



# Implementation of Tools for Getting Along: Equipping Educators to Teach Students to Get Along

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## TOOLS FOR GETTING ALONG

- Students who do not acquire social and emotional skills are at risk for a range of negative behavioral and academic outcomes.<sup>1</sup>
- Teaching **social problem-solving** helps students:
  - Understand their emotions.
  - Reduce their anger and behavioral problems.
  - Improve executive functions, interpersonal relationships, and problem-solving skills.

**Tools for Getting Along (TFGA)** is a classroom-based **social-emotional learning (SEL)** program that teaches elementary students problem-solving skills to reduce aggression and improve prosocial skills and behavior.



Examining **implementation fidelity** of SEL programs in the school setting and the impact of fidelity on student skills can provide information on whether the program is sustainable and is crucial to understanding the intervention's impact on student outcomes.

## STUDY DESIGN & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Data for this implementation study were drawn from a larger randomized controlled trial evaluating the impact of the TFGA intervention in schools.
- This study specifically examined **implementation data** for teachers who were randomly assigned to receive a 2-day formal training in and implement the 26 TFGA lessons under routine classroom conditions.

3 states

18 Elementary schools



52 Teachers



700 Grade 4 Students



Our **research questions** examined:

- Did teachers trained to implement the TFGA curriculum do so with fidelity?
- To what degree was the level of TFGA implementation fidelity related to student outcomes?

## METHOD

The study team completed the following data collection procedures:

### Teacher-reported surveys

- Teacher completed surveys about students' executive functions and behavioral problems at the beginning and end of the school year.
  - Behavioral Rating Inventory of Executive Functions (BRIEF):** Captures students' behavior regulation, including inhibitory control, the ability to modify behavior, and the ability to manage emotions.
  - Clinical Assessment of Behavior (CAB):** Captures students' behavioral problems, including internalizing and externalizing behavior, social skills, and adaptive behavior and academic competence

### Observations of Fidelity of Implementation

- TFGA developers created 26 lesson-specific checklists of **key components** (such as teachers' stating lesson objectives, soliciting student examples, or utilizing curriculum materials) derived from the curriculum manual and teacher training.
- Researchers conducted 4 to 5 classroom observations per teacher over the school year to assess fidelity to the curriculum (20% of all lessons).
- Data obtained during observations included:
  - Level of implementation fidelity:** The overall percentage of key lesson components delivered.
  - Lesson quality:** The quality with which teachers delivered each observed lesson, with ratings ranging from 1 to 5.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF TFGA

Teachers implemented the TFGA curriculum with high fidelity in terms of both percentage of lessons completed and lesson quality.

✓ Observers reported that teachers completed an **average of 88%** ( $SD=10\%$ ) of the **key components** in the manual.

➤ The **average lesson quality rating** across all teachers was **3.2** ( $SD=.5$ ).

## IMPLEMENTATION & STUDENT OUTCOMES

- Using Hierarchical Linear Models (HLM), we examined whether the percentage of lessons completed and lesson quality predicted teacher-reported student EFs and problem behaviors in the spring.
  - Higher **lesson quality** ratings but not levels of implementation fidelity marginally significantly ( $p < .10$ ) predicted greater **emotional regulation, cognitive regulation**, and overall **EF skills**
  - Level of implementation fidelity and lesson quality were not significantly related to student behavioral problems.

### HLM Results for Percentage of Lessons Completed and Lesson Quality Predicting Spring Teacher-Reported Measures

Scale	% of Lessons Completed			Lesson Quality		
	B	SE	p	B	SE	p
<b>BRIEF</b>						
Behavior Regulation Index	0.24	2.12	0.91	-0.37	0.43	0.38
Emotional Regulation Index	0.44	2.18	0.84	-0.73	0.43	<b>0.09</b>
Cognitive Regulation Index	-4.2	4.72	0.37	-1.75	0.95	<b>0.07</b>
<b>BRIEF Total</b>	-3.66	7.95	0.65	3.17	1.62	<b>0.05</b>
<b>CAB</b>						
Internalizing	5.08	3.56	0.15	0.32	0.72	0.66
Externalizing	3.58	3.93	0.36	1.26	0.78	0.11
Social Skills	-0.78	4.00	0.84	0.38	0.79	0.63
Competence	3.93	4.16	0.35	0.17	0.83	0.84

Note: Models control for fall scores and include random intercept on schools.

## DISCUSSION

- The high level of implementation fidelity and average lesson quality rating indicate the TFGA curriculum was **feasible for teachers** to implement in the school setting under routine conditions with minimal support after receiving initial training.
- The impact of lesson quality on students' EF skills suggests that the **quality of lesson delivery** is more important than the quantity of lesson content for student outcomes.
- This study provides evidence that when implemented with fidelity, **TFGA** holds promise as a universal intervention to develop students' **EF skills**.