The SOURCE: Conscious Discipline® Training Results for All Sites

Prepared by the Center for Collaborative Systems Change for The SOURCE of Elkhart County

Elkhart County System of Care

The SOURCE is a coordinated network of community partners who provide services and supports for youth who have or are at risk for mental health concerns, and their families. The SOURCE is committed to identifying gaps within the Elkhart County mental health system and bridging those gaps with new services and community partnerships. Several committees were convened to focus on community mental health supports aimed at prevention and early intervention, including the Early Childhood Committee. The committee is comprised of representatives from local childcare and early education agencies, school districts, Horizon Education Alliance, and The SOURCE.

Conscious Discipline

In the spring of 2018, the Early Childhood Committee conducted 22 interviews with respondents from 15 local preschools and childcare centers to assess their needs related to the mental health and social-emotional well-being of their students. The biggest challenges respondents named: poor emotional regulation skills, emotional outbursts, poor impulse control, and physical aggression.

The majority of early childhood providers indicated they had an interest in additional training in: understanding behaviors; helping children cope; teaching emotions, problem solving, and social skills; connecting with families; addressing trauma. In response to the professional development topics requested, the Committee chose Conscious Discipline® as a framework for meeting the needs of both educators and students.

Conscious Discipline® is built on "Seven Skills of Discipline", which are designed to teach children the social-emotional and communication skills needed to manage their emotions, resolve conflict, prevent bullying, and develop pro-social behaviors.

Training in Conscious Discipline® equips educators with skills related to composure, encouragement, assertiveness, choices, empathy, positive intent, and consequences, which are intended to give them the skills necessary to meet the social emotional needs of their students.

This is a shift from traditional classroom discipline in that it focuses less on rewards and punishments and more on taking ownership of our choices and mistakes and is dependent on teachers modeling expectations through self-regulation. Classroom management becomes less about implementing consequences and more about teaching social-emotional skills.

In short, Conscious Discipline® is a data driven, evidence-based practice that is rooted in relationship building and connection. It empowers teachers to be self-disciplined adults who, in turn, teach children to become self-disciplined.

Conscious Discipline® Training Impact

Sixty early childhood educators from nine Elkhart County early childhood sites participated in the training. It is estimated that over 600 preschool students have been impacted by the training during the 2018-2019 school year. Additional data about how the skills and activities from the training have been utilized by educators will be gathered via surveys, which will allow The SOURCE and providers to better support the implementation and training of Conscious Discipline® in the classroom.

Climate Results: All Sites

Prior to the start of the training, attendees were asked to rate their school's climate. Although all sites perceive most aspects of their school climate in an overwhelmingly positive way, the biggest area for growth was around trauma informed practices. We anticipate that Conscious Discipline® implementation will promote positive growth in this area for staff, teachers, and families. Currently, we plan to assess school climate on an annual basis in order to determine what impact Conscious Discipline® may be having at sites. The aggregated results for all pilot sites are below.

School Climate	Number of People Responding Not at all	Number of people responding Somewhat	Number of people responding Quite A Bit	Number of people responding A Great Deal
To what extent do you think that children enjoy attending your early learning facility?	3	4	23	30
How much does the school value diversity of child and staff backgrounds?	3	9	13	35
Overall, how much support do you feel you received in the	5	15	28	12

classroom by the leadership team at your learning facility?				
How motivating are the current professional development opportunities at your facility?	3	8	36	13
Does your Early Learning facility provide supports in dealing with child trauma?	5	19	20	16
Does your Early Learning facility provide supports to staff members to help address their own personal trauma?	13	20	12	15
Overall, how much respect do you think the teachers at your workplace have for the children and families?	3	8	26	23
How sufficient or insufficient is the current level of trauma informed supports for children, families, and staff at your facility?	6	22	23	9

Training Survey Results: All Sites

Attendees were asked to rate the adult skills and classroom activities after the training. They were asked how useful they thought the skill or activity would be and then how prepared they were to begin using the skill or activity in their classroom. While teachers who received the training overwhelmingly felt the activities were useful, the level of preparedness to implement the skills into their classroom varied. Results below compare the usefulness and preparedness for each skill or activity at all sites.

Skills and Classroom Activities	Number of People that Responded: Very Helpful	Number of People that Responded: Potentially Helpful	Number of People that Responded: Not Helpful
Composure	60	13	0
Assertiveness	51	20	1
Encouragement	62	11	0
Choices	60	13	0
Empathy	55	17	0
Positive Intent	63	8	1
Consequences	46	24	1
Brain Smart© Start Routine	53	15	2
Safekeeper Ritual	50	20	0
The Safe Place™	56	16	0
Daily Commitments/Job Board	45	27	1
Wish Well Routine/Board	58	13	0
Breathing Strategies	66	7	0
I Love You Rituals™	61	7	1
Feeling Buddies©	38	26	2
Greeting/Goodbye Ritual	55	15	1
Friends and Family Board	51	18	1
Transition Rituals	49	7	0
Visual Rules and Routines	55	14	1

Skills and Classroom Activities	Number of People that Responded: Very Prepared	Number of People that Responded: Somewhat Prepared	Number of People that Responded: Not at all Prepared
Composure	40	31	1
Assertiveness	35	36	1
Encouragement	54	17	1
Choices	53	18	1
Empathy	52	19	1
Positive Intent	49	22	1
Consequences	38	32	2
Brain Smart Start Routine©	33	34	4
Safekeeper Ritual	30	35	5
The Safe Place™	41	29	2
Daily Commitments/Job Board	34	33	5
Wish Well Routine/Board	39	32	1
Breathing Strategies	51	21	0
I Love You Rituals™	49	20	3
Feeling Buddies©	25	38	9
Greeting/Goodbye Ritual	46	22	2
Friends and Family Board	37	28	4

Transition Ritual	30	24	9
Visual Rules and Routines	44	22	1

Pre- and Post-Test Thoughts

Participants were asked a series of questions about their thoughts on children's behavior before and after training. In the post-training questionnaire, they were asked how true their thoughts were since completing the training, compared to how they felt before the training. Overall, findings suggest that the training promoted a shift in thinking amongst teachers. Below are the questions and aggregated results prior to and after the training.

1. **"Children's misbehavior is the cause of my upset."** 84% agreed with this before training, 16% agreed with this after training.
2. **"When a child hurts another child, they need to be punished."** 85% agreed with this before training, 15% agreed with this after training.
3. **"Children's refusal to listen to directions is willful misbehavior."** 82% agreed with this before training, 18% agreed with this after training.
4. **"Conflict among children is disruptive and an inconvenience for me."** 76% agreed with this before training, 24% agreed with this after training.
5. **"Children who have had a few chances to correct their misbehavior should be punished if the problem continues. "** 69% agreed with this before training, 31% agreed with this after training.

Participant Feedback

At the end of the training, participants were given space on the survey to write down what they thought of the training and how they thought they might use Conscious Discipline® in their school or classroom. Below are a few of the responses from attendees.

What do you think of Conscious Discipline®?

"Love it! Making a change in my classroom."

"I think it has a place in our structure and implementation in addressing behaviors."

"I think it is a good practice that will take time to intentionally implement."

"The model is informative and provides additional ideas to help children with self-regulation."

"It's a great way to support teachers who can then support their students. I'm very excited about it!"

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