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## **Incredible Years Dina Dinosaur Program Evaluation**

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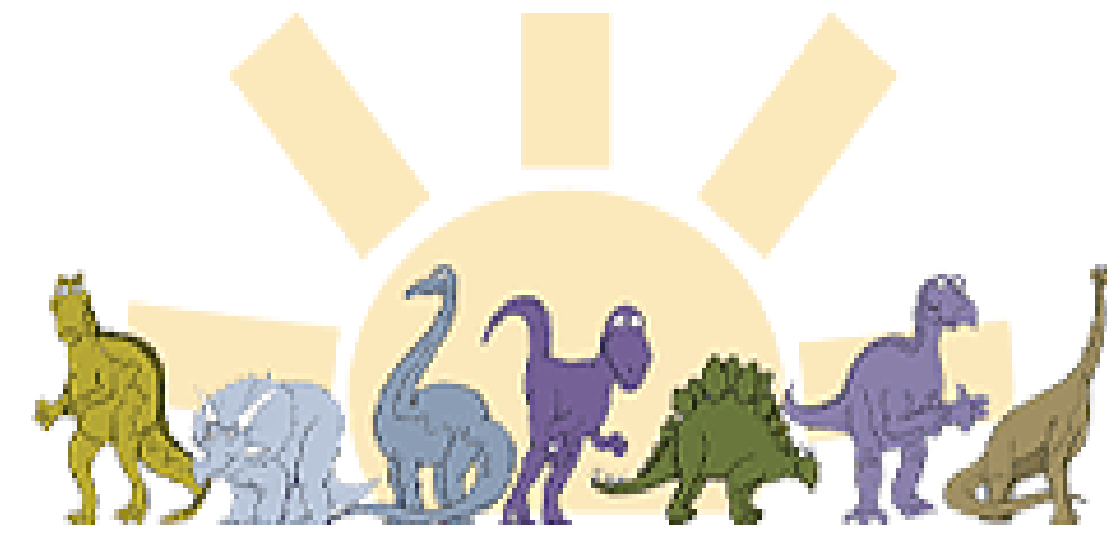
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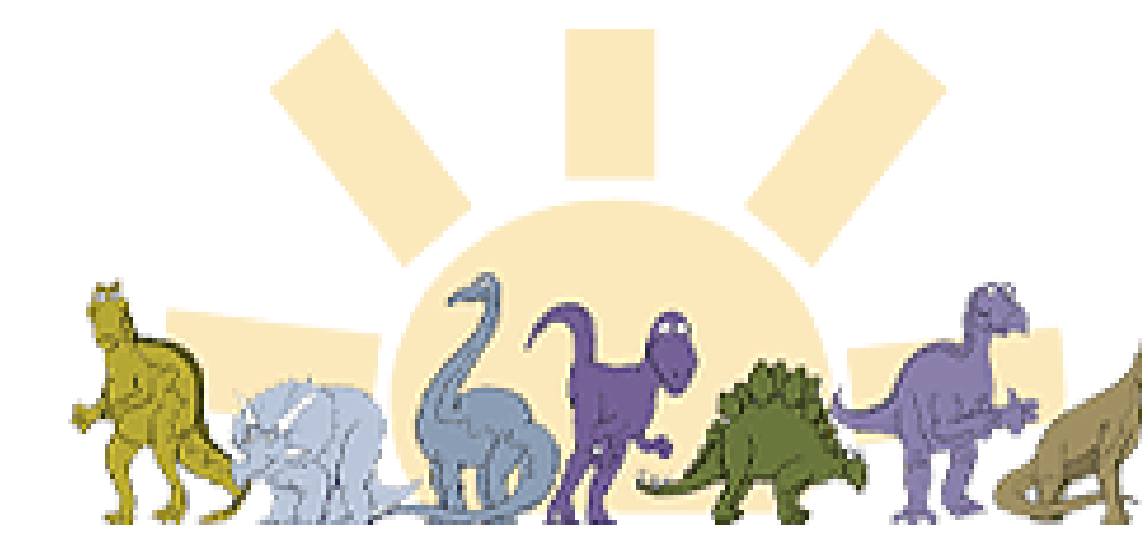
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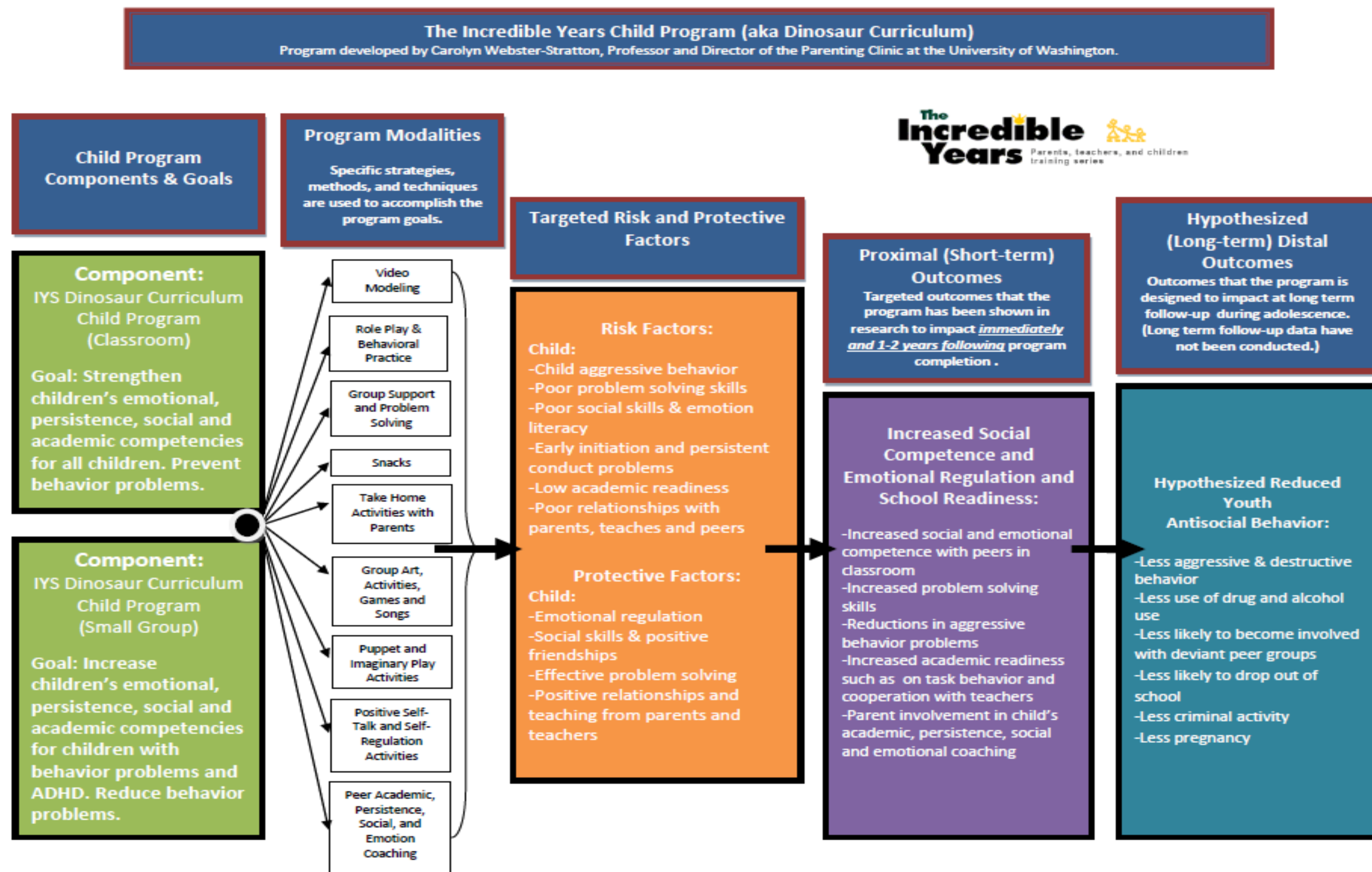
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# Incredible Years Dina Dinosaur Program Evaluation



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## Introduction

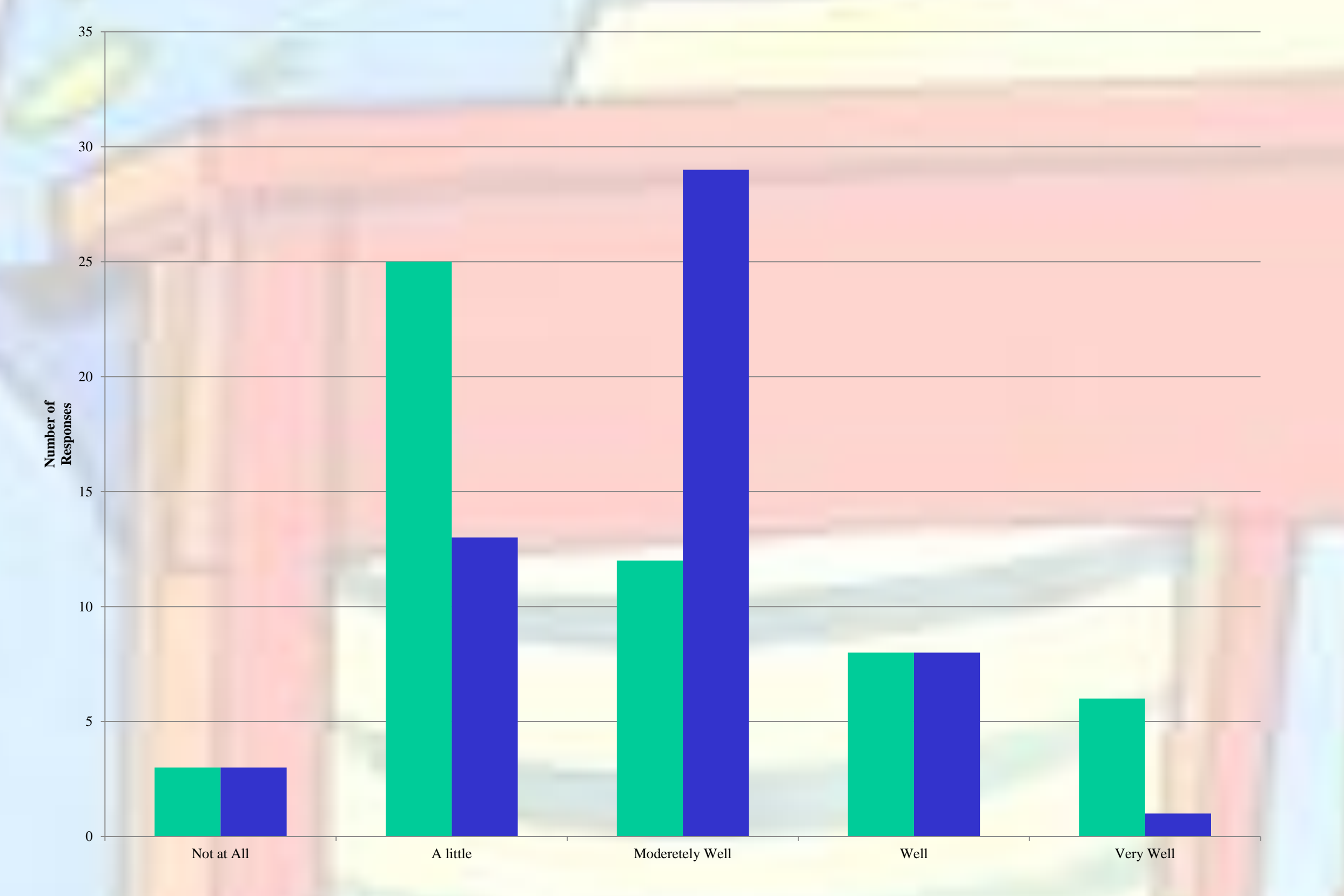
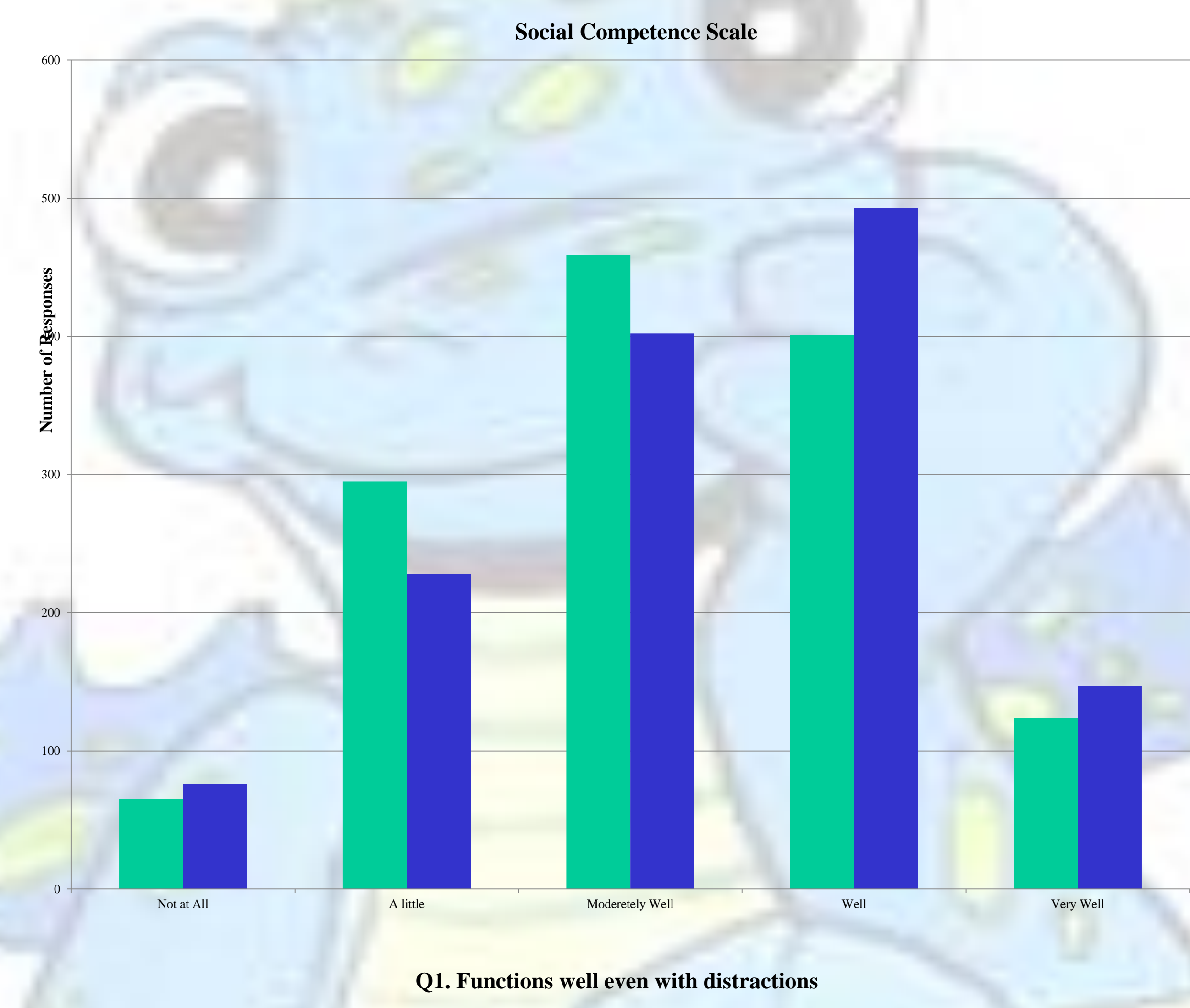
The purpose of this program evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the Incredible Years (IY) Dina Dinosaur Child Training Program in the Early Childhood Special Education Classroom (ECSE) at the GFW Elementary School, a small town school. The Dina Dinosaur Program is designed to promote children's social, emotional, behavior and academic skills through social skills and problem solving curriculum. This program has been found to be appropriate for children with ADHD, language and/or developmental delays and mild autism spectrum disorders, which were all present in the ECSE classroom at GFW Elementary. All of the ECSE teachers and paraprofessionals had previously been trained in the IY teacher training curriculum and the effectiveness of utilizing positive attention, praise and encouragement with young children throughout their school day to increase favorable behaviors.

## Methodology

The Dina Dinosaur Program was implemented in the ECSE classroom at GFW Elementary School in both the AM and PM classes. This population of students has been diagnosed with a developmental or learning disability, which makes them eligible for special education services. The program ran for 9 weeks in both the morning and afternoon sessions of ECSE with approximately two lessons taught in both classes weekly. The teachers and paraprofessionals completed the IY Social Competency Scale (SCS) on 20 students from the morning and afternoon classes both prior to the program starting and after it had concluded. The SCS included 25 questions where teachers rated the children's classroom behaviors based on a 5 point Likert scale with X being "Not at All" and Y being "Very Well". All ECSE classroom teachers and paraprofessionals had been previously trained in the IY Teacher program with the intent the philosophies and IY interventions would be utilized throughout the children's school day. Data was then analyzed using Excel and SSPS software.

## Literature Review

According to the research, the IY Dina Dinosaur Children's Program is appropriate for children with ADHD, language or developmental delays or mild autism spectrum disorders and the curriculum should be adapted to meet these special needs. All IY groups should use video, role playing, puppets, and activities provided through the program. The skills taught in the IY Dina Dinosaur Program should be implemented throughout the children's school day for the best intervention results (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004). The IY Program is based on the social learning theory and uses modeling, observational learning and positive feedback to increase children's positive classroom behaviors and social skills. The IY Dina Dinosaur Program has been found to equally effective in decreasing negative classroom behaviors in Latino children as it is in decreasing negative behaviors in European American children (Barera et al., 2002)



## Results

- Based on a 5 point Likert Scale, children received higher ratings of well and very well in the post-test when compared to the scores on the pre-test.
- In Question 1 of the SCS, which asked classroom professionals to rate how well children function with distractions, 29% of children increased in this area moving from "a little" rating to a "moderately well" rating when pre and post-test SCS scores were compared.
- There was very few statistically relevant differences in the mean scores of the other questions of the pre and post-test SCS.

## Research Questions

- Following the implementation of the IY Dina Dinosaur Program,
- Did the children's classrooms behaviors improve as observed by IY trained teachers and paraprofessionals?
  - Did the children's social interactions improve as observed by the IY trained teachers?
  - Were the children better able to identify their feelings and the feelings of classmates as observed by IY trained teachers?

## Conclusions Strengths

- Puppets kept children on task and assisted in helping them learn the social and emotional concepts of the Dina Dinosaur Program.
- During lessons children demonstrated strengthened social skills, emotional awareness and utilized appropriate play.
- Children were able to recall concepts learned in previous lessons when asked by instructors using the puppets.
- During lessons children showed increased self-esteem and self-confidence when completing lessons and activities.

## Limitations

- The IY Dina Dinosaur Program needs to be taught in a classroom where teachers embrace the interventions, are directly involved with teaching the curriculum, and use the IY interventions and language with students throughout the school day and on an everyday basis.
- Paraprofessionals need to be required to use the IY language and interventions when interacting with students.
- Parents need to be familiarized with the IY language and interventions. This can be done through parents attending the parent training portion of the IY Program, so children have consistency in school and at home.
- The IY Dina Dinosaur Program needs to be taught at the same time of the day consistently and after the children have had plenty of play time to help keep them on task during lessons.
- A control group should be utilized to better assess the successfulness of the program with certain student populations to increase validity.

## Implications for Practice

- The principles of the IY Dina Dinosaur Program are consistent with social work values when applied in early education classrooms.
- Change can occur with follow up teaching and can be sustained throughout a child's educational experience.
- GFW Elementary School will benefit from: expansion of the IY Dina Dinosaur Program to other preschool classrooms, expansion to Kindergarten classrooms and follow up lessons with older students.
- The IY Program will be most effective and beneficial to the GFW Elementary School if continued training and programming is offered to teachers, students and parents. This will allow consistency of interventions to students.

## References

References are available from the author upon request.

