

Figure 3: Parent-Reported Social Skills

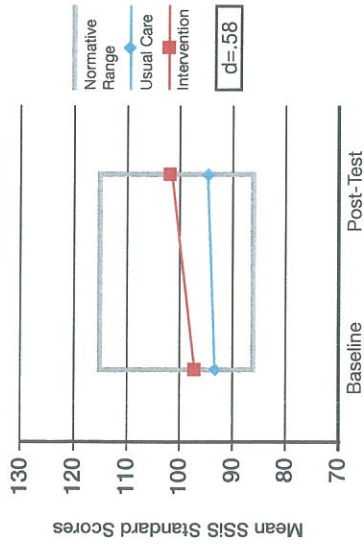
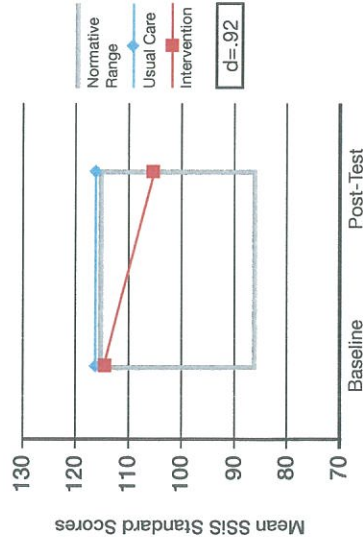


Figure 4: Parent-Reported Problem Behaviors



primary reason for these positive gains.

The overall message was to, "Keep the program coming!!"

### Project Team

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#### Intervention Team Leader

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#### Participating Oregon Preschools

- Busy Bee Academy
- Eugene YMCA
- Fern Ridge Child Development Center
- Great Days School
- Head Start of Lane County
- Little Beavers Preschool
- Kidco Head Start
- Mid-Valley Community Action Agency Head Start
- Pearl Buck
- Pleasant Hill High School Preschool
- Security First
- Sheldon Community Center
- Temple Beth Israel
- The Growing Place
- The Learning Tree
- The Village Preschool
- Unity Preschool

#### Resources

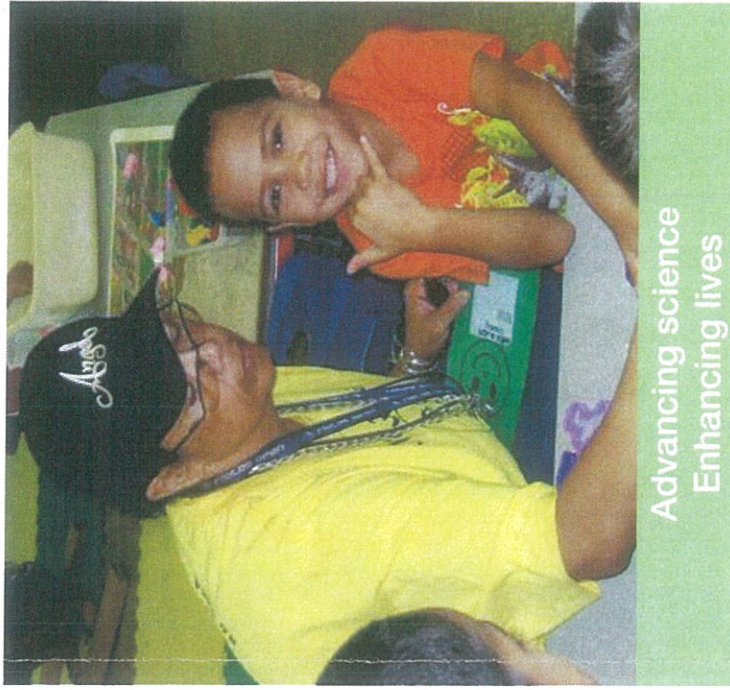
[www.firststeptosuccess.org](http://www.firststeptosuccess.org)

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Program Materials  
 Available from [www.sopriswest.com](http://www.sopriswest.com)



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# Thank you

for participating in the *First Step to Success* research project! This brochure is designed to keep teachers, parents, and administrators who have participated informed about the results and overall progress of this project. We are entering the last year of a five year project. We approached this year armed with many suggestions and improvements provided by the teachers and parents that participated over the past four years and are very appreciative of your time and insight. We thank you for your invaluable feedback and hope the following information is helpful. The results are encouraging, as they indicate that participating children are more prepared for kindergarten than they were when they started Head Start/Pre-K. Again, thank you for participating!

## What is First Step to Success?

First Step is a collaborative home and school intervention program designed for young children in classroom settings. The goal is to assist at-risk children with the best start possible to their school careers.

## Who participated?

- Beginning in winter/spring 2009 the intervention and research procedures were pilot tested in classrooms at Mid-Valley Community Action Agency Head Start. Feedback helped to refine the First Step program for the preschool settings.
- During the 2009-2012 school years, 126 families (59 in Oregon and 67 in Kentucky) participated in the project; half were assigned to an Intervention condition and half were assigned to a Usual Care condition. Teachers in the Usual Care condition received a half-day training on prevention strategies to promote social skills and reduce challenging behaviors. Intervention group teachers received this half-day training, a half-day training specific to the First Step intervention, and also received in-class support from a behavioral coach who assisted the teacher with implementation of the school component of First Step. Coaches also implemented the home component of the intervention with caregivers.

- One child from each class participated if the child was identified as appropriate for the First Step intervention and the child's parents agreed to participate. The characteristics of the participating children are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics by Condition (N = 81)

Measure	Comparison	Intervention
Age (Average)	4.0	4.0
Female N (%)	16 (41.0)	10 (23.8)
African American N (%)	15 (38.5)	14 (33.3)
Caucasian N (%)	13 (33.3)	18 (42.9)
At risk on Adaptive Behavior Index N (%)	35 (89.7)	40 (95.2)
At risk on Maladaptive Behavior Index N (%)	39 (100.0)	41 (97.6)
At risk on Aggressive Behavior Scale N (%)	39 (100.0)	39 (92.9)

Additionally, intervention materials, professional development, and support implementing the First Step intervention were provided for preschool teachers assigned to the Cohort 1 Usual Care group the year following the research year.

## Was the intervention effective?

Figure 1: Teacher-Reported Social Skills

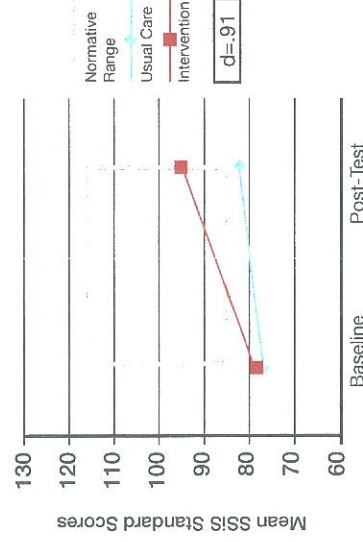
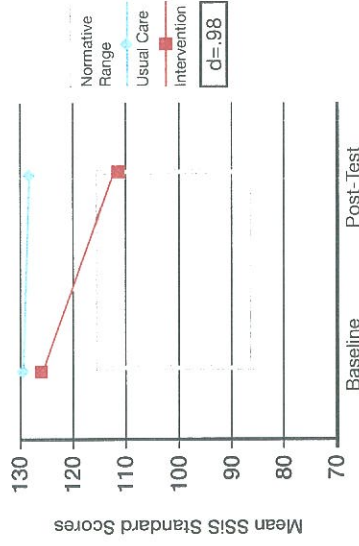


Figure 2: Teacher-Reported Problem Behaviors



demonstrated significant improvements in behaviors important to school readiness and adjustment to teacher- and parent-related expectations. We are especially pleased that the intervention students' behavior was perceived by both parents and teachers as significantly improved. The degree of cooperation we have received and continue to receive from participating Oregon preschools is a

- Our main goals were to:
- improve social skills,
  - reduce challenging behavior

Figures 1-4 illustrate the results from the Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS), which is a standardized measure of teacher and parent perceptions of children's social skills and problem behaviors. All figures illustrate baseline and posttest scores. The normative range (i.e., +/- 1 Standard Deviation) is presented as a gray box. Additionally, Cohen's d is reported, which is a measure of association, often used to identify the strength, or effect size of an intervention. Rules for interpretation are as follows: .2 = small effect, .5 = medium effect, and .8 = large effect (Cohen, 1988).

Preliminary findings from teacher and parent reports support the use of the preschool adaptation of First Step with children exhibiting challenging behaviors. Students participating in First Step to Success