**Summary**

**"Promoting Positive Youth Development Through School-Based Social and Emotional Learning Interventions: A Meta-Analysis of Follow-Up Effects"**

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Social and emotional learning (SEL) teaches children to recognize and understand their emotions, feel empathy, make decisions, and build and maintain relationships. A widely cited 2011 meta-analysis previously showed that SEL programs immediately improve mental health, social skills, and academic achievement. The current study shows that school-based SEL interventions continue to benefit students for months and even years to come.

For example, in follow-up assessments an average of 3.5 years after the last intervention, the academic performance of students exposed to SEL programs was an average 13 percentile points higher than their non-SEL peers, based on the eight studies that measured academics. Although based on only eight studies, these long-term academic outcomes are notable.

At other follow-up periods, SEL continued to boost student well-being in the form of greater social and emotional competencies, prosocial behavior, and prosocial attitudes. Furthermore, SEL students showed lasting decreases in negative outcomes such as conduct problems, emotional distress, and drug use compared to control groups.

These results come from a meta-analytic review of 82 different interventions involving more than 97,000 students from kindergarten to high school, where the effects were assessed at least six months and up to 18 years after the programs ended. Thirty-eight of the studies were from outside the U.S., indicating that SEL programs are being conducted in several countries around the world.

Also of note:

(1) Higher social and emotional competencies among SEL students at the end of the initial intervention was the best predictor of long-term benefits, demonstrating how important it is to develop these competencies in students.

(2) Several individual studies found a variety of other important benefits favoring program participants over controls. For example, SEL participants later demonstrated a 6% increase in high school graduation rates, and an 11% increase in college graduation rates. In other cases, SEL participants were less likely to have a clinical mental health disorder, ever be arrested or become involved with the juvenile justice system, and had lower rates of sexually transmitted infections, and pregnancies.

These outcomes can often be translated into substantial monetary benefits for participants and for society. For example, graduating from high school has a lifetime income benefit of $367,687 for each graduating student, and preventing a single case of conduct disorder saves society nearly $4 million.

The overall findings from this review suggest the value that can accrue to both participating students and society in general by incorporating well-conducted SEL interventions in schools and classrooms.