

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Multiple
Branches

Implementation of a School Districtwide Grassroots Antibullying Initiative: A School Staff and Parent-Focused Evaluation of Because Nice Matters

De Pedro, K. T., Pineda, D., Capp, G., Moore, H., Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R. A. (2017). Implementation of a school districtwide grassroots antibullying initiative: a school staff and parent-focused evaluation of Because Nice Matters. *Children and Schools*, 39(3), 137-145. doi:10.1093/cs/cdx008

SUMMARY: Military-connected youth experience a lot of stress resulting from deployments and multiple school transitions. A military-connected school developed a grassroots anti-bullying program called Because Nice Matters (BNM), its success was analyzed after two years of implementing the program. The results indicate that the BNM grassroots program resulted in improved rates of bullying in nonmilitary and military-connected students attending the school.

KEY FINDINGS:

- The implementation of BNM in the school resulted in a decrease in bullying rates for military and nonmilitary students.
- Seventy percent of parents agreed that the BNM program made the students more supportive and caring for one another.
- Seventy-eight percent of teachers agreed that the BNM program helped students comprehend the severity of bullying.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Enhance education, activities, and curriculum in military-connected schools to help reduce the stress of family deployment and frequent school transitions for children of military Service members
- Offer workshops to teachers that educate them on how to support children of military Service members
- Disseminate information to military parents regarding possible warning signs that their child is suffering from bullying

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Encourage the development and continuation of programs that reduce the bullying of children of military Service members
- Recommend partnership among military-connected schools in implementing anti-bullying programs
- Encourage the training of school staff to better identify and handle bullying

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METHODS

- High schools students' responses were collected from California Healthy Kids Survey, a statewide survey that demonstrates perceptions and experiences with bullying in their own school.
- Teacher and parents responses were collected via Internet-based surveys which were distributed to all parents and teachers in the school district; 89 parents and 67 teachers completed the survey.
- The students' responses were analyzed quantitatively to compare the percentages of questions from 2011 to 2013 on the topic of bullying.
- Parent and teacher's responses were analyzed qualitatively based on their knowledge of the program and their opinion on how successful they believed BNM was.

PARTICIPANTS

- In spring 2011 there were 660 9th graders, 178 military-connected and 690 11th graders, 193 were military-connected, 50% were White, 27% were Latino, 10% were Asian American, 4% Black, and 5% Multiracial.
- In 2013 there were 850 9th graders, 203 military-connected, and 695 11th graders, 172 were military-connected, 49% White, 27% Latino, 7% Asian American, 4% Black, and 7% Multiracial.
- Teachers surveyed were employees in the school district and parents surveyed were those who have a child enrolled in the school district.

LIMITATIONS

- The study solely relied on self-reported data which limits the ability to validate the collected data due to personal biases.
- There were limited perspectives used to analyze bullying in the school.
- The decrease in bullying rates cannot be concluded as solely due to the success of the BNM program, other factors could have contributed to the decrease.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Explore additional methods of reporting data instead of self-reports which can discredit the validity of the research
- Include perspectives of students, school administrators, school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and support staff
- Reduce length of the intervention period, collecting data more frequently

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