

THE PAX GOOD BEHAVIOR GAME

A Teacher's Kit for Creating a Productive, Peaceful Classroom

The PAX Good Behavior Game is a proven, research-based classroom management model designed for use in grades K–6. Based on a strategy developed by a classroom teacher 40 years ago, the PAX Game involves student teams “competing against” each other to earn rewards for refraining from disruptive, inattentive, or aggressive behavior. Approximately 20 published studies have shown that use of this model results in decreased classroom disruptions (by 50–90%), a greater number of students fully engaged in learning (by 20–50%), decreased referrals and suspensions (by 30–60%), and more time for teaching and learning (by 25%). Longitudinal studies have also shown that children who experienced the *Good Behavior Game* in elementary school were less likely to be involved in violent behaviors later in life and were less likely to use tobacco or other drugs later in life.

FEATURES AND BENEFITS

- provides classroom teachers with a proven tool for creating a more productive learning environment
- research-based practices are supported by an ongoing outcome study and over 30 years of educational research
- the impact of the game has been documented by approximately 20 published studies
- affordable and easy to implement
- does not involve extra class time to play
- based on a CSAP Effective Program
- engages parents/caregivers in classroom activities
- ideal for use in individual classrooms, schoolwide, or throughout entire school districts
- everything needed to play the game is included in one convenient kit
- can be used effectively in almost every setting in the school, and even on the bus
- behavioral strategies support group-based reinforcement for inhibition of disruption and aggression
- developed by internationally recognized educators from the PAXIS Institute
- an effective resource for youth with special needs
- works well with children for whom English is their second language
- shown to reduce the need (10–30%) for some special education services in the classroom

BACKGROUND

Research scientists Drs. Harriet Barrish, Muriel Saunders, and Mont Wolf created the *Good Behavior Game* in 1969 at the University of Kansas, Department of Human and Family Life, after observing a classroom teacher who employed a similar classroom strategy. Longitudinal studies of the *Good Behavior Game* conducted by Drs. Sheppard Kellam, Nicholas Ialongo, James Anthony, and others in the United States and Pol A. C. Van Lier in the Netherlands have since demonstrated that this set of practices helps to reduce student misbehavior, juvenile delinquency, and substance abuse—and increase time for learning.

Long-term follow-up studies of youth in the Baltimore public schools show that use of the *Good Behavior Game*, played in first and second grade, changed the life course of high-risk children. The game was used in the Baltimore schools to reduce aggressive and shy behaviors in the classroom and promote cooperative behaviors. Other long-term effects from the Baltimore project showed that students who experienced the *Good Behavior Game* as first or second graders were significantly less likely to show conduct problems or to have been suspended from school by sixth grade. Details of these findings are published in the following reports about the Baltimore Prevention Project:

Ialongo, N., Poduska, J., Werthamer, L., and Kellam, S. (2001). The distal impact of two first grade preventive interventions on conduct problems and disorder in early adolescence. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 9(3), 146–160.

Ialongo, N., Werthamer, L., Kellam, S., Hendricks Brown, C., Wang, S., and Lin, Y. (1999). Proximal impact of two first grade preventive interventions on the early risk behaviors for later substance abuse, depression, and antisocial behavior. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 27(5), 599–641

Kellam, S., and Anthony, J. (1998). Targeting early antecedents to prevent tobacco smoking: Findings from an epidemiologically based randomized field trial. *American Journal of Public Health*, 88(10), 1495.

Kellam, S., Ling, X., Merisca, R., Hendricks Brown, C., Ialongo, N. (1998). The effect of the level of aggression in the first grade classroom on the course and malleability of aggressive behavior into middle school. *Development and Psychopathology*, 10(2), 165–185.

Kellam, S., Ling, X., Merisca, R., Hendricks Brown, C., and Ialongo, N. (2000). Erratum: The effect of the level of aggression in the first grade classroom on the course and malleability of aggressive behavior into middle school. *Development and Psychopathology*, 12(1), 107.

A randomized control group study conducted in the Netherlands which involved 700 elementary students from 13 schools over two years also showed significant reductions in disruptive behaviors among students who experienced the *Good Behavior Game*. These findings are chronicled in a study published in 2002 by Pol Van Lier titled *Preventing Disruptive Behavior in Early Elementary School Children*, Erasmus Medical Center, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

With publication of these major studies, the promising long-term effects of this game became known. Many other studies of the *Good Behavior Game* have confirmed the effectiveness of the game's use of

team structure, peer competition, and simple activity rewards. Studies have also shown that the game works in various school settings (including the playground and hallways) and is effective from pre-schooler age to adolescence.

Dr. Dennis Embry and his colleagues at the PAXIS Institute drew from this wealth of research as well as educational best practices and the latest findings in brain research to further develop the game concept into an accessible, easy-to-implement set of practices that every elementary school teacher can use today—*The PAX Good Behavior Game*.

The PAX Good Behavior Game has been tested in several hundred classrooms in recent years in Ohio, Arizona, Illinois, California, and Wyoming. It has been used in inner city schools and suburban schools, with elementary students and secondary students, and in special education classrooms and regular classrooms.

OUTCOMES

Over the years, the various schools and classrooms that have used the *Good Behavior Game* have experienced a variety of outcomes, including:

- A 50 to 90% reduction in disruptive or disorderly behaviors in the classroom, hallways, and other school settings
- Up to 25% more time for teaching and learning, amounting to the equivalent of another month or more of school
- A 20 to 50% increase in the number of children being fully engaged in learning
- A 10 to 30% reduction in the need for special education services
- A 30 to 60% reduction in referrals, suspensions, or expulsions
- A 50% reduction in the use of tobacco or other drugs over a child's lifetime
- A major reduction in teacher stress level

MEETING FEDERAL, STATE, AND OTHER MANDATES

Each year, the burden on schools seems to grow with a variety of initiatives: No Child Left Behind Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504, Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act, character education, violence prevention, and migrant children education. Fortunately, the PAX Good Behavior Game addresses these diverse mandates, as briefly summarized below.

Mandate	How the PAX Game Helps
No Child Left Behind Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PAX Game is a research-based set of practices that increases time for fully engaged learning and academics. • The powerful effects of the PAX Game reduce the likelihood that a school will be labeled as persistently dangerous. • The PAX Game provides improved conditions for increasing academic performance of disadvantaged students.
Safe and Drug-Free Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong scientific and long-term evidence indicates that the PAX Game reduces substance use, violence, and aggression in students. • The PAX Game is a named best practice in this area.
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IDEA stipulates that, to the extent possible, children with disabilities be educated in regular classes with their nondisabled peers with appropriate supplementary aids and services. The PAX Game helps special-needs children participate more fully in the regular classroom. • The PAX Game can be used as part of a Functional Behavioral Assessment and Positive Behavioral Intervention Plan as required by law.
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of Civil Rights clarifies that schools must evaluate children for special education who are suspected of having attention deficit disorder based on parental request. • The PAX Game aids in reducing the symptoms of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and attention deficit disorder.
School improvement plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PAX Game results in school improvement that can be documented by valid measures such as teacher ratings of student behavior, student ratings of self and peers, and direct observation of engaged instruction (a key predictor of standardized achievement).
Civil rights issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PAX Game reduces the serious and minor discipline problems that have historically led to the overrepresentation of minority children or youth as dropouts or in special education. • The PAX Game and related interventions reduce victimization of all children that can lead to legal challenges.

Mandate	How the PAX Game Helps
Tobacco prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PAX Game, used in elementary school, profoundly reduces the risk of tobacco use in adolescence by addressing key risk and protective factors.
School reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive reforms must be grounded in scientifically based research and effective practice. The PAX Game components meet all those criteria, with effect sizes that run between +.4 and +.7. • The PAX Game can be combined with other research-based interventions such as classwide peer tutoring or academic improvement strategies to meet requirements of school reform.
Character education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PAX Game and related tools provide a language of character development related to trust, helpfulness, respect, promise keeping, and caring.
School safety and discipline plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PAX Game and related research-based strategies have been shown to reduce all of the behaviors that endanger school safety. • The PAX Game and related research-based strategies can reduce referrals, suspensions, and expulsions substantially, which is the goal of a discipline plan.
Resiliency initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on published studies, the PAX Game addresses resiliency factors such as (1) clear and consistent boundaries, (2) reduced threats and increased bonding, (3) high expectations, (4) increased caring and support, (5) meaningful roles, and (6) social skills.
Mental health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PAX Game has replicated scientific results in reducing symptoms of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorders, developmental disorders, and spectrum disorders, as outlined by the American Psychiatric Association. • The PAX Game reduces symptoms of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and anxiety disorders.

PRODUCT INFORMATION

Everyone wins when teachers have more time to teach and students have more time to learn. The PAX Good Behavior Game has been shown to increase student academic time by decreasing disruptive student behaviors. Because it's a daily practice, not a curriculum, the PAX Game is easily integrated into the instructional day and does not involve extra class time to play. In fact, studies show that teachers who have used the game have gained up to 25% more teaching time—the equivalent of a month or more of school.

The PAX Good Behavior Game **A Teacher's Kit for Creating a Productive, Peaceful Classroom** *Grades K–6*

Each game kit includes: 1 Teacher's Guide, 1 Quick Start Guide, 1 reproducible Parent Booklet, 1 timer, 1 harmonica, 60 reward stickers, 32 student wristbands, and 1 implementation video.

Item # 2114

\$249.00

Teacher's Guide

The Teacher's Guide provides in-depth information on how to play the PAX Game as well as background on the science and history of the game.

- Problem-Solving Tips, Added Suggestions, and Research Notes help you troubleshoot and understand the science behind game strategies
- Reproducible tools, such as the Spleem Tally Sheets, help you track and evaluate progress

Softcover, 160 pp.

Quick Start Guide

The PAX Game was created for teachers by teachers, so it's very easy to implement. The Quick Start Guide is your tool for easy implementation.

- Streamlined, informative text is written from a teacher's perspective
- Key steps for playing—from selecting your start date to charting your results—are outlined for quick implementation
- Words and phrases in bold type are defined in the Quick Start Guide glossary for easy reference

Softcover, 24 pp.

Parent Booklet

This reproducible booklet, created for the parent/caregiver to read with his/her child, is a fun way to keep parents involved with what's happening in their child's classroom.

- Engaging narrative can be read aloud by either the child or adult, depending on the child's age
- Fill-in-the-blank passages help children personalize and understand the story
- "Talk about it" questions get children and adults conversing about ways to create more peace and productivity
- Page notes provide additional information to parents about the research and science behind the game

Softcover, 34 pp.

PAX Game Gear

Each PAX Game kit includes a timer, a harmonica, 60 award stickers, and 32 student wristbands. This gear is not just for fun; it's for creating peace and productivity in the classroom.

- When you use the PAX timer to end game activities, time is the “bad guy”—not you!
- Blow the PAX harmonica to calmly signal transition time/quiet time to students
- Award stickers as PAX Game prizes or to motivate family members and friends to talk about the game with students
- Wristbands will help you easily identify children on the same team and will help students build team spirit

Implementation Video

When you watch the *PAX Good Behavior Game Video*, you'll see the game in action in real schools and hear from real teachers and school administrators about how they use the game to reduce student disruptions and increase teaching time.

- Meet Nancy Doty, an elementary teacher in Wyoming who explains how playing the PAX Game decreased classroom disruptions and increased academic performance
- See students playing the PAX game in the classroom and school hallways
- Hear about the research, science, and classroom experiences Dennis Embry drew from in developing the PAX Game

VHS video, closed-captioned

Item #2119

\$225.00

Additional Components

PAX Home Tootle Notes

These bright, cheery postcards are a fun way to share student Pax Game accomplishments with parents. 30 each of 4 designs

Item #2124

\$19.95

Schoolwide Implementation Guide

Less stress for teachers and staff. Extra support for teachers with special-needs students. A more positive school climate. Fewer high-cost problems. There are many reasons to bring the *PAX Good Behavior Game* schoolwide, and this guide shows you how. It gets all site leaders on board—staff, student representatives, families, and community stakeholders—for easy implementation of this best-practice and research-based game.

- Provides a step-by-step outline for training an entire school staff in the use of the PAX Game
- Contains practical, low-cost ideas for creating a schoolwide PAX environment including contests, events, and rewards
- Suggests ways to involve community members, parents, and other stakeholders in your school's PAX Game initiative

- Includes ideas for enhancing student performance during challenging times of the school year (e.g., before the holidays, at the end of the school year)
- Features resources for evaluating your PAX Game efforts

Softcover, 136 pp.

Item #2117

\$49.00

Re-order Materials

Student Wristbands

Package of 32

Item #2126

\$19.95

Reward Stickers

Package of 60

Item #2125

\$8.95

FAQ

What does PAX mean?

PAX is the Latin word for peace, but in the context of the *PAX Good Behavior Game* the word means something much bigger. It means school productivity, peace, health, happiness, and harmonious social interactions.

How was the game developed?

Research scientists Drs. Harriet Barrish, Muriel Saunders, and Mont Wolf created the game in 1969 at the University of Kansas, Department of Human and Family Life, after observing a classroom teacher who employed a similar classroom strategy. More than 30 years later, with the publication of large, randomized control studies with longitudinal follow-up, the long-term effects of this game became known. Dr. Dennis Embry of the PAXIS Institute drew from this research as well as educational best practices to further develop this game concept into an accessible, easy-to-implement practice that every elementary school teacher can use.

What is the research behind the game?

Longitudinal studies conducted by Drs. Sheppard Kellam, Nicholas Ialongo, James Anthony, and others in the United States and Pol A. C. Van Lier in the Netherlands have demonstrated that the *Good Behavior Game* reduces student misbehavior, juvenile delinquency, and substance abuse—and increases time for learning.

How does the *PAX Good Behavior Game* work?

Basically, student teams in a classroom “compete” against each other to earn rewards for refraining from disruptive, inattentive, or aggressive behavior. The team design creates positive peer pressure rather than negative peer pressure.

Will the PAX Game take away from my teaching time?

Because it’s a daily practice, not a curriculum, the *PAX Good Behavior Game* is easily integrated into your instructional day and does not involve extra class time to play. In fact, studies show that teachers who have used the game have gained up to 25% more teaching time—the equivalent of a month or more of school.

Is the PAX Game difficult to implement?

No. The game was created for teachers by teachers, so it’s very easy to implement. The Quick Start Guide is your tool for easy implementation. Key steps for playing—from selecting your start date to charting your results—are outlined for quick implementation.

Does the *PAX Good Behavior Game* involve the students' families?

Yes. The reproducible Parent Booklet, created for the parent/caregiver to read with his/her child, is a fun way to introduce families to the game. Family support is a big part of what makes the PAX Game so effective. That’s why several tools for keeping parents informed about and involved with what’s happening in their child’s classroom are included in the game kit. In addition, the reproducible Parent Booklet explains how families can easily play the game at home (their children will ask them to!), particularly at mealtime or when riding in the car.

What's included in the PAX Game Kit?

Everything a teacher needs to play the game—including all printed materials, reproducible materials, and game gear—is included in each kit.

Have other teachers used this game successfully?

Yes. Their experiences are chronicled in the more than 20 studies published about the impact of the *Good Behavior Game* model. In the *PAX Good Behavior Game* implementation video, several teachers and school administrators discuss the benefits and results of playing the game in their schools.

What do the words spleem and tootle mean?

You will get to know these words well when you play the PAX Game. Spleems are things or actions that get in the way of classroom peace and productivity (e.g., not listening, interrupting, or saying mean things). Tootling is the opposite of tattling. It is telling people about the positive actions of others.

Can the *PAX Good Behavior Game* be played outside the classroom?

That's the beauty of it! You can use the game effectively in almost every area of your school.

FEEDBACK

“We are delighted that our early work has been further creatively utilized by Dennis Embry, Ph.D., as a ‘behavioral vaccine’ with significant potential for positively impacting children.”

Harriet H. Barrish, Ph.D.
Coauthor of the original Good Behavior Game model

“The *Good Behavior Game* stands as one of the most remarkable simple strategies with growing scientific evidence for preventing serious behavior problems or preventing tobacco, alcohol, or other drug abuse. Dr. Dennis Embry and the PAXIS Institute have worked hard to bring the best science into a useful practice that every teacher can use.”

Nick Ialongo, Ph.D., associate professor,
Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University
Author of seven studies on the long-term impact of the Good Behavior Game model

“*The PAX Good Behavior Game* is one of the most powerful yet simple approaches to creating a supportive environment for successful student behavior.”

Dr. Anthony Biglan, Ph.D.
Senior scientist, Oregon Research Institute

“With the *PAX Good Behavior Game*, Dr. Dennis Embry has brought to life the idea of a low-cost, yet powerful, behavioral vaccine for behavioral problems in children.”

Ron Prinz, Ph.D.
Carolina distinguished professor
Psychology Department, University of South Carolina

“Every elementary school classroom should have the *PAX Good Behavior Game*. It is a powerful, respectful way of helping to turn around the lives of difficult children.”

Howard Glasser, M.A.
Author of *Transforming the Difficult Child: The Nurtured Heart Approach*

“*The PAX Good Behavior Game* makes a science-based approach accessible, fun, and useful to teachers.”

Lynn McDonald, M.S.W., Ph.D.
Senior scientist, Wisconsin Center for Education Research
School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison