
THE *Responsive Classroom*®

APPROACH is a way of teaching that emphasizes social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community.

BENEFITS TO YOUR SCHOOL

Urban, suburban, and rural schools nationwide implementing the *Responsive Classroom* approach consistently experience higher teaching quality, increased student engagement, academic gains, and fewer discipline problems.

EVIDENCE BASED

A study by the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education found a link between the *Responsive Classroom* approach and:

- Increases in math and reading test scores
- Improved social skills
- High-quality instruction and greater teacher efficacy

No Child Left Behind considers the design of this study to meet its rigorous standards for providing valid evidence of effectiveness.

(More on research, page 8.)





The Goal: Optimal Student Learning

The goal of the *Responsive Classroom* approach is to enable optimal student learning. Developed by classroom teachers and continually refined to meet schools' needs, the *Responsive Classroom* approach is based on the premise that children learn best when they have both academic and social-emotional skills. The approach consists of classroom and schoolwide practices for deliberately helping children build academic and social-emotional competencies day in and day out, year in and year out.

Schools that want to adopt this approach usually:

- Begin with getting *Responsive Classroom* training for teachers. Classroom implementation of the approach is the initial focus.
- Next extend the principles of the approach to all areas of the school.
- Foster, among the adults at school, a sense of community that's consistent with *Responsive Classroom* principles.

Schools that make a multi-year commitment to schoolwide *Responsive Classroom* implementation are most likely to see success.

©Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc. www.responsiveclassroom.org

“The Responsive Classroom approach provides prime evidence that social and emotional teaching strategies, when well constructed, lead to improved classroom behavior and academic growth.”

ROGER WEISSBERG, President, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL);
Professor of Psychology and Education, University of Illinois at Chicago

Classroom Implementation

Students learn best when their classrooms are places where they feel safe, challenged, and joyful—places that free them to learn. At the heart of the *Responsive Classroom* approach are ten classroom practices that help teachers create such an environment.

CLASSROOM PRACTICES

Morning Meeting ■ gathering as a whole class to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead

Rule Creation ■ helping students create classroom rules that allow all class members to meet their learning goals

Interactive Modeling ■ teaching children to notice and internalize expected behaviors through a unique modeling technique

Positive Teacher Language ■ using words and tone to promote children's active learning and self-discipline

Logical Consequences ■ responding to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity

Guided Discovery ■ introducing materials using a format that encourages creativity and responsibility

Academic Choice ■ increasing student motivation by differentiating instruction and allowing students teacher-structured choices in their work

Classroom Organization ■ setting up the physical room in ways that encourage independence, cooperation, and productivity

Working with Families ■ hearing families' insights and helping them understand the school's teaching approaches

Collaborative Problem Solving ■ using conferencing, role playing, and other strategies to resolve problems with students

©Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc. www.responsiveclassroom.org



Schoolwide Implementation

Individual classrooms are the primary influence on children’s school life. But classrooms exist within the context of the larger school, and consistency in climate and expectations between classrooms and the larger school is vital. When the adults at school work as a community to achieve such consistency, children can learn at their best.

SCHOOLWIDE PRACTICES

Schools implementing the *Responsive Classroom* approach schoolwide typically adopt the following practices:

Aligning policies and procedures with Responsive Classroom philosophy ■

making sure everything from the lunch routine to the discipline policy enhances the self-management skills that children are learning through the *Responsive Classroom* approach

Allocating resources to support Responsive Classroom implementation ■

using time, money, space, and personnel to support staff in learning and using the *Responsive Classroom* approach

Planning all-school activities to build a sense of community ■

giving children and staff opportunities to learn about and from all school members through activities

such as all-school meetings, cross-age recess or lunch, buddy classrooms, and cross-age book clubs

Welcoming families and the community as partners ■

involving them in the children’s education by maintaining two-way communication, inviting parents and others to visit and volunteer, and offering family activities

Organizing the physical environment to set a tone of learning ■

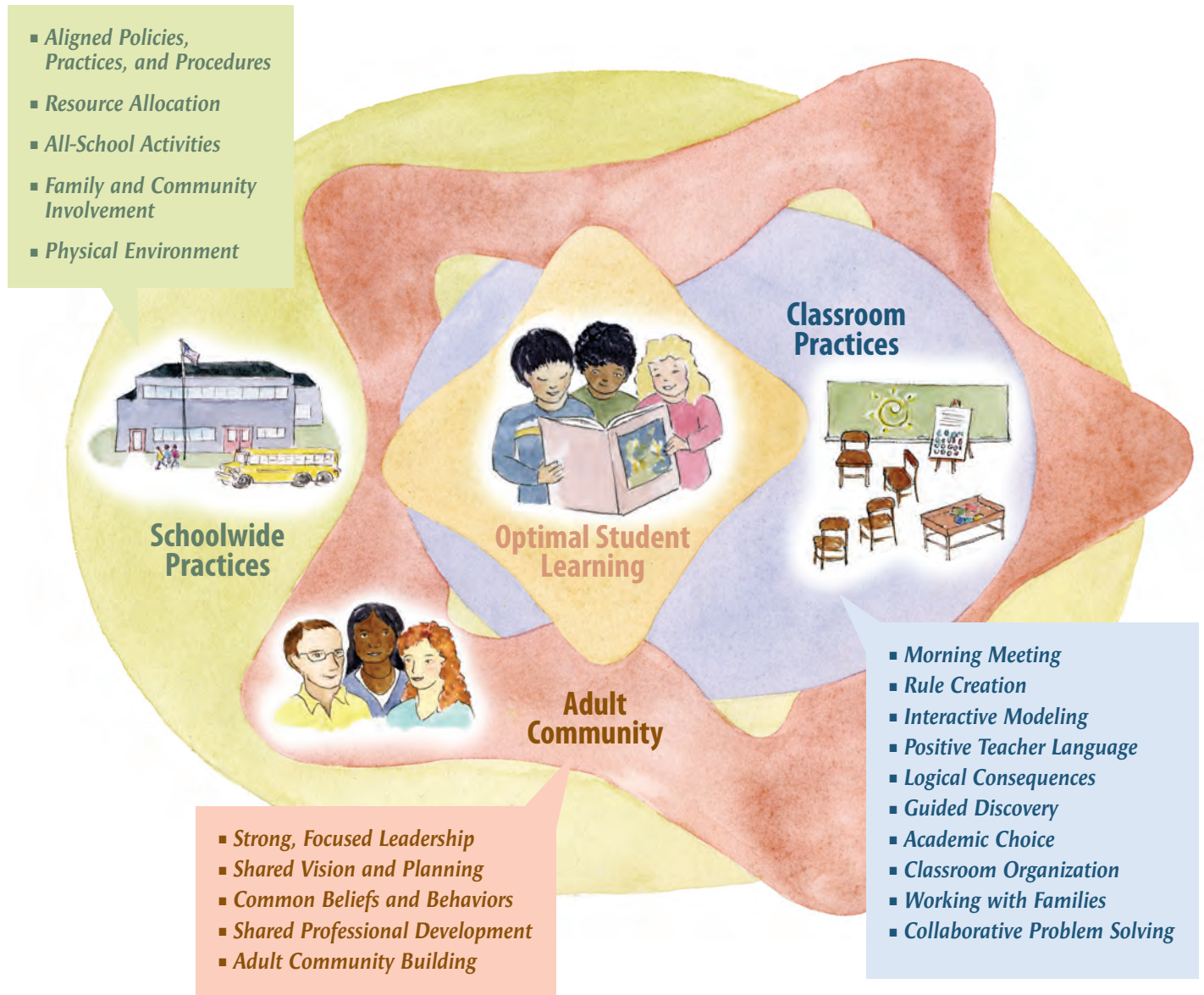
making sure, for example, that schoolwide rules are posted prominently, student work is emphasized in displays, and every space in the school is welcoming, clean, and orderly



“The Responsive Classroom approach is one of the very best social-emotional learning efforts in America. This approach is grounded in the day-to-day, moment-to-moment lives of teachers and learners. It translates research and best practices into wonderfully practical, loving, and wise guidelines.”

JONATHAN COHEN, Adjunct Professor in Psychology and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University;
Adjunct Professor in Education, School of Professional Studies, City University of New York

ELEMENTS OF A RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM SCHOOL



The goal of the *Responsive Classroom* approach is to enable optimal student learning. This is achieved when the adults at school, working as a community, consistently implement a combination of classroom and schoolwide practices that support children’s academic and social growth.



Learn about the *Responsive Classroom* Approach

We offer a variety of professional development opportunities and publications for educators who want to learn about and gain proficiency in the *Responsive Classroom* approach.

Each year, over 5,000 elementary teachers and administrators attend Responsive Classroom week-long institutes in locations across the country.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

One-Day Overview

Participants experience a Morning Meeting, explore *Responsive Classroom* foundational ideas, see practices in action, investigate approaches to discipline, and gather practical ideas.

Week-Long Institutes

Participants get intensive training in *Responsive Classroom* strategies. A menu of institutes is available to match participants' differing levels of experience with the *Responsive Classroom* approach.

Follow-Up Consultation

After a week-long institute, schools can arrange follow-up services for their staff, from demonstration lessons to review workshops.

Schoolwide Consultation

Schools wanting to implement the *Responsive Classroom* approach schoolwide can receive a range of consulting services based on their specific needs.

Responsive Classroom Schools Conference

Educators learn about schoolwide *Responsive Classroom* implementation, hear other schools' successes and challenges, and network with school leaders implementing the *Responsive Classroom* approach throughout the country.





Research on the *Responsive Classroom* Approach

Social and Academic Learning Study (SALS), 2001–2004
Curry School of Education, University of Virginia



From 2001 to 2004, researchers at the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education conducted a longitudinal, quasi-experimental study on how the *Responsive Classroom* approach affects children's academic and social skills. The study, led by Dr. Sara E. Rimm-Kaufman and funded by the DuBarry Foundation, found that the *Responsive Classroom* approach is associated with better academic and social outcomes for elementary school children.

The study yielded six key findings about children and teachers at schools using the *Responsive Classroom* approach:



1. *Children showed greater increases in reading and math test scores.*
2. *Teachers felt more effective and more positive about teaching.*
3. *Children had better social skills.*
4. *Teachers offered more high-quality instruction.*
5. *Children felt more positive about school.*
6. *Teachers collaborated with each other more.*

This study compared children at six schools in an urban district in the Northeast—three schools that implemented the *Responsive Classroom* approach and three that did not. The quasi-experimental design is one of the two types that *No Child Left Behind* considers appropriate for educational research.

For a full report of this study, see
“Social and Academic Learning Study on the
Contribution of the *Responsive Classroom* Approach”
by Sara E. Rimm-Kaufman, available at
www.responsiveclassroom.org/research.



All photography © Peter Wrenn. All rights reserved.