First Step to Success

1) Category:
   • Specific program

2) Issues Behind the Program:
   • Exposure to family, neighborhood, school and social risk factors produces negative short-term outcomes and leads to development of the expression of maladaptive behavior.
   • Antisocial children are at greater risk for learning difficulties, substance abuse, peer rejection, delinquency or negative, destructive long-term outcomes.
   • Parents are not always aware of the severity of their child's behavior.

3) Objectives:
   • To enhance children's social skills
   • To promote school engagement
   • Ultimately, to prevent children from developing more serious antisocial conditions

4) Setup Environment:
   • Primary schools
   • Families

5) Target Group:
   • Children from 4 to 10 years old exhibiting antisocial behaviors
   • Parents

6) Key Words:
   • First step to success, coeuréaction, school-family-community partnership, specific program, kindergarten, primary school, social skill, skills training, school engagement, success, behavioral problems, academic achievement, aggressiveness

7) Program Description:
   • First Step to Success is an early intervention program that helps children at risk for developing or who demonstrate anti-social or aggressive behaviors to get the best possible start in school.

This factsheet was taken from the following website: http://rire.ctreq.qc.ca/
• First Step to Success incorporates the use of a trained behavior coach who works with each student and his/her class peers, teacher, and parents for approximately 50 to 60 hours over a 3-month period.
• The multifaceted program relies on parents, teachers, and children in order to modify and, in turn, reward behavior both at school and at home.

8) Steps:
• FSS is organized around three distinct modules which include universal screening of at-risk kindergarten children, school-based intervention, and skill-building lessons for parents.
  o Screening: First Step to Success incorporates a screening tool to identify students who could benefit from the program. Teachers select students using a standard definition of anti-social behavior and rate selected students’ behavior using a standardized behavior scale.
  o CLASS (Contingencies for Learning Academic and Social Skills): During the CLASS portion of the program, a behavior coach works with the teacher, the student, and other peers. The student is taught to recognize and replace inappropriate behaviors with appropriate ones and is rewarded for using these behaviors, while the teacher observes and learns the techniques and skills necessary to implementing the program.
  o HomeBase: After day 10 of the CLASS module, the HomeBase intervention module begins and runs concurrently with the CLASS module. During the HomeBase phase, the behavior coach meets the student’s parents/caregivers either in their home or another designated place for approximately 45 minutes per week for 6 weeks. Parents are taught how to enhance their child’s adjustment and success in school by focusing on communication, cooperation, limit-setting, problem-solving, friendship-making, and confidence-building.
• The final phase of First Step to Success is maintenance. During this phase, concrete reward activities are phased out and replaced with social reinforcement, such as verbal praise, positive feedback, recognition, and other signs of approval.

9) Activities/Actions:
• The first module includes universal screening of a kindergarten population. The screening module can vary in complexity and design but serves one major purpose. Teachers are asked to evaluate all kindergarten students on various measures of antisocial behavior. Ultimately, teachers identify the children at risk for, or already exhibiting, internalizing or externalizing behavior problems.
• The second module includes school intervention, an adapted version of the CLASS program intended to target and correct behavioral problems. School intervention is organized into three phases which span 30 days. Only one child per classroom can receive the intervention at a time.
  o The first five days of the program are called the “consultant phase,” when a trained staff member, usually a school counsellor or psychologist, coordinates participant cooperation, consent and involvement with the program. Consultants introduce the child to the CLASS methods, which include an extensive rewards/privileges system for moderating behavior and performance. The student collects points toward his/her behavioral goal, and classroom peers are taught positive strategies to support the student. If the student reaches the daily goal, he/she gets to choose an activity that the whole class can enjoy. Each day, parents/caregivers receive feedback about their child’s daily progress. At day 6, the classroom teacher takes
over implementation of the CLASS module with close supervision by the behavior coach. Lastly, consultants must ensure a smooth transition into the second phase of intervention.

- The second phase of school intervention is organized by the child's classroom teacher and covers days 6 through 20 of the program, when the teacher assumes control of the intervention, provides the child with group activities, and continues to reinforce the rewards/privileges system introduced by the consultant. The teacher is also responsible for getting the parents involved and informing them about their child’s progress.

- The third module, known as HomeBase, represents the final component of the program. HomeBase begins at day 10 of the CLASS intervention and runs for six weeks. During this time, consultants meet with parents at home for approximately one hour a week. These six lessons are intended to help parents improve children's school adjustment, skill and performance. The lessons involve guides and parent-child games and activities. Consultants emphasize ways in which parents can help their child with communication and sharing, cooperation, limits-setting, problem-solving, friendship skills and confidence-building.

- The final phase of the intervention is known as maintenance and runs from day 21 through day 30. This time is dedicated to reducing dependence on intervention and transferring involvement to families. Rewards and privileges for appropriate behavior are used less and less by teachers and adopted in the home environment instead. Eventually, parents are encouraged to substitute praise for these privileges.

- Although FSS is organized into thirty distinct program days, a child must meet daily performance criteria in order to proceed to the next day of intervention. If the child fails to meet the criteria, he/she must repeat that day's intervention.

10) Resources Required:

- Human resources:
  - Teacher
  - Parents
  - Behavior coach (school counselor or psychologist)

- Financial resources:
  - Budget necessary to implement and run the program (SRI will reimburse schools $200 for a substitute teacher for each teacher participating in First Step to Success so he/she can attend one-day training and provides teachers with $150 for their participation*)

*These fees apply to the United States.

11) Roles of the Participants:

- The teacher:
  - attends one-day training;
  - meets with research staff to learn how to conduct behavior screening;
  - allows the First Step to Success coach to work with the child and provide advice as needed in the classroom;
  - implements the CLASS component on day 6 of implementation;
o completes a questionnaire and a behavior checklist twice a year for each participating child;
o allows a data collector to observe the child and classroom several times.

• Parents:
o sign a consent form agreeing to program participation;
o meet with the coach (for 45 minutes) once a week for 6 weeks;
o implement the First Step to Success program at home;
o complete a checklist of their child’s behaviors, a questionnaire about services, and a survey about their satisfaction with the program.

• The behavior coach:
o coordinates participant cooperation, consent and involvement with the program;
o is responsible for approximately two to three cases at a time, and meets with each child participant for 20 to 30 minutes twice daily.

• Participating schools agree to:
o allow teachers to participate in the study;
o distribute a letter to all parents of children in First Step to Success classrooms containing behavior screening information;
o work with study personnel to identify behavior coaches for the program.

12) Scientific Basis or Validity:

• First Step to Success has been evaluated and shown to impact young children’s behavior problems. (Walker, H.M., Kavanagh, K., Stiller, B., Golly, A., Severson, H.H., & Feil, E.G. (1998). “First Step to Success: An Early Intervention Approach for Preventing School Antisocial Behavior.” Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 6(2).)
o On average, both cohorts experienced substantial gains from baseline to post-intervention on almost all outcome measures. In comparison with the control group, children in the experimental group showed significantly more improvement on measures of adaptive and maladaptive behaviors, and aggression. Experimental children also performed significantly better than their control group counterparts on measures of academic engaged time. The two groups did not differ significantly, however, on withdrawn behavior.
o Assessments of the intervention’s sustainability showed that mean scores on the four significant outcomes remained similar at follow-up. Analyses revealed no significant differences between post-intervention and follow-up for either cohort, indicating that the effects of the intervention were sustained over time.

13) Program Material:

• Website: [http://www.firststeptosuccess.org/](http://www.firststeptosuccess.org/)
• Starter Kit (PreK-3)
• Preschool edition Kit (Pre-K and K)
• Replacement video (for parents)
• For more information, see: [http://store.cambiumlearning.com/ProgramPage.aspx?parentld=019005504&functionID=009000008&plID=&site=sw](http://store.cambiumlearning.com/ProgramPage.aspx?parentld=019005504&functionID=009000008&plID=&site=sw)
14) Additional Information:

- The information contained in this factsheet was taken from:
  - http://www.childtrends.org/lifecourse/programs/FirstSteptoSuccess.htm;
  - https://firststeptosuccess.sri.com/;
  - http://www.firststeptosuccess.org/handout%20Randomized%20control%20trial%20of%20First%20Steps%20to%20Success%20Intervention%20for%20behavior%20problems2.pdf;

15) Contacts:

- Annemieke Golly, Ph.D.
  The Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior
  1265 University of Oregon
  Eugene, OR 97403-1265
  Tel.: (541) 346-3582
  Email: agolly@uoregon.edu