



The Kids in Transition to School (KITS) Program

What is the KITS Program?

The KITS Program is an evidence-based, school readiness intervention developed at the Oregon Social Learning Center. The program is designed to strengthen children's literacy, self-regulation, and social skills just prior to kindergarten entry via a two-generational program:

- A 24-session school readiness group curriculum for children featuring a concentration on:
 - early literacy skills (e.g., letter names and sounds, concepts about print)
 - early numeracy skills (e.g., counting, number recognition)
 - self-regulation (e.g., teacher-preferred skills such as sitting still and raising hands)
 - social skills (e.g., cooperation, sharing, recognizing others' emotions)

The school readiness groups are structured like a kindergarten class. Sessions last for 2 hours.

- An 8-10 session workshop for parents and caregivers focusing on such topics as:
 - ways to increase early literacy skills at home
 - preparing children for the transition to school by establishing routines
 - how to initiate home-school communication and school involvement
 - how to encourage children's positive behaviors at home and school

Caregivers attend workshops weekly for 2 hours. These can be in-person or online. Online classes are generally 90 minutes.

The KITS school readiness and parent group curricula and materials have been translated and adapted into the ¡Vamos! Program for families whose primary language is Spanish.

Teachers, Instructional Assistants, and Classroom Aides are trained to work in the KITS positive behavioral and social-emotional support model. This approach emphasizes prevention and redirection strategies to promote positive, cooperative classroom behaviors, while embedding practice of academic and social-emotional skills for students' school success. During implementation, KITS teachers attend weekly professional development meetings with their coach and receive support and technical assistance in areas such as:

- Positive behavior support strategies and individualized problem-solving
- Strategies for embedding social-emotional learning from the KITS curriculum
- Team building and teacher-to-teacher support

Has the KITS Program been tested?

- Three randomized controlled trials (RCTs; tests where one group is randomly assigned to receive the KITS Program and one group does not) and one evaluation of a county-wide scale up have been conducted:
 - The KITS Foster Care Study focused on children in foster care
 - The KITS Developmental Disabilities Study focused on children who received early childhood special education/early intervention services who also had behavior and/or social problems that might interfere with the transition to school

- The KITS Promise Neighborhoods Study focused on children living in low-income, high-crime neighborhoods.
- The KITS Lane County Scale Up Evaluation focused on 12 school districts across Lane County, Oregon in which the KITS Program was implemented
- **Results of the studies** have shown:
 - **Gains on early literacy** (including letter naming abilities, letter-sound recognition, and understanding of conventions of print) prior to kindergarten, and **continued positive effects on reading at third and fifth grades**
 - **Gains on self-regulation skills** before and during kindergarten.
 - **Gains in social skills** through first grade, and **higher self-competence in third grade**.
 - **Increases in effective parenting** skills and **greater parent involvement** in school.
 - For children in foster care, **less involvement with deviant peers in third grade** and **less endorsement of risky behaviors**, such as antisocial activities.
 - **Positive changes in brain functioning and stress response** in children.
 - **Reductions in suicidal ideation in preadolescence** in children with a history of foster care involvement who received the program
 - **Positive effects for the educators implementing KITS** such as better behavior management skills and less stress in their classrooms during the school year.

The KITS Program is listed on the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare, the SAMHSA National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices, and the Office of Justice Programs' CrimeSolutions.org database.

Where has the KITS Program been implemented?

The KITS Program is currently being implemented in 11 school districts in Lane County, OR and has served over 2000 children and families over the past several years. KITS has also been implemented in Carroll County Public Schools in Carroll County, MD.

For more information about the KITS Program, please contact Dr. Katherine Pears, Program Director (katherinep@oslc.org; 541-485-2711), or Deena Scheidt, Program Coordinator (deenas@oslc.org; 541-485-2711) or visit www.kidsintransitiontoschool.org.

