

## *We Have Skills*, Effective and Efficient Social Skills Instruction for Early Elementary

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### Can Social Skills Instruction be Efficient and Effective?

Yes. A rigorous study shows that the *We Have Skills* program efficiently and effectively taught the academically related social skills needed for early elementary students to succeed in school. *We Have Skills* appealed to children, and teachers quickly mastered and readily implemented the program in their classrooms.

Compared to teachers who did not use *We Have Skills*, teachers who taught *We Have Skills* in their classrooms reported:

- Improved confidence in managing their classrooms.
- Fewer concerns about discipline and motivation.
- Greater student social adjustment and increased use of academically related social skills.

### The *We Have Skills* Program

*We Have Skills* provides brief lessons to improve students' skills related to learning in the classroom and teachers' self-efficacy for classroom management. In small daily doses across each week, *We Have Skills* teaches students how to (a) listen, (b) ask for help, (c) follow directions, (d) do the best they can, (e) follow the rules, (f) work out strong feelings, and (g) get along. For each skill, *We Have Skills* features an engaging video, an animated animal friend, and a song to model each skill and help students remember the steps. Teachers then reinforce the skills during classroom instruction.

During the development of *We Have Skills*, teachers asked for a program



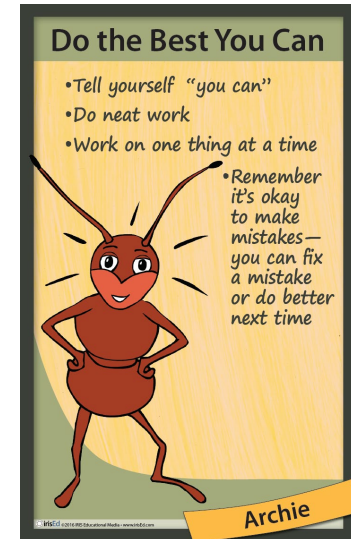
that they could learn and implement with little effort, saving time for instruction. To keep *We Have Skills* brief and efficient, it relies on explicit instruction with ample opportunities for student practice and review and engaging videos, songs, and other materials.

Compared to teachers who did not use the program, teachers who used *We Have Skills* rated their students more highly on classroom adjustment (e.g., listening, participation, work habits, working well with peers). The program had its strongest impact on students who started with the most challenges. Teachers also reported greater self-efficacy for behavior management and fewer concerns about student behavior in the classroom. The study did not assess student achievement.

### The *We Have Skills* Evaluation

Investigators at the Oregon Research Institute, University of Oregon, and IRIS Educational Media designed the study to meet best-practice evidence standards. The sample consisted of 127 kindergarten and first-grade teachers and 2,817 of their students. Teachers either taught *We Have Skills* or as usual, assigned at random to ensure that differences between the two groups were due to the program and not teacher or student characteristics.

*We Have Skills* also produced similar changes in student behavior as more intensive programs yet with less teacher time and at lower cost. This evaluation showed that social skills instruction can be both efficient and effective.



Watch a 5-minute summary: <https://youtu.be/qFFLflTX96g>

#### Full Article Citation:

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