

***TOOLS FOR PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS
AND REDUCING DELINQUENCY***

STEP 7.

Court-Involved Youth

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- **Dawn Project** *(a best practice)*
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Step 7. Court-Involved Youth

Introduction*

National data estimate that between 30% and 50% of youth in the corrections system have a special education disability. Estimates for court-involved youth with disabilities in some states range as high as 70%. There has long been speculation that youth with disabilities have a propensity towards criminal behavior. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) recently expressed concern over the connection between students having disabilities and their subsequent involvement with juvenile justice settings, and has issued a call for more scholarly research to be conducted in relation to this phenomenon.

Youth with disabilities are often disproportionately represented in youth detention centers across the nation. Conservative estimates of percentages of incarcerated youth with disabilities lie somewhere in the area of 33%, but this number is still 27% higher than the national average of students with disabilities in the general population and quite likely, a severe understatement of the actual number of students with disabilities who are currently in the juvenile justice system. Students with the disability classification of emotional disturbance and behavior disorder (E/BD) appear most frequently among the ranks of incarcerated youth. In some states, this number is as high as 60% of the population. Incarcerated youth with learning disabilities account for nearly 50% of the population in other states. A majority of these students come from economically depressed backgrounds, are predominantly Black, Latino, Native American and poor, and have significant behavioral and learning problems. Additionally, these students will often have histories of neglect and physical or sexual abuse. Due to the specific and individualized needs of students with disabilities in the juvenile justice system, efforts to more effectively meet their needs should be undertaken.

* A *Reference List* for each of the nine Steps, including this Step, can be found in Appendix E.

Many researchers have argued that frequent and consistent anti-social and delinquent behavior may be an indicator of an undiagnosed disabling condition. The task for juvenile courts, educators, parents, advocates, and attorneys becomes not just determining the best way to meet the needs of those students with identified disabilities, but also, how to serve the numerous other young people within the juvenile justice system with unidentified disabilities. Each of the tools presented in the following section is a method of addressing the problem of school failure and subsequent court involvement of youth with disabilities and other educational concerns.

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Step 7. Court-Involved Youth

CASASTARTsm

Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse

Striving Together to Achieve Rewarding Tomorrows¹ **(a best practice)**

BRIEF OVERVIEW

CASASTARTsm is a community-based, school-centered substance abuse and violence prevention program. Designed to keep 8-13 year-olds away from a life of crime and drugs, the program focuses on decreasing risky choice-making behavior for pre-adolescents from backgrounds that include a lack of positive social supports. The program seeks to build childhood resiliency, strengthen families, and improve school performance and attendance through coordinated efforts of schools, law enforcement, communities, social service agencies, and health agencies. This program is ideally implemented by school social workers in a public school setting.

This program is designed for children who display at least four risk factors from three broad categories:

- school risk (e.g., poor academic performance; truancy);
- family risk (e.g., extreme poverty; family violence); and
- personal risk (e.g., a serious emotional disturbance; victim of child maltreatment).

Employing a positive youth development framework, the program uses intensive case managers to provide services, directly or through referral, and also to coordinate a comprehensive menu of services. Each case manager serves 15 children and their families.

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University, www.casac.org, began the program in 1992 (then known as *Children at Risk*). The model was tested at six sites from 1992-1995. In 1996, the model was replicated in five new sites with CASA providing training, technical assistance and oversight. In 1998, it expanded to 17

¹ CASASTART was developed by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University. CASA is neither affiliated with, nor sponsored by, the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (also known as "CASA") or any of its member organizations, or any other organization with the name of "CASA."

additional sites. As of September 2006, CASA has conducted demonstration projects focused on children, families, and schools at 155 sites in 63 cities and counties in 26 states plus Washington, D.C. and a Native American tribal reservation.

*CASASTART*sm does not have a set curriculum. Each site is managed locally, and develops its own approach to designing and delivering services consistent with its needs, local culture, and setting. The core components of the program are:

- case management;
- family services;
- education services (e.g., tutoring and homework assistance);
- mentoring;
- after-school and summer activities (e.g., sports, arts programming, and life skills workshops);
- community-enhanced policy/enhanced enforcement;
- incentives (e.g., monetary and non-monetary awards); and
- juvenile justice intervention for youth involved in the court system.

Each child receives a range of wrap-around services designed to address the child's needs from a multi-systemic perspective.

IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIALS

Staffing. This program needs a part-time project manager, case managers trained or experienced in social service delivery, part-time clerical support, the cooperation of area police departments, and the active participation of designated community agencies.

Materials. The *CASASTART*sm 80-page field guide is needed. It can be purchased for \$50 on the CASA website. <http://www.casacolumbia.org/supportcasa/item.asp?cID=12&PID=125>.

Training. CASA provides training and technical assistance for new *CASASTART*sm sites. It works with new sites for a minimum of 12 days during the first year of implementation at a cost of approximately \$3,000/day.

Essential steps to creating a successful *CASASTART*sm program in a new site:

Phase I – Setting Up

- Conduct an assessment of community needs.
- Identify a lead agency in the community (a school is ideal).
- Identify community partners.
- Identify Advisory Council members.
- Set realistic goals.

Phase II – Implementation

- Develop a memorandum of understanding between community agencies.

- Engage additional partners as needed.
- Establish and honor confidentiality agreements.
- Begin service delivery.
- Begin CASASTART meetings.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

*CASASTART*sm has been recognized by various agencies.

- Recognized as a “program that works” in 2005 by the Promising Practices Network. <http://www.promisingpractices.net/program.asp?programid=107>
- Designated a “model” program in 2002 by SAMHSA <http://www.modelprograms.samhsa.gov/pdfs/FactSheets/CASA.pdf#search=%22CASASTART%22> and in May 2003 by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice.
- Designated an “exemplary” program in January 2001 by the U.S. Department of Education’s Expert Panel on Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools. <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/exemplary01/exemplary01.pdf#search=%22CASASTART%20%22Safe%20and%20Drug%20Free%20Schools%20Program%22%22>
- Designated a “promising” program in 2001 in the U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Youth Violence. <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/>
- Recognized as a “promising” violence prevention program in 2000 (updated 2006) by the Blueprints Project, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado at Boulder <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/publications/factsheets/blueprints/pdf/FS-BPP04.pdf#search=%22CASASTART%20-%20S%22>, and

AVAILABLE EVIDENCE

This program underwent an evaluation in five cities between 1992 and 1994. There was a random assignment of students to the experimental group of 338 students or a control group of 333 students. Data from a nearby neighborhood based on similar population demographics also was used as a control group.

Students who participated in the program showed increases in attachments to positive peers and adults and decreased bonds to negative peers or adults. The children also exhibited lower levels of violent offenses.

Children who have participated in this program are more likely to:

- be promoted to the next grade in school;
- have improved attachment to positive individuals and institutions; and
- have increased opportunities to achieve positive goals.

They are less likely to:

- use either ‘gateway’ (e.g., alcohol; tobacco) or strong drugs;
- be involved in drug trafficking;

- commit violent offenses, and
- be negatively influenced by peers or to associate with delinquent peers.

RESOURCES

- Contact for more information:

Lawrence F. Murray, CSW
 National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA)
 Columbia University
 633 Third Avenue, 19th Floor, New York, NY 10017
 Phone: 212-841-5200
 E-mail: lmurray@casacolumbia.org

- CASASTARTsm web page
<http://www.casacolumbia.org/absolutenm/templates/AboutCASA.aspx?articleid=203&zoneid=26>
- CASASTARTsm *Field Guide: A Proven Youth Development Model that Prevents Substance Abuse and Builds Communities*. (June 2001).
 - Free downloadable copy available online.
http://www.casacolumbia.org/absolutenm/articlefiles/203-casastart_field_guide_2003.pdf
 - Hardcopy available for \$50 from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.
<http://www.casacolumbia.org/supportcasa/item.asp?cID=12&PID=125>
- CASA Annual Reports
<http://www.casacolumbia.org/absolutenm/templates/AnnualReports.aspx?zoneid=15>
- CASA Newsletters
<http://www.casacolumbia.org/absolutenm/templates/Newsletters.aspx?zoneid=14>
- Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) website. www.casac.org

BACKGROUND READING

Websites

- Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free. <http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org>
- National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Education <http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/>
- Perspectives on Youth (POY). <http://www.perspectivesonyouth.org/> Created as a forum for those that work with youth to exchange viewpoints, research, and experiences with others that strive toward a common goal: promoting the well-being of youth.
- Safe and Drug Free Schools. <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/index.html>

Articles

- Mathias, R. (1997). *Specialized High School Prevention Programs Target At-Risk Adolescents*. NIDA Notes.
http://www.nida.nih.gov/NIDA_notes/NNVol12N3/Specialized.html

- National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse. (Sept. 2001). *Malignant Neglect: Substance Abuse and America's Schools*. New York, NY: Columbia University. http://www.casacolumbia.org/absolutenm/articlefiles/379-malignant_neglect.pdf
- Office of National Drug Control Policy. (n.d.). *Keeping Your Kids Drug-Free. A How-to Guide for Parents and Caregivers*. <http://www.theantidrug.com/pdfs/version3General.pdf>

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Step 7. Court-Involved Youth

Dawn Project (a best practice)

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The Dawn Project is an innovative interagency system of behavioral health care for children and adolescents with serious emotional or behavioral disorders and their families in Marion County, Indiana. Since 1997, it has been using flexible funding to provide a coordinated system of services that is cost-effective, family-focused, strength-driven, culturally competent, and community-based.

Dawn was created to integrate care for children involved in multiple systems and their families. Several state and county agencies finance the project, including the state mental-health agency, the state special education agency, the county child welfare agency, and the juvenile court. It is administered by Choices, Inc., a non-profit organization created to manage the program, using braided and blended funding from various state and local child-serving systems. The goal is to coordinate services, put the family at the center of decision-making, develop and strengthen natural supports, and improve outcomes for children at home, in school, and in the community. It serves about 150 children on any given day. Since its creation, it has provided services to over 800 children and their families by developing integrated care plans designed to improve each family's unique situation.

The program serves children and adolescents who are already in, or at risk of being placed in, a residential placement. Referrals are made from case managers of child service agencies. If the child meets eligibility criteria and is accepted, a service coordinator is assigned to organize and facilitate a Child and Family Team (CFT) that includes natural supports in the community. The team develops and implements an individualized service plan using a wrap-around approach focused on the needs of the child and building on the strengths of the family. At the service-delivery level, the team works across agencies to integrate school plans, court orders, probation requirements, and mental health plans into one coordinated plan that is manageable for families. Utilizing the full array of community resources, the service plan is specific to the child and is flexible, evolving with the child's progress. The Dawn Project's philosophy is that "families don't fail, plans do."

A long-term foundation for recovery is established because family and community are active participants in the child's treatment.

IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIALS

Core elements essential for *Dawn's* success include:

- interagency collaboration to provide flexible funding for care management;
- a non-profit entity to serve as the lead agency, providing service coordination and care management of children enrolled in the program;
- interagency governance of the lead entity and partnerships with families;
- a clinical practice that provides a strength based, family center, culturally competent approach to care;
- strong partnerships an extensive network of providers in the community;
- a broad array of flexible services and supports such as using case-rate financing, including: behavioral health services (e.g., individual and family therapy); psychiatric services (e.g., assessment, medication management); mentor services (educational mentors); placement services (e.g., residential treatment); respite services; supervision services; discretionary (e.g., child care, clothing, groceries); care management and service coordination; and other services;
- service coordinators employed by the lead entity who have small case loads; are able to authorize funds for agreed-upon services; and receive on-going training;
- clinical tools for outcome measurement and monitoring (e.g., the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale [CAFAS]; the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths [CANS]) and an emphasis on quality data for program management and evaluation; and
- a strong presence of information technology, including computers for all staff and software that integrates clinical care and fiscal data.

Choices has a Technical Assistance (TA) Center created to support systems-of-care development in Indiana communities. Its TA Center currently supports about 30 grant sites in the approximately 40 counties that have received funding from the Indiana Family & Social Services Administration's Division of Mental Health and Addiction to build community systems-of-care.

Staff from Choices is available to consult with communities outside of Indiana to replicate the *Dawn Project*. It has been replicated since 2002 in Cincinnati, Ohio through Hamilton Choices, a subsidiary of Choices, Inc. that was created to administer the Mosaic Project, a system-of-care in Hamilton County, Ohio. In 2005, Maryland Choices was created in Rockville (Montgomery County) for replication, and more recently Choices began replication efforts in Baltimore, Maryland.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The *Dawn Project* integrates the principles of systems-of-care and wraparound within a care management framework. It has received recognition for its positive outcomes.

- Designated a "promising" practice by the National Mental Health Association in 2004. <http://www.nmha.org/children/JJCompendiumofBestPractices.pdf>
- Recognized by the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) for the effective use of data and technology.
- Recognized as a "promising" approach to managed-care design and reform by the Health Care Reform Tracking Project (HCRTP), Research & Training Center for Children's Mental

Health, University of Southern California. (2002).

http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu/rtcpubs/hctrking/pubs/promising_approaches/toc_01.html

- Recipient of Indiana Achievement Award (IAA) in 2002 for efficiency in a large-budget operation. http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_go1582/is_200206/ai_n7059030
- In 2003, designated a “promising” approach for Behavioral Health Services to Children and Adolescents and Their Families in Managed Care Systems. http://gucchd.georgetown.edu/files/products_publications/cw3.pdf

In 1999 a grant was awarded to Marion County by the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA). It provided six years of funding to enhance the *Dawn Project* and to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the model. The grant supported the development and implementation of the Dawn Project Evaluation Study (DPES) to provide outside, independent evaluation designed in collaboration with parents and representations from child-serving agencies and academics from a wide range of disciplines. A DPES evaluation advisory board (known as the Evaluation Team, or E-Team) was established to include representation from many stakeholders including Families Reaching for Rainbows, a family advocacy and support group founded by *Dawn*.

AVAILABLE EVIDENCE

A six-year longitudinal study of *Dawn* is being conducted by Sociology Professor (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis) Eric R. Wright, PhD., and Education Professor (Indiana University School of Education at IUPIU) Jeffrey A. Anderson, Ph.D. In September 2005 the Indiana Consortium for Mental Health Services Research issued the Sixth Annual Evaluation Briefing of the *Dawn Project Evaluation Study*. Available online, http://www.choicesteam.org/content/choices/documents/RE/Complete%20Briefing%20Report_Final.pdf, it found ample evidence of the Project’s effectiveness.

- The *Dawn Project* was able to maintain the majority of its participants in community-based care settings throughout the 24-month evaluation period.
- Ratings of participants’ functional impairments improved significantly over time as rated by the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS).
- Ratings of participants’ problem behaviors improved significantly over time as rated by the Child Behavior Check List.
- Ratings of participants’ strengths increased significantly over time as rated by the Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale.
- Very few youth engaged in substance use behaviors at any point during their enrollment.
- Overall, the number of offenses committed by young people in the *Project* declined over time.
- *Project* participants were rated as showing significant improvement over time in their rates of school attendance, their level of discipline problems, and their academic performance.
- Sixty-five percent of participants leave the program by meeting the goals established by their Child and Family Team (age at enrollment, substance abuse, and impulsive behavior directed towards others predict discharge from the *Dawn Project* for reasons other than meeting Child and Family Team goals).

- Young people who are discharged from the Dawn Project after meeting their Child and Family Team goals are 78% less likely to return to a child-serving agency than are young people discharged for other reasons.

Caregiver ratings of satisfaction with services and the impact of the services were positive. Youth respondents also rated the project positively. Most youth were satisfied with the project, found it helpful, and were satisfied with the progress they made.

RESOURCES

- Contact information is available from the non-profit that administers the *Dawn Project*.

Knute Rotto, CEO
 Choices, Inc.
 4701 N. Keystone Ave., Suite 150
 Indianapolis, IN 46205
 Phone: 317-205-8202; 888-KID-WRAP (toll free)
 Email: krotto@kidwrap.org

- *Choices, Inc.* website. www.ChoicesTeam.org
- *Dawn Project* webpage.
<https://www.choicesteam.org/page/program/alias/dawn&article=311&prog=311>
- *Sixth Annual Evaluation Briefing of the Dawn Project Evaluation Study*. (2006). Indiana Consortium for Mental Health Services Research. Available online.
http://www.choicesteam.org/content/choices/documents/RE/Complete%20Briefing%20Report_Final.pdf
- *Team Learning Center*.
<https://www.choicesteam.org/content/choices/Documents/Programs/HostLearningInfo.pdf>
- *The Clinical Manager* software used by Choices.
<https://www.choicesteam.org/content/choices/documents/programs/TCMSlides.pdf>

BACKGROUND READING

Systems of Care

- Armstrong, M. I. (March 2004). *Consumer-directed health care: Challenges and opportunities for families with youth with serious emotional disturbance*. Mental National Health Information Center. SAMHSA.
<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/NMH05-0191/>
- Hornberger, S., Martin, T., & Collins, J. (2006). *Integrating Systems of Care: Improving the Quality of Care for the Most Vulnerable Children and Families*. Wash., DC: CWLA Press.
<http://www.cwla.org/programs/bhd/1integrating.pdf>
- Jefferson County [Colorado] Division of Human Services. (2004). *Systems of care literature review: Connecting communities to kids*. Colorado Institute of Public Policy.
http://www.cipp.colostate.edu/pdf/SOC_%20lit_review.pdf
- Kamradt, B. (Dec. 2002). *Funding mental health services for youth in the juvenile justice system: Challenges and opportunities*. National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice (NCMHJJ).
http://www.ncmhjj.com/pdfs/publications/Funding_Mental_Health_Services.pdf

- National Mental Health Information Center. (n.d.). *Systems of care: A promising solution for children with serious emotional disturbances and their families*. SAMHSA. <http://nmhicstore.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/Ca-0030/default.asp>
- O'Day, J. (2004). *Systems of care goes to school*. NASP Health Care Initiative http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/SPAN/span_sep04_systems.html

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Step 7. Court-Involved Youth

Educational Advocacy Program (a best practice)

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The ***Educational Advocacy Initiative (EA)*** is an interagency collaboration based out of the Fulton County [Georgia] Juvenile Court since 2002. It is designed to address the educational needs of court-involved youth who have disabilities and other educational concerns, and to keep them from entering the juvenile justice system or from recidivating.

This program has three primary components.

1. Juvenile court advocacy. An educational advocate provides the court with relevant information regarding a youth's educational status and needs.
2. Family, school, and community. The educational advocate provides technical assistance to schools and support to families by attending student support team (SST) and individualized education program (IEP) team meetings.
3. Education Advocacy Coordinating Committee. This is a multi-disciplinary group that meets monthly and serves in an advisory capacity to the educational advocate. It works on issues related to systems and policy change at the local, state, and national level.

Additional information about this program is contained in an electronic presentation prepared by Kimberly R. Mills, M.Ed., *Courts, Educators, and Attorneys Working Together to Support Students With Disabilities: A Look at The Educational Advocacy Initiative of the Fulton County Juvenile Court*. (July 2006). It is available online at http://ww2.co.fulton.ga.us/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=414&Itemid=140.

IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIALS

The *EA Initiative* provides advocacy to children and youth, and their families, who have been suspended or expelled from school and youth with juvenile justice involvement.

Resources need for this program include:

- a full time educational advocate with knowledge of court special education law, best educational practices and issues related to the court involvement of youth with disabilities;

- multidisciplinary team that includes school special-education personnel, attorneys, parents, researchers, and social service providers;
- support staff to facilitate the procurement of records and the scheduling of meetings;
- juvenile court support to address the educational needs and rights of youth with disabilities, both diagnosed and undiagnosed; and
- local school district (LEA) support of efforts to advocate on the youth's behalf.

An export manual will become available in January 2007, providing step by step instructions for jurisdictions and localities who wish to replicate this initiative. Technical assistance also is available.

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND AVAILABLE EVIDENCE

The *EA Initiative* has a comprehensive evaluation component. An evaluation tool is used that measures performance against predetermined outcomes and objectives (a logic model) to evaluate performance outcomes including: school success of students with disabilities; levels of parent involvement; quality and frequency of communication between families and the school system, and families and the juvenile court system; the number of assessments conducted; and the number of volunteer advocates enlisted. In addition, families are asked to complete a parent/guardian satisfaction survey. Survey data indicate that parents and primary caregivers feel extremely satisfied with the advocacy program and feel increased confidence in their abilities to advocate for their children's educational needs.

The *EA Initiative* was successful in meeting 25 of 26 program outcomes as defined by a logic model that measures performance against predetermined outcomes in relation to children, families, and system outcomes.

A quasi-experimental research study in 2006 analyzed the effects of the *EA Initiative* on recidivism and the IDEA Child Find obligation of states (i.e., the earliest possible identification of children who might benefit from early intervention or education services). The experimental group was comprised of 363 students who had received advocacy services. The control group for the Child Find variable was taken from archival school system data related to rates of special identification for 2003, the year prior to the innovation of the EA program. The control group for the recidivism outcome came from the Georgia State Department of Juvenile Justice database for the four years prior to the *EA Initiative*. This study found the program to have a statistically significant impact on rates of Child Find, the identification of students with previously undiagnosed disabilities. Rates of recidivism for students in the experimental group were nearly 5% lower compared with youth in the recidivism control group.

RESOURCES

- Contact for further information about the *Education Advocacy Initiative*.

Kimberly R. Mills, Educational Advocate
 Phone: 404-224-4431
 E-mail: kimberly.mills@fultoncountyGA.gov

- Educational Advocate Initiative.
http://www.myfultoncountyga.us/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=414&Itemid=126
- Educational Advocacy Program, National Center for School Engagement (NCSE).
<http://www.schoolengagement.org/truancyregistry/index.cfm?fuseaction=programinfo&displayprogramid=181>
- Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) 15-11-149. http://www.legis.state.ga.us/cgi-bin/gl_codes_detail.pl?code=15-11-149

BACKGROUND READING

- Christle, C.A., Jolivette, K. & Nelson, M.C. (2005). *Breaking the school to prison pipeline identifying risk and protective factors for youth delinquency*. *Exceptionality*, 13(2) 69-88.
http://www.leaonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/s15327035ex1302_2;jsessionid=nlfj6L4nq-rdF71wKX?journalCode=ex
- National Council on Disabilities. (2003). *Addressing the Needs of Youth with Disabilities in the Juvenile Justice System: The Current Status of Evidence Based Research*.
<http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2003/juvenile.htm>
- Quinn, M.M., Rutherford, R.B., Leone, P.E., & Poirier, J.M. (2004). *Youth with disabilities in juvenile corrections: A national survey*. *Students in Juvenile Corrections*, 1-17
<http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/nd/docs/mquinn0305.pdf>

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Step 7. Court-Involved Youth

LifeSkills™ Training (LST) (a best practice)

Teaching general personal and social skills in combination with skills to resist social pressures is a proven approach to preventing alcohol, tobacco and drug use by students who have not yet initiated substance use. Because these are considered the “gateway” drugs to other substance use, they are the target of prevention programs seeking to reduce risk and increase protective factors in students.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

LifeSkills Training (LST) is a universal, classroom-based tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse prevention program proven to reduce the risk of substance use. ***LST*** targets the major social and psychological factors associated with the initiation of substance use and other risky behaviors. It is designed to prevent the early-stages of substance use, based on an understanding of its causes, by influencing risk factors associated with occasional or experimental use.

LST has individual curricula for elementary school (grades 3-6), middle school (grades 6-9) and high school (9 or 10) students. Each curriculum is delivered as a series of 45-minute classroom sessions over three years. The first year for middle school is more intensive with 15 class meetings, followed by 10 refresher and review sessions during the second year, and five evaluation sessions in the third year. The elementary school program offers 24 classes that are taught during either third, fourth, fifth or sixth grade. The high school version consists of 10 sessions. Sessions can be delivered once a week or as an intensive mini-course. A program for parents of children ages 11-14 also is available.

Program activities are based on cognitive-behavioral principles, including role playing, modeling, immediate feedback, and positive reinforcement. In addition, students are encouraged to practice the lessons of the day through homework assignments.

The program consists of three major content areas.

- **Drug resistance skills.** Provides information dealing directly with social factors that promote drug use. This content area increases the awareness of social influences toward drug use, corrects common misperceptions about drug use, and provides prevention information and drug resistance skills.

- **Self-management skills.** Teaches skills for increasing self-control and self-esteem; general problem-solving and decision-making ability; critical thinking skills to resist peer and media pressures; and coping strategies for relieving stress and anxiety.
- **General Social Skills.** Enhances a students' social competence through a variety of general skills including learning communication skills, overcoming shyness, learning to meeting new people, and developing healthy friendships.

The program uses developmentally-appropriate and collaborative learning strategies to enhance a student's self-esteem, self-confidence, ability to make decisions, and ability to resist peer and media pressure. It is taught through lecture, discussion, tutorial, and practice.

IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIALS

LST is taught by teachers specially trained to deliver the program. One- or two-day training workshops for teachers are available from the National Health Promotion Associates (NHPA). Training costs per person for the two-day version is \$200 plus the cost of materials.

Curriculum materials consist of a Teacher's Manual and Student's Guide for each year of the program. Audiocassette tapes with relaxation exercises, a *Smoking & Biofeedback* video, and a CD-ROM also are available through NHPA to supplement the curriculum.

For optimal program implementation, **LST** should be delivered in a classroom setting conducive to learning. The setting can be part of a summer school or after-school program or in a community or faith-based location. In schools, it can be implemented in any subject area or taught across multiple subjects. The curriculum can be delivered by teachers, peer leaders, or health professionals.

There is an evaluation tool that can be used when implementing this program. **LST** provides a free evaluation service for those using the **LST** Questionnaire to evaluate the middle-school program.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

LifeSkills Training has been designated:

- a "Level 1" program (scientifically based using a high quality research design) by Helping America's Youth (HAY). <http://guide.helpingamericasyouth.gov/programdetail.cfm?id=353>
- a "model" program by SAMHSA. http://www.modelprograms.samhsa.gov/textonly_cf.cfm?page=model&pkProgramID=9
- an "exemplary" program by the U.S. Department of Education's Expert Panel on Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools. <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/exemplary01/exemplary01.pdf>
- a "promising" program by the Blueprints Project, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado at Boulder. <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/model/programs/LST.html>

- a “model” program by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). U.S. Department of Justice.
http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/TitleV_MPG_Table_Ind_Rec.asp?ID=353
- a “model” program in the U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Youth Violence.
<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/chapter5/appendix5b.html#LST> and
http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/youthviolence/surgeongeneral/SG_Site/chapter5/appendix5b.asp
- a “program that works” by the Promising Practices Network.
<http://www.promisingpractices.net/program.asp?programid=48>
- a “model” program by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.
- a “model” program by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.
<http://casat.unr.edu/bestpractices/view.php?program=55>

AVAILABLE EVIDENCE

The **LST** program has been extensively evaluated since 1980. Information about evaluation studies is available on the LifeSkills website: <http://www.lifeskillstraining.com/evaluation.php> It has been tested in urban and suburban schools with African-American, Asian-American, Caucasian and Hispanic and students in grades 7-12 (ages 11 to 18).

LifeSkills Training has been associated with a number of positive outcomes. Research has shown that this approach has resulted in a reduction in:

- tobacco use by up to 87%;
- alcohol use by up to 60%;
- marijuana use by up to 75%;
- polydrug use by up to 66%.
- pack-a-day smoking by 25%;
- use of inhalants, narcotics and hallucinogens;
- risky driving behavior; and
- HIV risk behavior.

In a study to determine the long-term effectiveness of LST for junior high school students, follow-up data from a randomized field trial involving nearly 6,000 students from 56 schools found significantly lower smoking, alcohol, and marijuana use six years after the initial baseline assessment. The program has been found to be effective with various scheduling formats; different levels of project-staff involvement; and different agents of delivery (by adults or peer leaders). Significant prophylactic effects have been found when the program has been delivered with a sustained commitment (i.e., 60 percent or more of the 30 lessons over a three-year period).

RESOURCES

- Contact for more information:

National Health Promotion Associates, Inc.
711 Westchester Avenue
White Plains, NY 10604

Phone: 800-293-4969
E-mail: lstinfo@nhpanet.com
Internet: www.lifeskillstraining.com

- LifeSkills website. www.lifeskillstraining.com
- LifeSkills Fidelity Checklist. http://www.lifeskillstraining.com/lst_process_tools.php
- LifeSkills Training Overview http://www.lifeskillstraining.com/training_overview.php
- Answers to many common questions about *Lifeskills Training* are found on the FAQ page of its website. <http://www.lifeskillstraining.com/faq.php>

BACKGROUND READING

Websites

- American Council for Drug Education (ACDE). www.acde.org
- Blueprints for Violence Prevention. <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/index.html>
- Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado at Boulder. www.colorado.edu/cspv/
- Free To Grow (FTG). www.freetogrow.org
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). www.madd.org
- Prevention Online (PrevLine). www.ncadi.samhsa.gov
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). www.samhsa.org
- Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator, SAMHSA. www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

Articles and reports

- Top 50 publications available for reading and downloading online. <http://ncadistore.samhsa.gov/catalog/top.aspx>

Videos

- Videos you can watch online. <https://ncadistore.samhsa.gov/catalog/results.aspx?h=publications&topic=128>

TOOLS FOR PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS AND REDUCING DELINQUENCY

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Step 7. Court-Involved Youth

PEN OR PENCIL (an emerging practice)

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The ***PEN OR PENCIL*** initiative of the National Alliance of Faith and Justice (NAFJ)² is designed to influence the lives of youth at greatest risk of academic failure and potential incarceration. "Pen" stands for penitentiary and "Pencil" refers to education. This initiative is geared to helping young people make the choice for education over a life of crime by cultivating resilience through a variety of exercises and approaches.

The ***PEN AND PENCIL*** curriculum series targets youth in grades five and higher using eight of 10 thematic strands of the National Standards for the Social Studies. It uses history as a template to promote responsibility for changing behavior, improve decision-making, and as applicable, reduce disproportionate minority contact. Program lessons are derived from the life experiences and examples set by families and community leaders during both the Underground Railroad and civil rights movements in the United States. The creative integration of media vignettes and other technology tools help participants to envision their own lives against a backdrop of history to understand how what happened long ago has relevance to the present. The lessons help participants to more clearly analyze the components of "choice," the responsibilities and entitlements of rights, and to hold themselves accountable for their outcomes. Youth who apply the lessons learned can increase their chances in life and reject unnecessary risks to themselves, their family, and the public safety of their communities.

The series includes a service-learning component to apply principles learned through the program, make more responsible choices and display more responsible behavior, promote the value of education, and understand and apply citizenship. Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

² NAFJ promotes the inclusion of faith in addressing consequences and resolutions of crime, with an emphasis on its impact on African Americans and other people of color. NAFJ's parent body is the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice (NABCJ), www.nabcj.org, a multiethnic, nonpartisan, nonprofit association of criminal justice professionals and community leaders dedicated to improving the administration of justice. NABCJ was founded as a vehicle for criminal justice practitioners to initiate positive change. Membership and participation in its activities are open to all, irrespective of race, creed, or country of national origin.

The *PEN OR PENCIL* curriculum helps shape complex cognitive skills, knowledge acquisition, intrapersonal development, civic responsibility, media literacy, and academic achievement. The philosophy behind *PEN OR PENCIL* involves several key points: life and any journey involves choices and multiple routes; freedom costs; education empowers; crime doesn't pay; while a school bus, a prison bus, and a transit bus each furnish transportation, only two out of these ultimately travel the road to independence.

IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIALS

NAFJ is the sole-source provider of the six-hour training course required for *PEN OR PENCIL* facilitators. Specific educational credentials, masters level or above, in social work, education, or divinity is preferred, or comparable levels of related experience.

PEN OR PENCIL can be implemented in a classroom environment, as part of a community or faith-based program, as an extended learning alternative to suspension, alternative to detention for court-referred youth, or as an institutional program for incarcerated youth or adults. Host locations should meet one or more of the following criteria:

- serving a high crime city or community (e.g., where high numbers of juvenile homicide and drug infestation occurs);
- a high percentage of the student population is eligible for free or reduced lunch;
- the targeted school(s) serves communities/children subjected to disproportionate minority contact (DMC) with the criminal justice system;³
- youth targeted are already in the juvenile justice system; and
- students served are enrolled in alternative education or alternative-to-suspension programs.

The *PEN OR PENCIL Series* uses two themes: *PEN OR PENCIL: Freedom of Choice*, adapted from civil rights history, and *PEN OR PENCIL: The Road That Led to Somewhere*, adapted from Underground Railroad history. The curriculum consists of four components that can be used separately or combined.

- **Two-hour classroom or special event presentation**

To increase media literacy, students view segments from the film, *PEN OR PENCIL: Let Me Read You Your Rights*, an adaptation of "The Intolerable Burden." Used to introduce both *Freedom of Choice* and *The Road That Led to Somewhere*, the film brings to life the personal accounts and images of history's risks, challenges, and personal victories with images and film clips which convey the visual realities of youth and their families in today's society. Students gain a new appreciation for history and a more healthy perspective for their own lives through a variety of interactive exercises by trained adults and peers.

³ Information about DMC is available on the Disproportionate Minority Contact website, <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/dmc/>.

- **An extended 10-week course series**

Used as an alternative to detention or suspension from school or as part of a court-ordered placement, *Freedom of Choice* and *The Road That Led to Somewhere* can be offered as a 10-week character education and life skills building program. It can also be adopted as an after-school, summer school, or community-based program. It consists of 10 two-hour lessons and exercises conducted by trained facilitators.

Each explores differing aspects of how TRAGEDY can impact youth today: **T**ruancy; **R**ace and retaliation; **A**ttitudes; **G**uns; **E**xpectations; **D**MC; **Y**esterday. Students learn that making choices involves more than options. Applying what they learn, participants are able to establish a sense of competence by doing something well, gain a sense of usefulness by having something to contribute, establish a relationship with caring adults, and gain a sense of power in learning how to control their own destiny.

The program includes interactive workshops, media presentations, and is supplemented with an Activity Book, also used for other components, which offer exercises to enhance the learning experience. The *PEN OR PENCIL Activity Booklet* includes: service-learning exercises; group or individual exercises to connect challenges of their lives with historic parallels; exercises aligned with the National Social Studies Standards; information to help youth understand DMC.; character education; leadership and life skills exercises; and team building, reading, and retention exercises. Recommended with the series is an array of sanctions that respond to non-compliance as well as incentives or rewards for successful participation.

- **One-to-Another Academic Mentoring (52-Weeks)**

The consequences of low achievement in reading can be a contributing factor to incarceration. The *PEN OR PENCIL* mentoring component uses carefully screened and caring adults who commit a minimum of one hour a week for one year or more to work with middle and high school youth who are most at risk of entering or who have entered the juvenile justice system.

Mentors must be at least 18 years of age, possess a valid driver's license and auto insurance, complete an application and agree to undergo background screening, and be willing to commit to one year of service as a mentor of a youth aged 5-17. They also must participate in a one-day (eight hours) NAFJ training program for mentors.

While the mentor and mentee may choose to supplement the structured curriculum with recreational or enrichment activities, they must commit to reading assignments each week from one of two *PEN OR PENCIL* source publications: *Silver Rights* by Constance Curry, or *The Road That Led To Somewhere* by Dr. Bryan Walls. Carefully designed lessons help the mentoring team to dissect and comprehend the messages conveyed in each chronological assignment. This purpose-driven mentoring builds reading comprehension and life skills, forms a basis for dialogue and to increase communication flow and sharing, and forges a bond between the mentor and mentee. Youth who might struggle to read in a classroom setting can benefit from this private and nurturing approach.

- **The B.U.S. Boycott**

Entering the criminal justice system often begins an endless journey to self-destruction. With this in mind, *PEN OR PENCIL* offers a service-learning activity to stimulate civic responsibility. Students use the history of the Montgomery Bus Boycott as a template for educational growth and civic participation to implement strategies to reduce contact with law enforcement and the threat of suspension from school. Stated in context with variables faced by today's youth, the Montgomery Bus Boycott proved that strong leadership, selfless service, individual and collective commitment, and hard work and determination can make an immeasurable difference.

Students build self-discipline and teamwork skills by replicating the principles of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. They gain a clearer understanding of human and civil rights to stage a campaign to refrain from (boycott) adverse behavior that might lead to the B.U.S.: **B**uilding of **U**nbalanced **S**ystems of jails and prisons. By organizing a B.U.S. boycott, students agree to choose the **PENCIL** rather than the **PEN [itentiary]** by refusing to give up their seat in the classroom (their education). Students participating in the campaign work together to identify the length of their "boycott," select leadership from among peers who most closely exemplify the historic figures associated with the original movement, and elicit support from community partners. They not only learn about democracy, citizenship, and public policy, they participate in exercises which allow them to become contributing citizens and community members committed to reduce disproportionate minority contact with law enforcement and increase public safety.⁴

PROGRAM EVALUATION

PEN OR PENCIL: Freedom of Choice has received recognition from various organizations.

- Endorsed by the American Friends Service Committee, March 17, 2006 via electronic memorandum issued by Joyce D. Miller, Assistant General Secretary for Justice and Human Rights.
- Endorsed by the National Council for the Social Studies. July 7, 2006. Susan Griffin, Executive Director.
- Designated a national service learning model in connection with the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Day of Service by the Corporation for National and Community Service (2006). http://www.nationalservice.org/about/newsroom/releases_detail.asp?tbl_pr_id=240
- Resolved in mayoral proclamations to be a quality and needful program for local implementation in 41 major metropolitan and other cities including Chicago, Milwaukee, Memphis, and Denver (see NAFJ website, www.nafj.org).

AVAILABLE EVIDENCE

⁴ In connection with Martin Luther King National Day of Service, resources are available through sub-grants of \$1,500 to activate this service-learning program in conjunction with any of the other *PEN OR PENCIL* components described above. Applications are available in early fall. More details are available under "Programs" on the NAFJ website, <http://www.nafj.org/programs.php>.

Research has shown that prevention/intervention programs are the most effective methods of addressing youth violence and creating a productive work environment. Youth diversion programs such as *PEN OR PENCIL* provide an alternative to suspension or channeling youth into the juvenile justice system.

The developers of *PEN OR PENCIL* conducted qualitative data analysis on the nearly 50 youth who participated in the intervention. The subjects had school-related offenses such as weapons offenses and/or incidences of violence and assault. The developers obtained outcome data by conducting exit interviews with youth participants and their parents. Ten youth who were previously gang affiliated had ceased gang involvement and enrolled in college programs. Parents reported decreases in youth recidivism and increases in cultural awareness and increased positive statements regarding to choice making and goal setting.

PEN OR PENCIL has been highly recommended by public school educators and principals whose students have participated in one or more of the program series. *PEN OR PENCIL* data collection in the next phase will include an empirical program evaluation. The *PEN OR PENCIL Series* evaluation will involve a quasi-experimental group research design with a pretest-posttest analysis. A private educational consultant will conduct a program evaluation beginning in January 2007. Outcomes associated with the research study will be available for dissemination in the fall of 2007.

The consultant uses the following instruments in the second phase of data collection:

1. Exploitive Manipulative Amoral Dishonesty Scale (EMAD);
2. Rody Reading Attitude Assessment;
3. attitudes toward gangs;
4. attitude toward interpersonal violence;
5. Birmingham Institute of Civil Rights Content Knowledge Assessment;
6. The Delinquency and Delinquent Behavior- SAGE Baseline Survey;
7. Youth Mentoring Survey;
8. Brigance Diagnostic Assessments related to reading;
9. qualitative commentary and feedback from mentors and mentees; and
10. longitudinal data collected at six months and 12 months in relation to recidivism at the conclusion of the intervention.

RESOURCES

- Contact information for training and technical assistance to implement the *PEN OR PENCIL* program, and to receive continuing updates and program enhancements:

National Alliance of Faith and Justice (NAFJ)
P.O. Box 77075
Washington, DC 20013
Phone: 703-765-4459
E-mail: office@nafj.org
Website: www.nafj.org

PEN OR PENCIL Series materials

- PEN OR PENCIL Curriculum Guide (2007 edition available in January)
<http://al.odu.edu/al/pdfs/intolerable.pdf>
- PEN OR PENCIL: Let Me Read You Your Rights DVD. Joyas Media (available January 2007)
- PEN OR PENCIL: Student Activities Booklet
- PEN OR PENCIL: One-to-Another Academic Mentoring Policies and Guide
- PEN OR PENCIL: B.U.S. Boycotts, power point presentation
<http://www.nafj.org/programs/Bus%20Boycott.ppt>
- *PEN OR PENCIL: Freedom of Choice*, power point presentation
<http://www.nafj.org/programs/Pen%20or%20Pencil%20Slides.ppt>

Related materials

- *CHOICES*; 22- minute video produced by the Indiana Department of Education in partnership with Indiana Project Safe Neighborhoods and the Office of the U.S. Attorney for Southern District of Indiana. <http://www.doe.state.in.us/media/video/choices.html>
- *Silver Rights*, written by Constance Curry (1995). Algonquin Books.
<http://www.shs.starkville.k12.ms.us/mswm/MSWritersAndMusicians/writers/Curry.html>
- *The Intolerable Burden*, film directed by Chea Prince, produced by Constance Curry, and sold by First Run Icarus Films. <http://www.frif.com/new2003/into.html>
- *The Road That Led To Somewhere: A Documentary Novel about the Underground Railroad*, written by Dr. Bryan E. Walls (1980). Olive Pub Co Ltd.
<http://www.undergroundrailroadmuseum.com/genealogy.html>
- *To Serve This Present Age: Reentering Through Faith Segments* (2005). Videos for clergy and lay people about re-entry from prison issues.
http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/mediagallery_toserve.htm
- Youth for Human Rights Campaign PSAs (1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 20, 21, 25, 28).
www.youthforhumanrights.org
- UNITED. A human rights music video. www.unitedmusicvideo.org

BACKGROUND READING

Service learning

- Giving Back: Introducing Community Service Learning. Constitutional Rights Foundation. (2006). An Action Guide for Youth Court Programs and the Juvenile-Justice System.
http://www.crf-usa.org/YouthCourt/Giving_Back_2006.pdf
- The National Service Learning Partnership. <http://www.service-learningpartnership.org/site/PageServer>

Mentoring

- OJJDP Model Services Guide. http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/mentoring_prevention.htm

School to Prison Pipeline

- Advancement Project. (March 2005). *Education on Lockdown: The Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track*. <http://www.advancementproject.org/reports/FINALEOLrep.pdf>
- *Dismantling the School to Prison Pipeline*. (2006). NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund.

http://www.naacpldf.org/content/pdf/pipeline/Dismantling_the_School_to_Prison_Pipeline.pdf

- *School to Prison Pipeline*. NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund.
<http://www.naacpldf.org/landing.aspx?sub=56>

TOOLS FOR PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS AND REDUCING DELINQUENCY

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Step 7. Court-Involved Youth

Strengthening Families Program (SFP) (a best practice)

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) is a nationally and internationally accepted parenting and family-strengthening program for high-risk families. It is an evidence-based and family skills training program found to reduce significantly problem behaviors, delinquency, and abuse of alcohol and drugs by children. The program also improves a child's social competencies and overall school performance. In addition to a curriculum for high-risk children (ages 6 - 12), there is a Youth (ages 10 - 14) version, and an early adolescent version (ages 12 - 14). It also has curricula specific to the needs of African-American, Asian, Hawaiian, Hispanic, Native American and Pacific Islander families. This program can be successfully implemented by school teachers within a classroom setting.

IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIALS

SFP is a behavioral and cognitive skills training program designed to increase resilience and decrease risk factors for aggression, depression, delinquency, substance abuse, school failure, and violence in high-risk children. It is taught in 14, two-hour periods. During the first hour, parents and children participate in separate classes, each led by two co-leaders. Parents learn to increase desired behaviors in children by using consistent attentiveness, clear communication, effective discipline, problem solving, and limit-setting. Children learn effective communication skills, empathy, anger management, accepting criticism, stress management, social skills, problem-solving, resisting peer pressure, and compliance with parental rules. In the second hour, families practice the following structured activities: therapeutic child play; family meetings; communication skills; effective discipline; modeling positive behaviors; and planning family activities.

The *SFP* curriculum includes Parent Skills Training, Children's Skills Training, and Family Life Skills Training. Courses are taught using a set of six *SFP* manuals (English and Spanish versions): Family Skills Training, Children's Skills Training, Parent Skills Training, Children's Handbook, Parents' Handbook, and Implementation Manual. Information on trainer costs is available on the *SFP* website, www.strengtheningfamilies.org.

SFP requires a part-time site coordinator and family recruiter and four trainers (two trainers for parents and two for youth) to deliver the program. Typically, 14 families take the course

together as a group. The program costs vary depending on whether existing staff is used as part of their regular job. If not, trainers can be hired hourly to run the groups one evening a week. Program costs include \$300 to purchase a set of six newly revised SFP manuals including a Spanish version. After purchasing a single set, the site can copy the manuals for trainers and the handbooks for families. It is recommended that funds be budgeted for child care, family meals, transportation, and incentives for homework completion and graduation. General supplies that are needed include toys and minimal paper supplies.

Complete master sets on CD of *SFP* course books for SFP3-5, SFP6-11, and SFP13-17 can be ordered from the Strengthening Families Program Office at the University of Utah (801-581-8498). The complete curriculum costs \$350.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Developed in 1982 with National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) research funds, *SFP* is recognized by many federal agencies as an exemplary, research-based family model. Positive results from over 15 independent research replications demonstrate that *SFP* is effective in increasing assets and protective factors by improving family relationships, parenting skills, and children's social and life skills.

SFP has been designated:

- a "model" program by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
http://www.modelprograms.samhsa.gov/template_cf.cfm?page=model&pkProgramID=179
- an "exemplary" program by the Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools Expert Panel, U.S. Department of Education.
<http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/exemplary01/exemplary01.pdf>; also available at http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/exemplary01/report_pg3.html
- an "exemplary" program by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice.
http://www.dsqonline.com/mpq2.5//TitleV_MPG_Table_Ind_Rec.asp?id=696
- an "effective" program by the NIDA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (*see* <http://www.drugabuse.gov/prevention/examples.html>).
- an "exemplary" program in *Effective Family Programs for Prevention of Delinquency* Strengthening America's Families, funded by OJJDP.
http://www.strengtheningfamilies.org/html/programs_1999/06_SFP.html .
- a "model" program by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.
<http://casat.unr.edu/bestpractices/view.php?program=117>

A multi-method and multi-informant assessment strategy is used for the process and outcome evaluation. To improve outcome validity, this strategy includes three primary interview instrument batteries measuring the reports of the parent, the child, and the therapist/trainer. The process evaluation includes at least two forms. The *Family Attendance Form* documents attendance, participation, and homework completion for each session by participant. The *Group Leader Session Rating Form*, filled out for each session by the trainer or therapist, documents changes the leader made in the session, family satisfaction with the session, how well families understood the material, and suggestions for programmatic improvement.

Specific instruments include:

1. the standardized SFP Parent Interview Questionnaire (195 items) with client satisfaction and recommendations for SFP improvements added for the Follow-up Parent Interviews.
2. the SFP Children's Interview Questionnaire (150 items); and
3. the SFP Teacher/Trainer Interview Questionnaire (about 160 items) used in prior SFP studies modified by the local site evaluator with recommendations and a pilot validation of the instruments.

Cost benefits

An analysis by researchers from the Partnerships in Prevention Science Institute found a return of \$9.60 for every dollar spent implementing SFP 10-14. <http://www.ppsi.iastate.edu/>

An analysis by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy found in two benefits: A return of \$7.82 for every dollar spent and a cost benefit of \$5,805 for each participating youth in SFP ages 10-14. <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/intro.asp>

AVAILABLE EVIDENCE

African American curriculum

Program outcomes have been most successful for African-Americans compared with curricula for other ethnic groups. Of the families participating, 82% completed at least 12 of the 14 sessions. The program was effective in minimizing family conflict and maximizing family organization in participating families. One unexpected benefit of the family program was that even without being in substance abuse treatment, the alcohol and drug abusing mothers significantly reduced their substance use.

By the end of the program, the mothers reported their children had significantly reduced their depression, conduct disorders, delinquency, aggression, psycho-somatic complaints, and obsessive-compulsive behavior. SFP was equally effective in improving the parenting style and behaviors of the mothers. These results were consistent with a pattern of positive findings from the original NIDA study suggesting that the Strengthening Families Program is robust and can be disseminated and replicated with fidelity without the program developer's direct supervision.

As a result of a SFP program in Alabama, though recruitment rates were high, only about 45% completed 10 of the 12 SFP sessions and graduated in the first year. However, the average completion was 82-86% after three cohorts finished the program. The positive results were the same as the prior Alabama program including significant improvements in family relations, children's behaviors, and parental stress and depression.

RESOURCES

- Contact for more information about *SFP*:

Karol L. Kumpfer, PhD

University of Utah
Salt Lake City, UT
Phone: 801-581-8498
E-mail: karol.kumpfer@health.utah.edu.

- Strengthening Families Program website. www.strengtheningfamilies.org
- OJJDP Fact Sheet (2002). http://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/2000_8_1/contents.html

Publications about SFP

- Kumpfer, K.L. (n.d.). *Effectiveness of a Culturally Tailored, Family-Focused Substance Abuse Program: The Strengthening Families Program*. Health Education Department. University of Utah. <http://www.nida.nih.gov/MeetSum/CODA/Effectiveness.html>
- Kumpfer, K.L. (April 1999). *Strengthening America's Families: Exemplary Parenting and Family Strategies For Delinquency Prevention*. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Juvenile Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. http://www.strengtheningfamilies.org/html/literature_review_1999.pdf
- SFP Publications list. http://www.strengtheningfamiliesprogram.org/pub_type.html
- The African-American Strengthening Families Program. <http://www.strengtheningfamiliesprogram.org/results.html>

BACKGROUND READING

Involving Families of Youth in Contact with the Juvenile Justice System

- Brock, L., Burrell, J., & Tulipano, T. (Aug. 2006). *Family Involvement*. NDTAC Issue Brief. <http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/nd/resources/spotlight/spotlight200608b.asp>
- Epstein, J.L., & Salinas, K.C. (May 2004). *Partnering with families and communities*. In *Educational Leadership*. vol. 61, #8 (p. 12-18). http://pdonline.ascd.org/pd_online/success_di/el200405_epstein.html
- Garfinkel, L.F., et al. (1999). *Promoting Family Involvement*. In *Unique Challenges, Hopeful Response: A Handbook for Professionals Working with Youth with Disabilities in the Juvenile Justice System* PACER Center (2nd ed.). www.edjj.org/publications/list/pacer-1997.pdf [Note: Includes "Things Professionals can do to Involve Families," and "Ways to reach under-involved families."]
- Osher, T., & Huff, B. (Aug. 2006). *Spotlight: Strategies to engage families*. NDTAC. <http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/nd/resources/spotlight/spotlight200608a.asp>
- Osher, T., & Hunt, P. (Dec. 2002). *Involving families of youth who are in contact with the juvenile justice system*. NCMHJJ Research and Program Brief. <http://www.ncmhjj.com/pdfs/publications/Family.pdf>
- Osher, T., & Huff, B. (July 2006). Webinar: Supporting Family Involvement of Students in the Juvenile Justice and Corrections System. NDTAC. Available at: http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/nd/events/webinars.asp#family_involvement
- Walker, J., & Friedman, K. (2001). *Listening and learning from families in juvenile justice*. Columbia, MD: Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health. Retrieved August 11, 2006, from <http://www.mdcoalition.org/jjustice.pdf>

TOOLS FOR PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS AND REDUCING DELINQUENCY

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Step 7. Court-Involved Youth

Truancy Intervention Project Georgia (TIP Georgia) (a promising practice)

Truancy is one of the first and best predictors of future delinquent behavior and is considered a gateway to a life of criminal activity. Truancy intervention programs provide resources to children, and their families, to reconnect them to and them succeed in school.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The ***Truancy Intervention Project Georgia ("TIP")*** is a program serving children ages 5-15 declared truant in the Atlanta City and Fulton County public school systems. Founded in 1991, *TIP* provides positive intervention services to children reported as truant. It offers at-risk children a second chance at success by pairing them with trained volunteers from the community. A strength of this program is the degree to which the volunteer works with the child and family at the school level.

Because truancy usually is a symptomatic behavior of other issues, *TIP* volunteers determine the root causes of a client's truancy, and then work to resolve those problems and meet client needs so the client can return to school and be successful. The program can assist with meeting daily necessities (e.g., clothing, water, heat, transportation) as well as long-term needs (e.g. drug and psychiatric treatment, tutoring, childcare) of *TIP* project participants.

Since January 1992, over 3,100 children have been placed in the program. This includes children who have been chronically absent from school and charged with truancy or, due to their age (11 or younger), their parents have been held responsible for the child's absenteeism and are charged with educational neglect.

Initially, participants in *TIP* were first-time truants referred to the program as a result of a referral from the Fulton County Juvenile Court but now, every child who is referred to the court for truancy is paired with a *TIP* volunteer. Since 2001, *TIP* has also served children at the school level through its early intervention initiative, pairing children and families volunteers to assist in rectifying the attendance issues before a court referral becomes necessary. More than 300 trained volunteers, both attorneys and non-attorneys, give their time and skills to help these children stay in school.

IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIALS

The *TIP* program is available for children grades K through 12. Staffed by six probation officers, six program staff members and hundreds of volunteers, more than 518 children were referred during the 2005-2006 school year.

TIP exists as a result of collaboration among various entities, including the juvenile court, the school system, a volunteer base, and community partners. The juvenile court is the system empowered to hold children and families accountable for truant behavior. Decisions made by the local juvenile court judge are binding on both the child and parent, and therefore give legal weight to recommendations that all parties agree are in the child's best interests.

TIP recruits and trains community volunteers to advocate for the child. Volunteers work with the child and family to ascertain the root cause of the truancy and to identify and procure services to assist in remedying the problem. Community agencies are integral to the success of a *TIP* program. Agencies that provide educational services, housing resources, and medical assistance are essential resources.

Replication of *TIP* in other communities.

In 1997, *TIP* began "exporting" the *TIP* model to other communities throughout the state and country that were interested in replicating the program in their area. *TIP* staff help implement truancy projects elsewhere by offering training and resource manuals, on-site start-up assistance and ongoing planning and implementation support. Contact information to obtain a copy of the *TIP* step-by-step start-up *Export Manual* is provided under the *Resources* section below.

The following are initial steps in establishing similar initiatives in other communities.

- Establish a steering committee made up of interested entities. The group need not be large but passionate and committed to doing initial planning and research.
- Contact the school board and inquire about existing dropout and truancy statistics and existing prevention programs.
- Begin to assess the need for a truancy prevention program through informal interviews with key stakeholders in the community, including school social workers, parents, and students. Gathering preliminary information is an opportunity to elicit the support and commitment of judges, probation officers, schools, parents, potential volunteers, prospective funding sources, and others for future involvement with the project.
- Consider whether a volunteer-based program is appropriate and, if so, whether to use an attorney model or a non-attorney model. Information about both models is available on the *TIP* website.
- Identify the entity or individual who will assume leadership responsibility for full implementation of the program, including volunteer recruitment, training and management, and programmatic oversight.

More implementation information is available on the *TIP* website, www.truancyproject.org.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

TIP has received recognition from various groups.

- Designated a “model” program by the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (NDPC/N).
<http://www.dropoutprevention.org/scripts/search/progsearch.asp?action=display&refnum=238>
- In 2002, designated an “effective approach to truancy prevention” by the Vera Institute of Justice.
[http://www.vera.org/publication_pdf/197_377.pdf#search=%22Truancy%20Intervention%20Project%20\(TIP\)%20%20Vera%20Institute%22](http://www.vera.org/publication_pdf/197_377.pdf#search=%22Truancy%20Intervention%20Project%20(TIP)%20%20Vera%20Institute%22)
- In 2006, recognized as a “model” truancy program by the Juvenile Justice Committee of the American Bar Association’s Criminal Justice Section.
<http://www.abanet.org/crimjust/juvjus/truancypreventionprograms.doc>
- In 2003 and 2004, received proclamations from the City of Atlanta, the Fulton County Commission and both Houses of the Georgia General Assembly in 2006,
http://www.legis.ga.gov/legis/2005_06/fulltext/sr947.htm, for *TIP*’s innovative, tenured and successful approach to truancy intervention.

AVAILABLE EVIDENCE

Since its inception, the *TIP* in has served over 2,600 children referred by the Fulton County Juvenile Court. Of 2,664 children served, 2072 did not return to juvenile court. This represents a 77.9% cumulative success rate since inception.

Over 830 Atlanta, GA, volunteers have donated over 64,290 hours of their time to *TIP* cases.

TIP now reaches children at an earlier age in the pattern of absenteeism. Since 1999, when *TIP* started tracking average days absent, the number of absences a child has at the time of referral to the project has dropped from 30.8 days in 1999 to 17.1 days in 2005. Early intervention before children have developed a pattern that is difficult to break increases the likelihood of making an impact in successfully returning children to school.

A similar program was established by the Ramsey County Attorney’s Office in 1995, in collaboration with 14 school districts, the county juvenile court, the county community corrections, and private agencies. An assessment of that initiative in 2002 found that, for a small investment per child, the program achieved the following results:

- The number of 9th to 12th grade students missing at least 15 days of school decreased from 73% to 42% between 1996-97 and 2000-01.
- The four-year completion rate among students who stayed in the St. Paul School District their entire high school career increased from 52% in 1996 to 63% in 2001.
- The number of truancy petitions filed in Juvenile Court dropped by 47% between 1995-96 and 2000-01.
- Each year, between 74% and 82% of students involved in *TIP* improved their attendance.

McNeely, C. (Sept. 2002). *Ramsey County Attorney's Office Truancy Initiative: An Assessment of a Successful Collaborative Intervention Program*. The Konopka Institute for Best Practices in Adolescent Health. University of Minnesota.

<http://64.233.161.104/search?q=cache:0xY9Yp4cPzMJ:www2.co.ramsey.mn.us/attorney/docs/TIPAssessment.pdf>

RESOURCES

- For information to obtain a *TIP* training manual or the step-by-step start-up *Export Manual* :

Caren Cloud Barnes, Staff Attorney and Export Coordinator
TIP Georgia, Inc., 95 Pryor Street, Atlanta, GA 30312
Phone: 404-224-4741
E-mail: ccloud@truancyproject.org

- TIP Georgia website. www.truancyproject.org
- ABA Standing Committee on Substance Abuse. (2001). *Truancy, Literacy and the Courts: A User's Manual for Setting Up a Truancy Intervention Project*. American Bar Association. http://www.abanet.org/subabuse/truancy_brochure.pdf
- ABA Youth Lawyer's Division description of *Truancy Intervention Project* (Oct. 2002). <http://www.abanet.org/yld/elibrary/cincy02pdf/TruancyIntervention.pdf>

BACKGROUND READING

Websites

- **Effective Dropout Prevention Strategies.** <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/effstrat.htm>
- **Model Truancy Prevention Programs.** Colorado Foundation For Families And Children. <http://www.schoolengagement.org/TruancyPreventionRegistry/Admin/Resources/Resources/9.pdf>
- **National Dropout Prevention Center/Network.** <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/ndpcdefault.htm>
- **National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities.** <http://www.ndpc-sd.org/>

Articles and reports

- Gonzales, R. & Mullins, T.G. (May 2004). *Addressing Truancy in Youth Court Programs*. In *Selected Topics on Youth Courts*. A Monograph. OJJDP. <http://www.youthcourt.net/publications/monograph.pdf>
- National Center for School Engagement. (2005). *Innovations in Truancy Prevention Practice: An Inventory of Selected Collaborations from around the United States*. National Truancy Prevention Association. <http://www.truancyprevention.org/TruancyPreventionRegistry/Admin/Resources/Resources/53.pdf>
- National Center for School Engagement. *Truancy Fact Sheet*. Colorado Foundation for Families and Children. <http://www.schoolengagement.org/TruancyPreventionRegistry/Admin/Resources/Resources/40.pdf>

- Pennington, J. & Barnes, C. (2006). *How to Establish and Run a Truancy Program*. Criminal Justice Section Newsletter Vol.14/3 (Spring 2006).
<http://www.abanet.org/crimjust/juvjus/truancyarticle.pdf>