

Effects of a Therapeutic Riding Program on At-Risk and Special Education Children. Kaiser, L., Heleski, C. R., Siegford, J., Smith, K. A. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 228 (1) 2006 Jan 1: 46-52.

Abstract: **OBJECTIVE:** To determine the effects of a therapeutic riding program on psychosocial measurements among children considered at risk for poor performance or failure in school or life and among children in special education programs. **DESIGN:** Observational study. **POPULATION:** 17 at-risk children (6 boys and 11 girls) and 14 special education children (7 boys and 7 girls). **PROCEDURE:** For the at-risk children, anger, anxiety, perceived self-competence, and physical coordination were assessed. For the special education children, anger and cheerfulness were measured, and the children's and their mothers' perceptions of the children's behavior were assessed. Measurements were made before and after an 8-session therapeutic riding program. **RESULTS:** For boys enrolled in the special education program, anger was significantly decreased after completion of the riding program. The boys' mothers also perceived significant improvements in their children's behavior after completion of the program. **CONCLUSIONS AND CLINICAL RELEVANCE:** Results suggest that an 8-session therapeutic riding program can significantly decrease anger in adolescent boys in a special education program and positively affect their mothers' perception of the boys' behavior.