

Child Lures Prevention Program: Development of a Program Specific Assessment Instrument and Evaluation of Program Effectiveness

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Abstract

Article investigates the effectiveness of a personal safety and prevention program titled the Child Lures School Program (CLPP). The measure of effectiveness was conducted through the development of a program specific assessment instrument in association with parental and school counselor surveys. The purpose of the CLPP is to provide elementary through high school students with information to prevent sexual exploitation, abduction, internet crime, drug abuse, and school violence. A concise review of current literature connected to personal safety and prevention programs are offered as the backbone for assessment development and interpretation of results. One hundred students from two southeastern Texas suburban school districts were involved in the research database. Results show an improvement in the overall pre-post testing percentages. A pre and post test question breakdown is provided based on significant statistical differences between groups. Issues of language barriers, and developmentally appropriate questions are addressed in the discussion along with implications for current practice and assessment development of personal safety and prevention programs.

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Introduction

Elizabeth Smart, Polly Klaas, Samantha Runnion, and McKay Everett. These are the names of children who have received recent and past media attention not for superior grades or contributions to society. These children are victims of abduction and murder. Someone known to the family abducted Polly from her home in the middle of the night. While Elizabeth's case as of September 2002 has still been unsolved, she too disappeared in the middle of the night from her bedroom while her sister witnessed the abduction. Someone claiming to be looking for a beloved lost pet abducted Samantha, while playing outside her home with a friend. McKay was abducted, while at home alone, by a family friend who lured him by saying that his parents had been a terrible car wreck. No matter the reason or how these malicious acts occurred the same element is intertwined between all of these children -abduction. In recent years, attention has been directed toward issues in child abductions both forcefully and those done when children do not recognize the tricks of abductors. The same question remains, "How do we protect our children?" This study investigates the effectiveness of a prevention program and reviews literature related to the effectiveness of a wide range of personal safety programs along with implications for future practice and research.

While we forge ahead and look for answers to our questions related to deviant acts upon children, one must look at the harsh statistics on malicious acts that occur to children within the course of just a year's time span. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) published an on-line document in 1999 that contained many chilling facts that support the need for child safety programs. A study done in 1997 by Wang and Daro revealed the number of sexual abuse and assault cases reported were 84,320 of which most victims were female and 61 percent were rape victims under the age of 18 with 90 percent of those younger than 12 years of age who knew their offender (as cited in the NCMEC publication, 1998, p.3). One eerie assertion by Conte, Wolf, and Smith's study discovered information about child victimization and state the following:

The average victim of abduction and murder is an approximately 11-year-old girl who is described as a "low risk", "average" child with a stable family relationship and has initial contact with the abductor within a quarter of a mile of her home. (as cited in the NCMEC publication, 1998, p.3). That statement within itself is the one phrase that is the "hook-line-and sinker" for support of child safety programs in American public schools and provides firm justification for a comprehensive study into a program's long-term effectiveness.

The Purpose of This Study

The birthing process of this research branched from a request by the Samuel McKay Everett Foundation (SMEF). They currently endorse the *Child Lures School Program* that has been in publication since the early 1980's by Kenneth Wooden. The program's current testing/review components are not effective in accurately assessing students' knowledge of the programs objectives. This has become a hindrance for many school districts when attempting to acquire funds to purchase the relatively expensive program for use by individual school counselors with their students. The goal of the SME Foundation is to offer an accurate assessment of the knowledge retained by students instructed in the program in order to supply evidence of growth during the Federal Grant writing process. Therefore, a precise account of student learning can only be accomplished through an experimental research project where a group of students are exposed to the *Child Lures Program* and weigh that information to a non-exposed group of students.

Definition of Terms

Through out this body of research there will be a continual use of universal terms related to the subject matter of child victimization. A lure is anything that attracts or entices a child into going with either a known or unknown person. There are several specific types of lures. The affection lure is when a child is abused by someone they know such as an aunt, uncle, stepparent, or even a family friend. The assistance lure is where a child is asked by the abductor to help him/her with directions to any given establishment and then asking the child to come along or even pull the child into the car unwillingly. The pet lure has been the most common especially with young children. This particular lure is when the child is asked to assist in finding a lost pet by having the child look at a picture of the pet or even follow the abductor while attempting to locate the pet. The bribery lure is where the child is offered money or other material items that children young and old find appealing. The authority lure is one that may be problematical for child to discern because they are taught to obey those in uniform, carrying a badge, or even person who is highly respected either in the family or community. The ego/fame lure is one that deems the most attraction to older children with the assurance that fame and fortune will be bestowed upon them if they agree to go with that person to a disclosed location without parental permission. The fun and games lure can start out as innocent play, but can lead to touching inappropriate places or putting the child in a compromising position. The emergency lure is where a stranger or even someone they might know asserts that a loved one has been in a terrible accident and child must leave immediately with him/her per the permission/request of the child's

parents. The hero lure is when someone the child highly admires takes advantage of the child. The name recognition lure is where the child either has his/her name on something they are carrying/wearing or when the abductor hears the child's name mentioned while ease dropping on a conversation the child is having with a friend. The job lure is one that promises money for assistance or to perform a chore. This lure can place the child in a situation that is unsafe leading to any form of abuse. The pornography lure is used as a way to capture the child's attention leading up to sexual abuse. The playmate/companion lure is where the abuser requests a child to bring along a friend. The threats and weapons lure is the most aggressive form of abduction by threatening the child's life by means of physical force that may include weapons or restraint. The most easily accessible lure that can be done without the child even actually seeing the abductor initially is the computer on-line lure. This lure has increasingly become popular by abductors due to the ease of accessibility to the Internet including emails, chat rooms, and instant messaging. The abductor works to get the child to reveal his/her full name, address, and etc and then arranges a meeting place. The drug lure is one where children may knowingly accept an offer for drugs or even be deceived into taking drugs that renders them helpless from abuse. The lure of hate and violence can be accomplished through not only adults but also other children. This precise lure is one that intimidates and leaves a child feeling petrified and vulnerable. This lure can prey on children based on simple effects such as hair color and what type of clothing a child wears, and may include race, religion, cultural background, sexual orientation, and etc. There are times that many abductors will use a combination of lures to entice a child into leaving with him/her, therefore making their repertoire of lures even more lethal in the victimization of our nation's children.

When assessing lures there are assorted types of environments in which a student can be assessed. The first is the classroom environment where the child is physically in a classroom where they are asked a question, either verbally or on paper. This can also include asking a child to role-play a situation in the presence of the curriculum instructor. The second is the natural environment that may include a park where the child often plays or a store that is familiar to the child. This environment will envelope many different aspects than the classroom in that the child is assessed in a familiar place outside the school setting and will have unknown individuals assume the role of possible abductor. The child is then unknowingly assessed by the curriculum instructor. When engaged in assessment within these two environments, there are correct responses that children must express. The verbal response means saying either the correct direct response to a lure that is taught within a specific prevention program such as, "No, I don't know you", or just merely saying "no". The physical response relates to the child actually leaving the situation and depending upon the specific prevention program, may or may not include going directly to a trusted adult to report the attempted lure.

Review of Related Literature

The following review of literature envelopes an entire spectrum of areas embodied within divergent prevention programs. These areas are comprised of developmental approaches that include disabled and non-disabled individuals, funding, assessment, facilitators of programs, parental involvement, behavioral techniques, group verses individual instruction, and instructional environments (classroom and natural). The review concludes with an in depth explanation of the *Child Lure School Program* that will provide an established insight into the preparation and development of a program specific assessment instrument. Within each incongruous type of study or program, the overall goal is the same: the prevention of malicious acts and victimization of children. Therefore, one must appraise all areas of prevention, including personal safety, and physical and sexual abuse, to find correlations and implications for further practice and research.

An issue associated with developmental appropriateness is a topic that that has been meticulously researched to establish its effectiveness in an innumerable amount of prevention

programs. Tutty (2000) reviews current literature related to developmental issues in sexual abuse prevention programs along with a secondary trial of a previous study involving the acquisition of knowledge through a pre and post testing of an intervention program spanning several developmental levels. Two hundred thirty one elementary age students were randomly assigned to either an experimental or control group and further sub-grouped by appropriate age categories (k-2; 3-4; and 5-6). The "*Who Do You Tell*" program was administered to the experimental group in developmentally appropriate levels via video, pictures, and role-plays. Areas addressed were issues relating to stating "no" to unwanted touch and differentiating between stranger identifiers. Following the conclusion of the program, students were given the Children's Knowledge of Abuse Questionnaire -Revised. In the pre-test portion of the study, the most common area of uncertainty across the developmental age groups related to the area of inappropriate touch. The results show implications toward a greater emphasis on instruction for younger students. Once the students completed the program, there was a significant increase in acquired knowledge of the appropriate and inappropriate touch concept. The overall impact of the study yields that all programs should incorporate developmentally appropriate methods of instruction in order to insure the acquisition of knowledge in younger populations due to their difficulty in grasping abstract concepts.

Roberts and Miltenberger (1999) addressed the same issue of developmental appropriateness in prevention programs through the discussion on countless research in the field of sexual abuse prevention programs. The effectiveness of the programs along with recommendations and implications for further research were included within the context of the article. The authors investigated previous studies, which spanned developmental appropriateness, parental involvement, potential side effects, and methods of assessment. They concluded that students of all ages and developmental levels could participate in prevention programs with relatively no side effects due to positive outcomes such as disclosure and increased knowledge. Therefore, no matter the marketed name or content of the prevention program, students receive the overall message with no adverse effects on the student psychologically. The use of concrete instruction such as role-playing may enhance the validity and retention of skills by younger students (Roberts & Miltenberger, 1999). Parental involvement is highly encouraged by the authors and they concluded that training is most effective if administered by professionals trained in the specifics of the program. The school setting is powerful in presenting students with concepts related to personal safety with the most justifiable outcomes of student success in comprehension and retention of concepts.

Once one has muddled through the issues associated with the development of children's learning styles, the issue shifts to how students are presented material. Carroll-Rowan and Miltenberger (1994) compared two different modalities of teaching the same abduction prevention curriculum and the effectiveness of retraining student whose mastery was not achieved during the first course of instruction. Sixty-two preschool Head Start students' age's four to five in Fargo, ND were randomly grouped into an experimental or control group. There were two experimental groups and the control group received instruction after the conclusion of the study. Teachers were trained as either manual only or video only administrators. The manual parallel's exactly with the video format. Children were assessed by using self-reports and situational settings such as the front yard of their home or at a nearby store determined by the parent or guardian. The children who were administered the manual form of teaching scored consistently better than those shown the video only format. With retraining, most of the children showed an improvement toward the mastery of skills set forth by the program. The study also paralleled with other conducted studies in that preschool children can be taught abduction prevention skills with minimal emotional or behavioral effects. They also found similar evidence that children's verbal and motor responses do not correlate when in situational assessments. This within itself provides compelling evidence that a continuation of training throughout all developmental levels is necessary to achieve personal safety in all children.

Other issues that emanate during school based prevention programs are funding, administering, and assessment of current programs. Lanning, Ballard, and Robinson (1999) researched the logistics to such programs in the Texas public schools. During the 1996-97 academic school year, one hundred large Texas school districts were chosen to participate in a survey related to sexual abuse prevention programs. The authors developed a survey from adaptations from various published surveying instruments. They also integrated information from a sundry of literature readings for further indication of program measurement. The surveys were mailed to school district superintendents whom were instructed to distribute the information to a colleague within the district that would most accurately answer the questions. The results varied among the districts depending on the given question. More than half of the schools surveyed had current programs in their elementary schools. Most, however, had programs incorporated into various other preventative programs and therefore addressing sexual abuse issues as they arose within the school setting. All of the districts surveyed had addressed issues related to a means of curriculum set aside for sexual abuse prevention training. All districts incorporated developmentally appropriate means of administering sexual abuse concepts. The most inconsistent variable was the amount of funding for such programs. In nearly all of the schools surveyed, they utilized outside resources of administering programs and the school counselor conducted most programs. This study validates the need for further funding to meet the exact needs of an ever-changing population of students that must go further than traditional guidance programs. Also, this supports the reasoning behind the development of a pre-post testing for the Child Lure School Program. Once success of any program is statistically proven, access to federal grant monies becomes less obtrusive.

While looking at developmental, modalities, and funding issues in prevention programs, research also investigates programs and their effects on disabled individuals. Bevill and Gast (1998) review literature involving personal safety issues in young children with and without disabilities. The authors gathered data and information electronically from ERIC, PsychINFO, and the University of Georgia library databases. They searched under the context of safety education, safety skills, and safety instruction. They concluded the research by narrowing down to young children, elementary, primary, and preschool within a fifteen-year period from 1982-97. After reviewing twelve articles, they all contained the same consistent element related to disabled and non - disabled student in that they have the capacity to learn the skills necessary to prevent abduction and or abuse (Bevill & Gast, 1998). They did find programs involving behavior training (i.e. role playing, discussion, and modeling) correlated with positive feedback were the most effective when all instructional venues were combined to convey the safety skills program objectives.

With that thought in mind, one must move to another inquiry done by Miltenberger and Olsen (1996) where the authors sought to review research studies related to abduction prevention program outcomes along with the correlation to such programs to adults and children with disabilities. Areas addressed within the reviewed article context were assessment of training programs, training approaches, and individual and group facilitation of programs. As with most current research, the authors determined that no matter the developmental age, all children are capable of acquiring abduction prevention skills through a systematic behavioral training program in either group or individual instructional settings. Concerning those with individuals with disabilities, skill acquisition was accomplished through instruction in the natural environment with prompt feedback and retraining of unaccomplished skills. In the area of individual verses group training, the researchers found through their studies that programs with a focus on individual instruction of concepts were more effective when using group behavioral skills training. As with other studies, the authors concluded that experts and teachers were more effective in teaching prevention programs. They further propose that programs incorporate a more thorough parental instructional procedure to ensure mastery of skills along with much needed parental involvement and support. The authors deduct that all programs must venture

beyond the positive lure and add a new focus of factors related to forceful abduction. On the area of assessment, it was concluded that issues surrounding social and cultural factors be assessed for validity when interpreting the scores collected for statistical purposes. This would ensure a more transferable program to all abilities, cultures, and social setting especially when testing in the natural environment.

The notion of teaching prevention skills in the natural environment is a fundamental dream of all researchers. One such study by Marchand-Martella and Huber (1996) incorporated classroom and the natural environment for instruction of program concepts. The authors performed a re-creation of a previous study where two students were taught how to verbally and physically respond to three basic lures and determined if skills can be maintained over a sixty-four week period. Two Caucasian preschool students (one boy and one girl) whom were identified as susceptible to lures were trained by role-play, discussion, and behavior rehearsal to react to three basic lures. The basis of the program was to instruct the children on how to respond to the lures of simple request to leave, request to leave with authority figure, and promise of incentive. The correct verbal and motor responses were taught to the students in the school (in the school yard) and community settings (out on the sidewalk and their neighborhood park). The students were taught for approximately three days with one on one instruction and then skills were generalized into the school and community settings. They were evaluated at one, seven, and sixty-four weeks post program. The assessment was done by observational measurements determined by the authors. Directly after training, both students displayed correct verbal and motor responses to all three lures. At the seventh week, the boy did not give the correct verbal response, yet did express correct motor response. The girl did express the correct verbal response and only part of the correct motor response. During the sixty-four week follow-up, both recognized that there was a stranger yet did not remove himself or herself from the situation, therefore not expressing the correct motor response. The parents reported no adverse side effects from the study. The authors do not that the training does not have the complete identification of a stranger and more venues of abduction prevention skills must be incorporated with in the context of the program. One such element is a lure from a familiar person. This study represents the need for continued refreshers on concepts related to personal safety during many cycles of developmental growth to insure the overall retention and correct application of skills taught within the program.

The issues of authentic assessment play a substantial role in the validity of any program development. Telljohann and Everett (1997) address a pre-post test study on a third grade sexual abuse curriculum that focused on the problems that children might encounter. The areas addressed were identifying adults in the family and community to inform of abuse, identifying three types of touching (safe, unsafe, and secret), personal safety rules, recognizing that any origin of abuse will never be their fault, and demonstrating ways to respond to a potential abuser both verbally and physically. Four hundred ninety students in grade three in urban, suburban, and rural northwestern Ohio were administered a two day, one hour sexual abuse prevention curriculum. Schools were randomly assigned as either control or experimental groups. Children were given a pre-post test one week before and after the curriculum was taught. The Wilcoxon Matched-Pair Signed Rank Test was used to analysis and configures scores from both tests. There was evidence of knowledge gained by the experimental group, but there was growth shown in the control group in the area of an adult to tell category at post testing time. The authors concluded that the control group students either remembered the question or discussed the issue at home therefore leading to the increase in this particular area. The format of the curriculum impressed a remarkable about of growth in the experimental group in the area of behavioral skills training. The nature of the curriculum allowed for students to practice appropriate verbal responses in an assertive manner while establishing whom they would inform of such a lure or action. This study provides compelling supportive data for the use of a pre-post test therefore validating the continued need for such instruments inclusion in all preventative programs.

Tutty (1995) compiled information related to previously formatted testing materials for abuse prevention programs and how they correlate to the psychometric validity of the Children's Knowledge of Abuse Questionnaire-Revised (CKAQ-R). The study included a total of three hundred thirty two students in grades one, three, and six in a midsize city in southern Ontario, Canada, whom had not been exposed to any school based sexual abuse prevention program. Tests were administered with the necessary modifications of each developmental level. The tests were scored according to the CKAQ-R guidelines. Some of the findings were that the newly revised edition needed a stronger emphasis on race and cultural background into consideration when rating children's response to certain issues. The most inconsistent issue was the children's knowledge of when it is appropriate to have a professional or parent/guardian view private parts. This is due to the possible confusion in answering questions that were contributed to a difficult concepts, such as those related to culture, to accurately measure therefore, the author suggest a possible revision of the section. The remainder of the survey did show improvements in many areas addressed with the context of the presented programs. This article provides insight into the need for program specific testing in order to insure accurate concept retention among participants of all developmental levels.

When developing a data sound-testing instrument for any prevention program, one must consider all views from various sources. Pohl and Hazzard (1990) began a study involving a three-day seminar on a sexual abuse prevention called, "*Feelings Yes, Feelings No*". The overall reactions of students, teachers, and parents were measured for the effectiveness of the program. The study and program was conducted on third and fourth grade students in six large metropolitan schools in the Spring of 1987. The program was administered to the students after staff development was offered for training in disclosure and appropriate response to possible student issues related to the participation in the program. The program format was accomplished through video that displayed actors in various abusive situations. A special comic book was distributed among the students that further emphasized the programs curriculum. The program did also allow for other venues of instruction such as role-playing and class discussion. Once the program was completed, the students, teachers, and parents were randomly selected and either interviewed or given a questionnaire reflecting either positive or negative outcomes of the program. The overall analysis by all involved was positive. The global goal of the program was achieved by the student's level of anxiety reduction and greater awareness about reporting and understanding sexual abuse. The greater parental involvement in the discussion of sexual abuse was a welcomed secondary achievement not foreseen by the authors.

Elements of the Child Lures School Program

The program was developed by Kenneth Wooden (1997) and is endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. According to Wooden (1997) the educational philosophy of the *Child Lures School Program* encompasses the following ideals:

“that children are extremely bright, exciting to teach and fun to learn from; the life experiences of children are the foundation on which a sound education may be built; a child's brain consists of a data bank more sophisticated and creative than the most powerful computer; children are endowed with amazing survival instincts; children smile and laugh effortlessly and this gift can be easily nurtured; drug and alcohol avoidance is essential to the safety and well-being of children; and any aspect of a child's education improves ten-fold when parents are actively involve” (p.22).

The program also includes a extensive quantity of educational goals that are to be achieved through the course of instruction in the program. According to Wooden (1997), the educational goals of the *Child Lures Prevention Program* are:

“to establish an understanding that the majority of people are decent, caring individuals

who are protective of children; teach children that sexual advances from adults are against the law; assure children that society has legal and moral obligations to protect their safety through the enforcement laws; make children recognize the ability to protect themselves from danger by relying on their own critical thinking and instincts; teach children to identify and thwart the various lures that may lead them from a safe environment into one where they are vulnerable to exploitation; teach children an awareness of their surroundings at all times; nurture the concepts of individual worth and dignity; caution children that drug use is not only physically and psychologically harmful, but also increases vulnerability to sexual assault and other crimes; and encourage parents to take an active role in the safety education of their children” (p. 23).

The *Child Lures School Program* contains twenty-three behavioral objectives that are incorporated into the lesson plans. These behavioral objectives are interwoven independently through the course of twenty-three separate lesson plans/presentations.

Wooden (1997) states the following as behavioral objectives within the *Child Lures Prevention Program* that include:

“being aware that while the vast majority of people are safe, there are criminals who prey on children; learn to recognize and thwart the various lures used to sexually abuse and abduct children; treat all people with respect and dignity and expect the same from others; listen to and follow instincts when confronted with a potentially dangerous person or situation; differentiate between real and fake expressions of love; stand up to those who try to use positions of authority to sexually abuse children; let and expect adults to help other adults when they need assistance; recognize pets and other animals can be powerful lures; decline gifts from adults who give or promise them for no apparent reason; refuse to keep secrets from parents or guardians; employ extreme caution with offers of fame or fortune; stay calm and adhere to a pre-arranged Family Plan of Action during emergencies; immediately put a stop to games involving inappropriate touching or use of restraints; accept jobs or chores only with the knowledge, guidance, approval of parents; place name tags where they are not easily visible by passer-by; refuse to go with unknown individuals who claim to know you or your family; avoid and report to parents and police any locations where adults or older students encourage alcohol and drug use, pornography viewing or sexual activity; immediately report verbal threats to parents and police; make a commotion if threatened with a weapon; tell parents of any attempts by adults or older students to show you pornography; shun alcohol and other drugs so as to keep a clear head at all times; avoid giving out personal information about oneself while on-line; and to refuse to go alone to meet an on-line “friend” in person” (p. 24-26).

The *Child Lures Prevention Program* goes beyond three basic lures or traditional lures to a more modernized set of lures that are being faced by children in the twenty-first century. Miltenberger and Olsen (1996) suggested that areas related to childhood luring be restructured and addressed within the framework of any program, therefore bringing program substance up to speed with current times and issues that children face daily. The *Child Lures Prevention Program* identifies and teaches knowledge related to sixteen types of lures for elementary and middle/high school age participants that have been compiled by the author through his years of research and interviews with child sex offenders.

At the beginning of the program, students are introduced to the “Human Weather Conditions” concepts by teaching the students that “like the weather, people are safe most of the time” (Wooden, 1997, p. 29). They make the relationship between good people being the bright shiny sun and the bad people as being similar to a thunderstorm or lightening. The next step of the program is to illustrate to the students, of all developmental levels, the concept of luring. This is accomplished through a tangible concept of a fishing pole and the correlation between

strangers/would-be abductors and how they may try to catch them on the pole by using a “lure”. The program then begins instruction on an assortment of character building themes such as fostering self-esteem within one’s self by following and “tuning” into one’s own instincts. The beginning stages of the program conclude with the identification of a stranger and the concept of law.

The program progresses from a preparatory period to the classification of lures that are integrated within the lesson plans through instructional media that include visuals, video, discussion, and role-play. The author of the program identifies sixteen lures for all developmental levels. For the construction of this study, we will concentrate on the elementary level lures that are taught to students ranging from kindergarten to approximately sixth grade. The lures are affection, assistance, pet, authority, bribery, ego/fame, emergency, fun and games, hero, job, name recognition, playmate, threats and fear, pornography, computer or on-line, and drug. The program also addresses an issue that most literature reviews state as an area of confusion in children. That area is appropriate and inappropriate touch. The author of the program discusses this issue in language that is explicable in the accompanying handout to the program. The handout is circulated to parents as a way to inform them of the concepts taught within the scaffold of the program and allows them the opportunity to be acquainted with the terminology that their children may use when talking about participating in the program. Wooden (2002) characterizes the difference in touches as “... Real Love (being tucked into bed at night by Mom, a big hug from Grandpa) and Fake Love (an adult touching a child in “the Bathing Suit Zone”). It is important to use the terms Real Love and Fake Love rather than good touch and bad touch since a “bad touch” may actually feel good” (p.5).

The manual offers the presenter/instructor two different alternatives in administering the program in either a one-week time frame or a two-week time frame. The lesson plans are scripted in order to preserve content validity. Currently, at the end of the program there is a review of concepts alas, the author does note that this is not a full-scale indication of acquired knowledge. Therefore, there is a need to go beyond suitable programmed answers to how the students thinking process will be engaged with the presentation of a lure.

Statement of Hypothesis

There are five Null Hypothesis associated with this specific research project. The first involves students knowledge of the program and states the following: There is no significant difference in knowledge between fourth grade students whom have received prior years of instruction/exposure to the *Child Lures Prevention Program* than fourth grade students whom have either no previous instruction/exposure to the *Child Lures Prevention Program*. For the purpose of this portion of the study, the information provided in the results and recommendation section of this paper will be based on the support or refuting of this particular hypothesis statement.

The second deals with the students psychological constructs, and states the following: There is no significant difference between the externalizing and internalizing behaviors of a child who has had previous instruction/exposure to the *Child Lures Prevention Program* and a child who has had no previous instruction to the *Child Lures Prevention Program*.

The third addresses issues within diverse ethnic groups and states the following: There is no significant difference between the ethnic groups in their cultural perceptions related to issues discussed and introduced in the *Child Lures Prevention Program*. For the purpose of this study the ethnic groups included are Caucasian, Hispanic, African American, and Other that includes all students not classified under the previous three categories.

The fourth investigates the perceptions of those involved with the students on a daily basis and states the following: There is no difference in perceptions of parents and counselors related to the *Child Lures Prevention Program*.

The fifth and final Null Hypothesis looks into the effects on students and states the

following: There are no negative side effects to participating in the *Child Lures Prevention Program*.

Questions Related to the Current Research Project

This precise study will analyze the following questions: Does knowledge of the *Child Lures Prevention Program's* educational goals prevent a child from being lured through retention of objectives and curriculum presented to the child within the context and content of the program? What is the psychological profile of a child who has had previous instruction/exposure to the *Child Lures Prevention Program* and that of a child whom has had limited to no instruction/exposure of the *Child Lures Prevention Program*? What are the parent/teacher attitudes towards the *Child Lures Prevention Program*? Are there any negative side effects to participating in the *Child Lures Prevention Program*? The last three questions will be answered in the context of another paper that will yield justice to the information collected. For time purposes and constraints the first question will be the only one addressed with in the context of the paper.

Method

Participants

The participants were from two southeastern area suburban school districts in Texas during the Fall 2002 semester. The independent variables were comprised of gender and ethnicity. The experimental group was the larger of the two school districts with the participating school comprised of approximately fifty-two participating 4th grade students who had received a maximum of five years exposure to the *Child Lures Prevention Program*. The control group was the smaller of the two school districts with the participating school comprised of approximately fifty two participating 4th grade students who had no exposure/instruction to the *Child Lures Prevention Program*.

The ethnic groups represented in this study were determined through student responses and parental indicators on both the pre-post testing and parental survey's returned with the consent forms. The groups identified were African American, Hispanic, and white. It was noted that in a few cases the students were unsure of their ethnic background, therefore a member of the research team asked the student a few simple questions in order to clarify the child's demographic information.

Research Design

The design of this particular body of research ventures beyond one simple methodology to a two step process due to the nature of the desired outcomes that are hoped to be achieved in this phase of the measurement in effectiveness of the *Child Lures Prevention Program*. The structure of the research was based on both qualitative and quantitative approaches in the experimental design schema. The quantitative portion consisted of two independent variables. One was a group of 4th grade students, the experimental group, who had at least five years experience/exposure to the *Child Lures Prevention Program* who were deemed the experimental group. The second group was comprised of 4th grade students, the control group, that had no exposure to the *Child Lures Prevention Program* before this research project began in November 2002 and were deemed the control group. The dependent variable was contingent upon the results of the pre and post-testing given to both groups through a curriculum based assessment tool designed by the author and a post testing standardized assessment tool called the Behavioral Assessment Scale for Children identified with the acronym of BASC.

The second area of this experimental research project is based on the qualitative approach through the use of two sources directly related to the two independent variables of this project the

students. The information collected in this portion of the assessment came from direct parental feedback through an author-developed survey. A focus group session was comprised of participating school counselors that have implemented the *Child Lures Prevention Program* for approximately five years. This information and results of this session was collected and entered under the effectiveness category of this research and will be reported at a later date once all testing issues have been addressed and completed.

Research Sampling

The research formula for sampling is expressed in two areas based on the desired information database collected for pre-testing and post-testing and internalizing and externalizing factors from the BASC in relation to the two independent variables. The initial portion under the nonrandom sampling technique is the purposive sampling approach of the data collection process. Attempts were made to stratify the purposive sampling by investigating and concluding with two different schools with similar ethnically diverse populations. The factors under this portion of the sampling were those students exposed to the *Child Lures Prevention Program* and those students who have received no prior instruction or exposure to the *Child Lures Prevention Program*. This was investigated through the use of an author developed pre and post-testing instrument.

The sampling continues with a technique that utilizes the data collected from the internalizing and externalizing factors of both independent variables. This section of the sampling was conducted under the simple random sampling category based on parental consent to allow the child to participate in this portion of the post testing. The data for this section was conducted under the Behavioral Assessment for School Children (BASC). The information collected for this portion of the study will be reported at another time once all data has been correctly analyzed with all other factors associated with this extensive study. It's association with this project will be mentioned from time to time yet results will be reported at a later date.

Instruments

For the purpose of this research study, two types of assessment instruments were utilized based on the desired outcomes of the five null hypotheses that correlated to the investigation into the effectiveness of the *Child Lures Prevention Program*. The first assessment instrument is an author developed testing tool to be used for the pre and post-testing portion of the research. Using the curriculum found within the context of the *Child Lures Prevention Program* comprised of information to assess each of the sixteen lures and the foundations of self-worth as indicated in the program developed the test. The modalities of assessment were scenarios and direct statements with an indication of student agreement by responding yes (Y), no (N), or don't know (DK). The format of the exam was a typed, two sided, three paged test printed on a mustard-yellow paper with thirty questions allowing room for the student to circle his/her response to each scenario or direct statement. The beginning of the exam allowed for the student to provide demographic information by indicating age, gender, ethnicity (African American, Hispanic, White, Other), grade level and school. This information was correlated throughout the groups of students and utilized in the conclusion of the results of all assessment characteristics.

The second assessment instrument is a standardized tool that measures internalizing and externalizing characteristics of children aged four through eighteen by norm referencing to other children of the same age group. The BASC is typically used to measure a variety of behavioral and emotional areas, but for the purpose of this research project the focus will be on the internalizing and externalizing characteristics of a child exposed to the *Child Lures Prevention Program* and a child who has not been exposed to the *Child Lures Prevention Program*. The portion of the BASC that was utilized to achieve this goal was the Student Self-Report ages eight to eleven, which is an element of the comprehensive BASC testing unit. The format of this tool is forced choice questions with an opportunity to respond to the prompt by indicating true (T) or false (F) to a given statement about oneself or responses to situations.

Procedure

When beginning the investigation process of any project, one must consider the benefits and risks involved in such a detailed project especially when working with children on such a sensitive matter. The benefits include the following: (1) the foundation will have preliminary evaluation of the sponsored program's effectiveness in acquiring student knowledge or lack of knowledge before and after exposure to the program presenting preliminary data to formulate justification for the program therefore allowing schools to apply for federal grant monies to purchase the program, (2) the information collected will provide powerful feedback to the schools and counselors as to how much information is being retained and possibly areas that need more attention or re-teaching to the content of the program allowing room for the publishers/writers of the program to make necessary adjustments to the programs over all effectiveness in presentation, (3) student's benefits will be the opportunity to refresh/introduce personal safety concepts taught within the program for the experimental group and the control group's school will be able to assess the needs of their students when time allows for exposure to such a program, (4) students will be able to trigger their thought process into developing a personal safety repertoire through positive feedback to correct behavioral responses through the course of instruction leading to a generated discussion of such issues with parent/guardians, teachers, and counselors which may or may not lead to disclosure of past or current abuses, and (5) the benefits will filter to the parents/guardians/families by providing the opportunity to generate family discussions allowing for concessive and conclusive information about how their child's personality affects their actions and creating an opportunity for counselors to assess the needs of their current school population.

The risks involved were deemed minimal compared to the overall benefits of exposure to such a research project. The literature reviewed in the previous sections state that the benefits of such a project outweigh the risks. It was concluded by the research team that there might be a possibility that a child may be overly involved in the idea that someone may try to lure him/her. There may be an instance where a child might express severe anxiety over the issues discussed in the program or seen on the pre-post testing. To ensure the welfare of the students involved, the information was coded to identify children that may be having problems and needing psychological assistance. For those student identified as needing assistance, the school counselor was made available to provide any additional services.

During the initial stage of this project there were many minute details that had to be in place before beginning such a large scaled project. Once the contact between the department heads of each school district was established, we received permission from the districts to proceed with the investigation into matching schools. The information was passed along to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and approval was granted to proceed with the investigation into the project. For both school districts, the informed consent was written in English on one side and Spanish on the other. For the experimental group, a parental survey was created in English and Spanish and was attached to the informed consent information that was sent home with the students via weekly information folders. Once all informed consent forms were received, we accepted 50 participants with parental consent for an experimental group and 50 for a control group. The numbers for each school district/group were based on the number of returned consent forms. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select students for an experimental and control group. The stratification was done by ethnicity and gender based on the demographic information that was collected from both school districts with each student assigned a number and letter that corresponded to the school district (i.e. #c or #m). There was room given to the research for the possibility of only a certain number of students from each group who returned the informed consent to participate in the project. Therefore, the project proceeded with the numbers of students who chose to participate through parental informed consent.

The procedure for the project was performed in the same manner for each group allowing for one slight difference. The only variance factor between the two groups was that the control group was not given treatment during the process; therefore all of the following steps were

conducted between the two except for the fourth step in the procedural process. The steps included: (1) students returned informed consent along with parental questionnaire, (2) returned consent forms were coded with numbers to provide confidentiality allowing for students with problems to be detected and referred for counseling either during the information gathering process or at the conclusion of the project, (3) students were given the pre-test via research coordinator and research assistant in a whole group setting with appropriate modifications for language and ability levels for approximately thirty minutes, (4) students in the experimental group were presented with the *Child Lures Prevention Program* by the school counselor for one day as a refresher course from the previous five years of exposure, (5) students were given the post-test in the same fashion as the pre-test was administered, (6) under the supervision of the research coordinator the research assistant administered the BASC to twenty randomly selected students whose parents gave permission to participate in this portion of the project. The random selection process was completed once a master list of names associated with assigned numbers and with indications consent for participation in the BASC. The sampling for both groups was done by even numbers and if the even numbered student was not given consent the next even numbered student was chosen until a total twenty students was achieved for both the experimental and control groups.

The initial stage of the data collection process was done over a one week time period for both groups of student involved in the project. The pre-testing began with the experimental group at the beginning of the week. The students participated during their P.E., music, and art periods per the permission of the building supervisor. Ample opportunity was provided later for those students who missed P.E. to have an extra recess to account for their physical activity portion of the school day.

The students were taken to the school library by two of the research team members where the overall environment was controlled for noise, disruption, and ample opportunity for each student to effectively participate in the testing process. The questions were read aloud to the students and the school counselor was present to provide the students with a familiar face during the proceedings. In this portion of the pre-testing, due to observed language barriers, the questions were read twice for the students. This may either validate or invalidate this portion of the testing. The testing administrators noticed that the initial format of the pre-testing under the demographic section was difficult and possibly ambiguous for the student to understand. It was noted that some students had a difficult time distinguishing between the terms male and female associated with gender and their ethnicity. The physical format of where the students were to indicate may have also directed them to incorrectly answer. This was solved by taking the tests one by one from the students by the research team and providing an opportunity for clarification of any ambiguity. Therefore, many lessons were learned in order to better serve the continuation of the project.

The pre-testing for the control group was conducted two days later by two members of the research team with the previous testing difficulties taken into consideration. The testing began during the students recess time as approved by the building supervisor and ample time was provided after testing for appropriate physical activity. The questions were read aloud to the students only once and accommodations were made for three students requiring special education modifications for reading abilities and attention span. These students were recognized and assisted by the school counselor. Once testing was completed with these particular students, the counselor was available for assistance with the rest of the students participating in the pre-testing.

The experimental group was given treatment two days after the pre-testing. The students were given an abbreviated version of the *Child Lures* program for one day due to their previous years of exposure to the programs objectives. This limited amount of current exposure to the program may serve as a hindrance to the outcome of this study. One can only speculate that the previous years of exposure and instruction will be seen through retention of objectives on various portions of the post-testing. It was noted that some students participating had not received any

previous exposure due to the fact that those students live in a transient area therefore movement among students is not uncommon. One would hope that these students would show the greatest amount of growth from the pre to post-testing.

After the experimental group was given treatment by the school counselor in the *Child Lures* program, the post-testing was administered in the same fashion as the pre-testing with the modifications needed from the initial testing. The questions were read only once to the whole group. During the first few questions read aloud, it was observed that a small group of Hispanic girls were having difficulty understanding the information in English. One of the research team members took them aside and read the rest of the post-testing to them in Spanish as a way of providing an opportunity for language clarification on all thirty questions. It may also be noted that these same students may have scored higher in the pre-testing portion had the appropriate modifications been put in place initially.

The post-testing for the control group was also conducted in the same manner as the post-testing. It was observed that in both groups during post-testing, the students appeared to take the material seriously since during the pre-testing the students reacted with giggles and etc to the content of the testing. Therefore an unforeseen welcomed outcome of maturity and understanding of the seriousness of the issues addressed created an environment for growth in

both groups.

Time Schedule

Event	Date
Identified research problem; Research literature for review; Complete literature review	09 Sept 02, 12 Sept 02, & 16 Sept 02
Completion of on-line ethics course and Application for Human Subjects; Permission granted To continue study	21 Oct 02 & 28 Oct 02
First draft submitted	30 Sept 02
Revision of first draft	14 Oct 02
Second draft submitted	04 Nov 02
Data gathered for pre-testing	12 Nov 02 & 14 Nov 02
Data gathered for post testing	15 Nov 02 & 18 Nov 02
Data coded/graded and entered on SPSS	15 Nov 02, 18 Nov 02, & 23 Nov 02
Analysis of Data	23 Nov 02
Presentation on PowerPoint	25 Nov 02
Final Draft and results	02 Dec 02

Results

The following data is concerned with the pre-testing only of the students in the experimental and control groups. The areas of focus are on specific testing items that showed either growth or variance in knowledge between the two groups of students. The information provided will also venture to the overall scores on the test within each group of students based primarily on the pre-testing portion of this study. One must note that at this stage, issues such as gender and ethnicity will not be deeply investigated, though in one instance the issue of ethnicity is mentioned in the analysis of the overall percentage score in one group of students in the experimental group.

Using a cross tabulation technique for data analysis, each district was compared based on pre-testing responses to each of the thirty questions. Percentages of student responses to the yes (Y), no (N), and don't know (DK) choices were stratified according to district 1 (experimental group) and district 2 (control group) using a Chi-Square Test to determine the significance of the students responses to any given question. The author has chosen only those questions that show a significance in the pre-testing process for discussion and further elaboration will be provided in the context of the paper.

Beginning with question number three of the pre-test that addressed dignity and worth, the students in district 1 responded with 43.4% yes, 1.0% no, 3.0% with don't know as overall responses. In district 2 the students responded with 30.3% yes, 1.0% no, and 21.2% don't know. Question number six addressed appropriate and inappropriate touch with district 1 answering 32.7% yes, 10.2% no, and 5.1% don't know. In district 2, students responded with 35.7 % yes, 7.1% no, and 9.2% don't know. Question number eleven investigated their parents knowledge of where they were at all times with district 1 responding with 43.4 % yes, 2.0% no, and 2.0% don't know. In district 2 the responses were 41.4% yes, 7.1% no, and 4.0% don't know. Question number 14 addresses the students using their brains and instincts with responses in district 1 being 27.6% yes, 8.2% no, and 12.2% don't know. In district 2 the responses indicated were 24.5% yes, 2.0% no, and 25.5% responding don't know. In question number twenty-one the area addressed was that most people are safe with responses in district 1 being 13.0% yes, 15.0% no, and 20.0% don't know. In district 2 the responses ranged from 14.0% yes, 32.0% no, and 6.0% responding don't know.

The total sum test scores of each district were tabulated by grading each student's pre and post-test with points awarded for the correct response and points taken away if the student indicated don't know as a response to any question. This factor will even out when the pretesting scores are correlated to the post-testing scores. The mean percentage score was derived through a Paired Samples Statistics. In district 1 the pre-test score was 76.84% and district 2 was 79.91%. The post testing score for district 1 was 84.65% and district 2 was 84.23% with a growth difference of 7.81% in district 1 and in district 2 the growth difference was only 4.32% yielding statistical significance to district 1 at the .000 level. Therefore the null hypothesis is refuted based on the increased growth in knowledge by the students who had been exposed/instructed in the *Child Lures Prevention Program* curriculum. The overall analysis of this test using the Cross Tab Case Processing Summary yields the test to be valid at 90.5 percent making the test valid based on its first trial usage with students.

Discussion

In discussion of the research findings, there are many issues that evolve from the mere numbers that correlate with a definitive explanation. This portion will evaluate the student's responses to specific questions based on comparing each district's response to specific questions. Question number six correlates with a study done by Tutty (1995) that investigates why students

have ambiguity in responding to questions related to appropriate and inappropriate touch while utilizing a pre and post-testing format for investigation. This current study using the Child Lures program shows that a higher percentage of students in district 2 are unsure of the issues surrounding when touching is appropriate. In question number eleven concerning their parents knowing where they are at all times, the students in district 2 had a higher percentage of students responding no to the question. This can be attributed to the Child Lures program encouraging and explaining that in order for their parents to keep them safe, they must be aware of where the child is at all times.

The next two questions addressed for discussion relate to program specific terminology and comprehension of terminology that expressed a statistical significance in the response percentages. In question number three concerning “dignity and worth“, students in district 1 responded higher with the correct answer of yes due to the students expressing retained knowledge related to specific terminology used through out the program. Question number fourteen addressed more terminology specific issues related to the students using their “brains and instincts” which are words used throughout the program. A larger percentage in district 2 responded with don’t know to this question yielding an analysis that the students in district 1 understand and remember the specific terminology associated with the program. One must note that the students not only remembered the specific word, yet they comprehended the meaning associated with the specific word.

The issue of a possible language barrier was one that may have attributed some skewdness to the overall percentage score for district 1. This can be illustrated in one specific question in the pre-testing analysis in question number twenty-one with the correct answer being yes. On the issue related to “most people are safe” there was a statistical significance of .001 with district 1 responding 20.0% don’t know to district 2 responding with 6.0%. The larger percentage in district 1 may be attributed to the Hispanic students language barrier in responding correctly or in a properly informed manner to the question. Another possible issue related to the number of responses may be due to the fact that in the pre-testing stage there may have been a number of students that were transient, which was confirmed by the school counselor. In a study by Miltenberger and Olsen (1996) the issue of assessment of personal safety programs addresses the need for social and cultural factors to be assessed for validity when interpreting scores. For the post-testing the students were given the opportunity to hear the questions in their native language and a comparison of results will be made in subsequent papers. The analysis continues with district 1 responding with 15.0% no and district 2 responding 32.0% no to the question. The overwhelming response of no in district 2 yields to the fact that the Child Lure program specifically teaches the concept of safe people. Therefore, in all of the above-mentioned questions, retention of knowledge was expressed in the pre-testing portion of this study.

In analyzing the overall percentage scores of each district there is an increase amount of growth for the experimental group. In correlation with a study done by Tellijohann and Everett (1997) that stated growth shown in a control group was a welcomed outcome that proved mere exposure to the issues surrounding sexual abuse could be a benefit for all parties involved in the research process. In the current study there was growth, yet minimal, in the control group due to the mere exposure of the issues addressed in the context of the pre-testing process. One can only attribute that growth to possible family discussion on the issues or mere student awareness to issues by providing the student with the opportunity to evaluate his/her own though processes.

Recommendations

It must be noted that the current project is only in the very early stages of development and any outcomes are in the preliminary stages. The information that may be taken from this study are based on its importance to the field in the development of personal safety programs. In the following paragraphs, issues that arose during this stage of the evaluation process are noted and will be implemented in to further studies associated with this project.

In the testing development stage the overall objective was attained in the amount of content covered within the exam. Through testing administration, it was noted that there was ambiguity in the terminology used in some of the questions that did not affect the desired outcome of the study. The amount of questions given to fourth grade students may be above their attention spans that may have attributed to variances in the scores. Therefore the same objectives could be achieved through a smaller amount of test items lending more to quality instead of quantity in responses.

The language barrier of most of the experimental group students may also have been better planned by the research staff before the pre-testing administration began. In some regions of the United States, this may or may not be an issue, but must be addressed before any administration of program curriculum or testing begins. This area was only noticed in the post-testing portion and was alleviated by the presence of a researcher who was fluent in the students native language.

There was one instance of a student who dropped out of the research project through the insistence of the parent. One can only speculate as to the reason, but all measures were taken by the school counselor to follow up on any issues surrounding the student's absence in the final stages of the project. Therefore, it is important to implement prior planning of such incidences immediately upon completion or during the research process.

Implications for Practice

The overall goal of this portion of the research on this subject has only just begun to scrap the surface of information that can be relayed through just this one study. The purpose was to seek the concrete numbers that prove the Child Lures program is effective in student retention of concepts related to sexual abuse, abduction, and other heinous crimes upon children. Through the pre and post-testing comparison of numbers, the overall growth in the experimental group provides a foundation of proof that the objectives sought by the program's author are being retained through current and previous exposure. It is also proven that a continuous refresher course is needed yearly in order to keep the objectives of the program in the child's daily working memory. One may even venture to say that the program should be taught more than once a year and become a staple in all school counseling guidance courses that span the personal safety realm of district assigned curricula.

Issues that are within the context of the program are found only in this specific program and yield a better understanding of real-life situations that students face on a daily basis. Criminal elements to luring, parental deception, and the fact that there is a predatory nature to those who commit such crimes upon children must be put in the forefront of any personal safety program. When providing instruction of this program, the specific time of year is important due to the fact that most children experience many vacations/breaks throughout the school year and will need a reminder before leaving the school grounds for any extended time period.

As educators, social workers, counselors, and civic leaders, we all tend to forget that our children are cute little ones where no one is a stranger. Though some parents do inform their children of strangers, they merely skim the surface and may even be unaware of how to explain the total concept in an effective and meaningful manner. These same issues arose during a study by Roberts and Miltenberger (1999) where they discovered that prevention programs are most effective if administered by persons trained in the program and experts in the field. One must note that parental efforts are not in vain and parenting styles can attribute to how the issue is taught to their child by adding another way of understanding the concept. Therefore issues surrounding the knowledge and understanding that a stranger could be someone known to the student, is one element that must be implemented into a comprehensive program in order to ensure the overall safety and recognition by the child of any criminal act.

In closing, the words by a mother of a child who was a victim of abduction and murder, "adversity is the greatest teacher", therefore the reason for this body of research can not be better

said by anyone. Let not our efforts be in vain, but in the hopes that regardless of the type of program taught or the amount of exposure, that some little bit be taken home by the child and someday not ever have to be used.

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Partnership:

This paper will be co-authored by Dr. Rebecca Robles-Pina when published in any journal. Dr. Robles-Pina was integral in the analysis of all data and vital in the collection of all data.

Websites :

www.childlures.com

www.protectingchildren.org

www.missingkids.org

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