



Campfire Coaching™ is an ongoing practice-based coaching cycle that provides support and accountability and leads teachers toward continuous classroom improvement. Teachers meet with their coach and cohort on a regular basis to learn new strategies and reflect together on what's working, and what's not. Just as children learn best in trusting and caring small-group environments, so do teachers. The portion of Campfire Coaching used in this study focuses on preventing challenging behavior in young children. The program achieves this by helping to build essential pro-social skills, problem solving skills, and supporting children in navigating strong emotions. The study below shows that Campfire Coaching Tracks 1 and 2 were successful in providing teachers with the support and strategies to help children improve in the areas of initiative, self-regulation, and ability to form and maintain positive connections in the classroom.

### **An Evaluation of a Teacher-Coaching Model to Reduce Challenging Behaviors and Support Teacher Well-Being in Preschool Settings**

In the spring of 2023, FirstDay Learning participated in a research study conducted by NOVA Southeastern University in Davie, Florida. The study included 28 classrooms, 57 teaching staff and 369 children across eight centers. The centers were assigned into two conditions, an intervention group and a comparison group. The intervention group consisted of five centers (15 classrooms) and the comparison group of four centers (13 classrooms).

The intervention group received FirstDay Learning's Campfire Coaching™, a practice-based, small group coaching program focused on supporting teachers in preventing & responding to challenging behavior. The program includes methods for building pro-social skills to reduce

challenging behavior. The control group received a single 3 hour standalone training. Researchers measured the impact on children's behavior using the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA-P2).

At the beginning of the study (baseline):

- There were no significant differences between the two groups in terms of children's protective factors or behavioral challenges.
- This is shown in Table 2, where the F values for all measures are not statistically significant (no asterisks).

**Table. 2 Descriptive statistics for children's behavior ratings for the Coaching and Comparison groups at baseline (n=369)**

	Coaching group (s.d, n=242)	Comparison group (s.d, n=127)	F value for mean scores (1,368)
<b>DECA-P2</b>			
Initiative	51.02 (11.73)	49.89 (9.23)	.887
Self-regulation	50.89 (10.47)	51.44 (10.11)	.238
Attachment/relationships	50.22 (9.93)	49.95 (9.71)	.065
Total protective factors	50.99 (10.64)	50.57 (9.25)	.142

At the end of the study (post-assessment):

- Children in classrooms with coached teachers showed significantly higher levels of protective factors compared to the comparison group.
- Table 3 shows statistically significant differences (indicated by asterisks) in initiative, self-regulation, attachment/relationships, and total protective factors..

**Table. 3 Descriptive statistics for children's behavior ratings for the Coaching and Comparison groups at post (n=294)**

	Coaching group (s.d, n=148)	Comparison group (s.d, n= 146)	F value for mean scores (1,294)
<b>DECA-P2</b>			
Initiative	55.70 (11.83)	51.53(10.42)	<b>10.381***</b>
Self-regulation	54.87 (21.33)	52.44 (9.065)	<b>4.608*</b>
Attachment/relationships	55.50 (9.85)	49.87 (8.313)	<b>28.114***</b>
Total protective factors	56.06 (10.22)	51.62 (8.932)	<b>15.691***</b>

### **Definitions and Significant Summarized Results**

Protective factors refer to social and emotional strengths related to a child's resilience. Specifically, the study uses the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA-P2) to measure these protective factors, which include:

1. Initiative: This likely refers to a child's ability to begin or lead activities independently.
2. Self-regulation: This involves a child's ability to control their emotions and behaviors.

3. Attachment/relationships: This relates to a child's ability to form and maintain positive connections with others.
4. Total protective factors: This is an overall measure combining the above individual factors.

The results of this research study conducted by Nova Southeastern University in 2023 suggest that coaching had a statistically significant positive impact on children's socioemotional development in several key areas that focus on building the skills children need to regulate emotion and build protective factors that lead to the prevention of challenging behaviors.