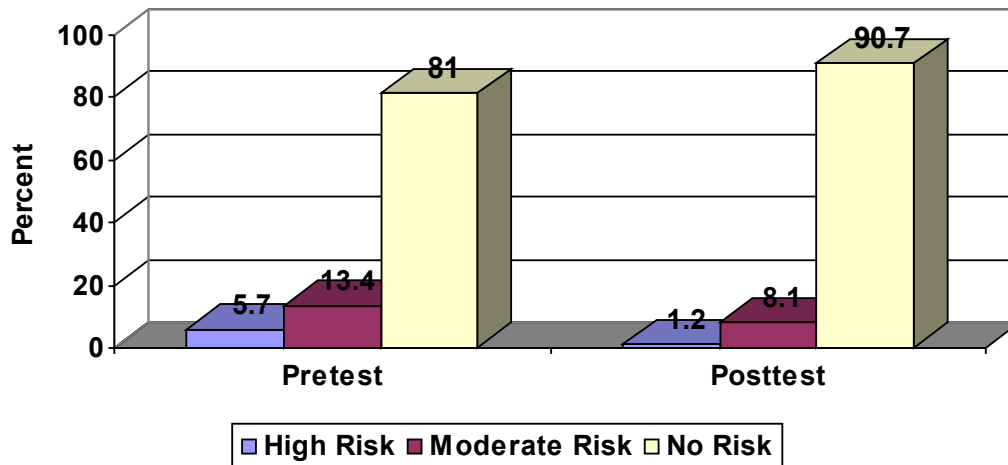
Raw Score Mean*	25.87	28.35	+2.48
Standard Score Mean*	96.64	104.30	+7.66
Percentile Rank Mean	49.65%	60.07%	+10.42%

*** Note Raw Score Mean and Standard Score Mean were statistically significant at the .0005 Level**

Table 3 indicates that there were positive increases in all categories of social independence. There was a 10.42% increase in percentile rank from pre to posttest assessment and the raw score and standard score increases were statistically significant.

The following graph shows the results for risk level for social independence.

Graph 4: Social Independence and Risk Levels (All Participants n= 248)



Graph 4 indicates that there were positive decreases in risk level for the social independence category. At pretest 19.1% of students were at moderate or high risk regarding social independence. The posttest percentage was 9.3%, a decrease of 9.8%.

SOCIAL SKILLS COMPOSITE SCORES

The composite scores are designed to measure all three components of the social skills scale. The composite score gives an overall view of the social skills scale. Table 4 represents the pre and posttest composite standard score and the composite percentile rank for the social skills scale.

Table 4: Social Skills Composite Means (All Participants n= 248)

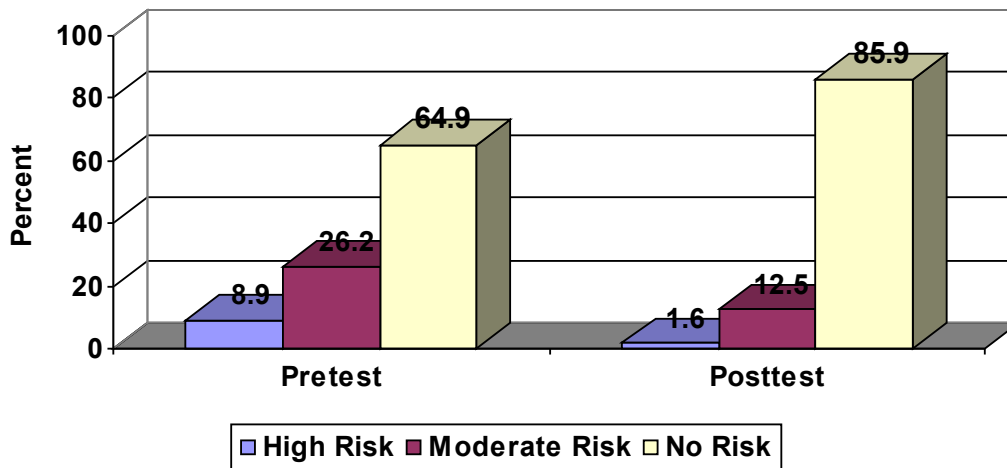
Composite	Pretest	Posttest	Difference
Standard Score Mean	283.98	312.00	+28.02
Percentile Rank Mean	40.64%	59.66%	+19.02%

*** Note all composite score increases are statistically significant at the .0005 level**

Table 4 shows that there were statistically significant gains in composite scores and composite percentile rank. There was a 19% increase from pretest to posttest for social skills composite scores.

Graph 5 shows the risk level changes from pre and posttest assessments for social skills composite scores.

Graph 5: Composite and Risk Levels (All Participants n= 248)



***Statistically significant at the .0005 level**

Graph 5 indicates that there was statistically significant decrease in risk levels from pre and posttest assessments. High risk assessments decreased 7.6% and moderate risk levels decreased 13.7%.

EXTERNALIZING PROBLEMS COMPONENT

The externalizing problems component describes acting out and disruptive behaviors in children. The following table presents the differences between pre and posttest assessments for the externalizing problems component. The data was analyzed by comparing mean scores from pre and posttests.

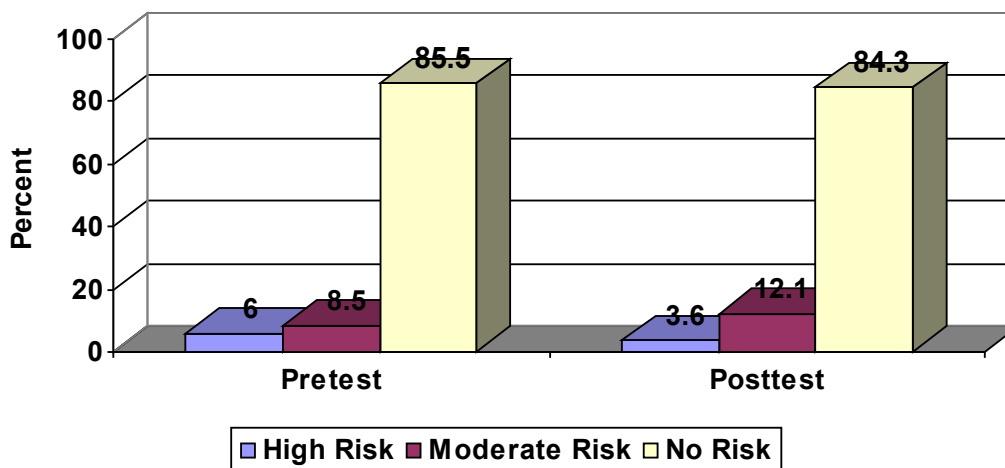
Table 5: Externalizing Problems Means (All Participants n= 248)

Externalizing Problems	Pretest	Posttest	Difference
Raw Score Mean*	20.10	22.81	+2.71
Standard Score Mean*	95.02	97.31	+2.29
Percentile Rank Mean	38.32%	43.67%	+5.35%

Table 5 indicates that there were increases in raw score, standard score and percentile rank for externalizing problems. These increases represent a slight increase in externalizing problems. For externalizing problems, the desired outcome is a decrease in percentile rank, which is the opposite for the social skills scale components.

The following graph shows the results for risk level for externalizing the problem.

Graph 6: Externalizing Problems (All Participants n = 248)



Graph 6 indicates no change in the category of no risk for pre and posttest assessments, while showing an increase in moderate risk and a decrease in high risk.

INTERNALIZING PROBLEMS COMPONENT

The internalizing problems component describes anxiety, fear and withdrawal in children. The following table presents the differences between pre and posttest assessments for the internalizing problems component. The data was analyzed by comparing mean scores from pre and posttests.

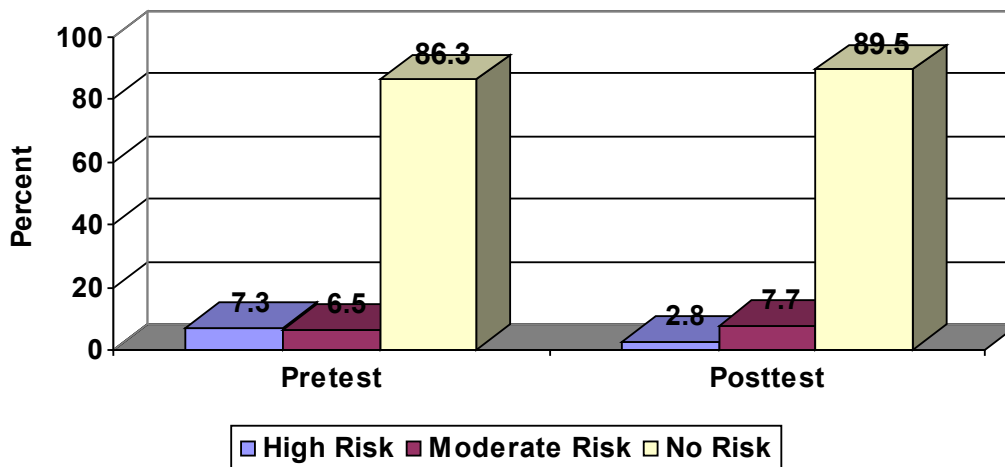
Table 6: Internalizing Problems Means (All Participants n= 248)

Internalizing Problems	Pretest	Posttest	Difference
Raw Score Mean	10.38	10.52	+0.14
Standard Score Mean*	95.55	95.72	+0.17
Percentile Rank Mean	40.78%	41.32%	+0.54%

Table 6 indicates that there were no changes in raw score, standard score and percentile rank for internalizing problems.

The following graph shows the results for risk level for internalizing the problem.

Graph 7: Internalizing Problems (All Participants n = 248)



Graph 7 indicates a slight increase in the category of no risk for pre and posttest assessments, while showing no change in moderate risk and a decrease in high risk.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Social Cooperation: There were statistically significant increases in social cooperation indicators. The social cooperation percentile rank increase 9.22% for

participants and there was a 9.6% increase in participants deemed to have no risk based on their social cooperation inventory. All five of the locations indicated positive increases in social cooperation.

2. Social Interaction: There was a statistically significant increase in the social interaction component of the inventory. The social interaction percentile rank increased 24.27% from pre to posttest assessment. In addition, there was a 19% decrease in high risk participants, an 8% decrease in moderate risk and a 27% increase in the number of students who had "no risk" from pretest to posttest. All five of the preschool locations indicated positive increases in social interaction.

3. Social Independence: Among all participants there was a statistically significant change in the raw (+2.48) and the Standard score (+7.66) for the social independence category. There was also a 10.42% increase in the percentile rank for this category and a 9.8% decrease in high/moderate risk students from pre to posttest. All five of the preschool locations showed positive increases in social independence.

4. Social Skills Composite: The composite score demonstrates the total changes in all three categories within social skills. There was a 19.02% statistically significant increase in social skills percentile rank. High Risk assessments decreased 7.6%, moderate risk decreased 13.7% and "no risk" increased 21% from pretest to posttest assessment. All five locations showed positive increases in the social skills composite.

5. Externalizing Problem Behaviors: Externalizing problem behaviors measures behaviors such as acting out and disruptive behaviors, under-controlled behavior and overactive behaviors. There was a 5.35% increase in percentile rank for externalizing problem behaviors with no indicated changes in risk assessment from pre to posttest. There could be several reasons why little gains were seen in this category as compared to the social skills area. One possible explanation is that while there is observed changes in knowledge of social skills the administration of the posttest following program completion may not capture the long-term changes in behavior. Future evaluations may need to employ a longitudinal design to insure that changes in behavior correlate with the positive changes in knowledge and to insure that there are long-term gains in social skills knowledge. Four of the preschools saw positive increases in percentile rank, with one school (Dresden) showing a decrease. The decrease in the Dresden participants may be due to the fact that Dresden only had five (5) participants in this evaluation.

6. Internalizing Behaviors: Internalizing behaviors measures behaviors such as inappropriate fear, anxiety and withdrawal. For the internalizing behaviors category there was little change in percentile rank for participants (+0.54%) and there was a slight increase in "no risk" (+3.2%) from pre to posttest assessments. As noted above, a longitudinal study may need to be employed to capture any long-term behavioral changes. Three (3) of the five preschools showed small improvements in percentile rank, while two (2) preschools showed decreases in percentile rank (Hiddenwood and Dresden).

As with the externalizing behaviors these two schools had small numbers of participants (Hidenwood 30, Dresden 5).