WITS Program Evaluation

The WITS Primary Program aims to reduce peer victimization and enhance social responsibility among children in Grades 1 to 3. The WITS acronym gives children simple strategies to make safe and positive choices when faced with peer conflicts. The term “Using your WITS” can give their school, community and family environments a uniform voice to promote positive conflict resolution strategies.

Evaluation 1: 2000-2003

The figures below show findings from a three-year evaluation of the WITS Primary Program, examining children’s ratings of:

- **Relational Victimization** (e.g. social exclusion, rumor-spreading)
- **Physical Victimization** (e.g. hitting, pushing)

The figures show data from 11 program schools and six control schools. Data were collected in fall 2000 (beginning of Grade 1), spring 2001 (end of Grade 1), spring 2002 (end of Grade 2) and spring 2003 (end of Grade 3). The data are divided by school levels of poverty (based on the school district’s average of 10% of students on income assistance). Low poverty schools have 3-10% of students on income assistance. High poverty schools have 11-24% of students on income assistance.

### Average Levels of Relational Victimization

**in Low Poverty Schools**

- Relational victimization **decreased** in all the program schools and in the low poverty control schools, but **increased** in the high poverty control schools.

### Average Levels of Relational Victimization

**in High Poverty Schools**

Evaluation 2: 2006-2008

Data were collected from six program schools and five control schools in fall 2006 (Wave 1), fall 2007 (Wave 2) and spring 2008 (Wave 3). The following figures show findings for:

- **Physical Victimization** (e.g. hitting, pushing)
- **Relational Victimization** (e.g. social exclusion, rumour-spreading)
- **Peer Support** (e.g. receiving help, being cheered up by classmates)
- **Social Responsibility** (e.g. giving help to others, solving problems in peaceful ways)

Children rated their experiences of physical and relational victimization, and peer support on 15 items (0 = ‘never’, 1 = ‘sometimes’, 2 = ‘almost all the time’). The average scores for physical and relational victimization were low (between ‘sometimes’ and ‘never’). Average scores for peer support were high (between ‘sometimes’ and ‘always’). Teachers rated five items tapping students’ levels of social responsibility (0 = ‘not yet within expectations’, 1 = ‘meets expectations’, 2 = ‘fully meets expectations’, 3 = ‘exceeds expectations’). Average scores were high overall (‘meets’ or ‘fully meets’ expectations).

**Average Levels of Physical Victimization**

The rate of decline in physical victimization was significantly greater in **program** than **control** schools.

**Average Levels of Relational Victimization**

The rate of decline in relational victimization was also greater in **program** than **control** schools.

**Note:** Children in **program** schools reported higher initial levels of physical and relational victimization, possibly due to a greater awareness of victimization created by the WITS Program.

**Average Levels of Peer Support**

Levels of peer support did not significantly differ in **program** and **control** schools.

**Average Levels of Social Responsibility**

Teachers of **program** school children reported higher average levels of social responsibility at each time point, compared to **control** schools.