

EVALUATION OF A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PROGRAM FOR SIXTH GRADERS
TRANSITIONING FROM ELEMENTARY TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

PSYCHOLOGY

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March, 1989

Blacksburg, Virginia

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(ABSTRACT)

The transition from elementary to middle school has been characterized as one of many "normative life crises" that involves both an increased opportunity for psychological growth and a heightened vulnerability to psychological disturbance. Principles from life stress/transition literature and prevention research have been applied to the development of programs designed to help students adapt to the various changes they encounter in the transition from elementary to middle school. In the present study, students evincing a poor academic transition to middle school were identified following the second grading period of the sixth grade, and placed into one of two 16-week treatment conditions. The "full treatment" condition consisted of group support (including training in problem-solving and social skills, goal-setting, self-monitoring, and incentives), parental support, and increased teacher support; the "partial treatment" condition consisted only of teacher support. A group of good academic transition students was included in the study for comparative purposes. Measures of depression, anxiety, stress, and self-esteem were administered to students at pre-treatment, post-treatment, and followup, and behavior problem checklists were completed by teachers at the same points in time. At pre-treatment,

important differences were found between treatment and comparison students, most notably along the behavioral dimension. The full treatment group showed a significant improvement in grade-point average (GPA) and depression scores over time, whereas the partial treatment group did not. However, improvement in academic performance was not as marked as predicted for either treatment group. The results of the present study were discussed relative to the findings of other prevention researchers, and directions for future research were considered.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation represents the completion of a project that began over two years ago, as well as the culmination of a graduate school experience that has spanned five years. Neither could have been achieved without the help, guidance, dedication, devotion, and love of many people.

I would first like to acknowledge my committee chair, Tom Ollendick, who also chaired my Master's thesis. It was my incredible good fortune to have had the opportunity to work closely with and learn from Tom. His patience, competence, energy, high standards, professionalism, personal style, and friendship have had a major impact on me professionally and personally. Moreover...further... indeed...thanks, Tho.

I would also like to acknowledge my committee members, beginning with Sandy Zeskind, who also sat on my Master's committee. Having a good friend on one's committee is not always viewed with favor, but had I chosen not to include Sandy I would have missed out on boundless conceptual and statistical guidance, and personal and professional support. Thanks, Z. That this project had a strong community and preventive psychology flavor is due in large part to the influence and enthusiasm of Richard Winett, another member of my Master's committee. In his quiet, humorous manner, he provided much conceptual and personal support, and helped make this dissertation a reality. Muchas gracias, Ricardo. The invaluable suggestions and input of Tom Hohenshil and Caryn Carlson also helped mold the final product and

were greatly appreciated. Finally, my gratitude to Danny Axsom, who sat in for Tom Hohenshil for the oral defense.

This project would not have gone beyond the proposal defense without the energy and dedication of the sixth grade teachers, guidance counselors, guidance staff, and administrative staff of the Montgomery County Public Schools, who made it all happen. They have my enduring admiration and gratitude. Although I cannot list each individual here, one deserves special mention. and I worked together at Shawsville Middle School for four years. We saw it all. This dissertation is a reflection of much of what I learned from her.

Graduate school is full of many hurdles, pressures, peaks and valleys. I wouldn't have survived graduate school without a lot of support and love from my mother and father, brother and sister, grandmothers, and aunts. Support and love come in many forms, and my family gave it any way I needed it. I hope I can give some back someday. Thanks, team.

Finally, I'd like to thank my wife, , who went through all the hurdles, pressures, peaks and valleys with me, as well as a bunch of her own. This dissertation is yours, too, ...

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Evaluation of a Multidimensional Program for Sixth Graders

Transitioning From Elementary To Middle School

Points of transition or "normative life crises" have been characterized as periods of psychological disequilibrium marked by both an increased opportunity for psychological growth and a heightened vulnerability to psychological disturbance (Felner, Farber, & Primavera, 1980). Events such as entering a new school, getting married, getting divorced, and retirement are thought to produce changes in personal relationships, environments, possessions, roles and status (Parkes, 1971). To successfully resolve a transition, an individual must conquer initial anxiety, gain information about the new state, break and modify old habits and patterns, create new coping styles, and adopt new behaviors (Bogat, Jones, & Jason, 1980; Hirschowitz, 1976). Failure to successfully resolve transitions may impair behavioral performance and social adjustment (Elias, Rothbaum, & Gara, 1986).

Entering a new school is a transition that routinely affects virtually all children and adolescents, and may be scheduled (the natural progression from one school setting to another) or unscheduled (a student switching from one school to another in isolation) (Jason, 1985). The transition from elementary to secondary school is an example of the former, and is thought to involve the same changes in personal relationships, environments, roles and status characteristic of other transitions, with a similar demand for adaptation and risk for unsuccessful resolution.

There is little question that the transition to secondary school involves numerous changes for students. This transition has been characterized as a shift from the highly supportive, nurturing environment of elementary school to a system of not one but several teachers, rotating classrooms, and 50-minute doses of specialized instruction (Gullotta, 1983). Students must adapt to changes in authority and discipline, time structure, classroom sociometry, and role definition, as well as a drop in status (from the oldest in elementary school to the youngest in middle school) (Unks, 1983).

Moreover, the transition to secondary school occurs at an age at which a child's "personal system" -- encompassing interpersonal, emotional, cognitive, physical, and biological attributes -- is thought to be in a state of major flux (Moos, 1984). At this age, peers are thought to become a critical reference point for interactions while individuals are simultaneously in conflict with adult authority figures over issues of dependence, conformity, and independence. Middle school age has been documented as a period during which rates for juvenile crime, drug abuse, adolescent pregnancy, and suicide increase (Lipsitz, 1980). While rates of incidence and prevalence of diverse problem behaviors peak during the high school years, these difficulties seem to emerge from unresolved issues of the middle school period (Rutter, 1980).

Thus, the transition from elementary to middle school is thought to represent a time of great turmoil and stress for students, parents, and educators (Elias, Clabby, Corr, Ubriaco, & Schuyler, 1982),

replete with pathogenic potential (Elias, Gara, & Ubriaco, 1985). Further, the outcome of the middle school years is seen as playing a major role in the subsequent adjustment of youth as they move into adolescence and adulthood (Kendall, Lerner, & Craighead, 1984; Sroufe & Rutter, 1984). Such assertions have provided the impetus for numerous preventive programs designed to address the problems of students undergoing this transition.

Research, however has not always verified the "stress and turmoil" conceptualization of the transition to secondary school. For example, while some researchers have identified stressors that appear to retain potency throughout the first year of secondary school (Elias et al., 1985), others have found that stressors encountered in the transition from elementary to middle school decrease dramatically in the first few weeks in the new school (Cotterell, 1982; Mitman & Packer, 1982). While transition to secondary school has been shown to have negative short-term implications for student adjustment on measures such as self-esteem (Simmons & Blyth, 1987), depression (Hirsch & Rapkin, 1987), perceived anonymity (Blyth, Simmons, & Carlton-Ford, 1983), and perceived quality of school life (Hirsch & Rapkin, 1987), researchers have yet to demonstrate that these effects persist in subsequent months or years of secondary school or have clear negative long-term sequelae. In fact, a pattern of recovery has been documented for many of the above "negative" indicators. This is consistent with a general pattern described by Moos (1984), who asserted that most persons are able to shape acceptable resolutions to

difficult circumstances, while some manage not only to survive but to mature in the face of hardship. This assertion seems to apply to the secondary school transition issue, and calls into question the true need for prevention programs developed for the purpose of improving all students' ability to cope with the numerous changes they encounter in secondary school.

Academic performance is the only area in which negative initial adjustment changes have been shown to persist beyond the first year of secondary school. In fact, a marked decrease in mean grade-point average (GPA) has been found to occur regardless of the grade or age at which transition takes place (Simmons & Blyth, 1987). However, some students evince far greater GPA deterioration than others, and lower grades tend to persist in the second year of secondary school for a significant number of these students (Greene & Ollendick, 1987). As documented by Simmons and Blyth (1987), students who show an early GPA decline at entry to middle school are even more likely than others to demonstrate a decline in later years as well.

Preventive programs for students entering new schools have typically provided similar services to all transfers regardless of need (Jason, 1985). For example, Elias, Gara, Ubriaco, Rothbaum, Clabby, and Schuyler (1986) provided problem-solving skills training to fifth graders in the year prior to transition to middle school and documented a significant reduction in children's self-reported level of difficulty with commonly occurring stressors in middle school, although possession of these skills was not necessarily predictive of

adjustment to middle school.

Similarly, Felner, Ginter, and Primavera (1982) developed a program aimed at reducing the degree of flux and complexity of the social setting for students undergoing the transition to high school. They also attempted to increase the instrumental and affective social support from teachers and peers. These researchers restructured the role of homeroom teachers so that they served as the primary administrative-counseling link between students, parents, and the rest of the school. The social system students were entering was reorganized by "blocking" academic subjects such that students remained with the same classmates for a major portion of the school day. At the end of the first year of high school (ninth grade), treatment students compared to controls were found to have significantly better GPAs and attendance records, more positive self-concepts, and saw the school environment as having clearer expectations and organizational structure and higher levels of teacher support. Felner et al. (1982) concluded that low-cost changes in the roles of school personnel and the social ecology of the high school environment can effectively prevent academic and personal difficulties associated with school change by increasing the levels of social support available to students and decreasing the confusion and complexity of the setting being encountered.

This study demonstrates the positive effects that primary prevention programs can have on students' adjustment to a new school. However, it is not at all clear that extensive services need be

provided to all students, given the generally positive adjustment patterns noted earlier. It may be more pragmatic to apply a secondary prevention model to the transition issue, providing more extensive services only to the subset of students evincing actual adjustment difficulty in the first year of secondary school.

How these students are to be identified and along which dimensions remains an important issue. As noted above, academic performance is the only variable for which negative effects have been shown to persist beyond the first year of secondary school for a significant proportion of the students evincing a poor transition along any given dimension. Grades have been characterized as the most important indicator of competence provided to the adolescent, and as one of the most relevant indicators in the school culture at large, with considerable import for future opportunities (Simmons & Blyth, 1987). As such, decline in academic performance may represent a significant stressor for new middle school students, and may be more difficult to reverse than other aspects of adjustment for some students.

The present study had three primary purposes. The first was to examine whether students evincing a poor academic transition to middle school showed greater problems in other areas of adjustment as compared to students whose academic transition was less difficult, including depression, anxiety, self-esteem, stress, and behavior. The second was to evaluate the efficacy of a multidimensional program designed to provide teacher support, group support (including training

in problem-solving skills, social skills, goal-setting, and self-monitoring) and heightened parental support to poor transition students, as compared to teacher support alone. The third purpose of the present study was to explore whether intervention had positive effects not only on GPA but also on other measures of adjustment described above. (See Appendix A for complete review of literature.)

Method

Subjects

The subjects were 66 children (37 boys and 29 girls), who were in their first year of middle school (sixth grade) at one of four middle schools in a southwestern Virginia community. Approximately two-thirds of the children ($n=42$, 24 boys and 18 girls) had evinced a marked decrease in GPA in middle school; this was established by comparing final grades from fifth grade to grades in the second grading period of the sixth grade in five academic subjects. These students were randomly assigned to one of two treatment conditions in the study. The remaining 24 students (13 boys, 11 girls) were those who had evinced either no change or an improvement in GPA from fifth grade to sixth grade. Over 95 percent of the 66 children were from white, middle- to lower-class families.

Measures

Self-report measures

Depression was measured by the Children's Depression Inventory (CDI: Kovacs & Beck, 1977; see Appendix B), a self-report inventory devised to measure depression in children and adolescents. This

measure has been shown to be appropriate for individuals between the ages of 8 to 16 years, and has been shown to have adequate validity (Kovacs & Beck, 1977), test-retest reliability and internal consistency (Smucker, Craighead, Craighead, & Green, 1986). The CDI includes 27 items requiring individuals to choose one of three statements. A representative set of statements is: "Nothing will ever work out for me;" "I am not sure if things will work out for me;" and "Things will work out for me OK."

Anxiety was measured by the Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (RCMAS: Reynolds & Richmond, 1979; see Appendix C). Individuals are required to circle "yes" or "no" in response to 37 statements, including, "I worry about what other people think about me," "My feelings get hurt easily," and "Often I feel sick in my stomach." This scale has been reported to be appropriate for students in grades one through twelve, and has been shown to have adequate reliability and validity (Reynolds & Richmond, 1979).

Self-esteem was measured by the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale (Piers & Harris, 1969; see Appendix D), a self-report instrument designed to assess children's self-attitudes. The scale is appropriate for individuals between the ages of 10 and 16 years, and has been shown to have adequate internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and validity (Piers & Harris, 1969). The Piers-Harris can be scored to include a total score and six factor scores, including Behavior, Intellectual and School Status, Physical Appearance and Attributes, Anxiety, Popularity, and Happiness and

Satisfaction. This instrument requires individuals to answer "yes" or "no" to a set of 80 statements, including "I am unpopular," "I am an important member of my family," and "I wish I were different."

Degree of anxiety and stress related to middle school was measured through administration of the Survey of Middle School Stressors (Elias, Gara, Ubriaco, Rothbaum, Reese, & Haviland, 1987; see Appendix E). This self-report instrument consists of 28 items requiring students to rate the extent to which various stressors are problematic in middle school, on a scale of one (not a problem) to four (large problem). Representative items include "Having an argument with a teacher," "Getting too much homework," and "Having trouble making new friends." This scale can be scored to include a total score as well as four factor scores, including Conflicts with Authority/Older Students, Peer Relationships, Academic Pressures, and Substance Abuse. Elias et al. (1987) have reported satisfactory stability for this measure.

Other-reported measure

The Revised Behavior Problem Checklist (RBPC: Quay & Peterson, 1983; see Appendix F) was employed as the teacher behavior rating instrument. The RBPC is an instrument consisting of 89 items which comprise four major subscales (Conduct Disorder, Socialized Aggression, Attention Problem/Immaturity, and Anxiety/Withdrawal) and two minor subscales (Psychotic Behavior and Motor Tension/Excess). Individuals are rated on the occurrence of various behaviors on a 3-point scale ("not a problem," "mild problem," or "severe problem").

Items include "Has temper tantrums," "Squirms, fidgets," and "Tense, unable to relax." This scale has been found to have adequate test-retest reliability, interrater reliability, concurrent validity, and construct validity (Quay & Peterson, 1983).

Archival data.

Grades and standardized achievement test scores for all students participating in the study were obtained from school records, as described below.

Treatments

The two treatment conditions in the study involved different levels of support. Full Treatment subjects received all three support components described below, whereas Partial Treatment subjects received only the first component. School system restrictions did not permit the inclusion of a "no-treatment" control group.

The first component involved the provision of additional support from a "block" teacher. (All of the students in the project had at least two of their academic subjects "blocked," whereby they spent different class periods with the same teacher and classmates.) Block teachers were asked to provide additional support to those students in their classrooms who were identified as having shown a poor academic transition to middle school. This support included informal counseling, monitoring, and encouragement regarding academic or personal difficulties, completion of homework assignments, difficulties getting along with other teachers and/or students, attendance, behavior problems, and school expectations and rules.

Teachers met with the project director twice before the program began and were appraised of the program rationale, expectations, and goals. They were also provided a written description of activities they were requested to perform with each of their target students (see Appendix G). In general, teachers were asked to engage in "supportive activities" at least twice per week during the third and fourth grading periods, and to fade their contact to once per week during the fifth grading period. Teachers were not informed whether the target student(s) to whom they were assigned were in the full or partial treatment conditions. The project director made contact with each teacher several times each month to answer questions, problem-solve, discuss difficult cases, and provide continuous encouragement. Teachers completed weekly activity survey checklists (see Appendix H) through which the level and nature of support provided to each student was monitored and their perceived relationship with each student was reported.

The second component, based on recommendations of the middle school guidance counselors and administrators and the work of other prevention researchers, involved the placement of students into discussion groups with other poor transition counterparts (there were six total groups of 3-5 students each). The groups met weekly during the third and fourth grading periods and bi-weekly during the fifth grading period; all six groups had the same group leader. Groups consisted of discussion of the differences between elementary and middle school, the need for students to accept greater personal

responsibility for their academic performance, the importance of completing homework assignments and getting along with teachers and other students, problem-solving training, methods for requesting help when it was needed, organizational skills, and other topics related to transition difficulties. Modeling and role-playing were employed, and peer support was encouraged within each group. Goal-setting and incentives were also an integral dimension of the groups, and student progress toward individually established academic goals were discussed weekly (see Appendix I). Although group topics differed from week to week, all groups followed an established protocol to insure basic uniformity of treatment (see Appendix J). Students completed surveys on a bi-weekly basis to assess integration of presented material, attitudes toward their group, assigned block teacher, and parents, and perceptions of support from and relationship with each (see Appendix K). Guidance counselors were also asked to record weekly contact with each student (see Appendix L).

The third treatment component was also based upon recommendations provided by middle school guidance counselors and administrators, and involved the facilitation of increased support in students' home environments. Parents were initially contacted by telephone by guidance counselors and advised that their child had been identified as having markedly lower grades in the sixth grade as compared to the fifth grade, informed about the nature of goals of treatment, and asked for permission for their child to participate in the program. Shortly thereafter, parents were contacted by the

project director and asked to monitor the completion of homework assignments and progress in school and to engage in informal discussions with their child about his or her school performance and how it might be improved (see Appendix M). In three subsequent phone contacts, parents were encouraged to continue their supportive activities, and a family learning environment questionnaire (adapted from Marjoribanks, 1979) was completed (see Appendix N). Parents of students who were not making progress toward meeting their established GPA goals were instructed in the use of basic contingency contracting. Guidance counselors were also asked to record weekly contact with parents of all treatment students.

Full Treatment students received all three components, Partial Treatment students only the teacher support, and Comparison students none of the treatment components.

Procedure

At the conclusion of the second six-week grading period of the sixth grade, guidance staff at the four middle schools assigned subject numbers to all first-year sixth grade students ($n=597$), and provided the project director with photocopies of these students' fifth and sixth grade report cards with all identifying information (except subject numbers) deleted. A transition/grade-change quotient was computed for all first-year sixth grade students, and this information was provided to guidance staff at each of the four schools. "Poor academic transition" target students were identified as those whose GPAs (averaged across five academic subjects, including

Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, English, and Reading) had dropped one grade-point or more (on a four point scale) in the transition from elementary to middle school; "good transition" comparison students were identified as those whose GPAs had either remained the same or increased. As noted above, guidance counselors contacted parents of target and comparison students by phone to explain the program and obtain parental permission for students to participate in the project; over 95 percent of the parents contacted agreed to allow their children to participate. Signed consent (see Appendix O) was obtained shortly thereafter, and included authorization for project staff to access students' school files for the purpose of gathering GPA information in subsequent grading periods.

Treatment and comparison students were matched as closely as possible on fifth grade GPA and gender; as such, fifth grade GPA for the three groups did not differ significantly (Full Treatment $\underline{M}=2.91$, Partial Treatment $\underline{M}=3.05$, Comparison $\underline{M}=3.01$). Poor transition students were matched on GPA and gender into pairs and then randomly divided into the two treatment conditions. As such, pre-treatment GPA did not differ significantly for the two treatment groups ($\underline{M}=1.59$ for both groups at the end of the second grading period of the sixth grade), whereas pre-treatment GPA for the comparison group was significantly higher ($\underline{M}=3.48$).

Measures of depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and middle school stress were administered to treatment and comparison students during

the second week of the third grading period (pre-treatment), and at the end of the fifth (post-treatment) and sixth (followup) grading periods (end of the academic year). The RBPC was completed by two teachers for each student at the same points in time. Treatment commenced during the third week of the third grading period and was completed at the end of the fifth grading period (over a 15 week period).

Results

Pre-treatment Group Differences

As noted earlier, the full treatment and partial treatment groups were matched for sixth grade GPA. A between-groups analysis of variance for GPA documented that the two treatment groups did not differ significantly on this dimension at pre-treatment, whereas GPA was significantly higher for the comparison students, $F(2,61) = 62.57$, $p < .0001$ (see Table 1).

Insert Table 1 about here

Similar between-groups analyses of variance were conducted on scores on the CDI (see Table 2) and RCMAS (see Table 3), and revealed nonsignificant differences among the three groups on these dimensions at pre-treatment.

Insert Table 2 about here

 Insert Table 3 about here

Between-groups multivariate analyses of variance were conducted for pre-treatment scores on the Survey of Middle School Stressors and Piers-Harris. On the Survey of Middle School Stressors, there was a marginally significant multivariate effect, $F(8,114) = 1.87$, $p < .08$; exploratory univariate analyses revealed that the two treatment groups reported significantly higher stress than the comparison group only on the Academic Pressures factor, $F(2,60) = 3.86$, $p < .05$ (see Table 4). On the Piers-Harris, there was also a marginally significant multivariate effect, $F(12,110) = 1.83$, $p < .06$, and exploratory univariate analyses revealed that the comparison group reported significantly higher self-esteem than the two treatment groups (which did not differ from one another) on the Behavior factor, $F(2,60) = 6.79$, $p < .01$ (see Table 5).

 Insert Table 4 about here

 Insert Table 5 about here

Finally, a between-groups multivariate analysis of variance was conducted on pre-treatment RBPC scores, and revealed a significant multivariate effect, $F(12,112) = 3.34$, $p < .001$. Univariate analyses

revealed significant group differences on five of the six factors (the Psychotic Behavior factor was the lone exception). The two treatment groups (which did not differ from one another) had significantly higher teacher-reported problems than the comparison group on the Conduct Disorder factor, $F(2,61) = 4.93$, $p < .01$, the Socialized Aggression factor, $F(2,61) = 3.13$, $p < .05$, the Attention Problems/Immaturity factor, $F(2,61) = 13.16$, $p < .0001$, and the Motor Tension/Excess factor, $F(2,61) = 8.91$, $p < .001$. On the Anxiety/Withdrawal factor, the comparison group had significantly lower teacher reported problems, but the two treatment groups also differed significantly, with the partial treatment group showing a higher degree of problems than the full treatment group, $F(2,61) = 3.83$, $p < .05$ (see Table 6).

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 Insert Table 6 about here
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Manipulation Checks

Prior to conducting analyses of time/treatment effects, manipulation check surveys (completed weekly by teachers and bi-weekly by students) were subjected to analyses to verify treatment integrity. The surveys documented the extent to which teachers engaged in supportive activities, as well as students' perceptions of support from teachers and parents. Teachers reported making supportive contact with target students an average of 1.7 times per week during the treatment phase of the project, with a range of 0.78 to 2.5

contacts per week. Academic problems were reported to have been discussed with students most frequently (33 percent of contacts), followed by completion of homework assignments (20 percent of contacts) and school behavior (15 percent of contacts). Neither the extent nor nature of support provided by teachers differed significantly for full versus partial treatment students. As noted earlier, the full treatment students participated in 13 support groups over the 16 weeks of the treatment phase, and parents of full treatment students were contacted by the project director by phone four times during this same period.

Treatment Effects

A 2 (status: Full Treatment and Partial Treatment) x 3 (time: pre-treatment, post-treatment, and followup) repeated measures analysis of variance for GPA revealed a significant effect for time, $F(2,76) = 8.17, p < .001$, but nonsignificant effects for time x status. Exploratory analyses documented that the full treatment group showed a mean GPA improvement of 0.44 points (on a four point scale) from pre- to post-treatment and an improvement of 0.32 points from pre-treatment to followup, $F(2,42) = 6.76, p < .001$. The partial treatment group showed a mean GPA improvement of 0.31 points from pre- to post-treatment and an improvement of 0.23 points from pre-treatment to followup, $F(2,34) = 2.34, p < .12$ (see Figure 1).

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 Insert Figure 1 about here
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Exploratory analyses were also conducted to examine changes in GPA over the course of the treatment phase. As shown in Figure 1, after four weeks of treatment (end of the third grading period), GPA for the full treatment group improved 0.36 points over pre-treatment, whereas GPA for the partial treatment group remained virtually unchanged. After ten weeks of treatment (end of the fourth grading period), GPA for the full treatment group improved 0.52 points over pre-treatment, while GPA for the partial treatment group improved 0.31 points. During the "fading" procedure of the final six weeks of the project, the full treatment group showed a slight GPA decline from previous gains, while GPA for the partial treatment group remained virtually unchanged from previous gains. Both groups showed moderate GPA decline relative to previous gains during the final grading period after treatment had ceased completely.

For the full treatment group, changes in GPA from pre-treatment to post-treatment ranged from an improvement of 1.2 points to a decline of 0.8 points, and response to treatment was distributed fairly evenly. Approximately three-fourths of the full treatment students showed improvement in GPA, with 37 percent of the total group evincing an improvement of greater than 0.5 points. For the partial treatment students, changes in GPA from pre-treatment to post-treatment ranged from an improvement of 1.6 points to a decline of 1.0 points, and response to treatment was also distributed fairly evenly. Half of the partial treatment group showed improvement in GPA, with 22 percent of the group evincing improvement of greater than 0.5 points.

A 2 (status: Full Treatment and Partial Treatment) x 3 (time: pre-treatment, post-treatment, and followup) repeated measures analysis of variance for depression scores produced a significant effect for time x status, $F(2,74) = 4.87$, $p < .01$. Within simple effects analyses documented that the full treatment group evinced a significant decline in depression scores over time, $F(2,42) = 5.04$, $p < .01$. Scores at both post-treatment and followup were significantly lower than scores at pre-treatment; scores at post-treatment and followup did not differ significantly. The partial treatment group did not show a significant change in depression scores over time (see Figure 2).

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 Insert Figure 2 about here
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A 2 (status: Full Treatment and Partial Treatment) x 3 (time: pre-treatment, post-treatment, and followup) repeated measures analysis of variance was also performed for the RCMAS, and revealed a significant main effect for time only, $F(2,74) = 3.22$, $p < .05$, with self-reported anxiety declining over time for both treatment groups. There was no significant effect for time x status.

A separate 2 (status: Full Treatment and Partial Treatment) x 3 (time: pre-treatment, post-treatment, and followup) repeated measures multivariate analysis of variance for the Survey of Middle School Stressors produced a marginally significant main effect for time only, $F(8,220) = 1.86$, $p < .07$. Exploratory analyses revealed a marginally

significant decrease in stress over time (collapsed across both groups) on the Peer Relationships subscale, $F(5,113) = 2.89$, $p < .06$.

Separate 2 (status: Full Treatment and Partial Treatment) x 3 (time: pre-treatment, post-treatment, and followup) repeated measures multivariate analyses of variance for the six factors on the Piers-Harris and RBPC produced nonsignificant effects for time and time x status.

Group Differences at Post-Treatment and Followup

Separate analyses were conducted to determine whether the two treatment groups approached the comparison group at post-treatment and followup on any of the dependent measures. Between-groups analyses of variance for GPA revealed that the comparison group continued to maintain a significantly higher mean GPA than both of treatment groups at post-treatment, $F(2,61) = 17.11$, $p < .0001$, and followup, $F(2,61) = 24.74$, $p < .0001$. The two treatment groups did not differ significantly along this dimension at either point in time (see Table 1).

Similar between-groups analyses of variance on scores on the CDI (see Table 2) and RCMAS (see Table 3) at post-treatment and followup revealed nonsignificant differences among the three groups at both points in time.

A between-groups multivariate analysis of variance for factor scores on the Survey of Middle School Stressors (see Table 4) at post-treatment revealed a significant multivariate effect, $F(8,116) = 2.97$, $p < .01$. Univariate analyses documented significant differences

only on the Academic Pressures factor, $F(2,61) = 3.24$, $p < .05$, with the comparison group reporting significantly lower stress on this factor than the two treatment groups, which did not differ. A similar between groups multivariate analysis of variance for factor scores on the Survey of Middle School Stressors at followup revealed nonsignificant differences among the three groups.

Between-groups multivariate analyses of variance for factor scores on the Piers-Harris (see Table 5) at post-treatment and followup revealed nonsignificant differences among the three groups at both points in time.

Finally, between-groups multivariate analyses of variance on factor scores on the RBPC (see Table 6) revealed significant multivariate effects at post-treatment, $F(2,112) = 2.68$, $p < .01$, and followup, $F(12,112) = 2.64$, $p < .01$. Univariate analyses documented that, at post-treatment, there were significant differences on the Socialized Aggression factor, $F(2,61) = 7.67$, $p < .001$, and the Anxiety/Withdrawal factor, $F(2, 61) = 6.76$, $p < .01$, with the partial treatment group having significantly greater teacher-reported problems on both factors than the full treatment or comparison groups, which did not differ. Significant post-treatment differences were also shown on the Attention Problems/Immaturity factor, $F(2,61) = 6.26$, $p < .01$, with the comparison group having significantly lower teacher-reported problems than the two treatment groups, which did not differ. At followup, significant differences were found on the Socialized Aggression factor, $F(2,61) = 5.87$, $p < .01$, with the

partial treatment group having significantly higher teacher-reported problems than the full treatment or comparison groups, which did not differ. Significant differences were also found for the Attention Problems/Immaturity factor, $F(2,61) = 7.22$, $p < .001$, and the Anxiety/Withdrawal factor, $F(2,61) = 3.80$, $p < .05$. On both factors, the comparison group showed significantly lower levels of difficulty than the two treatment groups, which did not differ.

Additional Analyses

Exploratory analyses were conducted to determine the extent to which various manipulation check variables were associated with changes in GPA and depression for the full treatment cohort. For GPA, more positive parental attitude toward their child's school (as measured by the family learning environment interview conducted with parents by phone) was positively correlated with GPA improvement, $r = .43$, $p < .05$. Higher levels of perceived general academic support provided by parents at home (as reported by students via manipulation check surveys) was positively associated at marginal significance with GPA improvement, $r = .38$, $p < .07$, as was higher levels of maternal education, $r = .40$, $p < .07$. Higher number of teacher contacts with full treatment students was also positively correlated at marginal significance with GPA improvement, $r = .40$, $p < .07$ (see Appendix P for intercorrelations of all manipulation check and family environment variables). A stepwise multiple regression analysis revealed that parental attitudes toward their child's school was the best predictor of change in GPA, $F(1,19) = 4.56$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .19$, and

student-reported levels of general academic support provided by their parents contributed significantly to the variance, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .41$.

Change in depression scores for the full treatment group was significantly correlated only with parental attitudes toward the child's school, $r = -.43$, $p < .05$, with positive parental attitudes associated with lower levels of depression.

Exploratory analyses were also conducted to determine the extent to which pre-treatment scores on the dependent measures were associated with GPA improvement for both treatment groups. None of the pre-treatment dependent measures was significantly correlated with change in GPA (see Appendix Q for intercorrelations of all dependent measures).

Discussion

The present study represents one of the first documented attempts to implement and evaluate a secondary prevention program for sixth grade students experiencing a difficult transition from elementary to middle school. Although the results of the current study are somewhat modest, the data do provide useful information about these students and their receptivity to interventions of this nature, and have provided new avenues of inquiry for further study.

As noted earlier, there are numerous variables which may be used to identify students evincing a "poor transition." The target students in the present study were selected because their grades evidenced a dramatic decline in the transition from elementary to middle school. As such, the primary focus of intervention was

academic performance. The full treatment intervention consisted of group support, parental support, and heightened levels of support provided by teachers; the partial treatment program included only the latter. The data indicate that, while both treatment groups showed an improvement in GPA (significant only for the full treatment group), the improvement was well below what had been anticipated, and statistical regression must be considered as a possible influence. The absence of a control group makes regression to the mean, as well as other threats to treatment validity (such as maturation), difficult to evaluate.

At first glance, these results do not offer compelling support for either the full or partial treatment program. The partial treatment program was based on the work of Felner et al. (1982), who documented the positive effects of "blocking" students and restructuring the role of the homeroom teacher to provide greater support to students transitioning to high school. In the present study, students were already being "blocked," so a heightened level of teacher support was the primary partial treatment "ingredient." Several hypotheses may explain the poorer-than-expected response to this treatment component. First, Felner et al. implemented increased support across an entire school year, from a primary prevention model. In the current study, heightened teacher support was implemented from a secondary prevention model midway through the third grading period, and was discontinued after the fourth grading period. Examination of GPA trends in Figure 1 reveals that, prior to

fading, GPA for both treatment groups was increasing; when treatment was faded and discontinued, GPA for both groups declined. Thus, one hypothesis is that poor transition students require treatment for a longer duration than that provided in the present study. Second, students in the present study were those who evinced a poor transition even when their classes were blocked. Such students may require more extensive intervention than mere heightened levels of teacher support. Further, additional levels of support may be adequate for students entering high school, but students entering middle school may require intervention of a different nature. Finally, the teacher support component was particularly prone to limitations common to field research, namely, whether treatment was truly carried out as planned. Because teacher support was provided informally, it was difficult to assess true treatment compliance on the part of teachers. Some teachers seemed to relate well to the goals of the treatment program and seemed quite invested in providing support, while other teachers appeared far less committed to the program. This variability may not have been captured or quantified as well as desired by manipulation checks, but may have limited the impact of the intervention.

The full treatment program of the present study was based, in part, on the work of Elias et al. (1986), who documented the positive effects of problem-solving training, provided once again in a primary prevention model, on students' ability to handle the stress of entering a new middle school (although positive effects were not

shown on other indices of adjustment, including academic functioning). In the current study, the full treatment program included problem-solving training, social skills training, goal-setting, self-monitoring, and group and individual incentives, as well as increased support from parents and heightened teacher support. While the data do not offer convincing support for the efficacy of the full treatment program, there are signs of promise. The full treatment students showed significant improvement in GPA and CDI scores over time, and similar changes were not shown by the partial treatment group. Further, although multivariate analyses did not document superior effects of full treatment on behavior, trends along the behavioral dimension were encouraging, as pre-treatment differences between full treatment and comparison students on the Socialized Aggression scale of the RBPC were no longer evident at post-treatment and followup. It is quite possible that providing parental and/or group support for a longer duration would have continued these trends to the point of clinical significance. However, as discussed below, it is also possible that the "ingredients" of the full treatment program were not sufficient to meet the needs of the some of the poor transition students.

Yet, even in its present form, the full treatment program did appear to benefit many students. The current study yielded useful information about the students most likely to benefit from an intervention of this nature. Exploratory analyses revealed that parental attitudes toward school, general academic support provided

by parents at home, maternal education, and number of teacher contacts were either significantly or marginally correlated with GPA improvement. A stepwise multiple regression analysis indicated that parental attitude toward school was the best predictor of GPA improvement, followed by general academic support provided by parents at home. While definitive conclusions cannot be drawn from correlational data, these analyses provide important information about which students are most likely to benefit from an intervention such as that provided in the full treatment condition.

Other important information was gathered related to the adjustment of poor academic transition students on measures of anxiety, depression, stress, self-esteem, and behavior problems. It was anticipated, based on transition literature, that poor academic transition students would evince greater maladjustment than their good transition counterparts, particularly at pre-treatment. At no point in time did the three groups differ significantly on self-reported depression or general anxiety. Treatment students did report significantly greater stress related to academic pressures than comparison students at pre- and post-treatment.

However, perhaps the most significant pre-treatment differences between treatment and comparison students were along the behavioral dimension. Comparison students reported significantly higher pre-treatment self-esteem on the behavior factor of the Piers-Harris than either of the two treatment groups, and evinced significantly fewer teacher-reported behavior problems on five of the six factors

on the RBPC, including Conduct Disorder, Socialized Aggression, Attention Problems/Immaturity, Anxiety/Withdrawal, and Motor Tension/Excess. The causal direction of these behavior problems is uncertain -- that is, whether students who evince poor academic transitions come to evince behavior problems or whether students who evince behavior problems are more prone to evince poor academic transitions. However, previous research suggests that students who evince a poor academic transition do, in fact, present greater behavior problems before entering middle school (Greene & Ollendick, 1987). Students who evince attention/concentration problems may have difficulty adapting to the attentional demands, structural changes (such as changing classrooms), and looser discipline of the middle school. Students who act-out or are withdrawn may not receive the same contingencies, understanding, or special attention at the middle school level that they did in elementary school. Although full treatment produced more positive changes in behavior than partial treatment, an intervention geared toward providing additional emotional support seems less appropriate for students evincing behavior problems. These students may be better served through a primary prevention program addressing their specific behavior problems in the fifth grade. While this area clearly deserves further study, elementary school behavior may be emerging as one of the best predictors of a poor transition to middle school.

Importantly, a poor academic transition to middle school does not appear to have the broad negative effects on other aspects of

student functioning, namely depression, anxiety, stress, and self-esteem, that the literature would have predicted. Moreover, the improvement over time in anxiety and stress for treatment and comparison students supports the general finding that students seem to adjust over the course of their first year in middle school to the various changes they encounter.

However, there is also strong evidence to suggest that, among the students who demonstrate a dramatic change in academic functioning in the transition from elementary to middle school, there is a subset for whom academic deterioration is quite resilient to remediation. As noted above, these students may require more intensive support and/or extensive services than that provided in either of the treatment conditions. This underscores the compelling need for middle school personnel to carefully monitor their incoming sixth grade classes so as to recognize those students who are exhibiting significant academic decline. Although the precise needs of these students may not be well-understood, recognizing when a poor transition is occurring is a necessary first step in the process.

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Table 1

Mean Grade Point Average (GPA) for Full Treatment, Partial Treatment and Comparison Groups at Pre-treatment, Post-treatment, and Followup

		Full Treatment	Partial Treatment	Comparison
Pre-treatment*	<u>M</u> =	1.59	1.59	3.48
	SD=	0.81	0.71	0.40
Post-treatment*	<u>M</u> =	2.03	1.90	3.21
	SD=	0.86	0.83	0.78
Followup*	<u>M</u> =	1.91	1.82	3.28
	SD=	0.82	0.94	0.57

*Comparison group significantly higher than Full Treatment and Partial Treatment Groups (which do not differ), $p < .0001$.

Table 2

Mean Scores on Children's Depression Inventory (CDI) for Full Treatment, Partial Treatment, and Comparison Groups at Pre-treatment, Post-treatment, and Followup

		Full Treatment	Partial Treatment	Comparison
Pre-treatment	<u>M</u> =	9.23	7.00	5.67
	SD=	7.60	7.83	5.72
Post-treatment	<u>M</u> =	7.23	8.06	4.54
	SD=	7.64	8.75	4.29
Followup	<u>M</u> =	6.27	7.72	4.42
	SD=	7.62	10.49	5.61

Table 3

Mean Scores on Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (RCMAS) for
Full Treatment, Partial Treatment, and Comparison Groups at
Pre-treatment, Post-treatment, and Followup

		Full Treatment	Partial Treatment	Comparison
Pre-treatment	<u>M=</u>	8.55	8.88	8.67
	SD=	6.81	6.92	6.29
Post-treatment	<u>M=</u>	6.45	9.06	7.96
	SD=	6.00	8.38	6.56
Followup	<u>M=</u>	5.41	8.00	6.92
	SD=	5.36	8.45	7.67

Table 4.

Means and Standard Deviations of Factor Scores on the Survey of Middle School Stressors for Full Treatment, Partial Treatment, and Comparison Groups at Pre-Treatment, Post-Treatment, and Followup.

	Full Treatment	Partial Treatment	Comparison
<u>Pre-treatment:</u>			
Academic Pressures*	<u>M</u> = 12.64	12.18	10.29
	SD= 3.75	3.19	1.97
Conflict w/Authority	<u>M</u> = 9.00	9.41	9.58
	SD= 2.83	3.39	2.86
Peer Relationships	<u>M</u> = 4.18	4.18	3.62
	SD= 1.40	1.24	1.41
Substance Abuse	<u>M</u> = 3.00	3.53	3.00
	SD= 0.00	2.18	0.00
<u>Post-Treatment:</u>			
Academic Pressures*	<u>M</u> = 11.41	12.67	9.92
	SD= 3.20	5.16	1.84
Conflict w/Authority	<u>M</u> = 8.23	8.28	8.96
	SD= 1.31	3.34	1.78
Peer Relationships	<u>M</u> = 3.91	3.78	3.54
	SD= 1.63	1.70	1.32
Substance Abuse	<u>M</u> = 3.14	3.83	3.00
	SD= 0.35	3.07	0.00

Table 4 (cont.).

	Full Treatment	Partial Treatment	Comparison
<u>Followup:</u>			
Academic Pressures	<u>M</u> = 11.27	10.89	9.58
	SD= 3.06	3.80	1.59
Conflict w/Authority	<u>M</u> = 8.04	8.78	8.79
	SD= 1.70	4.22	2.28
Peer Relationships	<u>M</u> = 3.45	3.33	3.04
	SD= 1.30	1.33	1.12
Substance Abuse	<u>M</u> = 3.09	3.44	3.17
	SD= 0.29	1.89	0.82

*Comparison group significantly lower than Full Treatment and Partial Treatment Groups (which do not differ), $p < .05$.

Table 5.

Means and Standard Deviations of Factor Scores on the Piers-Harris
Self-Concept Scale for Full Treatment, Partial Treatment, and
Comparison Groups at Pre-Treatment, Post-Treatment, and Followup.

		Full Treatment	Partial Treatment	Comparison
<u>Pre-Treatment:</u>				
Behavior**	<u>M=</u>	12.18	11.76	14.46
	SD=	3.26	2.08	2.21
Intell./School Status	<u>M=</u>	11.18	10.59	12.46
	SD=	4.02	3.45	3.09
Physical Appearance	<u>M=</u>	7.05	7.47	7.79
	SD=	3.90	3.43	3.15
Anxiety	<u>M=</u>	10.09	10.00	10.00
	SD=	3.87	3.89	3.30
Popularity	<u>M=</u>	8.05	8.59	7.46
	SD=	3.47	2.81	2.43
Happiness	<u>M=</u>	7.77	7.88	8.79
	SD=	2.60	2.26	1.74

Table 5 (cont.).

		Full Treatment	Partial Treatment	Comparison
<u>Post-Treatment:</u>				
Behavior	<u>M</u> =	12.95	12.22	14.04
	SD=	3.30	3.14	1.90
Intell./School Status	<u>M</u> =	13.09	12.38	13.12
	SD=	4.12	3.62	2.72
Physical Appearance	<u>M</u> =	8.73	8.67	8.25
	SD=	3.71	3.82	3.23
Anxiety	<u>M</u> =	11.18	10.22	10.54
	SD=	3.47	3.64	3.37
Popularity	<u>M</u> =	9.18	9.11	8.46
	SD=	3.13	2.61	2.55
Happiness	<u>M</u> =	8.14	8.28	8.71
	SD=	2.70	2.08	1.46

Table 5 (cont.).

		Full Treatment	Partial Treatment	Comparison
<u>Followup:</u>				
Behavior	<u>M</u> =	12.00	12.22	14.04
	SD=	3.27	3.30	2.35
Intell./School Status	<u>M</u> =	12.82	12.33	13.92
	SD=	4.11	4.70	3.09
Physical Appearance	<u>M</u> =	9.05	8.50	9.08
	SD=	3.86	4.25	3.81
Anxiety	<u>M</u> =	11.36	10.94	10.83
	SD=	3.32	4.07	3.53
Popularity	<u>M</u> =	9.45	8.55	8.58
	SD=	2.44	3.28	2.78
Happiness	<u>M</u> =	8.32	8.72	8.88
	SD=	2.59	2.49	1.83

**Comparison group significantly higher than Full Treatment and Partial Treatment groups (which do not differ), $p < .01$.

Table 6.

Means and Standard Deviations of Factor Scores on the Revised Behavior Problem Checklist (RBPC) for Full Treatment, Partial Treatment, and Comparison Groups at Pre-Treatment, Post-Treatment, and Followup.

		Full Treatment	Partial Treatment	Comparison
<u>Pre-treatment:</u>				
Conduct Disorder**	<u>M</u> =	5.43	4.33	1.04
	SD=	6.63	5.41	1.65
Socialized Aggression*	<u>M</u> =	1.23	1.28	0.02
	SD=	2.07	2.78	0.10
Att. Prob./Immaturity****	<u>M</u> =	7.27	5.75	1.23
	SD=	5.65	4.35	1.59
Anxiety/Withdrawal*'	<u>M</u> =	2.02	3.25	0.92
	SD=	1.80	2.35	1.15
Psychotic Behavior	<u>M</u> =	0.29	0.28	0.12
	SD=	0.63	0.59	0.30
Motor Tension/Excess***	<u>M</u> =	1.70	1.58	0.56
	SD=	1.69	1.63	1.28

Table 6 (cont.).

*Comparison group significantly lower than Full Treatment and Partial Treatment groups (which do not differ), $p < .05$.

*'Comparison group significantly lower than Full Treatment and Partial Treatment groups, and Full Treatment group significantly lower than Partial treatment group, $p < .05$.

**Comparison group significantly lower than Full Treatment and Partial Treatment groups (which do not differ), $p < .01$.

***Comparison group significantly lower than Full Treatment and Partial Treatment groups (which do not differ), $p < .001$.

****Comparison group significantly lower than Full Treatment and Partial Treatment groups (which do not differ), $p < .0001$.

Table 6 (cont.).

		Full Treatment	Partial Treatment	Comparison
<u>Post-Treatment:</u>				
Conduct Disorder	<u>M</u> =	4.39	6.00	1.56
	SD=	6.44	8.51	2.34
Socialized Aggression***	<u>M</u> =	0.43	2.31	0.08
	SD=	0.69	3.53	0.24
Att. Prob./Immaturity**'	<u>M</u> =	4.77	5.14	1.25
	SD=	5.57	3.74	2.19
Anxiety/Withdrawal**	<u>M</u> =	1.73	3.00	0.79
	SD=	2.02	2.55	1.08
Psychotic Behavior	<u>M</u> =	0.25	0.44	0.19
	SD=	0.40	1.14	0.55
Motor Tension/Excess	<u>M</u> =	1.02	1.50	0.77
	SD=	1.18	1.66	1.50

**Partial Treatment group significantly higher than Full Treatment and Comparison groups (which do not differ), $p < .01$.

**'Comparison group significantly lower than Full Treatment and Partial Treatment groups (which do not differ), $p < .01$.

***Partial Treatment group significantly higher than Full Treatment and Comparison groups (which do not differ), $p < .001$.

Table 6 (cont.).

	Full Treatment	Partial Treatment	Comparison
<u>Followup:</u>			
Conduct Disorder	<u>M</u> = 5.09	5.33	1.83
	SD= 6.60	7.67	3.42
Socialized Aggression**	<u>M</u> = 0.48	2.11	0.27
	SD= 0.79	3.22	0.85
Att. Prob./Immaturity***'	<u>M</u> = 4.86	5.14	1.14
	SD= 4.68	4.93	1.68
Anxiety/Withdrawal*'	<u>M</u> = 1.91	2.08	0.71
	SD= 2.44	1.78	0.95
Psychotic Behavior	<u>M</u> = 0.11	0.42	0.27
	SD= 0.26	0.88	0.57
Motor Tension/Excess	<u>M</u> = 1.32	0.69	0.60
	SD= 1.49	0.96	1.27

*'Comparison group significantly lower than Full Treatment and Partial Treatment groups (which do not differ), $p < .05$.

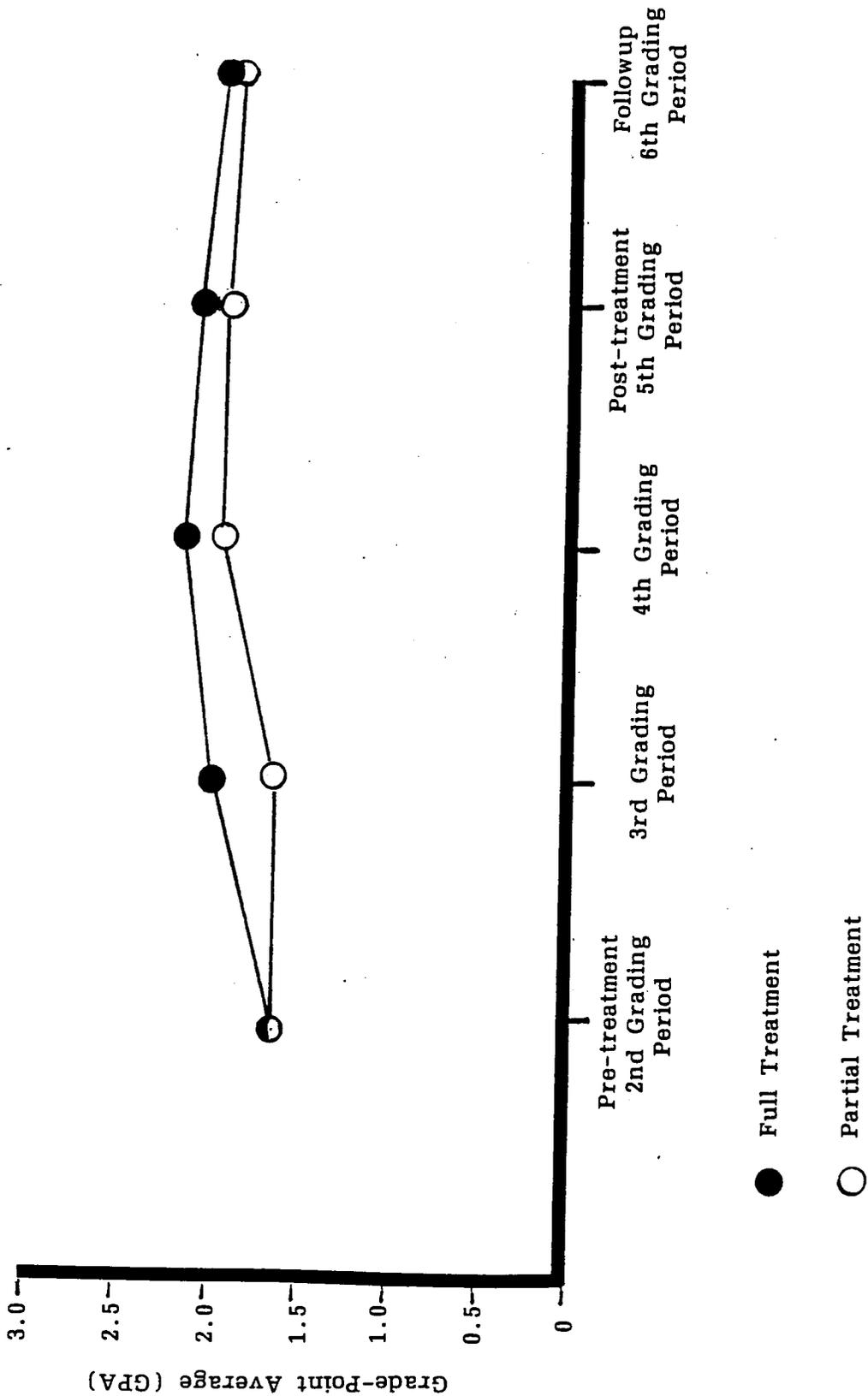
**Partial Treatment group significantly higher than Full Treatment and Comparison groups (which do not differ), $p < .01$

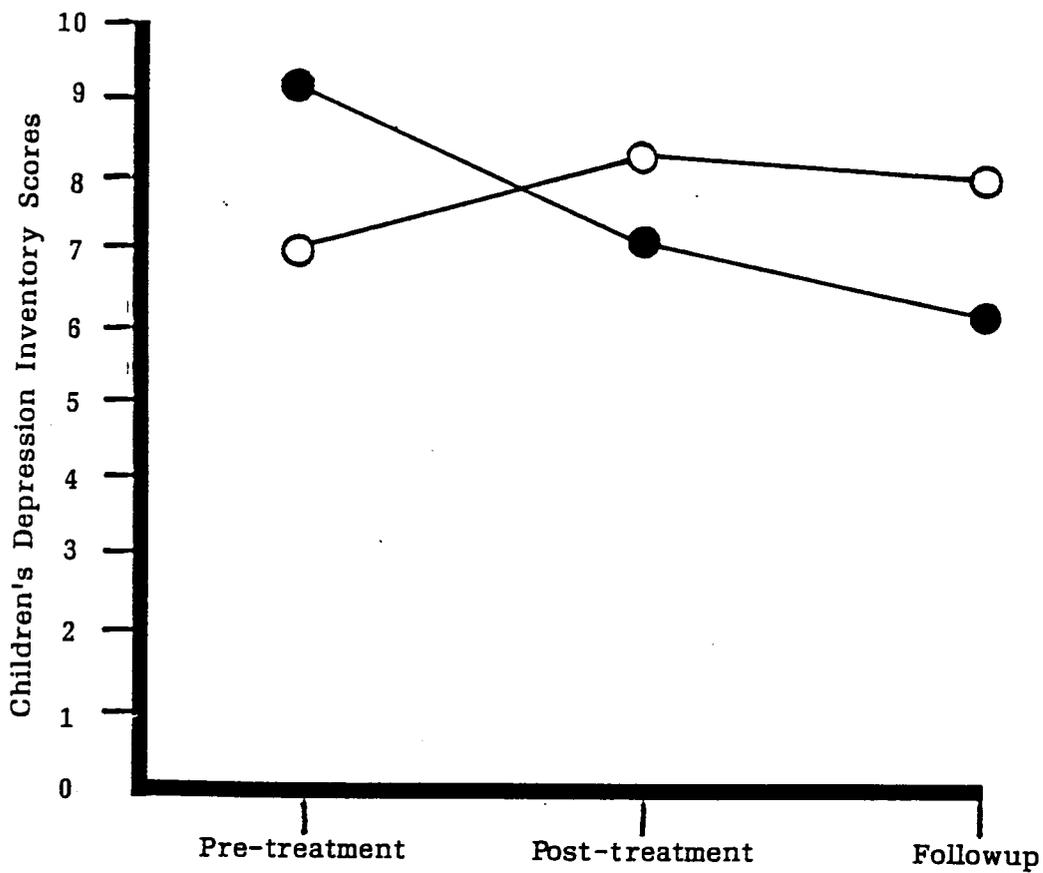
***'Comparison group significantly lower than Full Treatment and Partial Treatment groups (which do not differ), $p < .001$.

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Mean grade-point average (GPA) for Full Treatment and Partial Treatment groups at pre-treatment, post-treatment, and followup.

Figure 2. Mean scores on the Children's Depression Inventory (CDI) for Full Treatment and Partial Treatment groups at pre-treatment, post-treatment, and followup.





● Full Treatment

○ Partial Treatment

Appendix A
Comprehensive Review of Literature

Introduction

Points of transition or "normative life crises" have been characterized as periods of psychological disequilibrium marked by both an increased opportunity for psychological growth and a heightened vulnerability to psychological disturbance (Felner, Farber, & Primavera, 1980). Events such as entering a new school, getting married, getting divorced, and retirement are thought to produce changes in personal relationships, environments, possessions, roles and status (Parkes, 1971). Theoretically, to successfully resolve a transition, an individual must conquer initial anxiety, gain information about the new state, break and modify old habits and patterns, create new coping styles, and adopt new behaviors (Bogat, Jones, & Jason, 1980; Hirschowitz, 1976). It is further theorized that failure to successfully resolve transitions may impair behavioral performance and social adjustment (Elias, Rothbaum, & Gara, 1986b).

Entering a new school is a transition that routinely affects virtually all children and adolescents, and may take one of two forms: unscheduled transitions, involving students in isolation switching from one school to another; and scheduled transitions, involving the natural progression from one school setting to another (Jason, 1985). The scheduled transition from elementary to middle school is the focus of the present discussion and proposed study.

The literature regarding this transition may also be characterized as taking one of two forms: theoretical and empirical. There is an abundance of the former; a lesser, but increasing, body of

the latter. In theory, the transition from elementary to middle school is a time of great turmoil and stress for students, parents, and educators (Elias, Clabby, Corr, Ubriaco, & Schuyler, 1982), replete with pathogenic potential (Elias, Gara, & Ubriaco, 1985). Further, the outcome of the middle school years is seen as playing a major role in the subsequent adjustment of youth as they move into adolescence and adulthood (Kendall, Lerner, & Craighead, 1984; Sroufe & Rutter, 1984). Such assertions have provided the impetus for numerous preventive programs designed to address the problems of students undergoing this transition.

As shall be seen, empirical research has qualified these contentions considerably, and has caused, in some quarters, a subsequent rethinking of the nature of prevention programs. However, there is a growing body of evidence indicating that the transition from elementary to middle school has negative implications for some students, and that intervention may be appropriate in some cases.

The following discussion includes a brief review of transition theory and a more extensive review of the factors thought to be involved in the transition from elementary to middle school, as well as an examination of related empirical findings. This is followed by a description of preventive programs for students entering middle school as well as other similar transitions. Finally, an overall summary of the area and a research proposal are presented.

Transitions and Stressful Life Events

Hirschowitz (1976) has contended that transition connotes a state of movement and implies a state of departure and a destination. Transition is seen as a temporary state bridging from a former state toward a future state, as an in-between state involving movement from a stable role and identity to one which is new, changed or extended. During transition, habitual patterns of organization, control, equilibrium-maintenance, and integration are thought to become labored and difficult, and an individual's behavior may oscillate between the role behavior characteristic of his or her past situation and tentative attempts to enact the required new role. As the person struggles to master new role demands, security and self-esteem may be threatened. Thus, a state of transition is thought to involve significant adaptive demands. According to Hirschowitz (1976), adaptation will involve detachment from a former role and the structuring of roles appropriate to the new situation.

Some theorists (e.g., Felner et al., 1980) include transitions within the broader category of "stressful life events," thereby providing a link between transitions and the large body of stress-prevention literature. Dohrenwend (1978) described stressful life events as situations which involve change; the amount of change, as well as the individual's perception of the desirability of that change, may influence the degree of stress experienced. Dohrenwend posits that psychological and situational mediators define the context of the stressful event, and that individuals lacking in social support

or experiencing additional stressors are more likely to have difficulty adapting than those with adequate social support and minimal additional stress. Background and personality factors such as age, gender, cognitive and emotional development, the resolution of previous coping experiences, and the coping abilities and competencies of the individual are also thought to influence adaptation to the stressful event.

Dohrenwend (1978) has stated that there may be three possible outcomes of the coping process: substantial growth and adaptive change whereby the individual develops new skills and capabilities; the development of some form and degree of psychopathology; or no discernible change in functioning. This is consistent with the position of Felner et al. (1980) that individuals are not equally stressed by similar events. As defined by Goldston (1977), primary prevention programs should be geared toward increasing people's capacities for dealing with crises and for taking steps to improve their own lives.

The Transition from Elementary to Secondary School

The transition to secondary school, as with other transitions, is thought to be characterized by various tasks that must be mastered (Felner, Farber, & Primavera, 1983). These tasks include (a) shifts in role definition and expected behaviors; (b) shifts in membership in and position within social networks; (c) a need to reorganize personal and social support resources; (d) a restructuring of ways of looking

at one's world, that is, "cognitive reappraisal;" and (e) management of stress resulting from uncertainty about expectations, goals, and one's ability to accomplish the above tasks (Elias, Gara, & Ubriaco, 1985).

Whereas these tasks are thought to comprise the secondary school transition issue in the broader sense, some observers have focused upon the precise changes that occur in the transition from primary to secondary school. For example, this transition has been characterized as de-emphasizing the relationship between teacher and student and accentuating the acquisition of knowledge and subject mastery, and as involving a shift from the highly supportive, nurturing environment of elementary school to a system of not one but several teachers, rotating classrooms, and 50-minute doses of specialized instruction (Gullotta, 1983). It has been argued that this transition involves a change from an essentially client-centered social organization to a well-developed bureaucratic social organization (Unks, 1983).

Students must adjust not only to a dramatically different school environment but also to a different peer culture and a drop in status as the newest and youngest students in school (Rutter, 1980). Unks (1983) has provided a detailed overview of the various middle school elements requiring adaptation for the newly-arrived student:

(1) The entirety of student-teacher interaction in elementary school is centered around one teacher, but in middle school allegiance must be fragmented among several teachers. "Some young adolescents divide their allegiance fairly easily; for others, the process is

traumatic...the problem lies not so much in the psychological frame of the child as it resides in his inability to move from a social setting in which he dealt in a one-on-one client relationship to one in which he is part of a bureaucratic social system where power, compliance, reward, and punishment have been fragmented."

(2) There is a radical difference between elementary and middle school offices, entailing a shift from a remote place with little disciplinary impact to the center of the school replete with secretaries, forms, appointments and approvals. Most young adolescents successfully adjust to this shift of authority from the teacher to the office, but others find the change to be "mind-boggling."

(3) There is also a change from the relatively loose elementary school time structure to a system of clearly defined periods in which bells and clocks become important entities. This time-structuring scheme will present little apparent difficulty for most students, but other students, especially those from the lower class where being on time is not so sanctified; may find the entire process "bewildering and frustrating."

(4) Differences in classroom sociometry are also viewed as problematic. The student must make the transition from being in a classroom with the same students throughout the day (a "familial atmosphere") to a social pattern involving new sociometry for each class. In addition, ability grouping, which had been fairly informal in elementary school, becomes "carved in stone" in middle school.

(5) The new student must relate to significantly older and larger students in middle school. In the elementary school, students are insulated from the aggression of older students by their teachers; in secondary school, students must fend for themselves, a process which could turn into a "nightmare."

(6) In secondary school, the question of career plans suddenly looms large. While the social emphasis of the elementary school is on the here and now, and on the acquisition of skills that are relevant and immediately usable, the social emphasis of middle school is the future. For many young adolescents, the future is "simply incomprehensible."

(7) In the elementary school, there was no doubt that students were children, and the only people expected to act as adults were teachers. This is not the case in secondary school, where the student must be able to maneuver his way through bureaucracy with the skill of an adult, while receiving none of the awards of adulthood. In addition, the school seldom provides clues as to when it expects adult behavior and when it will tolerate childish behavior. "To expect a child's social interaction skills to become those of a semi-adult in just one summer, as we do in the transition from elementary (to) middle school, is ludicrous."

It is noteworthy that an underlying theme in Unks' observations is that, while most students seem to adapt fairly well to the changes they encounter in middle school, there is a group of students who may experience considerable difficulty.

The transition to middle or junior high school may be similar in some ways to the transition to high school; as such, observations regarding the latter are worthy of brief review. Felner, Ginter, and Primavera (1982) asserted that it may be particularly important to attend to key aspects of the social environment which may be modified to facilitate students' adaptation to the transition to high school. One feature of the school setting thought to exacerbate students' difficulties in coping with the transition to high school is the fact that the entire local system is in a state of flux with all incoming students attempting to adapt to the new setting at the same time. All students in the entering class are simultaneously confronted by a new physical environment and a larger and generally unfamiliar set of peers and school personnel. Such broad systemic flux may interfere with a student's adaptive efforts in several ways. A student's mastery of transition tasks, such as gaining an understanding of the school's expectations and regularities or reconstructing and reorganizing his or her formal and informal support systems, may be made more difficult by the social setting context. Similarly, teachers and guidance staff are confronted with getting to know and providing information and support for large numbers of new students. Thus, in addition to those tasks typically confronted by a student transferring to a new school, the students entering high school are also confronted by a less stable, less predictable environment in which the resources available to aid them in their coping efforts may be seriously taxed.

There are numerous factors complicating the secondary school transition issue. First, the precise changes that occur for students during this transition and demands for mastering the above tasks vary considerably from school to school. Second, not all secondary school transitions take place at the same grade or age; transition may occur in the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth or ninth grade, i.e., between the ages of 10 and 14 years. This variability not only complicates the research picture, but also seems to indicate that decisions about the timing of this transition may in some instances be influenced more by demographic than developmental considerations. Fielder (1978) has stated that the middle school sometimes conforms to perceived educational logic and other times merely serves to accommodate student enrollments in a geographical area. McEwin (1983) has argued that the middle school structure was developed more as a response to the developmental status of ninth graders than to the status of fifth and sixth graders. Given the tremendous variability in physical, emotional, and cognitive development of pre- and early adolescents, it is difficult to conceive of an "ideally timed" transition to secondary school.

Despite this variability, the fact that this transition occurs in pre- or early-adolescence has been emphasized by numerous observers. Moos (1984) has argued that the "personal system" -- encompassing interpersonal, emotional, cognitive, physical, and biological attributes -- is in a state of major flux for youngsters of middle school age. At this age, peers are thought to become a

critical reference point for interactions while individuals are simultaneously in conflict with adult authority figures over issues of dependence, conformity and independence (Lipsitz, 1980). Middle school age has been documented as a period during which rates for juvenile crime, drug abuse, adolescent pregnancy and suicide increase (Lipsitz, 1980); further, the seventh grade has been found to be a pivotal time for referrals to community mental health facilities. Disruptive students in middle level schools have been found to generally follow a downhill school course in their early teens which may include suspension, truancy, grade retention and eventual withdrawal or expulsion (Safer, Heaton, & Parker, 1981). Rutter (1980) has noted that, while rates of incidence and prevalence of diverse problem behaviors peak during the high school years, these difficulties seem to emerge from unresolved issues of the middle school period and should be studied in that context.

In sum, the transition from elementary to secondary school has been characterized as requiring, at best, change, adaptation, and mastery of various tasks by students, and at worst, exposure at a nodal developmental stage to "traumatic" circumstances with stress-inducing and pathogenic qualities. Our understanding of this transition is quite limited; while research described in the following section indicates that students evince variable responses to secondary school, there is little evidence to indicate that students who fail to successfully adapt to secondary school are at greater risk for other problems in middle school or beyond.

Research Findings

A growing body of research has confirmed, disconfirmed, and/or modified some of the above assertions. Several researchers have attempted to refine our understanding of factors that are associated with transition problems, particularly with regard to the specific stressors affecting students in transition. Elias, Gara, and Ubriaco (1985) attempted to systematically identify salient clusters of stressors that are reliable characteristics of middle school environments and to elucidate the clinical significance of the adaptational tasks accompanying these stressors. Questionnaires were completed by a combined 41 principals, vice principals and special education directors of middle schools, as well as by 158 sixth graders about four weeks after their entry into middle school. Students were asked to rate the extent to which various stressors were problematic for them; administrators were asked to estimate the percentage of children affected by a stressor and to indicate the times during the year of greatest severity. Stressors were categorized into five rotated factors and three longitudinal prototypes, and the resulting measure was called the Survey of Middle School Stressors (Elias, Gara, Ubriaco, Rothbaum, Reese, & Haviland, 1987).

The first factor was labeled Power, Conflict and Coping, and included stressors such as being sent to the principal's office, arguing with teachers and getting into fights. The second factor was designated Substance Abuse. It included stressors associated with pressure to smoke, take drugs and drink alcohol. The third factor,

Verbal Peer Pressure and Exclusion, included stressors such as being bothered by older kids, being teased and being pressured to do things one does not want to do. The fourth factor, New Rules for Sociability, was comprised of stressors such as dating members of the opposite sex, having trouble making friends and being made fun of in the locker room. Finally, the fifth factor was labeled Academic Demands, and included stressors such as having too much homework, having harder schoolwork and having tougher teachers.

Administrators tended to see academic demands (factor five) as the most severe stressors for students, whereas students viewed conflicts with authority (the first factor) as most severe, followed by substance abuse. Stressors were classified into prototypes according to their potency over the course of the year, and included stressors with maximum potency early in the year, constant potency throughout the year, and constant potency but renewed potency at the end of the year.

Other researchers have found that stressors encountered in the transition from elementary to secondary school decrease dramatically in importance after the first few weeks in the new school. For example, Mitman and Packer (1982) administered a "concerns" questionnaire to seventh grade students after their first five weeks at a junior high school, asking students to identify concerns they had prior to entering junior high school as well as present concerns. In general, students expressed more concern about those items having to do with academic work (e.g., having too much homework, being given

more difficult schoolwork and being able to get to class on time) and relatively less concern about those items having to do with the social aspects of junior high school (e.g., being beaten up or bullied by older students, or concerns about dating). There was a significant decrease in total expressed concerns from prior to entering junior high school to five weeks after entering. Mitman and Packer (1982) concluded that these students viewed themselves as having adjusted within the first few weeks to whatever few transition problems they may have experienced.

Cotterell (1982) found that students' initial concerns with the physical layout and academic routines began to wane after three weeks of secondary school. However, many children reported a continued sense of loneliness and alienation, as well as a feeling of potential threat from teachers and older students.

In another study (Schulenberg, Asp, & Petersen, 1984), 335 students were monitored longitudinally through sixth, seventh, and eighth grade, with interviews being conducted pertaining to students' views and attitudes about various aspects of school. It was found that academics were generally more important than athletics or popularity, especially for boys, and that the transition to junior high school went better than expected for most students. No information was reported regarding those students for whom transition did not go better than expected. The researchers noted that the subject pool was comprised chiefly of white, middle- to upper-class students whose fathers were typically college-educated and whose IQs

were, on the whole, above average.

Stressors and problematic situations such as those mentioned above have been subjected to behavioral and task analyses in both clinical and normative contexts. Elias et al. (1986b) have identified a set of social-cognitive skills as important for problem resolution. These include (a) expectations concerning the outcome of problem situations (positive or negative); (b) expectations concerning the extent to which personal initiative will facilitate positive problem resolution; (c) ability to understand the meaning of social situations and the motives and perspectives of different characters in them; (d) ability to consider multiple alternatives and their consequences and to develop detailed plans to obtain one's goals; (e) ability to react to obstacles encountered during the problem-resolution process; (f) qualitative style of resolving problem situations, that is, one's cognitive-behavioral strategies; and (g) ability to monitor one's experience in situations and use this information to refine future problem-solving performance. It was noted that deficiencies in any one of these areas was likely to impair behavioral performance and increase social adjustment difficulties. It must be stated, however, that research is far from conclusive concerning which skills are critical in particular situations and at particular developmental levels (c.f., Elias et al., 1986a).

Other researchers have examined changes that occur in more traditional indices of school adjustment. For example, in the study discussed above, Schulenberg et al. (1984) found that mean

grade-point-average declined significantly in the first year of secondary school, with the decline being more pronounced for males than females. Several explanations were suggested to account for the significant decline in grades, including possible changes in the difficulty of curriculum and more rigorous grading practices in junior high school, as well as the disruptive effect of the transition itself.

Blyth, Simmons, and Carlton-Ford (1983) assessed students undergoing the transition to secondary school in terms of grades, "social behavior" (as measured by responses to four statements on a scale developed by the researchers), and "psychological adjustment" (defined and measured by a self-report self-esteem instrument). Students were assessed in the sixth, seventh, ninth, and tenth grades, and comparisons were made by gender and cohort (one cohort of students entered secondary school in the seventh grade, the other in the ninth grade).

Among students entering junior high school in the seventh grade, females showed a significant drop in self-esteem, whereas males did not. This pattern did not occur for students entering secondary school in the ninth grade. A significant decrease in grade-point-average (GPA) was found regardless of when the transition to secondary school occurred, and this decrease was more pronounced for males than for females. A significant decrease in participation in extracurricular activities was also found regardless of the transition point, but no significant gender differences were found. Perceived anonymity

increased dramatically upon entry into secondary school for both males and females. While transition years were associated with negative changes, the years following the transition were generally associated with gradual recovery toward previous levels.

Hirsch and Rapkin (1987) examined the "psychological well-being" of 159 white and black students during the transition to junior high school, and found adjustment patterns to be "complex and highly differentiated." These researchers assessed students at the end of their final year of elementary school (sixth grade) and at the middle and end of their first year of junior high school (seventh grade). Self-esteem, measured by Rosenberg's (1965) 10-item scale, was unchanged from the end of the sixth grade through the middle of the seventh grade, and rose by the end of the seventh grade. Females reported an increase in depressive and other symptoms over time relative to males on the Brief Symptom Inventory, a short form of the Symptom Checklist 90 derived from the Hopkins Symptom Checklist (Derogatis & Spencer, 1982). The most dramatic change occurred in "quality of school life," measured by a self-report instrument developed by Epstein and McPartland (1976). Quality of school life plunged regardless of academic competence. These researchers suggested that future investigators consider whether important individual differences exist in patterns of adjustment over time, given their highly inconsistent aggregate findings.

Ward (1982) described six patterns of participation in sixth and seventh grade students, and examined changes in these patterns as

students made the transition from a single classroom environment in elementary school to different classroom environments in junior high school (in the seventh grade). Students were categorized by their teachers into one of the following participation/classroom behavior patterns: success/multitask, social, dependent, phantom, isolate, or alienate. Because of an extremely small subject pool (n=24), results are not presented in detail here. However, a general finding was that the majority of the students appeared to evince participation characteristics in the first year of junior high school that were similar to those they evinced in the last year of elementary school.

These studies underscore the difficulties confronting researchers attempting to quantify changes that occur in the transition from elementary to secondary school. Because school transitions are a relatively new area of study, researchers have yet to establish the most meaningful criteria for determining adaptive versus maladaptive transitions. To date, none of the transition difficulties discussed above have been tied to specific short- or long-term negative consequences for students.

As a result, some researchers have attempted to define a "good" versus "poor" transition and have explored differences among students who fit each description. Greene and Ollendick (1987), emphasizing that school performance has traditionally been measured in terms of academic performance, sought to explore changes that occur along this dimension in the transition from elementary school (fifth grade) to middle school (sixth grade). A significant decrease in grade-point

average (GPA) between fifth and sixth grade of 0.65 points (on a 4-point scale) was found, and there was considerable variability along this dimension; that is, there were students whose GPAs improved considerably (up to 1.3 points) and others whose GPAs deteriorated significantly (up to 2.8 points).

After subjects (n=167) were categorized according to their previous level of functioning in elementary school (high, medium, and low), transition parameters were established for each group (good, average, and poor transition) based upon distributions for the differences between fifth and sixth grade GPAs. It was found that, for different groups of students, variables such as gender, sociometric status, and academic competence (as measured by standardized test scores) were significant predictors of middle school transition status. Males represented two-thirds of those students categorized as having made a poor academic transition.

Finally, Greene and Ollendick (1987) found that over 75 percent of the poor academic transition students had GPAs at or below 2.0 points in the second year of middle school. About one-third of the poor transition students had lower GPAs in their second year of middle school, one-third had slightly higher GPAs (less than a 0.8 point increase), and about one-third evinced GPA increases of over one point. Thus, poor academic transitions were found to have persisted into the second year of middle school for a significant proportion of students. It was concluded that the transition from elementary to middle school is characterized by diverse adjustment patterns, and

that there exists a meaningful number of students who experience significant academic deterioration upon entering middle school.

In sum, research has established that the transition from elementary to middle school may be characterized by negative aggregate changes in students, including increased stress, lower self-esteem, higher perceived anonymity, lower participation in extracurricular activities, and an aggregate decrease in grades. Some students evince negative changes in behavior and attendance, and a subset of students experience grade-point, attendance, and behavioral deterioration far more serious than the average. However, at this stage, only significant grade-point decreases have been shown to persist beyond the first year of middle school, and then only for some students. Moreover, research has yet to establish a link between students who evince negative changes in the transition from elementary to middle school and the more serious maladaptive behaviors discussed in an earlier section.

Suggested and Implemented Programs

Based primarily upon observations and theories (and to a lesser extent on data), a variety of prevention programs have been proposed for middle level schools. Several have been implemented; few have been evaluated empirically.

For example, Hoffman (1979) has suggested that middle school programs should be designed to avoid the self-destructive characteristics of the secondary school such as fragmented rosters,

unmanageable lunchroom situations, inordinate preoccupation with remediation, ability grouping, focusing on subject rather than student, floating teachers, detention rooms and study halls. His plan for successful middle schools includes (a) having students remain with one teacher for the greater part of the day, thus encouraging a more secure, personalized teacher-pupil relationship; (b) limited movement of students throughout the entire building; (c) teachers with classrooms of their own or at least stations of their own; (d) teachers who are generalists rather than specialists; and (e) organizing the middle school in the fashion of the elementary school in general, for the purpose of providing a more intimate, humanistic, familiar environment. Unks (1983) has advanced several similar proposals, including the idea of a central teacher with whom a student could clearly identify and would spend a large block of time with each day, and the discontinuance of programs more characteristic of high schools, including fixed schedules, study halls, and departmentalization.

Elias et al. (1985) concluded that their stress-related and problem-solving findings were suggestive of areas to serve as a focus for clinical intervention; namely, how to handle problematic encounters with teachers or the vice principal, how to respond to teasing from peers or older children, how to respond when pressured to do things one does not wish to do and how to become part of prosocial group activities. The following elements were recommended as components of preventive programs: (a) providing fifth graders with

problem-solving and coping skills; (b) helping incoming students maintain links with schoolmates; (c) actively involving parents and older siblings in the academic routine; (d) providing teachers and vice principals with skills at conflict de-escalation and resolution; and (e) providing incoming students with one or two adults (e.g., teachers and counselors) who would act as a source of support and to whom a student would be regularly accountable.

Numerous of these components were incorporated in a preventive social problem-solving intervention for students prior to entry into middle school (Elias et al., 1986a). Fifth graders receiving either one-half year or one full year of a preventive social problem-solving program in elementary school were compared with each other and with a no-treatment group upon entry into middle school. The half-year treatment consisted of an "instructional phase" comprised of 20 lessons averaging 40 minutes each, during which students were instructed regarding the definition of a problem situation, ways of handling such situations more easily, and specific problem-solving skills. These skills included (a) interpersonal sensitivity, which includes focusing on one's feelings in problematic situations, putting those feelings into words while attending to what is going on in a situation, and thinking about one's goal in the situation; (b) means-ends thinking, which includes considering alternative ways to reach one's goal and multiple consequences for each alternative; and (c) planning and anticipation, which includes developing specific ideas for carrying out one's chosen solution, anticipating possible

obstacles, and, after attempting to solve the problem, reconsidering what happened for use in future situations. Modeling and role-playing were among the primary instructional components.

The full-year treatment consisted of the half-year instructional phase followed by a half-year "application phase," during which classroom teachers employed the technique of life space intervention, in which they attempted to mediate conflicts between individual students or larger groups by facilitating children's problem-solving thinking rather than stepping in and providing their own solutions to the problem. Teachers were also provided with specific activities designed to bring problem-solving into the regular classroom routine.

Two assessment measures were administered to students in the two treatment groups and one control group about one month after entry into middle school, the Survey of Middle School Stressors and the Group Social Problem Solving Assessment (Elias et al., 1986a). Analyses indicated that the one-year training was superior to the half-year training and both conditions were associated with a significant reduction in children's self-reported level of difficulty with commonly occurring stressors in middle school when compared to controls. However, while children lacking in social-problem solving skills were more likely to experience intense stressors, possessing the skills was not necessarily predictive of adjustment to middle school (Elias et al., 1986a).

The above study represents one of the few efforts reported in the literature involving an intervention for students entering middle

school. Given the limited research in the specific realm of transition to middle school, it is necessary to review briefly interventions that have been implemented in related areas, e.g., the transition to high school, graduation from high school, transition after a school closing and unscheduled transitions involving students in isolation switching from one school to another.

For example, Felner, Ginter, and Primavera (1982) developed a program for students undergoing the transition to high school aimed at reducing the degree of flux and complexity of the social setting the student was entering, as well as increasing the instrumental and affective social support from teachers and peers. The program had two primary components. The first involved restructuring the role of homeroom teachers so that these teachers served as the primary administrative-counseling link between the students, their parents and the rest of the school, performing many guidance and administrative duties usually done by guidance counselors and other school personnel. The intent of these changes were threefold: (a) to increase the amount of instrumental and affective social support from a school-based source the students perceived as present in their daily school environment; (b) to increase students' feelings of accountability and decrease their sense of anonymity; and (c) to reduce the difficulty with which students could gain access to important information about school expectations, rules, and regularities.

The second component involved a partial reorganization of the

social system the student was entering. Primary goals of this component were to reduce the degree of flux the students confronted upon entering high school and to facilitate the restructuring and establishment of a stable peer support system. The four academic subjects of the treatment students were "blocked" such that students remained with the same classmates for a major portion of the school day.

At the end of the first year of high school (ninth grade), treatment students compared to controls were found to have significantly better grade-point averages and attendance records, more positive self-concepts, and saw the school environment as having clearer expectations and organizational structure and higher levels of teacher support. Felner et al. (1982) concluded that low-cost changes in the roles of school personnel and the social ecology of the high school environment can effectively prevent academic and personal difficulties associated with school change by increasing the levels of social support available to students and decreasing the confusion and complexity of the setting being entered.

Jason and Burrows (1983) conducted a transition training program for students preparing to graduate from high school. The program focused on teaching adaptive coping responses and involved relaxation exercises, cognitive restructuring techniques and problem-solving procedures. All three components included the role-playing of various transition scenes. These researchers found that their preventive transition training program brought about significant gains for

program participants in cognitive restructuring, coping strategies and length of stories generated, rational beliefs and feelings of self-efficacy, as compared to a no-treatment control group. However, no significant differences were found at followup one year after graduation along lines of academic performance in college, enjoyment of employment or serious life crises.

Bogat et al. (1980) investigated the efficacy of a peer-led preventive orientation program aimed at allaying the detrimental effects of a forced school closing. Seventh-grade students transferring into a public elementary school were matched by grade and gender with students currently enrolled in the public school, and the group of transfer students were then assigned to treatment and no-treatment program conditions. The two-day peer-led orientation program was conducted the week before school commenced, consisting of distribution of booklets containing school information, a tour of the school building, review of school rules, regulations, and personnel, and discussion groups centering on the closing of the former elementary school, the differences and similarities between the public and private schools, and feelings about being a transfer student. Following the intervention, the treatment group was superior to both the no-treatment and currently-enrolled groups in terms of self-esteem related to peer relationships, knowledge of school rules and teacher conduct ratings.

Sloan, Jason, and Bogat (1984) employed similar components in a program designed to ease the unscheduled transition into a new school

system for individual students. Transfer students were assigned to either a peer-led discussion group, a peer-led discussion plus a slide presentation group, or a control group. Findings indicated that children in the discussion group and the discussion plus slide group knew significantly more information about the school, reported reduced anxiety, and demonstrated more positive attitudes about school subjects, peers, and school structure and climate than children in the control group. In a similar study, Jason and Bogat (1984) found that children exposed to the preventive intervention were more knowledgeable about their new school in comparison to controls, but found no differences in adjustment criterion measures such as anxiety, self-appraisal, person-environment fit, the Wide Range Achievement Test, sociometric status and social climate.

Summary

There seems little question that the scheduled transfer from elementary to secondary school may be characterized as a "transition," as it involves numerous environmental changes to which students must adapt. Unfortunately, much of what is "understood" about the changes involved in this transition remains speculative, based more on theory than empirical research. Our true understanding of the processes and effects of this transition is actually quite limited. Further, it would appear that some inappropriate conclusions have been reached based on the limited research that has been conducted in this area, and that some prevention programs have been implemented prematurely.

For example, several studies have shown that the changes encountered by students upon entry into secondary school are associated with an increase in student-reported stress, and that some stressors retain potency throughout the school year (Elias et al., 1985). Researchers have suggested that the amount of stress experienced and ability to problem-solve difficulties encountered in secondary school may be important predictors of adjustment in the first year (and subsequent years) of secondary school (Elias et al., 1986b), however these suggestions have yet to be substantiated empirically. Further, some studies (e.g., Schulenberg et al., 1984) indicate that students report sharply diminished stressors after about a month in their new school. What has been demonstrated is that students who are trained to problem-solve during the final year of elementary school are better problem-solvers and report better coping with stressors in their first year of secondary school than those who are not trained. There is no evidence to suggest that these improvements are related to subsequent student adjustment along lines of academic achievement, attendance, behavior, etc.

In studies evaluating preventive programs designed for different, but related transitions, researchers have trained adaptive coping responses, taught relaxation and cognitive restructuring techniques (Jason & Burrows, 1983), distributed information booklets, given tours of schools, reviewed school rules and regulations, and held discussion groups (Bogat et al., 1980). In most instances, program success was discussed in terms of student attitudes and

integration of instructed material; results rarely indicated improvements along more meaningful indices of adjustment (e.g., grades, attendance, and behavior). One might rightly question the significance of such programs in view of these limited findings.

Similarly, it is difficult to assess the importance of reported negative changes in self-esteem, perceived anonymity, and participation in extracurricular activities found to occur in the transition from elementary to secondary school (Blyth et al., 1983). These changes, on an aggregate basis, have also been found to diminish over time, and, once again, there is no evidence linking changes along these dimensions with subsequent maladjustment.

Along more traditional lines, grades have also been found to decline significantly in the first year of secondary school, whereas behavior and attendance evince no such decline (Greene & Ollendick, 1987). However, aggregate GPA shows a steady improvement after the first year of secondary school (Blyth et al., 1983).

Thus, the evidence seems to indicate that, although there are a variety of negative changes associated with entry into secondary school, these changes appear to improve over time. Moos (1984) has found that most persons do, in fact, shape acceptable resolutions to difficult circumstances, while some manage not only to survive but to mature in the face of overwhelming hardships. This suggestion appears relevant to the transition from elementary to secondary school, in that it appears that most students, after showing some degree of negative response to secondary school, subsequently adapt to their new

environment and the negative responses diminish over time.

However, this reasoning also implies that there is a subset of students who do not adapt to secondary school; this implication is made not only by Moos (1984) but also by Felner et al. (1980) and Unks (1983). Jason (1985) acknowledges that preventive programs such as those discussed in earlier sections have been non-prescriptive in that they have provided similar services to all transfers regardless of need. Such programs have not been specifically geared toward meeting the needs of subsets of vulnerable transfer students.

Some recent research efforts have been devoted toward identifying subsets of vulnerable students, i.e., finding differences between students who evince differential transition adjustment to secondary school. For example, among students at higher levels of functioning, good academic transition students were significantly more popular than their poor transition counterparts. Importantly, many students evincing poor academic transitions continue to demonstrate poor academic performance in their subsequent year of middle school (Greene & Ollendick, 1987). However, research in this area has not yet reached a level of understanding by which vulnerable students can be identified in advance of their entry into secondary school.

By way of summary, the following basic premises are therefore suggested: (a) it may be unnecessary to intervene with all students prior to their entry into secondary school, as the negative responses to this environmental change appear to diminish over time; (b) there is a subset of students who evince a more serious academic

deterioration in the transition from elementary to secondary school, and this deterioration appears to persist into subsequent years; and (c) it is not yet possible to identify students at-risk for poor academic transitions prior to their entry into secondary school. Given these premises, it appears that the most appropriate timing for intervention with poor academic transition students is shortly after the poor transition has occurred. This shifts the focus of intervention from primary to secondary prevention. Greene (Note 1) reported considerable stability in grades across the first year of middle school, and indicated that poor academic transitions were typically evident after no more than two six-week grading periods. This finding suggests that intervention for poor academic transition students can occur at the beginning of the third grading period, before a considerable amount of time has elapsed, and continue throughout the first year of middle school.

To date, the only transition intervention shown to have a positive impact on student academic performance is that implemented by Felner et al. (1982) at the high school level, described earlier. It will be recalled that this intervention included redefining the role of the homeroom teacher to provide for greater student support and the "blocking" of four academic classes so that students were with the same classmates during much of the school day. The study demonstrated that low-cost changes in the roles of school personnel and the social ecology of the high school environment can effectively prevent academic and personal difficulties associated with school change by

increasing the levels of social support available to students and decreasing the confusion and complexity of the setting being entered.

Given the premises discussed above, the following research questions required further study:

(1) Do students evincing a poor academic transition to middle school show greater problems in other areas as compared to students whose academic transition is less difficult, including depression, anxiety, self-esteem, stress, and behavior?

(2) Is an intervention consisting of group support (including problem-solving skills training, social skills training, goal-setting, self-monitoring, and incentives), parental support, and teacher support more efficacious than an intervention consisting of teacher support alone in improving the academic performance of poor transition students? Do either of the two treatment groups approach the comparison group along this dimension at post-treatment or followup?

(3) Does the full treatment intervention produce more positive effects along other areas of adjustment as compared to the partial treatment condition, and does either treatment group approach the comparison group along any of these dimensions at post-treatment or followup?

These issues are the focus of the present study.

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Appendix B
Children's Depression Inventory (CDI)

CD INVENTORY

M. Kovacs

NAME _____ AGE _____ DATE _____

DIRECTIONS: Kids sometimes have different feelings and ideas. This form lists the feelings and ideas in groups. From each group, pick one sentence that describes you best for the past two weeks. After you pick a sentence from the first group, go on to the next group. There is no right or wrong answer. Just pick the sentence that best describes the way you have been recently. Put a mark like this - X - next to your answer. Put the X on the line next to the sentence that you pick.

Here is an example of how this form works. Try it. Put a mark next to the sentence that describes you best:

- I read books all the time
 I read books once in a while
 I never read books

Remember, pick out the sentence that describes your feelings and ideas in the past two weeks.

1. I am sad once in a while
 I am sad many times
 I am sad all the time
2. Nothing will ever work out for me
 I am not sure if things will work out for me
 Things will work out for me O.K.
3. I do most things O.K.
 I do many things wrong
 I do everything wrong
4. I have fun in many things
 I have fun in some things
 Nothing is fun at all
5. I am bad all the time
 I am bad many times
 I am bad once in awhile
6. I think about bad things happening to me once in awhile
 I worry that bad things will happen to me
 I am sure that terrible things will happen to me

7. I hate myself
 I do not like myself
 I like myself
8. All bad things are my fault
 Many bad things are my fault
 Bad things are not usually my fault
9. I do not think about killing myself
 I think about killing myself but I would not do it
 I want to kill myself
10. I feel like crying every day
 I feel like crying many days
 I feel like crying once in awhile
11. Things bother me all the time
 Things bother me many times
 Things bother me once in awhile
12. I like being with people
 I do not like being with people many times
 I do not want to be with people at all
13. I cannot make up my mind about things
 It is hard to make up my mind about things
 I make up my mind about things easily
14. I look O.K.
 There are some bad things about my looks
 I look ugly
15. I have to push myself all the time to do my schoolwork
 I have to push myself many times to do my schoolwork
 Doing schoolwork is not a big problem
16. I have trouble sleeping every night
 I have trouble sleeping many nights
 I sleep pretty well
17. I am tired once in awhile
 I am tired many days
 I am tired all the time
18. Most days I do not feel like eating
 Many days I do not feel like eating
 I eat pretty well

19. I do not worry about aches and pains
 I worry about aches and pains many times
 I worry about aches and pains all the time
20. I do not feel alone
 I feel alone many times
 I feel alone all the time
21. I never have fun at school
 I have fun at school only once in awhile
 I have fun at school many times
22. I have plenty of friends
 I have some friends but I wish I had more
 I do not have any friends
23. My school work is alright
 My school work is not as good as before
 I do very badly in subjects I used to be good in
24. I can never be as good as other kids
 I can be as good as other kids if I want to
 I am just as good as other kids
25. Nobody really loves me
 I am not sure if anybody loves me
 I am sure that somebody loves me
26. I usually do what I am told
 I do not do what I am told most times
 I never do what I am told
27. I get along with people
 I get into fights many times
 I get into fights all the time

Appendix C

Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (RCMAS)

WHAT I THINK AND FEEL

School _____

Name _____

Grade _____ Age _____

Girl _____ Boy _____

Directions: Read each question carefully. Put a circle around the word YES if you think it is true about you. Put a circle around the word NO if you think it is not true about you.

- | | | |
|-----|----|--|
| YES | NO | 1. I have trouble making up my mind. |
| YES | NO | 2. I get nervous when things do not go the right way for me. |
| YES | NO | 3. Others seem to do things easier than I can. |
| YES | NO | 4. I like everyone I know. |
| YES | NO | 5. Often I have trouble getting my breath. |
| YES | NO | 6. I worry a lot of the time. |
| YES | NO | 7. I am afraid of a lot of things. |
| YES | NO | 8. I am always kind. |
| YES | NO | 9. I get mad easily. |
| YES | NO | 10. I worry about what my parents will say to me. |
| YES | NO | 11. I feel that others do not like the way I do things. |
| YES | NO | 12. I always have good manners. |
| YES | NO | 13. It is hard for me to get to sleep at night. |
| YES | NO | 14. I worry about what other people think about me. |
| YES | NO | 15. I feel alone even when there are people with me. |
| YES | NO | 16. I am always good. |

- YES NO 17. Often I feel sick in my stomach.
- YES NO 18. My feelings get hurt easily.
- YES NO 19. My hands feel sweaty.
- YES NO 20. I am always nice to everyone.
- YES NO 21. I am tired a lot.
- YES NO 22. I worry about what is going to happen.
- YES NO 23. Other children are happier than I.
- YES NO 24. I tell the truth every single time.
- YES NO 25. I have bad dreams.
- YES NO 26. My feelings get hurt easily when I am fussed at.
- YES NO 27. I feel someone will tell me I do things the wrong way.
- YES NO 28. I never get angry.
- YES NO 29. I wake up scared some of the time.
- YES NO 30. I worry when I go to bed at night.
- YES NO 31. It is hard for me to keep my mind on my school work.
- YES NO 32. I never say things I shouldn't.
- YES NO 33. I wiggle in my seat a lot.
- YES NO 34. I am nervous.
- YES NO 35. A lot of people are against me.
- YES NO 36. A never lie.
- YES NO 37. I often worry about something bad happening to me.

Appendix D

Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale

THE PIERS-HARRIS CHILDREN'S SELF-CONCEPT SCALE
(Response Form)

NAME _____ AGE _____ DATE _____

- | | | |
|-----|----|---|
| YES | NO | 1. My classmates make fun of me. |
| YES | NO | 2. I am a happy person. |
| YES | NO | 3. It is hard for me to make friends. |
| YES | NO | 4. I am often sad. |
| YES | NO | 5. I am smart. |
| YES | NO | 6. I am shy. |
| YES | NO | 7. I get nervous when the teacher calls on me. |
| YES | NO | 8. My looks bother me. |
| YES | NO | 9. When I grow up, I will be an important person. |
| YES | NO | 10. I get worried when we have tests in school. |
| YES | NO | 11. I am unpopular. |
| YES | NO | 12. I am well behaved in school. |
| YES | NO | 13. It is usually my fault when something goes wrong. |
| YES | NO | 14. I cause trouble to my family. |
| YES | NO | 15. I am strong. |
| YES | NO | 16. I have good ideas. |
| YES | NO | 17. I am an important member of my family. |
| YES | NO | 18. I usually want my own way. |
| YES | NO | 19. I am good at making things with my hands. |
| YES | NO | 20. I give up easily. |
| YES | NO | 21. I am good in my school work. |
| YES | NO | 22. I do many bad things. |

- YES NO 23. I can draw well.
- YES NO 24. I am good in music.
- YES NO 25. I behave badly at home.
- YES NO 26. I am slow in finishing my school work.
- YES NO 27. I am an important member of my class.
- YES NO 28. I am nervous.
- YES NO 29. I have pretty eyes.
- YES NO 30. I can give a good report in front of the class.
- YES NO 31. In school, I am a dreamer.
- YES NO 32. I pick on my brother(s) and sister(s).
- YES NO 33. My friends like my ideas.
- YES NO 34. I often get into trouble.
- YES NO 35. I am obedient at home.
- YES NO 36. I am lucky.
- YES NO 37. I worry a lot.
- YES NO 38. My parents expect too much of me.
- YES NO 39. I like being the way I am.
- YES NO 40. I feel left out of things.
- YES NO 41. I have nice hair.
- YES NO 42. I often volunteer in school.
- YES NO 43. I wish I were different.
- YES NO 44. I sleep well at night.
- YES NO 45. I hate school.
- YES NO 46. I am among the last to be chosen for games.
- YES NO 47. I am sick a lot.

- YES NO 48. I am often mean to other people.
- YES NO 49. My classmates in school think I have good ideas.
- YES NO 50. I am unhappy.
- YES NO 51. I have many friends.
- YES NO 52. I am cheerful.
- YES NO 53. I am dumb at most things.
- YES NO 54. I am good looking.
- YES NO 55. I have lots of pep.
- YES NO 56. I get into a lot of fights.
- YES NO 57. I am popular with boys.
- YES NO 58. People pick on me.
- YES NO 59. My family is disappointed in me.
- YES NO 60. I have a pleasant face.
- YES NO 61. When I try to make something, everything seems to go wrong.
- YES NO 62. I am picked on at home.
- YES NO 63. I am a leader in sports and games.
- YES NO 64. I am clumsy.
- YES NO 65. In games and sports, I watch instead of play.
- YES NO 66. I forget what I learn.
- YES NO 67. I am easy to get along with.
- YES NO 68. I lose my temper easily.
- YES NO 69. I am popular with girls.
- YES NO 70. I am a good reader.
- YES NO 71. I would rather work alone than with a group.
- YES NO 72. I like my brother (sister).

- YES NO 73. I have a good figure.
- YES NO 74. I am often afraid.
- YES NO 75. I am always dropping or breaking things.
- YES NO 76. I can be trusted.
- YES NO 77. I am different from other people.
- YES NO 78. I think bad thoughts.
- YES NO 79. I cry easily.
- YES NO 80. I am a good person.

Appendix E

Survey of Middle School Stressors

MIDDLE SCHOOL SURVEY

Name _____ School _____

Look at the list below. It is a list of 28 things that might have happened to you in middle school. After each item on the list, you will see four numbers.

Read each item. Then circle the number 1, 2, 3, or 4 depending on how much of a problem that item is for you right now in middle school.

1 = THIS IS NOT A PROBLEM FOR ME

2 = THIS IS A SMALL PROBLEM FOR ME

3 = THIS IS A MEDIUM-SIZED PROBLEM FOR ME

4 = THIS IS A LARGE PROBLEM FOR ME

1. Getting lost and not being able to find your way around school ----- 1---2---3---4
2. Forgetting your locker combination -----1---2---3---4
3. Being treated more like a child-----1---2---3---4
4. Having school farther away from home -----1---2---3---4
5. Having a tough teacher -----1---2---3---4
6. Buying new notebooks -----1---2---3---4
7. Having to do harder work -----1---2---3---4
8. Eating in a larger cafeteria -----1---2---3---4
9. Having an argument with a teacher -----1---2---3---4
10. Being sent to the assistant principal -----1---2---3---4
11. Leaving the wrong books and supplies in your locker and forgetting to bring the right books and supplies to class -----1---2---3---4
12. Getting too much homework -----1---2---3---4
13. Getting into fights -----1---2---3---4
14. Missing your friends from elementary school -----1---2---3---4
15. Having trouble making new friends -----1---2---3---4
16. Wishing you were in a better reading group -----1---2---3---4
17. Kids trying to talk you into things you don't want to do -----1---2---3---4
18. Getting things stolen from you -----1---2---3---4
19. Getting bothered by the older kids -----1---2---3---4
20. Not getting along with all your different teachers -----1---2---3---4
21. Other kids teasing you -----1---2---3---4
22. Being left out of the "in" group, being out of the group of kids you'd like to hang around ----1---2---3---4

23. Kids seeing you in the locker room without
any clothes on and making fun of you -----1---2---3---4
24. Drinking beer, wine, or liquor -----1---2---3---4
25. Getting involved with drugs -----1---2---3---4
26. Smoking cigarettes -----1---2---3---4
27. Dating members of the opposite sex -----1---2---3---4
28. Teachers expecting too much of you -----1---2---3---4

Appendix F

Revised Behavior Problem Checklist (RBPC)

REVISED BEHAVIOR PROBLEM CHECKLIST

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and

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Donald R. Peterson, 1983*

Please complete items 1 to 7 carefully.

1. Name (or identification number) of child

2. Date of birth _____

3. Sex _____

4. Father's occupation _____

5. Name of person completing this checklist

6. Relationship to child (circle one)

a. Mother b. Father c. Teacher d. Other _____
(Specify)

7. Date checklist completed _____

Please indicate which of the following are problems, as far as this child is concerned. If an item does not constitute a problem or if you have had no opportunity to observe or have no knowledge about the item, circle the zero. If an item constitutes a mild problem, circle the one; if an item constitutes a severe problem, circle the two. Please complete every item.

REVISED BEHAVIOR PROBLEM CHECKLIST

1. Restless; unable to sit still	0	1	2
2. Seeks attention; "shows-off"	0	1	2
3. Stays out late at night	0	1	2
4. Self-conscious; easily embarrassed	0	1	2
5. Disruptive; annoys and bothers others	0	1	2
6. Feels inferior	0	1	2
7. Steals in company with others	0	1	2
8. Preoccupied; "in a world of his own;" stares into space	0	1	2
9. Shy, bashful	0	1	2
10. Withdraws; prefers solitary activities	0	1	2
11. Belongs to a gang	0	1	2
12. Repetitive speech; says same thing over and over	0	1	2
13. Short attention span; poor concentration	0	1	2
14. Lacks self-confidence	0	1	2
15. Inattentive to what others say	0	1	2
16. Incoherent speech, what is said doesn't make sense	0	1	2
17. Fights	0	1	2
18. Loyal to delinquent friends	0	1	2
19. Has temper tantrums	0	1	2
20. Truant from school, usually in company with others	0	1	2
21. Hypersensitive; feelings are easily hurt	0	1	2
22. Generally fearful; anxious	0	1	2
23. Irresponsible, undependable	0	1	2
24. Has "bad" companions, ones who are always in some kind of trouble	0	1	2
25. Tense, unable to relax	0	1	2
26. Disobedient; difficult to control	0	1	2
27. Depressed; always sad	0	1	2
28. Uncooperative in group situations	0	1	2
29. Passive, suggestible; easily led by others	0	1	2
30. Hyperactive; "always on the go"	0	1	2
31. Distractible; easily diverted from the task at hand	0	1	2
32. Destructive in regard to own and/or other's property	0	1	2
33. Negative; tends to do the opposite of what is requested	0	1	2
34. Impertinent; talks back	0	1	2
35. Sluggish, slow moving, lethargic	0	1	2
36. Drowsy; not "wide awake"	0	1	2
37. Nervous, jittery, jumpy; easily startled	0	1	2
38. Irritable, hot-tempered; easily angered	0	1	2
39. Expresses strange, far-fetched ideas	0	1	2
40. Argues; quarrels	0	1	2
41. Sulks and pouts	0	1	2
42. Persists and nags; can't take "no" for an answer	0	1	2
43. Avoids looking others in the eye	0	1	2
44. Answers without stopping to think	0	1	2
45. Unable to work independently; needs constant help and attention	0	1	2
46. Uses drugs in company with others	0	1	2
47. Impulsive; starts before understanding what to do; doesn't stop and think	0	1	2
48. Chews on inedible things	0	1	2
49. Tries to dominate others; bullies, threatens	0	1	2
50. Picks at other children as a way of getting their attention; seems to want to relate but doesn't know how	0	1	2
51. Steals from people outside the home	0	1	2

(please go on to next page)

52. Expresses beliefs that are clearly untrue (delusions)	0	1	2
53. Says nobody loves him or her	0	1	2
54. Freely admits disrespect for moral values and laws	0	1	2
55. Brags and boasts	0	1	2
56. Slow and not accurate in doing things	0	1	2
57. Shows little interest in things around him or her	0	1	2
58. Does not finish things; gives up easily; lacks perseverance	0	1	2
59. Is part of a group that rejects school activities such as team sports, clubs, projects to help others	0	1	2
60. Cheats	0	1	2
61. Seeks company of older, "more experienced" companions	0	1	2
62. Knows what's going on but is listless and uninterested	0	1	2
63. Resists leaving mother's (or other caretaker's) side	0	1	2
64. Difficulty in making choices; can't make up mind	0	1	2
65. Teases others	0	1	2
66. Absentminded; forgets simple things easily	0	1	2
67. Acts like he or she were much younger; immature, "childish"	0	1	2
68. Has trouble following directions	0	1	2
69. Will lie to protect his friends	0	1	2
70. Afraid to try new things for fear of failure	0	1	2
71. Selfish; won't share; always takes the biggest piece	0	1	2
72. Uses alcohol in company with others	0	1	2
73. School work is messy, sloppy	0	1	2
74. Does not respond to praise from adults	0	1	2
75. Not liked by others; is a "loner" because of aggressive behavior	0	1	2
76. Does not use language to communicate	0	1	2
77. Cannot stand to wait; wants everything right now	0	1	2
78. Refuses to take directions, won't do as told	0	1	2
79. Blames others; denies own mistakes	0	1	2
80. Admires and seeks to associate with "rougher" peers	0	1	2
81. Punishment doesn't affect his or her behavior	0	1	2
82. Squirms, fidgets	0	1	2
83. Deliberately cruel to others	0	1	2
84. Feels he or she can't succeed	0	1	2
85. Tells imaginary things as though true; unable to tell real from imagined	0	1	2
86. Does not hug and kiss members of family; affectionless	0	1	2
87. Runs away; is truant from home	0	1	2
88. Openly admires people who operate outside the law	0	1	2
89. Repeats what is said to him or her. "parrots" others' speech	0	1	2

	CD	SA	AP	AW	PB	ME
Raw Score	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
T Score	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Appendix G
Teachers' Protocol and Activity Memos

Teacher's Name:

Protocol for Teachers
Transition to Middle School Project

You have been requested to provide additional supportive services to some of the sixth grade students in your "block" and/or homeroom. These students have demonstrated dramatically poorer academic performance (a grade-point drop of one point or more) as of the second grading period in middle school as compared to their previous performance in fifth grade. It is hypothesized that some students are not prepared for the significant changes in school environment that occur in the shift from elementary to secondary school, and the Transition to Middle School Project has been developed to meet the needs of these students. We believe that a major problem for these students is the decrease in teacher-provided support in middle school. Thus, we are attempting to provide additional support to those students who have evinced a poor academic transition. We are requesting that you engage in the following activities at least two times per week for each of the identified poor transition students in your class:

1. Provide informal counseling, monitoring, and encouragement concerning students' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, ATTENDANCE, AND BEHAVIOR.
2. Provide informal counseling, monitoring, and encouragement concerning students' PERSONAL DIFFICULTIES that may be affecting school performance.
3. Provide informal counseling, monitoring, and encouragement concerning students' COMPLETION OF HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS.
4. Provide informal counseling regarding SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS AND RULES.
5. Provide informal counseling, monitoring, and problem-solving concerning students' DIFFICULTIES GETTING ALONG WITH OTHER TEACHERS AND/OR STUDENTS.
6. ESTABLISH A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP with the students so they come to view you as a SUPPORTIVE ADVOCATE whom they may rely on for SUPPORT, and to whom they also feel ACCOUNTABLE.

These supportive activities may occur in structured (e.g., during specific times in the classroom) or unstructured (e.g., passing in the hallway) situations. PLEASE COMPLETE THE BRIEF WEEKLY CHECKLIST AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY ON FRIDAYS.

YOU MAY BEGIN ENGAGING IN THESE ACTIVITIES WITH THE FOLLOWING STUDENTS BEGINNING WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20:

Transition to Middle School Project

Week 10 Activity Memo

Dear Teacher:

Attached you'll find copies of the report cards of the students to whom you are providing support. Within the next few days, please meet individually with each student to discuss their report cards.

In your discussions with each student, compare grades for the fourth grading period (just ended) to grades for the second and third grading periods, and note whether the "trend" is in a positive or negative direction. If the "trend" is in a positive direction, please praise the students for their efforts and encourage them to continue the good work.

IF THE TREND IS IN A NEGATIVE DIRECTION, OR THERE IS LITTLE CHANGE IN GRADES ACROSS THE THREE GRADING PERIODS, PLEASE TAKE SOME TIME TO PROBLEM-SOLVE WITH THE STUDENTS, ATTEMPTING TO GENERATE SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS THAT ARE PREVENTING THEM FROM BRINGING THEIR GRADES UP. Many of the students whose grades are not improving seem to be having great difficulty completing and turning in homework assignments. Whatever the problem, in your discussions with each student, please try to generate specific solutions for their academic difficulties, and check back with them during the next several weeks to encourage them and ask how they are progressing.

Thanks for your help.

Transition to Middle School Project

Week 12 Activity Memo

IMPORTANT INFORMATION!

Dear Teachers:

The Transition to Middle School Project is now in its 12th week, which means that you have been providing support to, and filling out weekly checklists for, your assigned students for approximately three months. A majority of the students involved in the project in Montgomery County have responded quite favorably to the support being provided by their teachers, group leader, and/or guidance counselors; for others, improvement has been less dramatic, but steady; and for still others, improvement has not been made. You deserve considerable credit for your efforts, and much thanks from both myself and the students you've been working with.

Now is the time for you to begin decreasing the levels of support you are providing to the student(s) you've been working with, **ESPECIALLY THOSE WHOSE GRADES HAVE IMPROVED.** For these students, you should decrease the frequency of personal contacts to approximately once per week for the remainder of the fifth grading period, and should, beginning with the sixth grading period, provide no additional support above and beyond that which you provide your other students. One of the goals of the program was to help students maintain characteristic levels of functioning independently once the additional support provided by teachers helped them through a difficult period of adjustment to middle school. You may want to reassure these students that they've demonstrated an ability to handle the academic demands of middle school, and that you feel there is less need for your assistance at this time.

For those whose grades have not improved, the potential still exists for your continued support to have beneficial results. THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE TRANSITION TO MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT END AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE FIFTH GRADING PERIOD...HOWEVER, IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU WANT TO CONTINUE PROVIDING SUPPORT TO STUDENTS WHOSE GRADES HAVE NOT IMPROVED, YOU SHOULD NATURALLY FEEL FREE TO DO SO IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR NORMAL TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES AND/OR IN CONSULTATION WITH YOUR SCHOOL'S GUIDANCE STAFF. As part of the Transition to Middle School Project, parents of many of the students whose grades have not improved have been contacted and asked for substantially greater home support.

I'll be asking you to complete weekly activity surveys (as you've been doing) for the next three weeks; after that time, the project ends (officially), and you'll no longer be asked to complete weekly activity surveys.

Once again, thanks for all your help, cooperation, and interest.

Transition to Middle School Project

Week 15 Activity Memo

REMINDER!

Please be reminded of the following points mentioned in a memo you should have received several weeks ago:

1. The Transition to Middle School Project officially ends at the conclusion of the fifth six-week grading period...as such, you will no longer be receiving weekly activity checklists to complete.

2. Many of the students to whom you have been providing additional support have been helped through a difficult period of adjustment to middle school. If you feel this is the case, you should phase out your supportive activities with these students, such that they receive no support over and above that which you provide other students in your classes during the final six weeks of the school year. You may want to reassure these students that they have demonstrated an ability to handle the demands of middle school more independently (so they do not misinterpret any noticeable decrease in contact).

3. You should FEEL FREE TO CONTINUE PROVIDING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TO THOSE STUDENTS WHOM YOU FEEL WILL CONTINUE TO BENEFIT!

4. Please accept my sincere gratitude for your help, cooperation, and interest. Thanks!

Appendix H

Teachers' Weekly Activity Survey (Manipulation Check)

Transition to Middle School Project
Teachers' Weekly Activity Survey

Teacher's Name _____ Week _____

Student's Name _____ Days Absent _____

Please circle (or check) the responses below which best describe your activities with this student during the past week:

1. Number of times PERSONAL CONTACT was made with this student to discuss problems related to middle school:
 - a. Not at all
 - b. A little (one personal contact)
 - c. Several times (two or three personal contacts)
 - d. Quite a lot (four or more personal contacts)

2. Areas of difficulty discussed with this student this week (circle all that apply):
 - a. Academic performance
 - b. Attendance
 - c. School Behavior
 - d. Personal Problems or Difficulties
 - e. Completion of Homework Assignments
 - f. School Expectations and Rules
 - g. Difficulties Getting Along with Other Teachers and/or Students

3. Number of times you had contact with this student's parents this week, by phone or in person, to discuss middle school progress or problems:
 - a. Not at all
 - b. A little (one time)
 - c. Several times (two or three times)
 - d. Quite a lot (four or more times)

4. Which of the following best describes your relationship with this student:
 - a. Quite poor -- student is not receptive to my supportive efforts
 - b. Fair -- student is moderately receptive to my supportive efforts
 - c. Good -- student is very receptive to my supportive efforts
 - d. Excellent -- student is extremely receptive to my supportive efforts

Appendix I

Students' Grade Contract and Weekly Monitoring Chart

Name _____

PERSONAL CONTRACT

I promise myself that I will try as hard as possible to get the following grades in my subjects this grading period:

Subject	Grade
English -----	
Reading (or Vocabulary) ---	
Arithmetic -----	
Social Studies -----	
Science -----	

I will give myself the following reward if I meet my goals:

I also promise myself that I will keep better track of the things I need to do to reach the above goals. This means giving myself a grade at the end of every day in each area I'm working on. The areas I will be working on to help me reach my grade goals are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

DAILY REPORT CARD

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1.	1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.	3.

Signature

Appendix J
Protocols for Weekly Group Sessions

Transition to Middle School Project
Group Treatment
Week #1

OBJECTIVES: Students will learn names of the other students in the group; will understand the purpose of the groups and activities they will be engaging in; will discuss the changes between elementary and middle school and how these differences may have affected them; and will discuss the changes they feel have had the greatest negative impact on their grades.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Students will introduce themselves
2. Group leader will explain the purpose of the groups and some of the activities that will take place
3. Students will participate in a discussion of the changes between elementary and middle school, things they like and dislike about their new school, the changes which they feel have had a negative impact on their grades, and how being in a new school has affected them.

MATERIALS: Paper, pencil

* * * * *

Activity #1:

Group leader will begin by asking students to introduce themselves.

Activity #2:

Group leader will describe the purpose of the groups and some of the activities that will take place, as follows:

"Welcome to our transition to middle school group. Some of you may have noticed that things are a little different here in middle school. There are different teachers, older kids, different rules...a lot of differences between elementary school last year and middle school this year.

"A lot of kids find that one thing that's different about middle school is their report cards! That is, when they start middle school, some kids' grades aren't as good as they were when they were in elementary school. Now, that's no reason to press the panic button, because most of you got pretty good grades in elementary school and should be able to do the same here in middle school.

"But that's the reason for these groups. These groups were designed to help you do as well in middle school as you did in elementary school. We're going to meet every week for a half hour or so for about three months, and hopefully, by the time the groups end at the end of the fifth grading period, your grades will be up where they used to be.

"Does anybody have any questions so far?"

Group leader allows for questions, then explains what some of the activities of the group will be, as follows:

"I think you all will start to think these groups are pretty fun as time goes on. We're going to be having discussions, playing games, learning ways to solve problems and get along with teachers and other students a little better, and we're even going to be competing with other groups in other schools to see which group raises their grades up the most. Believe it or not, we're going to be playing baseball, football, and even Family Feud in these groups, but probably not the way you're used to seeing these games played! I'll explain more about these games in a few weeks.

"How does all that sound?"

Group leader allows for comments or questions.

Activity #3:

Group leader then initiates discussion of the differences between elementary and middle school (making a conscious effort to ensure that all group members participate) as follows:

"You know, there are a lot of differences between elementary and middle school. What are some of the things that you all have noticed are different between this year and last year?"

Group leader should allow students to generate as many responses as possible, and should write responses down on a piece of paper, but should make sure the following differences are mentioned for discussion:

- many teachers instead of just one
- a locker and several desks instead of just one desk
- more homework
- harder teachers
- nobody checking up on them like their fifth grade teacher may have
- different rules
- older and bigger kids
- switching classes

Group leader then asks each student to identify some of the differences they feel have had the greatest negative impact on their grades. Each student will be encouraged to participate in this discussion.

Group leader should ask whether any of these changes were scary, or whether any other aspects of entering middle school not already mentioned were scary.

Next, group leader will initiate discussion about what students like and dislike about their new school, as follows:

"I'm sure there are things that you all like and dislike about being in middle school. What are some of the things you like?"

(Allow for responses) "What are some of the things you dislike?"

(Allow for responses)

Finally, group leader should make the following statement:

"Well, we've discussed a lot of things about middle school today. It's possible that some of the things we've talked about are some of the reasons your grades have gone down a little bit. Next week, we're going to start talking about things you all can do to get your grades back up again. For this week, I'd just like you to think about some of the things we've talked about today and think about what you might need to do to get your grades up. Don't do anything drastic! Just start thinking about it. You may want to start thinking about what you need to do in the next few weeks to get your grades up before this grade period ends. I'll see you next week."

Transition to Middle School Project
Group Treatment
Session #2

OBJECTIVES: Students will be asked to review material covered in first session (i.e., the purpose of the groups, changes between elementary and middle school, and specific reasons their grades may have gone down); students will discuss their feelings related to their lower grades, as well as any negative consequences that have resulted from having lower grades; students will learn problem-solving steps, and will apply these steps to current problems they are having in middle school, especially lower grades.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Group leader will ask students to describe:
 - the purpose of the groups
 - some differences between elementary and middle school
 - specific reasons their grades may have decreased
2. Group leader will initiate discussion of students' feelings regarding their lower grades, as well as any negative consequences that may have resulted from having lower grades
3. Group leader will instruct students in problem-solving skills
4. Students will apply problem-solving steps to problems they are encountering in middle school, especially lower grades
5. Students will complete manipulation check survey.

MATERIALS: None

* * * * *

Activity #1:

Group leader will ask students to review last week, as follows:
"Welcome back to our group, everybody. Last week we talked about a lot of things, including that we'd be getting together once a week, differences between elementary and middle school, and specific reasons each of you thought your grades may have gone down. Can anyone remember what these groups are for?"

Group leader allows students opportunity to respond.

"Good. Now, who can remember some of the things that we put on our list that are different between elementary and middle school?"

Group leader allows students opportunity to respond, attempting to engage all students in the discussion.

"Very good. Now, let's see if each of you remember which of the differences on our list you thought was the most important reason your grades may have gone down?"

Group leader encourages each student to respond.

Activity #2:

Group leader will initiate discussion of feelings students have about having lower grades, including any negative consequences they may have suffered as a result.

"You know, last week we didn't really have enough time to discuss how each of you is feeling about having lower grades. Since everybody doesn't feel the same way, it would be good for us to know how each of you are feeling. For example, some of you might be pretty down about having lower grades...others of you might be concerned, but not too upset...and others might not even care. How does each of you feel?"

Group leader solicits feelings from each student, attempting to explore further when appropriate. Group leader then asks students to consider any consequences they may have suffered as a result of their lower grades, as follows:

"Thank you for sharing your feelings with the group. I know that's sometimes hard to do. Has anybody noticed that they are being treated differently by their parents or teachers or other kids since they started getting lower grades?"

Group leader encourages each student to respond.

Activity #3:

Group leader instructs students on problem-solving steps.

"I'd like to teach you all something today. It's a really quick way to figure out how to solve problems. Has anybody in here ever had a problem they needed to solve?" (Allows for responses) "Well, I'd like to teach you four simple steps to help you solve problems.

"The first step is to ask yourself, 'What's my problem?' This is a very important step, since you can't start solving a problem until you know what it is! Say your car broke down and you needed to get from Shawsville to Blacksburg for an appointment in a half hour. What would your problem be?" (Allows for responses)

"Good. The next step is to ask yourself, 'What can I do?' With this step, you think of all the different ways you could solve the problem...good ways, bad ways, funny ways...all the different ways you could solve the problem. So, if my problem was that my car broke down and I had an appointment in Blacksburg in a half hour, what could I do?" (Allows for responses)

"Very good. Now, the next step is to ask yourself 'What will happen if I do each of these possible solutions?' With this step, you plan out in your mind what would happen if you were to follow through on each of the solutions. (Allows for responses to each suggested solution)

"Finally, you pick a solution, the one you think would work the best. You do it the best you can. After you do it, you ask yourself, 'How did I do?' In other words, you evaluate yourself. (Each student is asked to pick their choice as to the best solution to the car problem)

"If you think you solved the problem, you can say, 'I think I did well...I solved my problem.' If you didn't solve the problem, you might say 'I didn't do so well...I still have a problem,' and you'd go back to the first step and start all over again."

Activity #4:

Group leader encourages students to use the steps they've learned as applied to a school problem, especially lower grades.

"Now, let's see if you can use these steps to solve any problems you may be having in middle school, especially lower grades. Who'd like to give it a try, and the rest of us will help out if you get stuck."

Time permitting, each student applies problem-solving steps to a problem they're having in middle school.

Activity #5:

Students complete manipulation check survey (Group Survey #1).

Transition to Middle School Project
Group Treatment
Week #3

OBJECTIVES: Students will review problem-solving steps learned in previous week; will identify specific behaviors they must engage in to improve their grades; will review all material covered thus far by playing a game; will contract to engage in these behaviors for the next grading period, and will monitor their performance in practicing these behaviors during the next week.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Group leader will ask students to recall the problem-solving steps learned in last week's session.
2. Group leader will ask each student to identify three specific behaviors they must engage in to improve their grades.
3. Group leader will lead "Family Feud" game in which students will be quizzed on areas covered in groups to date, including differences between elementary and middle school, problem-solving steps, and behaviors that will improve their grades.
4. Students will partially complete individual contracts; they will record three behaviors they will be focusing on during the week to improve their grades, and will self-monitor these behaviors and evaluate their performances during the week as well.

MATERIALS:

- blank contracts
- pencils
- chalk, chalkboard

* * * * *

Activity #1:

Group leader will ask students to recall the problem-solving steps they learned last week, as follows:

"Last week, you learned some steps that should help you deal better with problems you may be having in middle school. Who can remember the four steps to solving problems?"

Group leader solicits volunteers, but asks each student in the group to recite the problem-solving steps in the proper order.

"Did anyone use the problem-solving steps after our group last week to help them solve a problem?"

Group leader solicits responses and encourages discussion.

Activity #2:

Group leader will initiate discussion of some of the behaviors the students will need to engage in to get better grades, as follows:

"Today, we're going to start talking about the 'What can I do?'

part of the problem-solving steps, and then we'll talk about a way to help you actually carry out the plan you've decided will best solve the problem of lower grades in middle school.

"So far, we've talked about the things that each of you has noticed is different between elementary and middle school, and each of you has identified a few of the changes that you think has had the biggest negative effect on your grades. Today, I'd like each of you to think of the specific things you're going to need to change about yourself or work harder on to help you get better grades. Maybe some of the changes have to do with things we've already discussed, or maybe you'll think of some changes you need to make that we haven't discussed yet. What things will each of you have to work on, or what changes will you have to make, to get better grades in middle school?"

Group leader solicits responses from each student in the group, requiring each student to identify three separate target behaviors or behavior changes, though some students will have similar goals.

Activity #3:

Group leader introduces "Family Feud" game. Students are divided into two teams. One student from each team participates on each question, with two different students participating on alternative questions. The two opposing students face a table, standing, with their hands behind their backs. Group leader asks a question from the Question Pool, and the student who hits the table first is permitted to respond to the question. If the student responds correctly, his or her team gets one point; if the response is incorrect, the other student is permitted to respond. If neither student responds correctly, group leader solicits other team members for the correct answer, with no points awarded. Then, two other students from each team compete. The group leader should insure that the same students are not always competing against each other in identical pairs, and that all students are permitted an equal number of chances. Group leader keeps score; the game can last from 10 to 20 minutes. Some "fun" questions unrelated to group material may be included to make the game more exciting.

Activity #4:

Group leader hands out blank contracts to the students, and students are asked to fill in their three behavioral goals for the week. Group leader also explains concept of self-monitoring, as follows:

"At the top of these contracts, you'll see a space for you to fill in what grades you're going to try to get next grading period. We'll fill that section in next week. In the next section, there's a place for you to list the three behaviors or changes you're going to be working on during the next six weeks to help you get your grades up. In that space, go ahead and write in the three behaviors or changes you're going to be working on this week.

"In the next section, you'll see a space with the five week days on it, and the numbers 1, 2, and 3 under each day. This is where you'll grade yourself at the end of each day on how you think you did on each of your goals. For example, if your first goal is to do your homework every night, and the first night you did no homework, what grade would you give yourself for #1 for the first night?" Group leader solicits responses.

"But, if you did almost all your homework the first night, what grade would you give yourself?" Group leader solicits responses.

"OK, this week, after every school day, grade yourself on your performance on each of your goals. You decide what you should get, but be honest with yourself. Then, bring these sheets back to our group next week and we'll see how you did.

"Soon, you'll be filling in the top section....that is, what grades you'll be trying to get next grading period. This week, just do a good job of grading yourself on your goals. See you next week."

Transition to Middle School Project
Group Treatment
Week #4

OBJECTIVES: Students will discuss their performance on behaviors they were monitoring during past week; students will discuss their grades on recently-issued report cards; students will set goals for grades for the new grading period, and will identify a reward they will give themselves if they reach their individual goals; students will complete manipulation check.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Students will review their performance on the various behaviors they had identified last week as important for improving their grades.
2. Report cards will be reviewed; students will discuss their progress (or lack of) regarding improving their grades.
3. Students will discuss grades they would like to work toward during the new grading period; goals will be written on contracts; students will identify a reward they can give themselves if they achieve their goals; contracts will be signed.
4. Students will complete manipulation check.

MATERIALS:

- blank contracts
- pencils

* * * * *

Activity #1:

Group leader will begin session by asking students to discuss their self-monitoring activities of the previous week, as follows: "Last week, you all identified three behaviors you needed to work on to help you get your grades up, and I asked you to grade yourselves every day on each behavior. How did each of you do thinking about your goals during the day and giving yourself a grade at the end of each day?" (Allows for responses and encourages discussion) "Now, let's take a look at how each of you actually performed on each of the behaviors you were working on." Group leader has each student review their self-rated performance over the past week, explores in some depth how students feel about their performance and any problems that may be hindering good performance in each area, and provides feedback, reinforcement, and encouragement.

Activity #2:

Group leader will ask the members of the group if they mind having their third grading period grades shared with the other members of the group. If there are no objections, group leader reviews each

student's report card. Students will be asked for their reactions to their report cards, and whether they are pleased or displeased with their performance. All students will be provided with feedback and encouragement; those whose grades went up will be reinforced by the group leader and other group members.

Activity #3:

Students will be asked to set goals for the present grading period. Goal-setting will be done with the assistance of the group leader, as follows: "It's time for you to start thinking about what grades you're going to be working toward for this grading period. Each of you should think about what grades you can bring up and by how much, and after we discuss it, you can record your grade goals on your contracts." Dependent on progress thus far, students will be expected to maintain at least a grade of "C" in all academic classes, although a "D" will be an acceptable goal for students currently receiving a failing grade in a class. Group leader will encourage all students to raise their grades in each academic subject by at least one grade. Students will be reminded that their group may be having a pizza party next week, depending on whether their grades went up more than any of the other groups, and that the competition will be continued for the new grading period.

Students will also be asked to continue their self-monitoring activities for the current week, as follows: "Last week, you all started trying harder and grading yourself in certain areas that you thought would be important for getting your grades up. But your grades will only go up if you work on these areas the entire grading period. Some of you are happy about the grades you got on your report cards this week; others are not so happy. But whether you're happy or not, there's more work to be done. Remember that one of the problems for many of you was that you didn't try very hard early in the grading period and then had to go crazy trying to make up work. Work hard on your behavior goals this week, and that won't happen again; then maybe the whole group will be happy at the end of the next grading period."

Students will record grade goals, behaviors, and rewards on new contracts.

Activity #4:

Students will complete manipulation check (Group Survey #2).

Transition to Middle School Project
Group Treatment
Week #5

OBJECTIVES: Students will discuss their performance on behaviors being self-monitored during the past week, and how they feel they're progressing toward their grade goals; students will apply problem-solving steps to the specific problem of not getting along with teachers; students will learn key phrases.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Groups will be told where they rank compared to other groups on grade improvement during the previous grading period; group with most improvement will have pizza for lunch as a reward.
2. Students will review their performance on the various behaviors they have identified as important for improving their grades; students will also report to the group on the reward they intend to give themselves if they reach their goals. Students will complete new contracts for upcoming week.
3. Students will use problem-solving steps to discuss the problem of not getting along with teachers
4. Students will learn key phrases.

MATERIALS:

- blank contracts
- pencils

* * * * *

Activity #1:

Group leader will begin session by informing group members as to their ranking as a group compared to other groups on grade improvement during the last grading period; group with greatest improvement will have pizza for lunch.

Activity #2:

Group leader will ask students to review their performance and progress on self-monitoring activities of the previous week, in a manner similar to that described in the protocol for Week 4. Students will be reminded of the grade goals they set the previous week, and will be asked to report on their progress toward these goals. Students will complete new contracts for upcoming week.

Activity #3:

Group leader will ask the students in the group if getting along with a particular teacher has been a problem for them in middle

school, as follows: "Sometimes, our attitude toward school or a certain class can be influenced by how we feel about a particular teacher. If we really like a teacher, or really like the way they teach a class, we'll probably work extra hard for him or her. If we don't like a teacher, or don't get along with him or her too well, we might not work as hard. Since one of the goals of these groups is to help you get your grades up, getting along with teachers is an important area to discuss. Does anybody have a teacher who they're not getting along with very well?" Students who respond in the affirmative will be asked to describe the problems between themselves and the teacher(s), and will be asked to demonstrate for the group how they might use the problem-solving steps to resolve these problems. Other group members will be asked to assist. After the first student has satisfactorily used the steps to resolve this problem, other students will be asked to apply the steps to problems they are having with a teacher. This activity is concluded with the following statement: "This is a good example of how you can use the problem-solving steps to solve problems you're having in middle school. The steps are a good chance for you to say to yourself, 'I really CAN do something about my problems if I think about them and then take action.'"

Activity #5:

Students will be instructed on the following key phrases, to be used in future discussions and games:

1. If I keep track of myself and fill in my self-monitoring sheet every day, my grades should go up.
2. If I do my homework every night, my grades should go up.
3. If I get along better with my teachers, my grades should go up.
4. If I keep a neat locker and stay organized, my grades should go up.
5. If I study harder for tests, my grades should go up.
6. My grades won't go up if I don't do what I say I'm going to do.

Students will be encouraged to continue self-monitoring activities and to continue working hard to achieve their grade goals.

Transition to Middle School Project
Group Treatment
Week #6

OBJECTIVES: Students will discuss their performance on behaviors they were monitoring during the previous week, as well as their progress in working toward grade goals; students will role-play use of problem-solving steps to resolve problem of not being organized; group will play "baseball game" to review material covered in groups thus far; and students will complete manipulation check survey.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Each student will review his or her performance relative to the various behaviors each has been monitoring and evaluating over the past week, will discuss progress in working toward grade goals, and will complete new monitoring sheets for next week.
2. Students will discuss problem of being disorganized; examples include not having notebooks for each class, not getting to class on time, not bringing the right books to class, and not writing down homework assignments. Students will be asked to resolve this problem, using the problem-solving steps.
3. Students will play "baseball" game, with questions taken from key phrases learned in last session, behaviors they're working on, changes between elementary and middle school, purpose of the groups, and fun questions relevant to each school
4. Students will complete manipulation check survey.

MATERIALS:

- blank contracts
- pencils
- chalk and chalkboard

* * * * *

Activity #1:

Group leader will ask students to review their performance and progress on self-monitoring activities of the previous week, in a manner similar to that described in the protocol for Week #4. Group leader will review grade goals students established for the grading period, and will discuss with each student their progress toward these goals. Students will complete new monitoring sheets for the coming week.

Activity #2:

Group leader will ask the students if being organized has been a problem for them in middle school, as follows: "A lot of you mentioned that there were a lot of changes between elementary and middle school. One of these changes was having different desks for

each class, so you couldn't keep all your stuff in the same desk for every subject. In middle school, you have a locker you have to keep all your stuff in, and you're supposed to go to your locker before and after each class to get what you need. Some of you said that this was a big problem for you...that it was hard for you to remember to bring everything you needed to each class, to bring everything you needed home at the end of the day for homework, to write down your homework assignments, or to get to class on time. Being disorganized can make it a lot harder to do well in school, so it's an important area for us to discuss. Does anybody have a big problem with being disorganized?" Students who respond in the affirmative will be asked to describe the specific nature of their organizational difficulties, and will be asked to role-play the use of the problem-solving steps in resolving these difficulties. Other group members will be asked to assist. After the first student has satisfactorily demonstrated the resolution of this problem, other students who are having similar difficulties will be asked to role-play the use of the problem-solving steps as well. This activity is concluded with the following statement: "This is another good example of how you can use the problem-solving steps to help you with problems that may be keeping you from getting your grades up. But it's very important for you to do more than just practice the steps in our groups...you have to use them outside of our groups for them to do you any good."

Activity #3:

Students will play "baseball" game using questions from the "Question Pool." Baseball is played by dividing the group into two teams and drawing two diamonds on the chalkboard. Teams take turns answering questions from the "Question Pool," with each "batter" indicating beforehand whether he or she wants a "single" (easy question), "double" (more difficult question), or "homerun" (most difficult question). Teams take turns answering questions, and players take turns on each team. Group leader adds baserunners and keeps score based on the "hitting" of each team. Game lasts 10-20 minutes. Fun questions unrelated to group material can be added at the group leader's discretion to make the game more interesting.

Activity #4:

Students will complete manipulation check (Group Survey #3).

Transition to Middle School Project
Group Treatment
Week #7

OBJECTIVES: Students will review progress in working toward grade goals over the past week, and will be advised that their teachers will be asked for progress reports this week which will be reviewed in our next group session; students will report on self-monitoring of target behaviors for the past week, and will discuss any new behaviors they feel they should be working on and any they feel they can delete; and students will role-play the use of the problem-solving steps to resolve the problem of asking for help when they need it from teachers or parents.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Each student will be asked to review their progress in working toward grade goals over the past week, and will be advised that teachers in each of their academic subjects will be completing progress reports during the week, to be reviewed in the next group session.
2. Each student will be asked to discuss their performance on self-monitored behaviors over the past week. Students will be asked to consider whether there are new behaviors they feel they need to work on, and whether any of their current goals can be deleted. Students will complete new self-monitoring sheets.
3. Students will be asked, in the manner of the previous two weeks, to role-play the use the problem-solving steps to resolve the problem of asking for help when they need it from parents or teachers.

MATERIALS:

- blank contracts
- pencils

* * * * *

Activity #1:

Students will be asked to discuss their progress on grade goals over the past week, and will be provided with feedback and encouragement from the group leader. Students will also be advised that teachers in each of their academic subjects will be completing progress reports during the week, to be reviewed at the beginning of the next group session, as follows: "We are right at the middle of the grading period, and I think it's very important for us to get some feedback from your teachers about how you're doing in their classes, just to make sure that there aren't things you should be working on that we haven't discussed in our groups yet. Your teachers will let me know if there's any work you need to make up, if you're getting your homework in, how you're behaving in class, and what grade you'd get if report cards came out right now. We'll go over all this

information in our group next week." Group leader should allow opportunities for comments or questions.

Activity #2:

Students will be asked to review their performance on self-monitored behaviors over the past week, in a manner similar to that described in the protocol for Week #4. Students will be asked to consider whether there are behaviors they should be adding to their sheets, and whether there are behaviors they feel they have mastered well enough to delete, as follows: "You've all been working on the same behaviors for about a month now...all of you have done very well in some areas, and still have to work a little harder in other areas. I'd like each of you to think about whether there are behaviors you feel you don't need to keep monitoring every week, and if there are other behaviors you feel you need to add." Group leader discusses each student's behaviors and makes necessary changes.

Activity #3:

Group leader will ask the students if asking a teacher for help has been a problem for them in middle school, as follows: "When you were in elementary school, you only had one teacher for most of the day. In middle school, you have many different teachers, and it's a little harder to feel comfortable with all of them. Sometimes when we don't feel completely comfortable with a teacher, it's harder to let them know we need help on something we don't understand. If you can't ask for help, you fall behind, learn less, and it's harder to get good grades. Has any of you had trouble asking a teacher for help since you've been in middle school?" Students who respond in the affirmative will be asked to describe situations in which they have had difficulty asking for help from a teacher (or from their parents in doing homework), and will be asked to role-play the use of the problem-solving steps in resolving this difficulty. Other group members will be asked to assist. After the first student has satisfactorily demonstrated the resolution of this problem, other students who are having similar difficulty will be asked to role-play the use of the problem-solving steps as well. This activity will be concluded with the following statement from the group leader: "Once again, you can see how the problem-solving steps can really come in handy in helping you with problems you are having in middle school. But don't forget...practicing the steps in group is good, but using the problem-solving steps outside of the group is the whole idea. Did anybody use the problem-solving steps during the last week to help them with a problem?" Group leader allows for responses and discussion.

Transition to Middle School Project
Group Treatment
Week #8

OBJECTIVES: Students will review progress on self-monitoring activities and behaviors for the past week; students will be provided with feedback from teachers regarding their grades, completion of homework and classroom assignments, and classroom behavior for the current grading period; students will play the "Transition to Middle School Game" reviewing all material covered in groups thus far; and students will complete manipulation check survey.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Each student will briefly review progress over the past week on self-monitored behaviors, with special emphasis on new behaviors discussed in last session.
2. Each student will be given feedback provided by their teachers as to their current grades, and will be encouraged to do what is necessary to maintain or raise their current grades so as to meet (or exceed) their grade goals. Students will also be given feedback regarding completion of in-class and homework assignments and classroom behavior.
3. Students will play "Transition to Middle School Game."
4. Students will complete manipulation check survey.

MATERIALS:

- progress reports provided by teachers
- blank contracts
- pencils
- Monopoly board and cards with questions from "Question Pool"

Activity #1:

Students will be asked to review their progress on self-monitored target behaviors over the past week, in a manner similar to that described in the protocol for Week #4, with special focus on behaviors added to contracts in last session.

Activity #2:

Students will be provided with feedback from teachers in each academic subject via progress reports completed by teachers during the previous week. Students will be told what grades they would receive in each academic subject were report cards to be issued now, and these grades will be compared to goals established by students at the beginning of the grading period. Students will be praised if their progress is on-target, and encouraged to work harder if they are not meeting their goals. Students will also be provided with information regarding teachers' ratings of their completion of in-class and homework assignments, as well as classroom behavior. This information

will be discussed in the context of the impact of these areas on students' ability to learn and meet their grade goals. Once again, students will be reinforced for their efforts and, when appropriate, encouraged to try harder and use their newly acquired problem-solving skills.

Activity #3:

Group will play the "Transition to Middle School Game." Using a Monopoly game board, patches of yellow, pink, and white paper will be used to cover the Monopoly board. Yellow squares represent "thinking" questions; pink squares represent "doing" questions; and white squares represent "feeling" questions. Questions are taken from the "Question Pool."

Activity #4:

Students will complete manipulation check (Group Survey #4).

Transition to Middle School Project
Individual Treatment
Week #9

OBJECTIVES: The group leader will meet with each student on an individual basis to review teacher feedback on a more concentrated, class-by-class and teacher-by-teacher basis; and will discuss, in a problem-solving framework and in some detail, how each student might begin to address some of the continuing concerns raised by teachers as related to their academic performance. Special attention will be paid to attitudinal issues, particular in students who may be showing less-than-optimal attitudes in response to teacher feedback and academic performance. The group leader will explore with each student any issues related to attitude problems that may not have been addressed in group sessions. Other students will be provided with highly positive feedback and encouraged to maintain their efforts. Each student will meet with the group leader for up to 10 minutes.

Transition to Middle School Project
Group Treatment
Week #10

OBJECTIVES: Review students' report cards from the fourth grading period; determine whether goals were reached and what group and individual rewards are to be dispensed; discuss switching focus from working toward goals for group rewards to other rewards of doing well in school; remind students that group will not be meeting next week, and will be meeting every other week until the end of the grading period (two more sessions); dispense personal contracts if students choose to use them during next two weeks.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Group leader will review students' report cards from the fourth grading period; will establish whether goals were reached, and solicit students' reactions to their grades; will encourage students who reached their goals to reward themselves as contracted; and will remind students that the group that came closest to meeting its goals will have a pizza party the following week.
2. Group leader will lead discussion centering on the need for students to switch from working toward good grades for rewards provided by the group leader to working toward good grades for other types of rewards. Students will be advised that the group leader will no longer be monitoring them as closely, and that close monitoring must be carried on by the students themselves.
3. Group leader will begin discussing the "fading" process by which groups will begin meeting bi-weekly for the current grading period.

MATERIALS:

- blank contracts

* * * * *

Activity #1:

Group leader will review students' report cards from the fourth grading period and solicit reactions in a manner similar to that described in the protocol for Week #4. Students who reached their goals will be encouraged to reward themselves as contracted. Group leader will encourage students who did not reach their goals, and will emphasize positive aspects of these students' performance, while discussing possible ways (based upon teacher feedback) that these students might be able to improve their performance during the current grading period. Students will be reminded that the group that came closest to meeting its combined goals will have a pizza party next week.

Activity #2:

Group leader will open discussion related to the need for students to begin working toward goals for rewards other than those provided by the group leader, as follows: "Some of you have made excellent progress in getting your grades up, while others need to keep trying hard to meet their goals. So far, you have been working for rewards that I have been providing, such as a pizza party. But when these groups end, I won't be around anymore to reward you when you do well in school. That's why, at the beginning of the last grading period, I had you decide what reward you would give yourself if you reached your grade goals. It's a good idea to reward yourself in some way for a job well done. And, there are other rewards for doing well in school, besides those that I give you or that you give yourself. What are some of these rewards?" Students will be encouraged to discuss other rewarding aspects of getting good grades, including personal pride, knowledge, and being able to go to college or get a better job. Students will be advised that the group leader will no longer be monitoring their progress as closely, and that the responsibility for self-monitoring now falls to them personally, as follows: "Up until now, I've been giving you a lot of feedback and encouragement about how you've been progressing. Every week, I asked you how things were going and how you were progressing on your target behaviors. I gave your teachers checklists to fill out to give you information about how you were doing in their classes, whether or not you were getting your homework and classwork done, and how you were behaving. Now, it's important for you to begin doing for yourselves what I have been doing over the past ten weeks. If you're wondering how you're doing in a class, you can ask your teacher. And you can also begin to ask yourselves some questions, like, 'Did I study as hard for this test as I could have?', or, 'Am I behaving in a way that's going to help me learn and get good grades?', or, 'Do I have all my homework assignments written down?'. Now it's up to you. I'll still be around to help a little, but now it's time for you to really take responsibility for things at school." Group leader will allow time for comments and discussion.

Activity #3:

Group leader will advise students that the group will meet bi-weekly for the next two weeks, as follows: "We've been talking today about how it's time for me to fade out of the picture a little and for you all to start really taking responsibility for how things go at school. Because of this, we will not be meeting next week, but will meet again in two weeks. Not meeting next week will be hard for some of you, but now's the time to really start using the things you have learned in our groups and show how much progress you have made." Group leader will allow time for comments and discussion. Group leader will allow students to choose whether to engage in self-monitoring and goal-setting for the current grading period.

Transition to Middle School Project
Group Treatment
Week #12

OBJECTIVES: Review progress of students over the past two weeks; continue to emphasize that it is very important that they begin actually using, on their own, things they have learned in the groups over the past three months, and remind students that there is only one group session remaining; administer a final manipulation check to gauge students' retention of material covered in the groups, attitudes about the groups, and relationships with their block teachers; and discuss the components of the group more fully (after manipulation checks have been completed) to reinforce concepts covered over the course of treatment.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Discuss with each student their progress over the past two weeks, and provide encouragement for students to use problem-solving steps and other ideas they learned from the groups to resolve any continuing problems.
2. Administer a final manipulation check.
3. Remind students that there is only one final group session remaining. Review concepts covered over the course of the treatment program, including problem-solving steps, setting goals, doing their best, not depending on teachers, parents, or adults to take care of their problems for them, the best ways of dealing with teachers, and the importance of doing homework, as well as any other areas students choose to cover.

* * * * *

Activity #1:

Group leader will discuss with each student their progress over the past two weeks, as follows: "It's been two weeks since our last group, and this is the first time since our groups began that we skipped a week. Was that hard for any of you? How did things go for each of you over the past two weeks?" (Allows opportunity for responses.) Group leader will ask each student whether there are continuing problems that may be impacting upon academic performance, and encourages the use of the problem-solving steps in resolving these problems.

Activity #2:

Administer final manipulation check (Group Survey #5).

Activity #3:

Group leader will remind students that there is only one group

session remaining, in two weeks, as follows: "As you all probably know, we have only one group remaining. After that time, we won't be meeting anymore, and it will be up to you to continue the progress you have made. It's important for you all to try hard to remember the things you learned in our groups, and to put them into practice. Let's talk a little about what you have learned over the past 12 weeks." Group leader solicits ideas for what students have learned in the groups, including the components listed above. This is the final opportunity for students to demonstrate integration and recall of group material, so group leader should encourage each student to go into some detail about what they have learned and how they have used what they have learned to help them resolve problems they have encountered in middle school.

Transition to Middle School Project
Group Treatment
Week #14

OBJECTIVES: Provide closure for group

ACTIVITIES:

1. Group leader should let the group know how much he or she has enjoyed working with each of the group members; let students know it will be important for them to continue practicing the skills they learned in the groups; provide opportunity for students to comment on the groups.

* * * * *

Appendix K
Student Manipulation Check Surveys

Group Survey #1

Name _____ School _____

Date _____

Circle the statement which is most true for you:

1.
 - a. I think these groups are very helpful
 - b. I think these groups are somewhat helpful
 - c. I think these groups are a little helpful
 - d. I don't think these groups are helpful
2.
 - a. I don't expect these groups to help me much
 - b. I expect these groups to help me a little
 - c. I expect these groups to help me somewhat
 - d. I expect these groups to help me a lot
3.
 - a. My parents are very interested in how I do in school
 - b. My parents are somewhat interested in how I do in school
 - c. My parents are a little interested in how I do in school
 - d. My parents are not interested in how I do in school
4.
 - a. I've noticed that my parents are a lot more interested in how I do in school lately.
 - b. I've noticed that my parents are somewhat more interested in how I do in school lately.
 - c. I've noticed that my parents are a little more interested in how I do in school lately.
 - d. My parents are about as interested as usual in how I do in school.
5. The four problem-solving steps are:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
6. Of all the differences between elementary and middle school, the one I think has had the biggest effect on my grades is:

Group Survey #2

Name _____ School _____

Date _____

Circle the statement which is most true for you:

1.
 - a. I think these groups are very helpful
 - b. I think these groups are pretty helpful
 - c. I think these groups are a little helpful
 - d. I don't think these groups are helpful

2.
 - a. I don't expect these groups to help me much
 - b. I expect these groups to help me a little
 - c. I expect these groups to help me pretty much
 - d. I expect these groups to help me a lot

3.
 - a. My parents are very interested in how I do in school
 - b. My parents are pretty interested in how I do in school
 - c. My parents are a little interested in how I do in school
 - d. My parents are not interested in how I do in school

4.
 - a. I've noticed that my parents are a lot more interested in how I do in school lately
 - b. I've noticed that my parents are somewhat more interested in how I do in school lately
 - c. I've noticed that my parents are a little more interested in how I do in school lately
 - d. My parents are about as interested as usual in how I do in school
 - e. My parents are less interested than usual in how I do in school

5. My grade goals for this grading period are:
 - Reading.....
 - English.....
 - Social Studies..
 - Mathematics.....
 - Science.....

6. The three behaviors I'm working on and grading myself on are
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

Group Survey #3

Name _____ School _____

Date _____

Circle the statement which is most true for you:

1.
 - a. I get along very well with my "block" teacher
 - b. I get along pretty well with my "block" teacher
 - c. Sometimes I get along with my "block" teacher, sometimes I don't
 - d. I don't get along with my "block" teacher

2.
 - a. My "block" teacher is not helpful with problems I have in school
 - b. My "block" teacher is a little helpful with problems I have in school
 - c. My "block" teacher is pretty helpful with problems I have in school
 - d. My "block" teacher is very helpful with problems I have in school

3.
 - a. I discuss my problems with my "block" teacher very often
 - b. I discuss my problems with my "block" teacher sometimes
 - c. I discuss my problems with my "block" teacher every once in awhile
 - d. I never discuss my problems with my "block" teacher

5. If I had a teacher I wasn't getting along with in middle school, I think the following solutions would help solve the problem:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

6. If I had a problem being organized in middle school (remembering books, writing down homework assignments, etc.), I think the following solutions would help solve the problem:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

Group Survey #4

Name _____ School _____

Date _____

Circle the statement which is most true for you:

1.
 - a. I think these groups are very helpful
 - b. I think these groups are pretty helpful
 - c. I think these groups are a little helpful
 - d. I don't think these groups are helpful

2.
 - a. My parents are very interested in how I do in school
 - b. My parents are pretty interested in how I do in school
 - c. My parents are a little interested in how I do in school
 - d. My parents are not interested in how I do in school

3.
 - a. I've noticed that my parents are a lot more interested in how I do in school lately
 - b. I've noticed that my parents are somewhat more interested in how I do in school lately
 - c. I've noticed that my parents are a little more interested in how I do in school lately
 - d. My parents are about as interested as usual in how I do in school
 - e. My parents are less interested than usual in how I do in school

4.
 - a. I get along very well with my "block" teacher
 - b. I get along pretty well with my "block" teacher
 - c. Sometimes I get along with my "block" teacher, sometimes I don't
 - d. I don't get along with my "block" teacher

5.
 - a. My "block" teacher has been a big help to me with problems I have in school
 - b. My "block" teacher has been pretty helpful to me with problems I have in school
 - c. My "block" teacher has been a little helpful to me with problems I have in school
 - d. My "block" teacher has not been helpful to me with problems I have in school

6. I could use the problem-solving steps to help me with the following problems at school:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

Group Survey #5

Name _____ School _____

Circle the statement which is most true for you:

1. In helping me get my grades up and handle other problems in middle school, I think these groups have been:

- a. very helpful
- b. somewhat helpful
- c. a little helpful
- d. not helpful

2. In helping me get my grades up and handle other problems in middle school, I think my block teacher has been:

- a. very helpful
- b. somewhat helpful
- c. a little helpful
- d. not helpful

3. In helping me get my grades up and handle other problems in middle school, I think my parents have been:

- a. very helpful
- b. somewhat helpful
- c. a little helpful
- d. not helpful

4. I have enjoyed coming to these groups

- a. quite a bit
- b. pretty much
- c. a little
- d. not very much

5. I think these groups are a good idea for other students whose grades go down when they start middle school.

- a. strongly agree
- b. mostly agree
- c. don't know
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

6. The group leader seems to care a lot about how I do in middle school.

- a. strongly agree
- b. mostly agree
- c. don't know
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

7. If I was to rate how well I get along with my block teacher right now, I would say

- a. very well
- b. pretty well
- c. sometimes we get along, sometimes we don't
- d. not well at all

8. If I was to rate how comfortable I would feel going to my block teacher for help with a problem involving middle school, I would feel:

- a. very comfortable
- b. pretty comfortable
- c. a little comfortable
- d. not comfortable at all

9. The four problem-solving steps are:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

10. I could use the problem-solving steps to help me with the following problems at school:

- a.
- b.
- c.

11. If I had a problem being organized in middle school (remembering books, homework assignments, etc.), I think the following solutions would help solve the problem:

- a.
- b.
- c.

12. Three of the behaviors I've worked on since I've been in these groups have been:

- a.
- b.
- c.

Appendix L
Guidance Counselors' Weekly Contact Survey

Transition to Middle School Project

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR WEEKLY CHECKLIST

Week _____

Please indicate the number of times you had contact with the students listed below or their parent(s) or guardian(s) during the past week regarding school-related issues. A BRIEF CONTACT with a student would include a meeting of a few minutes or a personal contact in the hallway. A BRIEF CONTACT with a parent would include a brief telephone conversation or a written note. A PROLONGED CONTACT with a parent or student would include a conference.

	STUDENT		PARENTS	
	Brief Contact	Prolonged Contact	Brief Contact	Prolonged Contact
John Doe				
Jonathan Doenfeld				
Juan Don				
Johnny Donatelli				
Jan Doe				
Janice Dobrofsky				
Juanita Donita				
Jo Marie Dominici				

Appendix M
Protocol for Parental Contact

Parental Contact #1

Good evening, Mr./Mrs. _____; my name is Ross Greene, and I am the person who is conducting the special groups at the middle school that _____ (child's name) is participating in. How are you this evening? Do you have time to speak with me for a few minutes?

As you probably know, the groups have been designed to help students whose grades have gone down a little between elementary and middle school. In addition to the groups, _____ (child's name) 's teachers are also providing special support. Beyond the group and teacher support, though, I am asking parents to take a special interest in their child's progress in middle school.

Basically, I'm requesting that you make a special effort every day to ask _____ (child's name) about his/her activities in school, ask about and check up on whether he/she is completing his/her homework assignments, and ask if there's any special help you can provide. I realize that you may already be doing some or all of these things already.

My approach to helping the kids get their grades up is to see how they do on their own without too much help from you during the fourth grading period. But I'd like you to know that in our group, _____ (child's name) has set goals for the grades he/she is working toward this grading period, and has also identified three behaviors he/she must improve upon to get his/her grades up. I'd like you to ask him/her about these goals and behaviors sometime this week, and continue discussing his/her progress several times each week in the coming weeks.

Depending on how well _____ (child's name) does during this grading period, I may be asking you for a little more help next grading period. For now, I'd just like you to ask about school activities, homework, goals for grades and behavior, and whether there's anything you can do to help out. How does that sound to you? Do you have any questions? I'll be contacting you in several weeks to see how things are going. Thanks for your help.

Parental Contact #2

Good evening, Mr./Mrs. _____ (caller should speak with parent who was spoken to in first contact). This is Ross Greene again, the person who is running the special groups that _____ (child's name) is participating in at the middle school. How are you this evening? Do you have time to speak with me for a few minutes?

As you know, report cards came out this week. As you probably remember, _____ (child's name) got the following grades (caller reviews child's grades for the third grading period with parent). How did you feel about these grades? Have you let _____ (child's name) know that you are pleased/feel he/she needs to improve in (subjects)?

As I told you in our first conversation, _____ (child's name) is receiving additional support from his/her teachers, and learning things that we hope will help him/her get his/her grades up in our groups. One of the things _____ (child's name) has done in our groups is set goals for the grades he/she is working toward for this grading period. Please ask him/her about what goals he/she is working toward, and ask if there is any way you can help. We feel that the more interested you are in _____ 's progress, the more interested he/she will be in making progress.

_____ (child's name) 's teachers have provided me with feedback about areas they feel he/she needs to improve on to do better academically. These areas include (reviews teacher's feedback with parents). Of course, if you want more information, you should feel free to contact (teacher's name).

I'll be contacting you again in several weeks.

Parental Contact #3

Good evening, Mr./Mrs. _____ (caller should speak with parent who was spoken to in previous phone contacts). This is Ross Greene again, the person who is running the special groups that _____ (child's name) is participating in at the middle school. How are you this evening? Do you have a few moments to speak with me?

I'd like to give you some additional feedback from the teachers about how _____ (child's name) has been doing over the past few weeks since we spoke last (caller provides parents with teacher feedback). I'd like you to take some time during the next few days to discuss this feedback with _____ (child's name) and find out if there is anything you can do to help. (For students who are not turning in homework assignments, parents are instructed on the use of daily report card/homework assignment sheets and basic contingency contracting).

If you can spare a few more minutes, I'd like to ask you a few questions (Family Learning Environment Survey is administered).

Is there anything else you feel we need to discuss related to _____ (child's name) 's progress in school? Is there anything else I can help you with in dealing with _____ (child's name) ?

I'll only be contacting you one additional time, at the end of the fourth grading period. I appreciate your help and interest.

Parental Contact #4

Good evening, Mr./Mrs. _____ (caller should speak with parent who was spoken to in previous contacts); this is Ross Greene again, the person who is running the special groups that _____ (child's name) is participating in at the middle school. How are you this evening? Do you have time to speak with me for a few minutes?

As you know, report cards came out this week. As you probably recall, _____ (child's name) received the following grades (caller reviews child's grades for the fourth grading period with parent). How did you feel about these grades? Have you let _____ (child's name) know that you are pleased/feel he/she needs to improve in (subjects)? (For parents participating in daily report card/homework assignment sheets: How do you feel the daily report cards have been working out?)

As you know, this is the last time I will be contacting you. But even though you won't be hearing from me anymore, I want to urge you to continue taking a strong interest in _____ (child's name) 's schoolwork and continue to let him/her know what you expect. And, of course, you should always feel free to get in touch with the guidance counselor, _____ (counselor's name), or any of the teachers to get more information or find out what you can do to help.

Thank you for your help, and keep up the good work.

Appendix N
Family Learning Environment Survey

Transition to Middle School Project

Family Learning Environment Survey
(adapted from Marjoribanks)

Student's Name _____ School _____

LS-1 What adults live in the household?

- 7 - natural mother and father
- 6 - natural mother and step-father
- 5 - natural father and step-mother
- 4 - natural mother only
- 3 - natural father only
- 2 - grandparents
- 1 - Other _____

PE-1 What is highest degree held by male head of household?

- 5 - above bachelor's
- 4 - bachelor's
- 3 - associate
- 2 - high school
- 1 - less than high school

PE-2 What is highest degree held by female held of household?

- 5 - above bachelor's
- 4 - bachelor's
- 3 - associate
- 2 - high school
- 1 - less than high school

ATS-1 How satisfied would you say you are with _____ Middle School?

- 5 - very satisfied
- 4 - reasonably satisfied
- 3 - not really satisfied
- 2 - very dissatisfied
- 1 - don't know or don't care

For the following statements about _____ Middle School,
please indicate whether you:

- agree strongly
- agree
- don't know
- disagree
- disagree strongly

	AS	A	?	D	SD
ATS-2 There is not enough homework	1	2	3	4	5
ATS-3 There is not enough discipline	1	2	3	4	5
ATS-4 Children are very friendly	5	4	3	2	1
ATS-5 Too much time is spent on subjects such as art and music	1	2	3	4	5
ATS-6 Not enough time is spent on teaching the basic subjects such as reading and arithmetic	1	2	3	4	5
ATS-7 Teachers are very friendly and approachable	5	4	3	2	1
ATS-8 Teachers seem to treat all children very fairly	5	4	3	2	1
ATS-9 Teachers seem to be very interested in _____ 's education	5	4	3	2	1
ATS-10 The methods of teaching seem to be too progressive, too modern	1	2	3	4	5
ATS-11 I don't receive enough information about how _____ is doing in school	1	2	3	4	5
PA-1 How much education would you like _____ to receive if at all possible? 5 - postbaccalaureate education 4 - bachelor's degree 3 - some post-high school degree 2 - high school degree 1 - don't care or less than high school					
PA-2 How much education do you really EXPECT _____ to receive? 5 - postbaccalaureate education 4 - bachelor's degree 3 - some post-high school degree 2 - high school degree 1 - don't care or less than high school					
PA-3 What kind of job would you like _____ to have when he/she grows up? 5 - job requiring postbaccalaureate education 4 - job requiring bachelor's degree 3 - job requiring high school diploma plus professional training 2 - job requiring high school diploma 1 - job not requiring high school diploma, or don't care					
IO-1 How many hours a day does _____ watch TV? 1 - more than 5 hours 2 - between 4-5 hours 3 - between 1-3 hours 4 - less than 1 hour 5 - none					

- IO-2 How often do you help _____ with his/her homework?
 1 - never
 2 - less than once a week
 3 - about once a week
 4 - couple of times a week
 5 - almost every day
- IO-3 How much time do you think an 11-year old should spend doing homework every night?
 1 - no time
 2 - about 15 minutes
 3 - about 30 minutes
 4 - about 45 minutes
 5 - an hour or more
- IO-4 On the average, how much time does _____ spend doing homework every night?
 1 - no time
 2 - about 15 minutes
 3 - about 30 minutes
 4 - about 45 minutes
 5 - an hour or more
- IO-5 Do you (or your spouse) ever discuss _____ progress at school with him/her? How often?
 1 - no
 2 - yes, not very often (less than once a week)
 3 - yes, a couple of times a week
 4 - yes, nearly every day (3-4 times/week)
 5 - yes, every day (5 times/week)
- IO-6 Do you (or your spouse) know what _____ is studying in, for example, English or math right now?
 1 - no
 2 - does not know present topic but does know previous topics
 3 - has vague idea of current topics
 4 - knows specific current topics
- MS-1 Did you (or your spouse) make any special changes when _____'s grades went down after beginning middle school?
 1 - no
 _____ yes _____

PE _____

ATS _____

PA _____

IO _____

MS _____

Appendix O

Permission Forms for Target and Comparison Students

Blacksburg Middle School

501 South Main Street Blacksburg, Virginia 24060 (703) 552-2401

Dear Parent(s),

The transition from elementary to middle school involves important changes in school environment, and some students experience difficulty in adapting to these changes. This year, Blacksburg Middle School is participating in a new program to provide additional support, assistance, and encouragement to students who may be experiencing difficulty in their new middle school environment. The program is being conducted in collaboration with researchers from Virginia Tech, has been approved by Montgomery County Public Schools, and is being implemented in all four middle schools in Montgomery County. We believe the program will help our students through a difficult first year and improve the likelihood for continued success in middle school and beyond.

We have selected your child, _____, as eligible for participation in the project. The program will be implemented by our teachers and guidance staff and by the project directors from Virginia Tech, and may involve additional support from classroom teachers, participation in weekly or bi-weekly support groups with other students who may be experiencing similar difficulties, continued contact with parents, and periodic assessment of students' personal and psychological adjustment to middle school.

Your consent is required for your child to participate in this project. Because the program examines academic performance, we are also requesting your permission for the project directors to record your child's fifth and sixth grade grades and standardized test scores from school records. All grades, test scores, and scores on assessment measures will remain strictly confidential. Data will be stored by subject number on computer, and names will not be used in any subsequent reports describing the program.

YOUR CHILD'S PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY IS OPTIONAL. If you decide to withhold permission for your child to participate in this study, you will not be jeopardizing his or her opportunity to participate in other school programs. You may withdraw your child from the study at any time.

If you have any questions regarding any aspect of the project, please contact me or a member of our guidance staff at 552-2401, and we will be pleased to discuss the program with you. The project directors, Ross Greene, M.S., and Thomas H. Ollendick, Ph.D., can be reached at 961-6451. Once you have made a decision concerning your child's participation in the program, please complete the section below and return to our guidance department within the next few days.

Sincerely,

Donald Kelsey, Principal

Student's Name _____ BMS-T

_____ I give permission for my child to participate in the "Transition to Middle School Project", and for the project directors to access my child's school records for grades and test scores.

_____ I do not give permission for my child to participate in the "Transition to Middle School Project."

Parent or Guardian Signature

Blacksburg Middle School

501 South Main Street Blacksburg, Virginia 24060 (703) 552-2401

Dear Parent(s),

The transition from elementary to middle school involves important changes in school environment, and some students experience difficulty in adapting to these changes. This year, Blacksburg Middle School is participating in a new program to provide additional support, assistance, and encouragement to students who may be experiencing difficulty in their new middle school environment. The program is being conducted in collaboration with researchers from Virginia Tech, has been approved by Montgomery County Public Schools, and is being implemented in all four middle schools in Montgomery County. We believe the program will help our students through a difficult first year and improve the likelihood for continued success in middle school and beyond.

Your child, _____, does not appear to be having academic difficulty in the middle school environment, but has been selected for participation because of the need for comparison students. As such, your child will not be involved in the treatment aspect of the program. However, because the program examines academic performance, we are requesting your permission for the project directors to record your child's fifth and sixth grade grades and standardized test scores from school records. All grades, test scores, and scores on assessment measures will remain strictly confidential. Data will be stored by subject number on computer, and names will not be used in any subsequent reports describing the program. We are also requesting your permission for the researchers to periodically assess your child's personal and psychological adjustment to middle school through administration of various questionnaires.

YOUR CHILD'S PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY IS OPTIONAL. If you decide to withhold permission for your child to participate in this study, you will not be jeopardizing his or her opportunity to participate in other school programs. You may withdraw your child from the study at any time.

If you have any questions regarding any aspect of the project, please contact me or a member of our guidance staff at 552-2401, and we will be pleased to discuss the program with you. The project directors, Ross Greene, M.S., and Thomas H. Ollendick, Ph.D., can be reached at 961-6451. Once you have made a decision concerning your child's participation in the program, please complete the section below and return to our guidance department within the next few days.

Sincerely,

Donald Kelsey, Principal

Student's Name _____ BMS

_____ I give permission for the project directors of the "Transition to Middle School Project" to access my child's school records for grades and test scores and to assess my child's personal and psychological adjustment to middle school

_____ I do not give permission for my child to participate in the "Transition to Middle School Project."

Parent or Guardian Signature

Appendix P

Intercorrelations of Manipulation Check Variables

Intercorrelations of Manipulation Check Variables

	Grade-change (CRABZ-CRABS)	Tchr Cont w/Student	Tchr Cont w/Prnts	Tchr Belief w/Student	Wifeness of Group	Expectancy of Grp Mlp	Prnts Supp, General	Prnts Supp, Middle Sch	Manipulation Checks	Stdat Belief w/Tchr	Educ of Father	Educ of Mother	Prnts Attd Toward Schl	Prnts Supp, Aspects	Prnts Supp, Instrumentl
Tchr Cont w/Student (1)	.40*														
Tchr Cont w/Prnts (1)	-.10	.01													
Tchr Belief w/Student (1)	.26	-.30	-.17												
Wifeness of Group (2)	-.16	.27	-.03	-.54***											
Expectancy of Grp Mlp (2)	-.19	.19	-.17	-.38	.76***										
Prnts Supp, General (2)	.29	.42*	-.29	-.13	.69**	.39									
Prnts Supp, Middle Schl (2)	-.09	.35	.12	-.63**	.52**	.24	.54***								
Manipulation Checks (3)	-.22	-.37	.11	-.01	.18	.02	.09	-.05							
Stdat Belief w/Tchr (3)	-.03	.12	-.19	.26	.12	.20	.30	.18	-.02						
Educ of Father (3)	.28	-.39	-.24	.48**	-.62***	.13	.14	-.32**	-.02	-.31					
Educ of Mother (3)	.48**	-.09	-.07	.22	-.40*	.33	.14	-.02	.11	.13	.45**				
Prnts Attd Toward Schl (3)	-.44**	-.10	.10	.22	-.11	-.05	-.27	-.31	-.39	.17	.35	.18			
Prnts Supp, Aspects (3)	-.03	-.31	-.20	.20	.10	.14	.31	.02	.34***	-.20	.38	.20	-.30		
Prnts Supp, Instrumentl (3)	.26	.19	-.01	-.13	.18	.33	.37	.07	.18	-.05	.12	.37	-.06	.32	
Prnts Supp, Middle Schl (3)	.01	-.30	.11	.03	.10	-.05	.05	.01	.61***	.04	.23	.44**	.17	.37	.04

(1) - reported by teachers
 (2) - reported by students
 (3) - reported by parents

spc.07
 spc.05
 spc.01
 spc.001

Appendix Q

Intercorrelations of Dependent Measures at Pre-treatment

Intercorrelations of Dependent Measures at Pre-treatment

	Grade-Change (CPAS-CPAS)	RRFC Good Dis	RRFC Sec Age	RRFC Att Prob/Em	RRFC Ans/With	RRFC Prys Bab	RRFC Mot Tenn	P-8 Behavior	P-8 School	P-8 Physcl App	P-8 Anxiety	P-8 Popularity	P-8 Supplins	RRMAS	Mid Schl Surv Acad Press	Mid Schl Surv Conflict w/Auth	Mid Schl Surv Year Matric	Mid Schl Surv Subst Abuse
RRFC Good Dis	.27 n=40																	
RRFC Sec Age	.10 n=40	.54*** n=40																
RRFC Att Prob/Em	.20 n=40	.64*** n=40	.40 n=40															
RRFC Ans/With	.05 n=40	-.04 n=40	.05 n=40	.27 n=40														
RRFC Prys Bab	.27 n=40	.64*** n=40	.50*** n=40	.10 n=40														
RRFC Mot Tenn/Exc	.13 n=40	.73*** n=40	.29 n=40	.07 n=40	.43*** n=40													
Piers-Harris Behavior	-.15 n=39	-.42*** n=39	-.11 n=39	-.25 n=39	-.29 n=39	-.34* n=39	-.22 n=39	-.22 n=39	-.25 n=39	-.26 n=39	-.26 n=39	-.26 n=39	-.26 n=39	-.26 n=39	-.26 n=39	-.26 n=39	-.26 n=39	-.26 n=39
Piers-Harris School	-.12 n=39	-.26 n=39	-.04 n=39	-.43*** n=39	-.09 n=39	-.10 n=39	-.14 n=39	-.14 n=39	-.14 n=39	-.14 n=39	-.14 n=39	-.14 n=39	-.14 n=39	-.14 n=39	-.14 n=39	-.14 n=39	-.14 n=39	-.14 n=39
Piers-Harris Physcl App	-.04 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.13 n=39	-.22 n=39	-.13 n=39	-.11 n=39	-.11 n=39	-.11 n=39	-.11 n=39	-.11 n=39	-.11 n=39	-.11 n=39	-.11 n=39	-.11 n=39	-.11 n=39	-.11 n=39	-.11 n=39	-.11 n=39
Piers-Harris Anxiety	-.02 n=39	.05 n=39	.26 n=39	-.20 n=39	-.06 n=39	-.03 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39
Piers-Harris Popularity	-.00 n=39	-.06 n=39	-.16 n=39	-.18 n=39	-.04 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39	-.02 n=39
Piers-Harris Supplins	-.04 n=39	-.19 n=39	-.16 n=39	-.20 n=39	-.08 n=39	-.04 n=39	-.04 n=39	-.04 n=39	-.04 n=39	-.04 n=39	-.04 n=39	-.04 n=39	-.04 n=39	-.04 n=39	-.04 n=39	-.04 n=39	-.04 n=39	-.04 n=39
RRMAS	.05 n=39	.03 n=39	-.26 n=39	.17 n=39	-.05 n=39	-.13 n=39	-.13 n=39	-.13 n=39	-.13 n=39	-.13 n=39	-.13 n=39	-.13 n=39	-.13 n=39	-.13 n=39	-.13 n=39	-.13 n=39	-.13 n=39	-.13 n=39
Mid Schl Surv Acad Press	.04 n=39	.54*** n=39	.39* n=39	.21 n=39	.21 n=39	.21 n=39	.21 n=39	.21 n=39	.21 n=39	.21 n=39	.21 n=39	.21 n=39	.21 n=39	.21 n=39	.21 n=39	.21 n=39	.21 n=39	.21 n=39
Mid Schl Surv Conflict w/Auth	-.10 n=39	.28 n=39	-.01 n=39	.27 n=39	-.09 n=39	-.21 n=39	-.21 n=39	-.21 n=39	-.21 n=39	-.21 n=39	-.21 n=39	-.21 n=39	-.21 n=39	-.21 n=39	-.21 n=39	-.21 n=39	-.21 n=39	-.21 n=39
Mid Schl Surv Peer Matric	.17 n=39	.10 n=39	.04 n=39	.07 n=39	-.07 n=39	.16 n=39	.16 n=39	.16 n=39	.16 n=39	.16 n=39	.16 n=39	.16 n=39	.16 n=39	.16 n=39	.16 n=39	.16 n=39	.16 n=39	.16 n=39
Mid Schl Surv Subst Abuse	-.15 n=39	-.10 n=39	-.09 n=39	-.03 n=39	-.04 n=39	-.08 n=39	-.08 n=39	-.08 n=39	-.08 n=39	-.08 n=39	-.08 n=39	-.08 n=39	-.08 n=39	-.08 n=39	-.08 n=39	-.08 n=39	-.08 n=39	-.08 n=39
CSI	-.03 n=39	.06 n=39	-.04 n=39	.15 n=39	-.21 n=39	.05 n=39	.05 n=39	.05 n=39	.05 n=39	.05 n=39	.05 n=39	.05 n=39	.05 n=39	.05 n=39	.05 n=39	.05 n=39	.05 n=39	.05 n=39

* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .001
**** p < .0001

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