

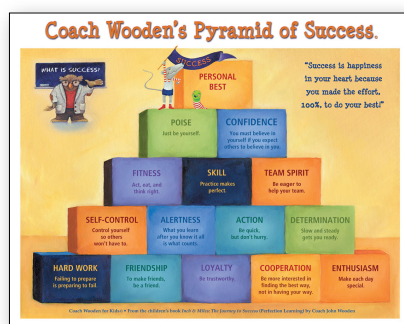


# Harper For Kids Program – *A Case Study on Impact*

*Volume 1, January 2016*

## About Harper for Kids

Harper for Kids (HFK) organization was founded by Tim and Peanut Harper in 2008. The mission of Harper for Kids is to teach youth the important life skills that will empower them to achieve their personal best in life. HFK’s youth character development program is based upon legendary UCLA Coach John Wooden’s Pyramid of Success and his “definition of success”, which he defines as: *peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to become the best you are capable of becoming.*



The Pyramid of Success is comprised of character traits that can help children reach their personal best and lead positive, productive and fulfilling lives. HFK helps schools incorporate Coach Wooden’s Pyramid of Success into their character education program to help children understand what it really takes to make the effort – 100% – to fulfill their potential and do their best at school, at home and in life. There is no cost to the schools for our program but we require a strong commitment level. In this case study, we are happy to share the results from a recently conducted survey from California schools that are actively engaged with the Harper for Kids program.

*“Harper for Kids has been at the core of our character education program. It has given everyone a focus and has helped to change our school culture for the better.”*

*Principal, Rancho Mirage Elementary*

## Harper for Kids Program by Numbers

7  
years

75  
schools

40,000  
students

In the 2008-2009 school year, HFK began with just 2 schools. Since then, HFK has worked with 75 schools throughout California. An estimated 40,000 students were introduced to our youth character development program at these 75 schools, out of which approximately 50% are students from low income families. To better understand the program’s impact on the school environment, we conducted a survey of school principals in Fall of 2015. We received an astounding response to our survey and heard back from 33 school principals. In this case-study, we will summarize these survey results to highlight the program’s achievements and impact.

*“HFK’s program has been exactly what was needed to add a breath of new life into our character education program. Teachers have the materials they need in class, and the school-wide focus to help students see the connection between their behavioral choices and the school community.”*

*Principal, Adams Elementary*

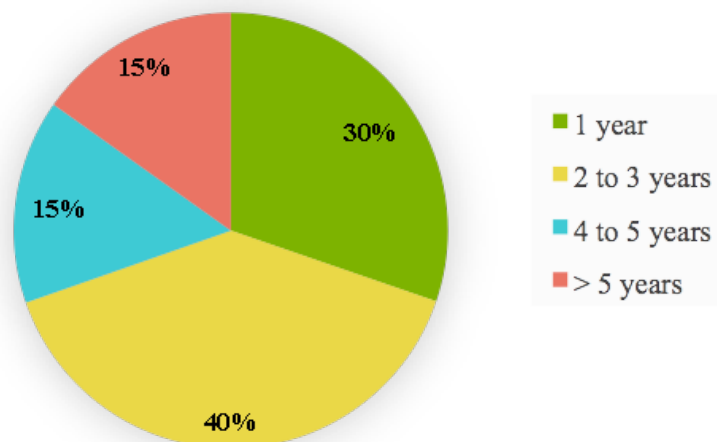
## Survey Results

*“We are extremely proud to partner with HFK in introducing our character development program and teaching our students about Coach Wooden’s Pyramid of Success . . . and also helping us incorporate it with our schoolwide expectations of Be Safe, Be Respectful and Be Responsible.”*

*Principal, Silver Spur Elementary*

Of the 33 schools that participated in the survey, 70% have been with the program for more than 2 years (exhibit 1). A healthy 30% of the participants have been with Harper for Kids program for less than 1 year, which highlights our organization’s efforts to spread character education across more schools.

**EXHIBIT 1: NUMBER OF YEARS SCHOOL HAVE BEEN WITH HARPER FOR KIDS PROGRAM, N=33**



As we designed the survey, our focus was to measure both qualitative and quantitative impacts of the character education program on school environment. After a detailed discussion with multiple school principals, we shortlisted the following three negative behavior traits as key metrics to measure the impact of Harper for Kids program:

- Disciplinary referrals
- Bullying incidents
- School suspensions

The majority of the schools do not formally track quantitative negative behavior occurrences, therefore, the sample size is lower at 10 responses. However, this result is very relevant due to strong reduction in negative behavior occurrences measured (exhibit 2).

**EXHIBIT 2: AVERAGE NUMBER OF NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR OCCURRENCES AT SCHOOLS, N=10**



*“Character education is in many ways more important than any other content we teach our students. The Pyramid of Success is a comprehensive, inspirational, and easy to digest format for teaching young people how to be successful in all areas of their life.”*

*Athletic Director,  
Oakland Military Institute*

---

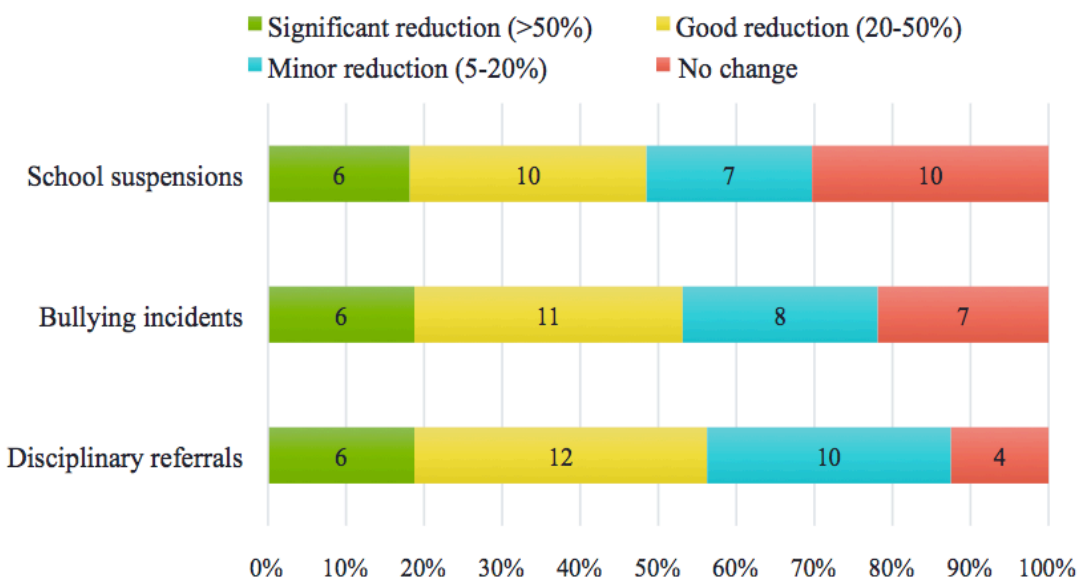
*50% of all students in Harper for Kids affiliated schools are from low income families*

---

On all three metrics, survey results show a significant decline of more than 55% in the negative behavior occurrences after introducing Harper for Kids youth character development program. As more and more schools start tracking behavior data, we are positive they can learn from this example on how to utilize a data driven approach to highlight the effectiveness of any character education program they choose to invest resources in.

Knowing not all schools would have data on actual number of negative occurrences, we also asked principals about their understanding of observed percentage reduction of negative behavior occurrences. More than half of the principals felt that incorporating Harper for Kids program has resulted in Significant (>50%) or Good (20% -50%) reduction in negative behavior occurrences, with 10%-25% sharing that it has had no impact. While more than 70% of the schools observed minor reduction or higher in school suspensions and bullying incidents, almost 80% of the schools observed reduction in disciplinary referrals. However, knowing 10%-25% of schools are seeing limited success highlights the need to provide continuous support to our partner schools with events such as school-wide assemblies, role-models etc. to help them achieve and observe measurable positive impact.

**EXHIBIT 3: PERCENTAGE REDUCTION IN NUMBER OF NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR OCCURRENCES, SINCE LAUNCHING HARPER FOR KIDS, N=32 or 33**



*“The Pyramid of Success character education program presented by Harper for Kids builds the foundation for a child’s success in life by first instilling attributes that lead to being a person of character. All other successes, academic, physical, etc. can then be built to achieve one’s personal best.”*

---

*Principal, Reilly Elementary*

---

## Insights into Schools Approach and Needs

At Harper for Kids, we have an immense appreciation of what our schools have achieved with limited resources at their disposal. Having worked with principals, teachers and other support staff at 75 schools over the last 7 years, we wanted to understand how the schools are incorporating our program into their day-to-day activities. From the survey, all 33 school principals who participated in our survey agreed that the program is creating a strong positive environment in the following key aspects:

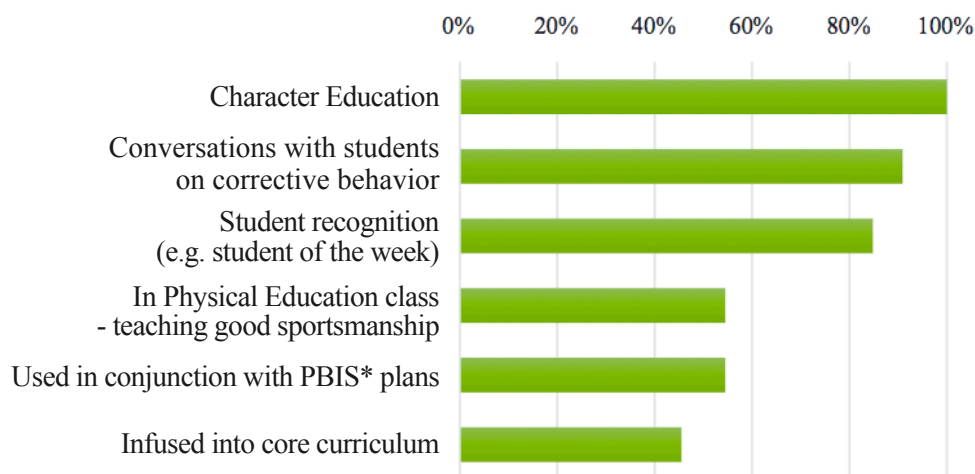
*“Our goal is to provide our students with the skills they need to make good decisions and be kind and helpful citizens. HFK’s program and Coach Wooden’s Pyramid of Success is aligned to this belief.”*

*Principal, Rio Vista Elementary*

- Helps our students develop a strong foundation of good character and positive behavior
- Helps our students develop social emotional skills (for example: growth mindset, self-efficacy, self-management, social awareness)
- Helps our students develop leadership qualities
- Teaches our students how to be respectful, caring and responsible citizens
- Helps our students understand that success is about giving their 100% effort in everything they do
- Gives our students a simple road map to reach their personal best

Additionally, as expected, 100% of all schools have incorporated Harper for Kids program into their character education, while more than 80% of the schools are also using the program to engage students in corrective behavior conversations and reinforcing positive behaviors with student recognition (exhibit 4), and 55% of the schools are using the program in conjunction with their school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) plan. It should be noted that there are other opportunities to further embed the program into the fabric of schools, as 46% of the schools have started infusing the program into their core curriculum and 55% are using it to teach good sportsmanship in physical education class as well. Schools should look into these additional avenues as opportunities to teach their students how to become respectful and caring citizens of tomorrow.

**EXHIBIT 4: WAYS IN WHICH SCHOOLS HAVE INCORPORATED HARPER FOR KIDS PROGRAM AND COACH WOODEN'S PYRAMID OF SUCCESS, N=33**



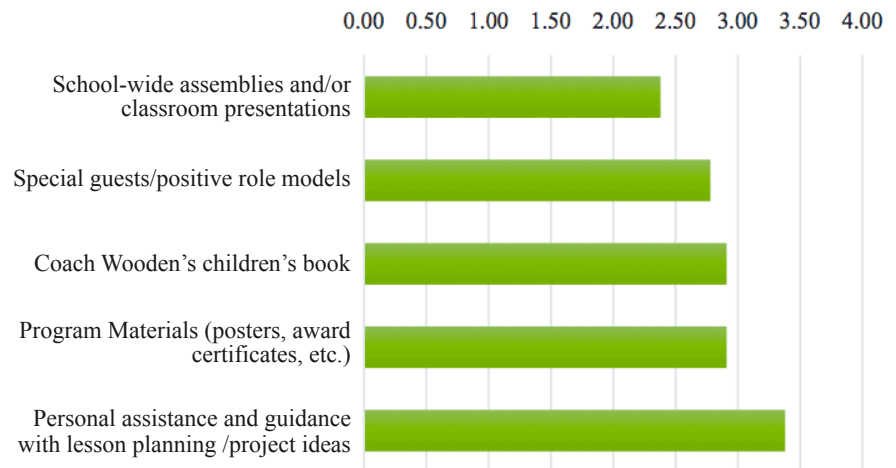
*\*PBIS: Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support*

*“Partnering with HFK was one of the best decisions I made when opening my school! Thanks for developing an awesome character education program for my school!”*

*Principal, Alliance College-Ready Middle Academy #8*

At Harper for Kids, we also wanted to understand what resources we are providing the schools that are helping them make the >70% positive impact in reducing negative behavior occurrences. What we learned is that school-wide assemblies and classroom presentations have the strongest impact on improving character education learning in schools (exhibit 5). Second highest impact is from bringing special guests or positive role models into the schools which highlights the need for additional resources by Harper for Kids to make such events happen. While resources such as Coach Wooden’s children’s book and program material are very important, what we learned was that students and principals find the human interaction element of learning most valuable.

**EXHIBIT 5: RANK RESOURCES HARPER FOR KIDS HAS PROVIDED  
WHICH HAVE HELPED YOU IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE CHARACTER  
EDUCATION PROGRAM  
(1= EXTREMELY HELPFUL, 4 = SOMEWHAT HELPFUL), N=33**



## Conclusions

- Harper for Kids program has spread its mission of shaping students into leaders of tomorrow from 2 schools to 75 schools over the last 7 years. Over 40,000 students (out of which 50% are from low income families) have been introduced to Coach Wooden's Pyramid of Success. We need continuous support to further advance character education in California and beyond.
- 70% to 80% of the schools observed some level of reduction in negative behavior traits after implementing Harper for Kids into their character education program.
- Schools should start tracking student behavior data and utilize a data driven approach to highlight the effectiveness of any character education program they invest resources in.
- 40% of the schools have started using the Harper for Kids program as part of core curriculum. Schools should look into this avenue as an additional opportunity to teach their students how to become respectful and caring citizens of tomorrow.
- School-wide assemblies, special guests, and positive role models in the schools have the strongest impact on improving character education among students, which highlights the need for additional resources by Harper for Kids to make such programming happen on a regular basis.