

2020-2021

Analysis & Report by



The Social Emotional Learning Achieved

AFTER SCHOOL & SUMMER CAMP

EK&C

Artist credit to Silas Raines
11-year-old EKC Participant



VISION STATEMENT

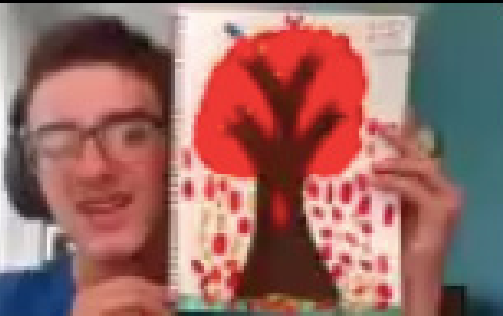
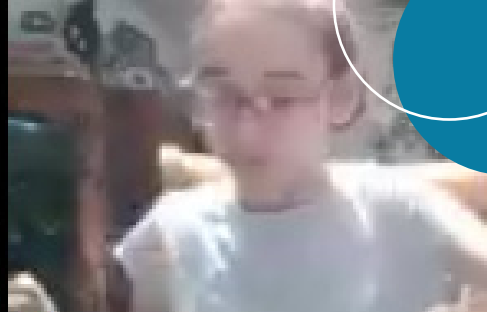
Extreme Kids & Crew seeks to show people that disability is not to be feared, pitied nor mindlessly exalted, but understood to be an inherent part of life. We achieve this by establishing and maintaining creative community centers for the disability community.

Extreme Kids & Crew (EKC) is a New York community space for children with disabilities and their families. In a city with limited, affordable disability-centered programs and few opportunities for families of children with disabilities to connect with other families, EKC fills a very particular need. EKC does not require proof of diagnoses, dues/fees, nor long-term commitments. Its programs are free and open to all. Families are valued, and their enjoyment is paramount. EKC programs, whether in-person or online, are based wholly on the input and feedback of participating children, teens, and their families. Music, art and play are integral to building connections and providing channels for self-expression, creativity, and fun experiences for the whole family.

The need for acceptance, community, and connection only increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. When NYC schools closed in March 2020, families found themselves more isolated than ever, without the tools to provide day-long learning and activities to engage their children. EKC children and teens—most of whom rely on consistent, structured routines—found their worlds upended, unable to see their teachers, learning specialists, and peers. EKC responded swiftly, “reopening” with online programs within one week of school closures. Online programming included after-school social groups, gaming, arts and music, parent support groups and seminars, and special events for the whole family. The COVID-19 crisis presented new growth opportunities for EKC’s programming to better support and reach families.

THIS REPORT FOCUSES ON THE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) OF 49 TOTAL EKC YOUTH PARTICIPANTS, 2020-21.





“

Extreme Kids & Crew is amazing. As a parent, I learned so much about my boy. He enjoyed signing in, listening to videos, using his speech device to answer questions about himself, music sessions, and all the act activities.

– EKC Parent

THE PROGRAMS

AFTER-SCHOOL

After-School offers arts and play for children with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) age 6 and up, and prior to the pandemic it was offered to children who attend P.S. 15. In March 2020, we moved the program online, opening it up to children throughout New York City. Activities are built on a foundation of creative expression, imaginative play, and SEL. Participants make friends, build confidence in their abilities, and have fun!

- Even as in-person after-school is reestablished this fall at P.S. 15, and EKC offers a variety of special events around the city, virtual programming will continue on an ongoing, permanent basis.

VIRTUAL SUMMER CAMP

This program offers six weeks of arts and play activities geared towards children with developmental disabilities, ages 6 to 15. Completing its second year, this year’s summer camp offered a menu of activities from which families could choose based on unique needs and interests. Activities included daily huddles, social groups, arts classes, and weekly challenges to extend each camper’s learning experience beyond the virtual classroom. The curriculum and weekly themes were designed around campers’ individual interests and abilities. All camp families received a box of art and play supplies including the basic components necessary to participate in camp activities.

- In-person programs were added over the summer, as EKC also continued virtual programming. Families were invited to “Fridays at the Park” offering sensory-friendly playgrounds with live music, unstructured play, and socializing.

••••• **Enjoy three BEFORE/AFTER success stories in the Appendix to this report.** •••••

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT YOUTH WITH STRONGER SEL ARE MORE LIKELY TO MAKE MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY & TO GAIN:

THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE

The Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) of 49 participants was assessed by EKC staff at different points during the school year. The SEED Impact Competency Ladders™ were customized for this purpose to reflect the growth opportunities afforded to the children and teens.

- 23 youth who participated in both fall 2020 and spring 2021 were observed to achieve an **8 percent gain in SEL**
- 31 students assessed pre- and midyear (fall 2020 to winter 2021), as well as 28 students assessed midyear and post- (winter to spring 2021) were observed to achieve a **4 percent gain in SEL**.
- Assessments for eight students who continued through summer camp showed an average additional **3 percent gain in SEL**.

Academic
& Career
Success

Positive
Relationships

Better
Physical &
Mental
Health

SEL is an integral part of individual human development. A meta-analysis of over 200 programs, covering three decades of research, found that those focused to develop social and emotional wellbeing had lasting, positive effects. Students showed decreased emotional distress, such as anxiety and depression; improved social and emotional skills (e.g., self-awareness, self-management); improved attitudes about self, others, and about school (including higher academic motivation, stronger bonding with teachers); better classroom behavior (e.g., following classroom rules); decreased classroom misbehavior and aggression, and improved academic performance (e.g., standardized achievement test scores).¹

Through well-rounded instruction, continuous evaluation, and authentic partnerships between SEL providers, families and communities, SEL advances educational equity and excellence.² Youth with stronger SEL are more likely to gain academic and career success, foster positive relationships, and attain better physical and mental health, leading them to achieve more meaningful contributions to society.³

SEED Impact's approach to SEL outcomes measurement supports Extreme Kids & Crew's priorities to deepen, capture and quantify whole-person development.

¹Durlak, J., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions [PDF]. Child Development, 82(1), 405-432.

²Casel.org. 2020. What Is SEL. [online] Available at: <<https://casel.org/what-is-SEL/>> [Accessed 20 October 2020].

³Council of Distinguished Scientists National Commission on Social, Emotional and Academic Development. The Aspen Institute, September 2017.

HOW WE MEASURE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

SEED Impact provided tools to measure SEL gains across three domains (Being, Doing, and Relating), and guided the Extreme Kids & Crew staff to define progressive outcomes depicted as competency ladders that participants climb.

SEL Key The highest stage of each ladder articulates the ideal outcomes toward which participants are encouraged by Extreme Kids & Crew staff to aspire, as here described:



BEING
SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SELF-EFFICACY

The child is more composed, capable, confident and self-directed. There is an elevation of spirit, more optimism about self and world.



DOING
CAPACITY TO PERFORM

The child makes choices and takes actions. There is evidence of more able decision-making and readiness to take on bigger challenges.



RELATING
ABILITY TO ENGAGE WITH OTHERS

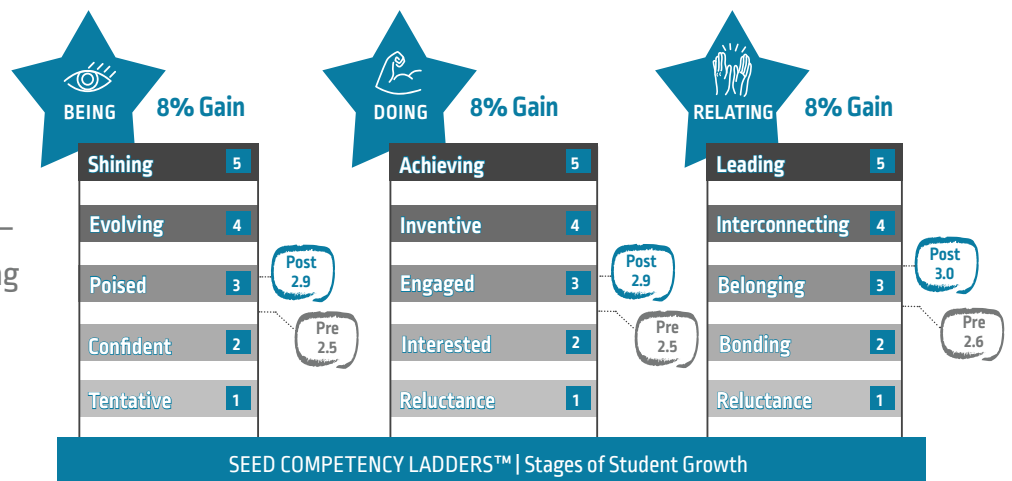
The child is confident and comfortable interacting, and shows interest in others' successes as well as their own.

Progress is measured by evaluating how much of each unclimbed ladder has been mastered pre to post.

AFTER-SCHOOL GROWTH IN SEL COMPETENCIES

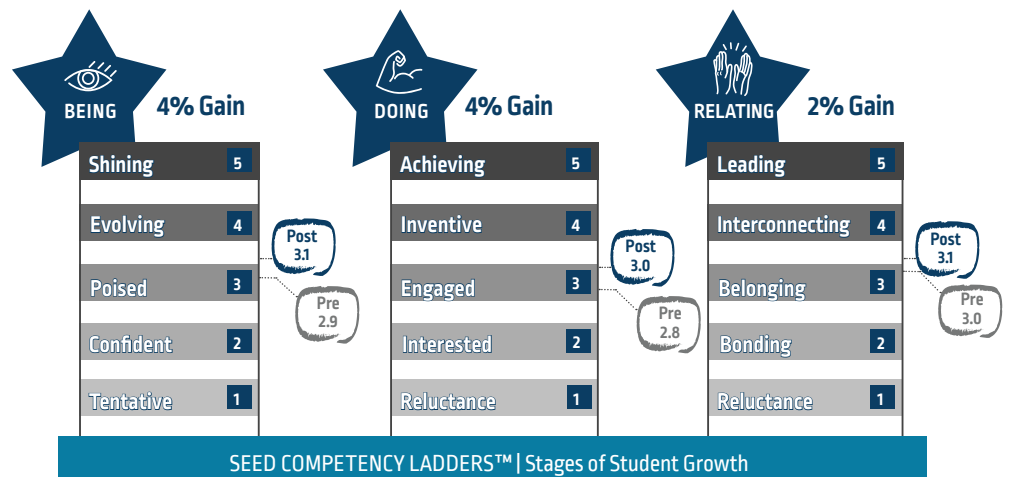
Staff assessed SEL practices during each term of attendance. Overall gains for the 23 youth who participated in both the fall 2020 and spring 2021 averaged **8 percent**—that is an ascent of nearly half a rung (20 percent each) on the three SEL competency ladders.

Similar gains were observed for practices in all three SEL domains.

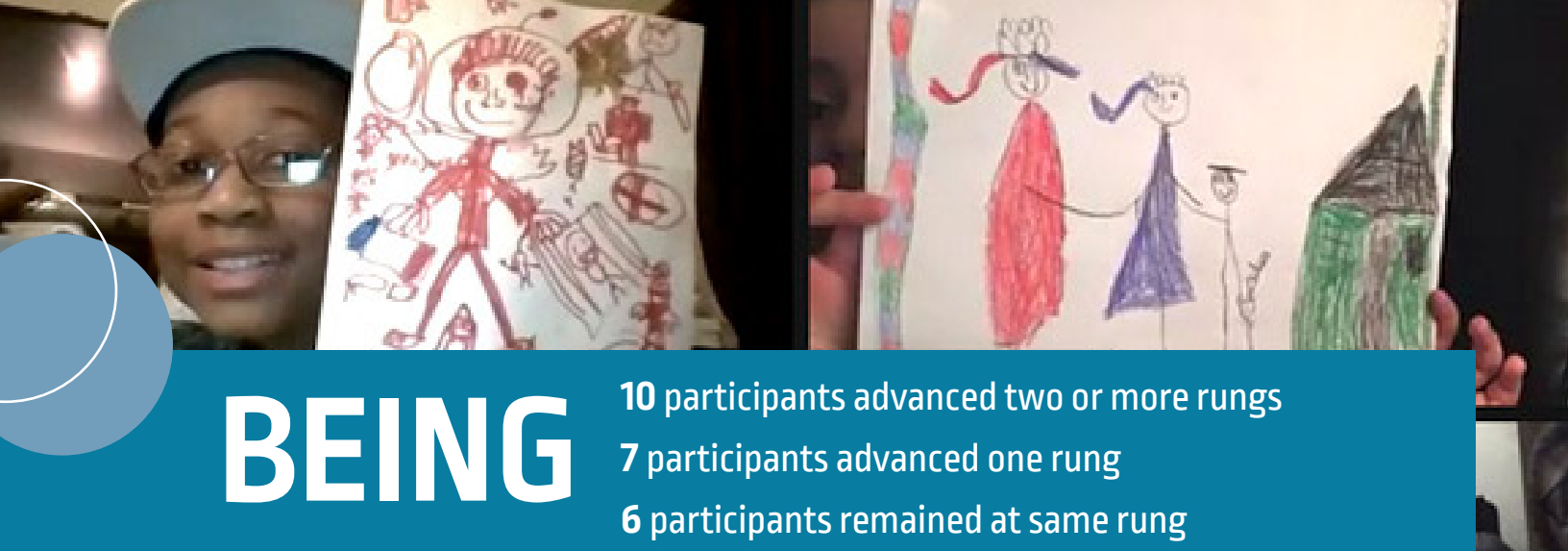


SUMMER CAMP GROWTH IN SEL COMPETENCIES

Additional gains for the eight youth who continued through the summer averaged **3 percent**—a modest ascent up the ladders.



To appreciate the richness of SEL development achieved by EKC youth, see the detailed SEL competency ladder descriptions in the Appendix to this report.



BEING

10 participants advanced two or more rungs

7 participants advanced one rung

6 participants remained at same rung

IN THEIR WORDS: Extreme Kids & Crew Staff

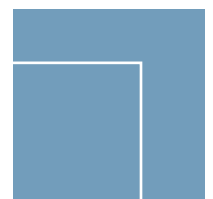
The after-school staff documented thoughtful observations pre- to post- in all three domains.

PRE- TO POST BEING

“Darren has shown tremendous growth during the course of this year. Not only has he been willing to share in small social groups but has requested to share about his experience or to show his work in Circle Time. He enjoys art projects and games of imaginative play. He loves to incorporate his stuffed animal Lucas into his games of imaginative play and to tell his classmates about Lucas' likes or dislikes. He continues to share more freely during sessions, including his prolific drawings. Darren has displayed many moments where he celebrated another participant's success. This includes complimenting others via the Zoom chat and asking participants to stop spamming the chat to give others an opportunity to chat.”

“John is well-regulated and a cheerful and active participant during sessions. He occasionally demonstrates self-reflection through the retelling of previous conflicts where he rehearses verbally what he should have done. He is very concerned with the approval of adults. For instance, during art, when given open-ended prompts, he often directly copied the teacher's example instead. He has demonstrated significant gains in confidence as he makes increasingly improvisational responses to discussion questions. John's answers don't always make sense, but they represent a shift from his previous reliance on rote repetition of points already made to genuine attempts to make new connections. This emergent skill also demonstrates his growing confidence and that he is moving away from his previous anxious approval-seeking behaviors.”

“Shawn continues to try new activities and actively participates as an observer even when he is not following along with the actions. Occasionally, he will turn his camera off or log-off completely if he is not interested in the activity. With that said, we have seen Shawn grow significantly in his capacity to handle unexpected challenges over this year. While not getting his way used to dysregulate him entirely, Shawn shows increasing flexibility and resilience.”





DOING

9 participants advanced two or more rungs

7 participants advanced one rung

7 participants remained at same rung

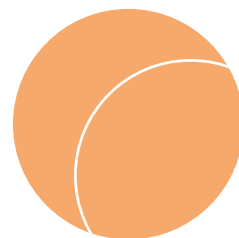
IN THEIR WORDS: Extreme Kids & Crew Staff (continued)

PRE- TO POST DOING

“Ian is very comfortable with the material and openly shares without need for support from the facilitator. He follows the structures, participates at appropriate times during the sessions, and is very honest and candid when it comes to expressing his feelings. Though he was very excited about and comfortable with Roblox, he was open to Minecraft and has enjoyed learning new things about it and sharing it with the group. On occasion, Ian openly recommended Roblox games to participants and invited them to play outside of the sessions.”

“Sam contributes often, bringing maturity and critical thinking through his additions to the group. He demonstrates flexible thinking and openness to the ideas of others, though he does still try to over-explain his position when he feels challenged in a discussion. Sam continues to enjoy imaginative play activities and takes pride in supporting his sister’s participation. He has shown willingness to participate in most activities, and enjoys sharing things he has learned or discovered. This is particularly true during Roblox group, as he often makes recommendations to other participants about new potential games they should try.”

“Janelle’s early timidity has entirely evaporated, and instead we have to ask her to give other kids a turn to answer questions. She makes many meaningful contributions. She can be rigid (often as a result of the expectations set in her school classroom) and is working on her flexible thinking. We see this frequently when she asks whether it is ok to approach a challenge in a creative or different way. Janelle is often open to the ideas of others and tries to build on their ideas and collaborate. She steps out of her comfort zone and engages in non-preferred activities.”





RELATING

10 participants advanced two or more rungs

4 participants advanced one rung

9 participants remained at same rung

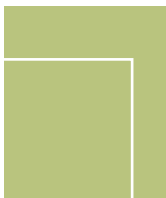
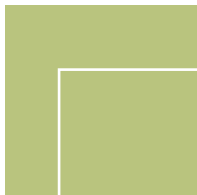
IN THEIR WORDS: Extreme Kids & Crew Staff (continued)

PRE- TO POST RELATING

“Pamela offers reflections and positive feedback to her peers and has recently cultivated a friendship with another participant, resulting in virtual playdates. Pam also connects spontaneously in the chat. She continues to enjoy joking around with the kids she knows from previous years of after-school.”

“Regina responds directly to her classmates in group conversations and shows that she is listening and connecting to what they have to say through her own responses. Recently Regina became overwhelmed and opted out of a conversation about something personally scary that her mom had asked us to bring into the class discussion. This was an emotionally fraught conversation and Regina communicated clearly that she was not ready to have it in the large group dynamic of after-school. This was an excellent example of self-advocacy for Regina.”

“Karim demonstrates a true sense of belonging to Extreme Kids and Crew. He enjoys sharing about his new puppy, Ginger, with the group, and often looks to add her into our music and daily sessions. This has provided an opportunity for Karim to interact with the other members of the community. His most significant growth is his ability to request a game of imaginative play that he led, while also allowing other students to have a say and actively participate.”



PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

Parents were surveyed about the growth they see in their children due to the EKC experience. Parents rated the frequency of observed SEL behaviors at 2.8 out of 5. These ratings align with the Extreme Kids & Crew staff observations.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU SEE EVIDENCE OF THESE CHANGES?

Parents indicating “Most” or “All of the time”:

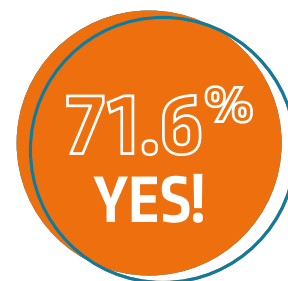
My child appears to feel a sense of belonging at EKC.



My child appears to be committed to learn and grow.



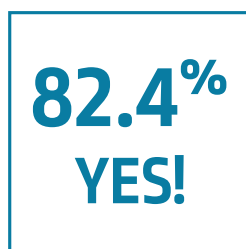
My child forms positive relationships with most adults.



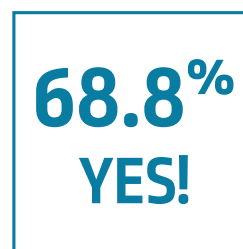
PARENTS WERE ALSO ASKED, “DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THIS STATEMENT?”

Parents responding “Agree”:

My child attended and felt valued, included, and understood by the EKC community.



My child is advocating for themselves and others more at home, in school, and in the community.



Highest-Rated Behaviors



“

He likes being part of the community. He feels he belongs to a group of amazing people who are there for each other.
- EKC Parent

IN THEIR WORDS: PARENTS

“Wonderful engaged and enthusiastic instructors trying to ensure each child felt included and valued.” – EKC Parent

“He loved it and looked forward to it weekly.” – EKC Parent

“Online allowed us to be more together and utilize our time more productively. I believe it allowed children to be their full self. The most important gain was watching how the staff at EKC were engaged and cared that their students learn, interact & participate together. Lakesha has definitely learned new skills. I'm hoping and praying that she can incorporate them as she returns to her traditional way of learning.” – EKC Parent

“Jay has formed a positive relationship with adults and peers within Extreme Kids & Crew. He enjoys seeing and talking to his friends. He enjoys showing his artwork.” – EKC Parent

“The program manager navigated everything so brilliantly that Benson stuck it out and had a nice time. It was the first block of time since school started that I've been able to leave the room when he's in class, and he has chosen to remain engaged. Hurray!” – EKC Parent

“... Thank you for another great class. Harris loves her music and theater classes and has hugely surprised me in her enthusiasm ... after the painful slog that was online learning. That is in no small part thanks to Extreme Kids, how you've designed the classes, and how attentive you are to each kid. Thank you so much!” – Email from EKC Parent

CLASSROOM TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

School classroom teachers were also surveyed about the frequency of SEL indicators observed in EKC students. Overall, teachers rated the SEL level of the student observed at 2.9 out of 5. This average was also in agreement with observations of EKC staff and parents.

Teachers seeing this “Most” or “All of the time”:

The student appears to feel a sense of belonging at EKC.



The student formed positive relationships with most of their peers.



The student appeared committed to learn and grow.



Highest-Rated Behaviors





IN THEIR WORDS: CLASSROOM TEACHERS

“Erica is a sweet and kind student. She has greatly improved in her ability to speak up for herself and ask for help when she needs it. She is an absolute pleasure to have in class. Erica is much better at advocating for herself; letting me know when she needs help with a math problem or doesn’t understand the question. She is very outgoing with answering questions, especially typing her answers in the chat.” — NYC Public School Teacher

“At the start of the school year, Chris would often call out if he needed something, like more water in his water bottle or if he needed to use the bathroom. If he didn’t understand something or needed help with an assignment, he would sit quietly and say and do nothing. Also, Chris is prone to cry when he doesn’t get his way or doesn’t understand something. This has definitely [all improved] throughout the year.” — NYC Public School Teacher

“Bruno has made much progress in his speech, language, and ability to have conversations with others. He is benefitting from SEL and is usually able to accept when he gets something wrong; he recently has been correcting himself with no problem. He still struggles with unexpected changes and transitions. He is better able to self-soothe when upset by changes. He also made progress in his ability to participate in social conversation, and ask and answer personal questions [e.g., How are you today?].” — NYC Public School Teacher