## CARING SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Caring School Community (CSC) is an elementary school program that aims to strengthen students’ connectedness to school by fostering academic motivation, achievement, and character formation and reduce drug abuse, violence, and mental health problems.

### 1. INITIATING ORGANIZATION(S), PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

The Caring School Community (CSC) program was first introduced in California elementary schools in the early 1980s as the Child Development Project. Since then, the program has been adopted by about a thousand schools in 34 states in the USA. CSC has also been implemented in Australia, Spain, and Switzerland.

### 2. THEORETICAL APPROACH

The program is based on the premise that children’s prosocial characteristics can best be enhanced in school settings that emphasize commitment to shared values, mutual responsibility and concern, and a sense of community.

### 3. PROGRAM DURATION

The four components of CSC are designed to be introduced over the course of 1 year, although schools may decide to introduce components at their chosen pace.

### 4. COMPONENTS AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Caring School Community offers four core educational practices:

1. *Class meetings.* Teachers learn how to build unity and social skills, while students learn how to set class norms and goals, make decisions, and identify and solve problems that affect classroom climate.

2. *Cross-Age Buddies program.* Pairs classes of older and younger students for academic and recreational activities to help build caring, cross-age relationships. For each activity, buddy teachers plan together, prepare their own classes, support the buddy pairs during the activity, and reflect on the experience with their students afterward.

3. *Homeside activities.* Teachers learn how to create a cycle of learning that starts in the classroom, develops at home, and concludes in the classroom, while students obtain short conversational activities (in both English and Spanish versions) to do at home with their caregiver, and then debrief back in their classroom.

4. *Schoolwide activities.* Teachers learn collaborative school-wide activities and ways to link students, parents, school staff, and the community. The all-inclusive activities are meant to foster new school traditions and promote cultural understanding.

### 5. PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Caring School Community, a program designed for use in kindergarten through sixth grade.
6. ASSESSMENT

The overall evidence of effectiveness of the Caring School Community (CSC) program is mixed. The 1988 study of CSC by Solomon and colleagues found significant differences between the intervention and comparison classrooms on some measures of behaviour. The 2000 study by Battistich and colleagues found few significant differences when examining the high-change schools (schools that implemented the program properly) and no significant differences between the intervention and comparison groups when examining all the schools included in the study.


7. FURTHER READING AND CONTACT INFORMATION


[https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/caring-school-community](https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/caring-school-community)