The RI Youth-At-Risk Coalition Presents the

Truancy Prevention Toolkit

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RI Youth-at-Risk Coalition

The Department of Children, Youth and Families in partnership with the Parent Support Network of Rhode Island, received a grant from the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law and the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The Youth at Risk Coalition was subsequently established with the support of this grant.

Vision
Families , schools, organizations and communities work in partnership to enhance the protective factors necessary to ensure that education, supports, and interventions are provided for children and youth at risk for truancy.

Mission
The youth at risk coalition will work towards building and enhancing protective factors for children and youth at risk for truancy by examining research with respect to prevalence, best practices, and creating training and technical assistance opportunities for developing and implementing new practices in partnership with families, schools, organizations, and local, state, and federal government.

Focus
The focus of this year's work of the coalition is to create a "Truancy Reduction Toolkit", designed to give schools information, tips, and resources to help reduce truancy in their schools. The coalition is hosting an "Improving School Attendance and Reducing Truancy Forum on November 18. 2010, to introduce the toolkit and exchange ideas and practices among school districts. The coalition will continue to outreach to schools subsequent to the forum.

Coalition Partners
Rhode Island Department of Education, Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Parent Information Network, Parent Support Network of Rhode Island, Child Advocate's Office, Regional Family Care Community Partnerships (FCCP), Tides Family Services, the Governor's Council on Disabilities, Rhode Island Family Court and Families, Youth and Community Partners.

We are always looking for people who are interested in helping to reduce truancy in Rhode Island. If you would like to be a member of the coalition please call Parent Support Network at 467-6855.

Introduction to the Truancy Prevention Toolkit

The truancy prevention toolkit is designed to give schools easy- to-access information, tips, resources and materials for family and youth engagement. The toolkit was conceived by the Youth-at-Risk coalition and is divided into the following sections:

Introduction
Includes an introduction to the Coalition as well as the Toolkit

Overview of Truancy
A brief overview of the serious nature of truancy, factors that are involved in truancy, some general thoughts about how to reduce truancy, and the components of a good truancy reduction program. This section also includes relevant RI Data from Kids Count.

Information for Schools
This section contains information about the five most important things schools can do to start improving school attendance. In addition there is information about school policies that can engage students and families, and some resources for conducting a school assessment around truancy, as well as information about some model and/or best practices around the country.

Family and Youth Engagement
Family and Youth Engagement materials include a booklet designed for parents/guardians, a flyer that was designed to share with students and a powerpoint presentation that can be used at parent meetings to address the topic of truancy.

Where to Get Help
This section contains important information about the community resources that are available to you for help in supporting students and their families.

Additional Resources
This section contains links to additional educational resources around truancy.

To obtain more copies of the toolkit, you may download documents from the website of Parent Support Network www.psnri.org after December 1, 2010.

Overview of Truancy
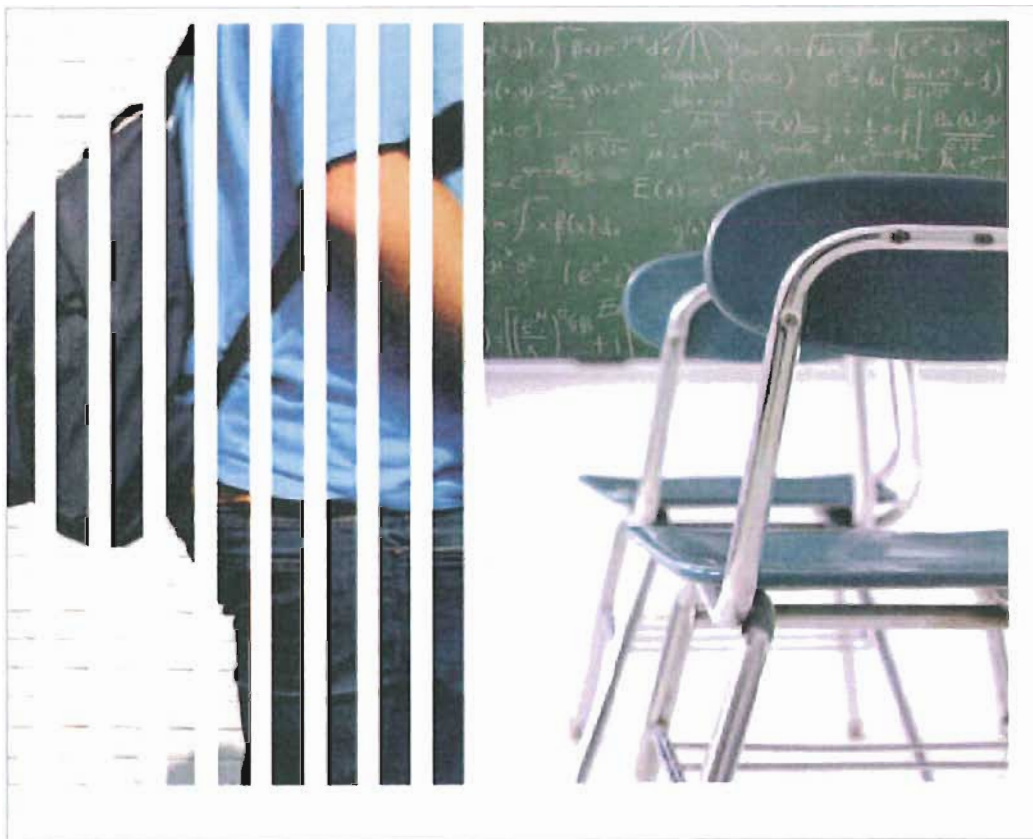
Overview of Truancy

What is Truancy?

Truancy is any unexcused absence from school. State laws vary on the number of absences and the criterion age of the offender, but all states recognize truancy as criminal behavior. Truancy is considered a status offense – an act that is a crime due to the age of the offender. Truancy is a concern for all communities; some metropolitan areas report thousands of unexcused absences each day, creating a substantial problem for schools, law enforcement, and the larger community.

Truancy is recognized as a serious issue because it is often the result of one set of problems and the cause of others. Truancy is frequently the result of deep-seated problems with substance abuse, physical abuse, mental and physical illness, or poverty serious enough to impair a child's ability to attend school regularly. With excess time on their hands, many truants get in trouble with the law and develop substance abuse problems that further inhibit their ability to attend school. Missing school causes students to fall behind in their studies, making a return to class harder with each day missed.

Factors Contributing to Truancy

Research shows that the factors contributing to truancy stem from three realms: family and community, school, and personal psychological characteristics. They are listed below.

School Factors

- Lack of effective and consistently applied attendance policies.
- Poor record-keeping, making truancy difficult to spot.
- Push-out policies, for example, suspension as a punishment for truancy and automatic "Fs" for students with poor attendance.
- Parents/guardians not notified of absences.
- Teacher characteristics, such as lack of respect for students and neglect of diverse student needs.

- Unwelcoming atmosphere, for example, an unattractive facility or one with chronic maintenance problems.
- Unsafe environment, for example a school with ineffective discipline policies where bullying is tolerated.
- Inadequate identification of special education needs, leading some students to feel overwhelmed and frustrated with their inability to succeed.

Home and Community Factors

- Family health or financial concerns that pressure the student to care for family members or work during school hours.
- Child is a victim of abuse or neglect.
- Pressures arising from teen pregnancy or parenting.
- Safety issues such as violence near home or between home and school.
- Parental alcoholism or drug abuse.
- Negative role models, such as peers who are truant or delinquent.
- Parents/guardians who do not value education and are complicit in student's absences.

Personal Factors

- Poor academic performance, sometimes due to special education needs, and a resulting lack of self-esteem.
- Unmet mental health needs.
- Alcohol and drug use and abuse.
- Lack of vision of education as a means to achieve goals.

Combating Truancy

A wide range of options is open to schools and communities interested in combating truancy. Programs that reduce unexcused absences generally fall into one of three categories: school or district programs, court programs, and community programs.

Schools

School districts can begin by involving parents in school activities before truant behavior ever becomes a problem, and immediately notifying parents of problems when they arise. Many schools have school attendance review boards – that bring together parents, truant students, school representatives, and perhaps social service or mental health representatives to discuss the importance of school attendance and work out an attendance plan.

Example of a School-based program: Denver Public Schools has focused its truancy program on middle school students, trying to reverse patterns of truancy before they become ingrained in the high school years.

Courts

Seventeen states have laws requiring young people to stay in school or maintain a certain grade point average to earn or keep their drivers' licenses.

> Kelderman, Eric, "Truant Teens Lose Licenses in Georgia and Other States,"
> stateline.org, Thursday, August 19, 2004. http://www.stateline.org.

Many courts have reorganized to form special truancy court dockets within the juvenile or family court. Consolidation of truancy cases results in speedier court dates, more consistent sentencing, and makes court personnel more attuned to the needs of truant youth and their families.

Example of a Court-based program: The At-Risk Youth Program of the Seattle County Court, though a court-based program, involves the community in providing attendance workshops that are alternatives to standard truancy court hearings, and case managers to work with the family of each truant youth.

According to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, there were 1,332 truants in juvenile detention in 1997, 913 in 1999, and 784 in 2001. The Census Bureau conducts this survey biannually for OJJDP, counting juveniles in detention nationwide on a single day in late October.

Sickmund, Melissa, "Juveniles in Corrections," Juvenile Offenders and Victims National Report Series Bulletin, June 2004. And online data from the 2001 survey at http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/cjrp/asp/State_Offense.asp

Community

Community programs bring together schools, law enforcement, social service providers, mental and physical health care providers, and others to help stabilize families and reengage youth in school.

 Example of a Community-based program: Communities in Schools, Inc. operates in 235 school districts in 30 states. They work not only to improve school attendance, but to break down all barriers to high school graduation.

Components of Effective Truancy Reduction Programs

- Parent/guardian involvement, or whole family involvement.
- A continuum of supports, including meaningful incentives for good attendance and consequences for poor attendance.
- Collaboration among community actors such as law enforcement, mental health workers, mentors, and social service providers, in addition to educators.
- Concrete and measurable goals for program performance and student performance.
- Good record keeping and on-going evaluation of progress toward those goals.

In summary, truant behavior is extremely costly to society. In the short run, truants often engage in criminal behavior. Crime carries with it a cost to the victims and to the community in terms of law enforcement and corrections costs. In the long run, chronic truants are highly likely to drop out of school. Studies show that each high school dropout costs over $800,000 over the course of their lives. These costs are incurred as a result of lost income taxes due to unemployment and lower salaries, and higher social service expenditures and criminal justice costs.

Adapted From: National Center for School Engagement: www.schoolengagement.org

Chronic Early Absence

DEFINITION

Chronic early absence is the percentage of children in kindergarten through third grade (K-3) who have missed at least 10% of the school year (i.e., 18 days or more), including excused and unexcused absences.

SIGNIFICANCE

When students are absent from school they miss opportunities to learn and develop positive relationships within the school community. During the early elementary school years, children develop important skills and approaches to learning that are critical for ongoing school success. Through their experiences in K-3 classrooms, children build academic, social-emotional and study skills.[1,2] Children who are chronically absent in kindergarten show lower levels of achievement in math, reading and general knowledge in first grade. Among poor children, chronic absence in kindergarten can predict low educational achievement at the end of fifth grade. Nationally, chronically absent Hispanic kindergartners have lower reading achievement than their chronically absent peers of other ethnicities.[3,4]

Nationally, chronic early absence affects one out of 10 children during their first two years of school.[5] Younger children from poor families are much more likely to have high rates of chronic absenteeism than higher-income children. In the U.S., one in five (21%) poor kindergartners was chronically absent, compared to less than one in ten (8%) of their higher-income peers.[6] Children who are homeless or formerly homeless also experience poor educational outcomes related to school absenteeism and mobility.[7] Lack of access to preventive health care and chronic health issues, such as asthma, can result in increased absenteeism.[8]

Chronic early absence is most often a result of a combination of school, family and community factors.[9] Risk factors such as poverty, teenage parenting, single parenting, low maternal education levels, unemployment, poor maternal health, receipt of welfare, and household food insecurity can all affect school attendance. Rates of chronic absence rise significantly when three or more of these risk factors are present.[10,11] Chronic absenteeism can also result from poor quality education, ambivalence about or alienation from school, and chaotic school environments, including high rates of teacher turnover, disruptive classrooms and/or bullying.[12] Community factors that may disrupt school routines and lead to chronic absence include unreliable or insufficient public transportation systems, violence or the fear of violence on the way to and from school, multiple foster care placements, and lack of access to safe and affordable housing.[13]

School Attendance in Rhode Island by Number of School Days Missed, Kindergarten Through Third Grade, 2008-2009 School Year

47%	0-5 Days
30%	6-11 Days
13%	12-17 Days
10%	18 Days or More

n = 45,966

Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2008-2009 school year.

◆ During the 2008-2009 school year, 10% of Rhode Island children in grades K-3 were chronically absent (i.e. absent 18 days or more). In Rhode Island's core cities, 16% of children in grades K-3 were chronically absent.[14]

◆ Almost one in four (23%) Rhode Island children in grades K-3 missed 12 or more days of school during the 2008-2009 school year.[15]

◆ Schools may inadvertently overlook the prevalence of chronic early absence because high rates for school attendance can easily mask significant numbers of chronically absent students.[16] In Rhode Island during the 2008-2009 school year, elementary schools in the core cities had an average daily attendance rate of 93%, but 16% of students in grades K-3 were chronically absent.[17]

◆ While most elementary schools monitor average daily attendance or unexcused absences, few actively monitor the combination of excused and unexcused absence for individual students.[18] Schools can promote attendance by helping parents understand that coming to school, especially in the early grades, is critical to children's academic success.[19]

◆ Chronic absenteeism rates can be reduced through school-family-community partnerships that use an ongoing and intentional approach for monitoring attendance and contacting parents as soon as troubling patterns of attendance appear.[20] Schools and communities can address the problem of chronic absence through existing initiatives on parent involvement, school readiness, after-school programming, school-based health services, and drop-out prevention.[21]

Table 47.

Chronic Early Absence Rates, Grades K-3, Rhode Island, 2008-2009 School Year

SCHOOL DISTRICT	STUDENTS ENROLLED	ELEMENTARY (K-5) ATTENDENCE RATE	TOTAL # OF K-3 STUDENTS CHRONICALLY ABSENT	% CHRONIC ABSENCES IN GRADES K-3
Barrington	993	96%	40	4%
Bristol Warren	1,047	95%	83	8%
Burrillville	850	95%	72	8%
Central Falls	1,178	93%	205	17%
Chariho	1,017	96%	73	7%
Coventry	1,582	96%	31	2%
Cranston	3,285	95%	292	9%
Cumberland	1,454	96%	73	5%
East Greenwich	643	96%	27	4%
East Providence	1,823	95%	177	10%
Exeter-West Greenwich	527	96%	34	6%
Foster	168	95%	43	26%
Glocester	416	96%	10	2%
Jamestown	186	96%	12	6%
Johnston	961	95%	96	10%
Lincoln	866	96%	48	6%
Little Compton	126	95%	0	0%
Middletown	839	96%	39	5%
Narragansett	387	92%	28	7%
New Shoreham	47	93%	0	0%
Newport	754	94%	121	16%
North Kingstown	1,173	96%	72	6%
North Providence	896	95%	79	9%
North Smithfield	518	96%	38	7%
Pawtucket	3,233	95%	433	13%
Portsmouth	774	96%	38	5%
Providence	8,816	93%	1,865	21%
Scituate	468	96%	48	10%
Smithfield	686	97%	33	5%
South Kingstown	1,053	96%	68	6%
Tiverton	624	96%	38	6%
Warwick	3,129	96%	231	7%
West Warwick	1,343	95%	104	8%
Westerly	913	96%	30	3%
Woonsocket*	2,204	93%	NA	NA
Charter Schools	*976*	*96%*	*34*	*3%*
Rhode Island School for the Deaf	*11*	*93%*	*0*	*0%*
*Core Cities**	*17,528*	*93%*	*2,728*	*16%*
Remainder of State	*27,451*	*96%*	*1,853*	*7%*
Rhode Island	*45,966*	*95%*	*4,615*	*10%*

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2008-2009 school year. Note that these numbers may not include some children in grades K-3 who miss 18 days of school or more (chronic early absence) but who are officially disenrolled in one district and have not yet enrolled in another district. This sometimes happens when children are homeless, live in unstable living situations, are transitioning from an out-of-home placement (juvenile justice, foster care, residential or hospital placement), or miss school due to extended travel out of state or out of the country.

* Data for Woonsocket were not available. Therefore, only five of the six core cities are included in this calculation: Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, and West Warwick.

Charter schools include The Compass School, CVS Highlander Charter School, Kingston Hill Academy, International Charter School, The Learning Community, and Paul Cuffee Charter School.

References

[1] Romero, M. & Lee, Y. (2008). *The influence of maternal and family risk on chronic absenteeism in early schooling.* New York: National Center for Children in Poverty.

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[4] Romero, M. & Lee, Y. (2007). *A national portrait of chronic absenteeism in the early grades.* New York: National Center for Children in Poverty.

[6] Romero, M. & Lee, Y. (2008). *Risk factors for chronic absenteeism: Facts for policymakers.* New York: National Center for Children in Poverty.

[7] Aratani, Y. (2009). *Homeless children and youth: Causes and consequences.* New York: National Center for Children in Poverty.

[8] Basch, C. E. (2010). *Healthier students are better learners: A missing link in school reforms to close the achievement gap.* New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

School Attendance

DEFINITION

School attendance is the average daily attendance of public school students in each school district in Rhode Island for middle school (grades 6-8), and high school (grades 9-12).

SIGNIFICANCE

An important aspect of students' access to education is the amount of time actually spent in the classroom.[1] Truant students are at risk of disengagement from school, academic failure and dropping out.[2] Regardless of whether absences are unexcused or excused, students who miss school are more likely to fall behind academically and engage in risky behaviors.[3,4]

Nationally, 3% of eighth-graders and 5% of tenth-graders in the U.S. reported that they skipped three or more days of school in a four week period.[5] Students' reasons for not attending school include repeated suspensions, disruptive learning environments, poor achievement, concerns for safety, difficulty with peer and adult relationships, conflicts between school and work, family responsibilities and negative perceptions of school.[6,7]

Absenteeism is rarely a reflection of the student alone and is often an indication that the family needs help. Family and economic factors connected to student absenteeism include: poverty, substance abuse, domestic violence, foster care placements, student employment, student disability, single-parent households, parents with multiple jobs, lack of affordable and reliable transportation and child care.[8,9,10]

School factors contributing to student absenteeism include school climate, school size, attitudes of school staff and discipline polices.[11,12,13] Policies and practices to increase student attendance include: providing free breakfast and lunch in schools with low attendance rates and high concentrations of low-income students, investing in out-of-school time programs, improving the reliability of transportation to and from school, streamlining school enrollment for students in foster care, and providing psychological services.[14,15]

During the 2008-2009 school year, almost half (47%) of middle and high school students in Rhode Island were absent for five or fewer days. Nearly a quarter (24%) of middle school students and 33% of high school students were absent for 12 days or more.[16]

Attendance rates in the core cities are lower than in the remainder of the state. Improving the core cities' high school attendance rate from the current rate of 87% to 93% (the rate in the remainder of the state) would mean that on average 890 more students would be attending high school in the core cities each day of the school year.[17]

Students Charged with Truancy in Rhode Island Family Court and Truancy Court, 1997-2008
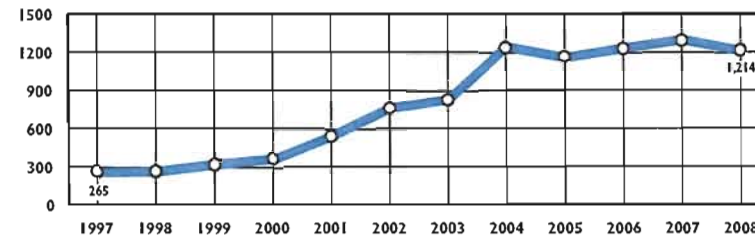
Source: Rhode Island Family Court, Intake Charges, 1997-2008.

◆ The U.S. Department of Education and the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education define truancy as 10 or more unexcused absences in a school year.[18,19] Truant students in Rhode Island may be referred by school administrators to the Rhode Island Truancy Court. The goal of the Truancy Court is to work with families, schools and communities to address the individual causes of truancy through monitoring, counseling, tutoring and other support services for students.[20]

◆ The number of Rhode Island students charged with truancy more than quadrupled between 1997 and 2008, from 265 students to 1,214 students.[21]

Effective Truancy-Reduction Strategies

◆ School connectedness plays an important role in student attendance.[22] An open, supportive, safe and engaging school environment and caring adults can address many of the causes of truancy.[23,24]

◆ Effective truancy-reduction strategies include: creating community and school partnerships to get students to school, using challenging and creative school curricula, developing discipline policies that keep students in school, providing art, music, physical education and other high-interest classes, and implementing credit recovery programs.[25,26,27]

◆ Discipline policies that ensure the uniform use of suspensions and expulsions when appropriate and enable the use of alternative interventions to address the root causes of truancy and reward positive behavior are also important for reducing truancy rates.[28]

Table 48. **Student Absence and School Attendance Rates, Rhode Island, 2008-2009 School Year**

SCHOOL DISTRICT	MIDDLE SCHOOL				HIGH SCHOOL			
	TOTAL # OF STUDENTS	% OF STUDENTS ABSENT 12-17 DAYS	% OF STUDENTS ABSENT 18+ DAYS	ATTENDANCE RATE	TOTAL # OF STUDENTS	% OF STUDENTS ABSENT 12-17 DAYS	% OF STUDENTS ABSENT 18+ DAYS	ATTENDANCE RATE
Barrington	808	10%	5%	97%	1,163	9%	5%	96%
Bristol Warren	795	16%	12%	95%	1,151	17%	23%	92%
Burrillville	529	16%	9%	96%	840	19%	13%	94%
Central Falls	791	17%	17%	94%	838	17%	39%	86%
Chariho	1,110	15%	6%	96%	1,221	14%	15%	93%
Coventry	1,259	9%	3%	95%	1,810	0%	<1%	96%
Cranston	1,726	14%	11%	94%	3,548	14%	24%	92%
Cumberland	1,240	13%	6%	96%	1,588	14%	22%	92%
East Greenwich	404	11%	5%	96%	770	3%	3%	95%
East Providence	1,294	14%	19%	94%	1,967	5%	5%	89%
Exeter-West Greenwich	330	7%	3%	97%	642	13%	11%	95%
Foster-Glocester	568	1%	0%	96%	863	3%	2%	93%
Jamestown*	201	7%	8%	96%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Johnston	830	18%	21%	93%	903	17%	25%	92%
Lincoln	883	11%	8%	96%	1,039	14%	18%	93%
Little Compton*	107	0%	0%	95%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Middletown	746	11%	5%	96%	651	13%	10%	95%
Narragansett	478	13%	3%	92%	476	11%	9%	86%
New Shoreham	39	0%	0%	93%	28	3%	0%	91%
Newport	497	17%	26%	92%	588	20%	35%	88%
North Kingstown	1,026	<1%	<1%	96%	1,629	8%	4%	93%
North Providence	792	16%	9%	95%	1,061	19%	19%	92%
North Smithfield	460	10%	6%	96%	577	13%	11%	95%
Pawtucket	1,409	16%	18%	93%	2,366	16%	33%	89%
Portsmouth	673	10%	9%	96%	1,043	9%	10%	95%
Providence	4,494	16%	27%	91%	7,362	15%	43%	85%
Scituate	420	9%	6%	96%	529	11%	13%	95%
Smithfield	613	13%	6%	98%	853	16%	19%	95%
South Kingstown	869	12%	6%	95%	1,173	12%	13%	93%
Tiverton	611	18%	9%	95%	643	22%	10%	94%
Warwick	1,789	16%	11%	95%	3,481	15%	23%	92%
West Warwick	793	14%	19%	93%	1,105	12%	26%	90%
Westerly	795	4%	<1%	96%	1,058	14%	12%	93%
Woonsocket	1,357	0%	0%	91%	1,769	0%	0%	88%
Charter Schools	*296*	*5%*	*5%*	*95%*	*338*	*0%*	*0%*	*90%*
State-Operated Schools	*32*	*0%*	*0%*	*94%*	*1,615*	*10%*	*13%*	*92%*
UCAP	*140*	*14%*	*34%*	*91%*	*NA*	*NA*	*NA*	*NA*
Core Cities	*9,341*	*14%*	*21%*	*92%*	*14,028*	*14%*	*34%*	*87%*
Remainder of State	*21,395*	*12%*	*8%*	*95%*	*30,707*	*12%*	*14%*	*93%*
Rhode Island	*31,204*	*12%*	*12%*	*94%*	*46,688*	*12%*	*21%*	*91%*

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2008-2009 school year.

Attendance rates are calculated by dividing "the average daily attendance" by the "average daily membership."

Note that these numbers may not include some children who miss more than 18 days of school but who are officially un-enrolled in one district and have not yet enrolled in another district. This sometimes happens when children are homeless, live in unstable living situations, transitioning from an out-of-home placement (juvenile justice, foster care, residential or hospital placement), or miss school due to extended travel out of state or out of the country.

*Little Compton students attend high school in Portsmouth and Jamestown students attend high school in North Kingstown.

Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

Charter schools include BEACON Charter School, Blackstone Academy Charter School, The Compass School, CVS Highlander Charter School and Paul Cuffee Charter School. State-operated schools include The Rhode Island Training School operated by DCYF, Metropolitan Regional Career & Technical Center, and William M. Davies Jr. Career & Technical High School. UCAP is the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program.

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[2,6] Kilma, T., Miller, M. & Nunlist, C. (2009). *Truancy and dropout programs: Interventions by Washington's school districts and community collaborations* (Document No. 09-06-2202). Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

[4,5] Eaton, D. K., Brener, N. & Kann, L. K. (2008). Associations of health risk behaviors with school absenteeism. Does having permission for absence make a difference? *Journal of School Health, 78*(4), 223-229.

[1] Henry, K. L. (2007). Who's skipping school: Characteristics of truants in 8th and 10th grade. *Journal of School of Health, 77*(1), 29-35.

RHODE ISLAND FAMILY COURT ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2010-2

RHODE ISLAND FAMILY COURT
TRUANCY DIVERSION PROGRAM

Purpose

The purpose of the Rhode Island Family Court Truancy calendar is to reduce truancy statewide. This Administrative Order reflects existing practice and directs the proceedings of the Truancy Diversion Program. The intent of this Diversion Program is to ensure that students not only attend school but also receive the rehabilitative services and educational services that will help to assure school attendance and academic success. The Truancy calendar is designed to provide a continuum of interventions and services to support families and children in order to keep children in school.

Organization

The Chief Judge of the Family Court, as administrative judge, will have primary responsibility for the calendar.

Magistrates will be assigned to this calendar by the Chief Judge. Magistrates have the authority to successfully effectuate the purposes of the Truancy calendar.

Eligibility Guidelines

1. Children involved in the program must be of school age pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws §16-19-1.
2. Students who are charged with truancy will be referred to a truancy calendar after the Intake Department reviews said petitions.
3. Students assigned to this calendar shall not have any other petitions open at the time of assignment.
4. Family Court Associate Justices at their discretion may assign truancy petitions to the Truancy calendar.
5. If a student is charged with new offense(s) while being monitored on the truancy calendar, the truancy petition shall transfer along with the new petition(s) to an Associate Justice of the Family Court.

Intake Guidelines for Truancy Petitions

1. All truancy petitions filed shall be reviewed by the Intake Department.

Pursuant to R. I. Gen. Laws § 8-10-22 and R. I. R. Juv. P. 3, all truancy petitions shall be referred to the RI Family Court Intake Department for a preliminary investigation. In matters where evidence and/or documentation are insufficient to bring a student within the jurisdiction of the court, the Intake Department will not authorize the petition. For cases that are sufficient to assert the court's jurisdiction, the Intake Department shall determine the most appropriate level of judicial action. This may include:

- Assignment of truancy petitions to an Intake worker for further investigation and monitoring;
- Assignment of cases to the Truancy calendar;
- Assignment of cases to the formal juvenile calendar.

As a guideline, the Chief Intake Supervisor may refer truancy cases to an Intake worker if the petition:

- Requires further investigation and monitoring at a preliminary level;
- Is not represented by a Truancy calendar location;
- Is represented by a Truancy calendar location, *but* the Truancy petition states less than 10 days of absences and/or the student has not regularly attended some public day school during all the days and hours that the public schools are in session where the child resides;
- Is filed during months the Truancy calendar is not in session; or
- Requires any other action at the discretion of the Chief Intake Supervisor.

The Intake Department may refer cases to the Truancy calendar if the petition:

- Is represented by a Truancy calendar location; and
- Has at least 10 days of absences and/or states that a student is habitually late or absent from school; and
- Has supporting documentation from the school department that the child has not regularly attended some public day school during all the days and hours that the public schools are in session in the city or town in which the child resides or willfully and habitually absents himself or herself from attending school.

2. Truancy petitions will be referred to the formal juvenile calendar if a student has any other pending petitions or active adjudications in his/her file.

3. If the Intake Department determines a petition is suitable for the Truancy calendar, the following steps will be followed:

   - The Petition will be assigned to the appropriate school location;

   - A written notice shall be sent to the parent/guardian explaining that the student has been referred to the Family Court on a wayward status offense of truancy and the student has been pre-screened to enter the Truancy Diversion Program. The parent/guardian will be informed that she/he has the opportunity to provide valid excuses for absences, if any, at the hearing.

   - The notice will briefly explain the Diversion calendar and set the location, time and date of the hearing before a Magistrate.

   - If the student or parent does not appear at the Truancy calendar, a summons may be issued for the child and parent/guardian to appear.

Truancy Calendar Procedures

After a truancy petition has been assigned to the Truancy calendar, the Magistrate will read the truancy petition and will explain the Rhode Island compulsory school attendance laws as well as the requirements of the Truancy Diversion Program consistent with the document entitled Participant Guidelines. The Magistrate also will explain the child's right to trial as well as the option for the Truancy Diversion Program consistent with the form entitled Participant's Forum Choice. The Magistrate will explain the Release of Confidential Information to the child and parent/guardian.

If a student and parent choose to stay in the Truancy program, they will sign the Truancy Diversion Program forms: Participant Guidelines, Participant's Forum Choice, and Release of Confidential Information. If the student and parent/guardian do not *each* agree to participate in the Truancy Diversion Program, the case will be referred to the formal juvenile calendar. The

parent/guardian and student will be advised that they have the right to hire an attorney for the child at any time during the Truancy Diversion Program or, if they cannot afford an attorney, the case will be scheduled on the formal juvenile calendar in the county where the student resides. If a parent/guardian is financially unable to engage counsel, the student may be referred to the services of the public defender or court appointed counsel.

Magistrates will assess the need for interpreters taking into account the participant's desire for such services and ensure that interpreters be provided for each Court session if necessary. This may include referring a case to the formal juvenile calendar.

After a Magistrate finds that a student has substantially complied with the requirements of the Truancy Diversion Program, the Magistrate may dismiss the truancy petition. If the Magistrate finds that the student has not substantially complied with the requirements of the program, the case may be referred to the formal juvenile calendar in the county where the child resides for arraignment before a Judge. The Magistrates may refer truancy petitions to the formal juvenile calendar if it is clear that the student will not comply with the requirements of the Truancy Diversion Program, or at any time if the child or parent/guardian of a child makes a transfer request of the Court.

In order to review a student's progress with the program requirements, the Truancy Diversion Program may convene as needed. The student and his or her parent/guardian may attend sessions as mandated by the Magistrate. Incentives and positive reinforcement will be given to the student for good behavior and consequences will be given for non-compliance. Magistrates may use the services of the Department of Children, Youth and Families if necessary. The Magistrates of the Truancy Diversion Program may review truancy cases for one year and may only extend said monitoring for just cause.

All Truancy Diversion Program hearings will be recorded.

_____   _____
Date   Haiganush R. Bedrosian
                                                           Acting Chief Judge

Information for Schools

What Can Schools Do?

Five Important Things Schools Can Do to Improve Attendance

1. **Learn about successful practices that other schools have used to improve attendance**
2. **Conduct an assessment of current policies and practices and identify areas for improvement**
3. **Have a written plan to combat truancy**
4. **Address absences as they occur, not once they have reached critical level**
5. **Don't try to do it alone**

1. Successful Practices

Schools across the nation have been attempting to address truancy. Rather than learning by trial and error, we can share experiences and outcomes. One of the most useful sites for disseminating information about research, pilot projects and successful practices is the National Center for School Engagement. We have included here a printout of one of their resources, *"School Policies that Engage Students and Families."* This is just one of hundreds of valuable resources and tools.

Here in Rhode Island, participation in the November 18th Forum is one opportunity to share successful practices. Results from the forum will be documented and disseminated to school districts across the state. Going forward, the Youth-at-Risk Coalition monthly meeting is another venue in which to share successful practices as well as to problem-solve barriers or challenges that school districts are facing.

In other forums or venues where schools come together, putting truancy front and center on the agenda will help to drive forward our efforts across the state to improve attendance and reduce truancy.

2. Assessment of Current Practice

A practical way to begin an effective truancy reduction program, is to conduct an assessment of current practices, helping to determine what is working well and what is not. The national

center for School Engagement provides an online assessment tool to help with the assessment process:

National Center for School Engagement AAA (Attendance-Attachment-Achievement) Policy and Practice Assessment
This comprehensive assessment is designed to help school teams evaluate the extent to which school level policies and practices help students feel engaged and connected to this school community and whether they intentionally foster or unintentionally undermine student attendance, attachment and achievement. Go to www.schoolengagement.org for sample questions and information on the complete assessment.

3. Have a written plan to combat truancy

A plan tends to work best when it is written down. Setting concrete goals based on data is most effective. It also is important to engage all stakeholders in the planning process so that everyone knows what role they play in helping students stay in school. Rather than launching stand-alone efforts, a plan helps everyone to understand how various practices fit together. Designing an early warning system to help identify a potential situation before it becomes serious is part of many effective truancy reduction programs.

4. Address absences as they occur

It is important to address addresses as they occur, both with students and with families. Let students know that it is noticed that they were not there, and that the school is interested in the reason why. If possible, talk to parents or guardians directly, rather than relying on messages.

5.Don't try to do it alone

Schools usually do not have the resources to take on the issue of truancy by themselves, nor should they. Community partners are equally interested in keeping kids in school, and the most effective truancy reduction programs involve multiple partners. Build relationships with community partners, with law enforcement officials and even with local businesses that may have youth congregating there during the school day. Working together we can accomplish much more. Section Five, Where to Get Help, contains information about the various community resources available in Rhode Island. The list is by no means exhaustive, each community may have valuable resources to partner with.

How to Connect Families to Outside Agencies

Help is here! Schools can't do it all-a referral to an outside agency can provide families with the help they need.

In trying to identify the issues, students need to be treated with respect and in an atmosphere that shows that people truly care about them. It may be beneficial for the student to speak with a guidance counselor, student assistance counselor, or social worker rather than in the Assistant Principle's officice, which is usually a site of disciplinary punishments.

When connecting families with outside agencies, it is important to do it in a way that does not violate confidentiality, but ensures that the connection is made. It is sometimes intimidating to a family to make the call alone, or it is one more task that can get lost along the way. You can give families the contact information for them to make the call, but better yet is to have them call from your office to set up the first appointment.

Offer to allow families and outside agencies to meet at the school, especially for the first time. Refer the family to a family organization, where they can get some assistance from other parents who have been through it as well. This is often less intimidating for families. Parents may not know where agencies are located or may be uncomfortable going to an unfamiliar place or may have transportation difficulties. Meeting at the school, possible even to have the familiar school representative to make the introductions, can make the process much easier for families.

Another way to assist families in connecting with outside agencies is to ask the parents for permission to invite a representative of an outside agency to a meeting at the school. Prior to the meeting, ask parents to sign a release form that allows the school to share information with the agency. Then the school representative can assist in the referral process.

If you are not sure if a particular agency or service is right for a certain student, you can call the agency and provide general information about the student to see if it is a good match. Be careful though, that you do not provide names or information that is so specific that a child or family can be identified, which violates confidentiality.

National Center for School Engagement

TRUANCY PREVENTION IN ACTION:
BEST PRACTICES AND MODEL TRUANCY PROGRAMS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

National Center for School Engagement

July 2005

An initiative of the Colorado Foundation for Families and Children
303 E. 17th Avenue, Suite 400   Denver, CO 80203
303/837-8466
www.schoolengagement.org

Promoting attendance, attachment and achievement

Truancy Prevention in Action: Best Practices and Model Truancy Programs
Executive Summary

Truancy has long been identified as an educational, social and juvenile justice issue worthy of public and private attention. It has been linked to many problem behaviors in adolescence, school failure, school dropout and juvenile delinquency, among others. Many national and local agencies are working to identify the best strategy for addressing truancy. In order to improve the chances of success, it is recommended that developers focus on those programs, approaches and strategies that have already demonstrated success.

Utilizing best practices is a sound investment strategy:

- *By studying those programs that have been proven to reduce or prevent truancy, practitioners and policy-makers avoid re-creating the wheel and have more time to spend on implementation and evaluation issues.*
- *By taking advantage of the research and development efforts of others, staff has more time to spend on adapting a strategy to meet the demands of the local community.*
- *By financially supporting practices that have demonstrated success, public and private funders engage in prudent expenditure of limited monies.*

Adopting and adapting approaches that have demonstrated their success is simply the most practical strategy for developing programming given the current and reasonable focus of policy-makers and funders on clear outcomes and cost/benefit analyses.

Critical Components of Truancy Programs
As a result of the research and assessment work conducted by the Department of Education (DOE), the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), the National Center for School Engagement (NCSE), the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (NDPC/N), the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) and others, a set of critical components linked to positive outcomes for children and families has been identified:

Collaboration
Truancy programs that include a broad-based collaborative as part of their approach are stronger and may last longer. Most funding and government agencies now expect that new programs engage in collaborative community-based planning. OJJDP identified collaboration as a required component for initial and ongoing funding in the Truancy Reduction Demonstration Program and for Title V Delinquency Prevention monies. The NDPC/N includes school-community collaboration as an effective strategy for dropout prevention. In addition, The National Network for Youth points to collaboration as an important part of successful after-school programs.

Family Involvement

Involving parents/guardians and family members in truancy prevention and intervention is critical. There is a large body of research demonstrating the positive outcomes associated with increased parent/guardian involvement in school activities including improved academic achievement and reduced likelihood of dropout. Involving parents/guardians in truancy programming is more than simply inviting their attendance at a school or court meeting. True participation means that parents/guardians are sought after for their advice, experience and expertise in the community, as clients of our public systems of care and as experts in the lives of their children. This means engaging parents/guardians as a natural course of events, not just when things are not going well.

Comprehensive Approach

Effective programs simultaneously focus on prevention and intervention. As described by the National Center for School Engagement, many factors contribute to truant behavior. Youth fail to attend school due to personal, academic, school climate, and family related issues. A truancy program may be called upon to help a family obtain counseling, advocate for a family to receive entitlement benefits such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), negotiate a new school schedule, figure out transportation solutions, and other more traditional social work activities such as mental health evaluation and counseling services. An effective truancy plan will address these issues and be prepared to respond to the first unexcused absence of an elementary student and not give up on the 100th absence of the habitually truant adolescent youth.

Use Incentives and Sanctions

Among the list of successful truancy practices identified by the National Center for School Engagement (NCSE), is the use of a continuum of approaches or a combination of incentives and sanctions. Specifically, meaningful sanctions for truant behavior and meaningful incentives for school attendance are key components of promising and model truancy programs. Sanctions, traditionally used to respond to truancy, frequently mirror the punitive steps taken against other undesirable behaviors: detention, suspension, petition to juvenile court, denial of privileges, etc. Incentives tend to be recognition-based, but may include special experiences or even monetary rewards. The critical task in this area is to design sanctions and incentives that are *meaningful* to youth and their families.

Develop a Supportive Context

A supportive context is crucial to developing a sustainable and effective truancy program. Programs that exist in a supportive context are more likely to survive and thrive than those that are fighting against system infrastructure or acting in isolation. Time spent nurturing a supportive context is well worth the effort. In this case, context refers to the environment in which the truancy program engages youth and their families. The context can be determined by an umbrella agency, a neighborhood, a set of laws and policies and/or a political reality. It is in the truancy program's best interest to impact and influence this context to better serve families and to survive the inevitable changes and challenges that occur to even the best of programs.

Evaluate the Program
In these lean financial times, government agencies and private funders are limiting their investments to those programs or practices that have clearly demonstrated some success. It is imperative that programs measure their impact in an effort to improve services. In addition, the criteria used to identify whether program models and practice approaches are proven or promising rests largely on the rigor of their evaluation design. It is mandatory in this environment to collect and examine data on program outcomes.

Best Practices Improve Truancy Programming
Programs that include each of these components are stronger and more successful. How these components are incorporated into existing approaches or developed from scratch should be determined by the needs and strengths of the local community. Creativity and determination are required for successful and lasting implementation of any new program!

For a more complete discussion of truancy program development, the economic and legal impact of truancy and the importance of collaboration in truancy programming, look for the truancy series to be released in Fall 2005 by the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network www.truancypreventionassociation.com in collaboration with the National Center for School Engagement www.schoolengagement.org

The National Center for School Engagement (NCSE) is an initiative of The Colorado Foundation for Families and Children (CFFC). NCSE strives to build a network of key stakeholders who share the belief that improving school attendance and school attachment promotes achievement and school success.

National Center for School Engagement

NCSE was established as a result of more than a decade of educational research about youth out of the educational mainstream conducted by CFFC. The impact of this work has been the development of significant investments of state funds to reduce suspensions expulsions and truancy. Over five years ago, CFFC began working with the OJJDP, US Department of Justice to assist in the planning and implementation of pilot demonstration projects across the country. As projects developed, CFFC became the national evaluator of this five-year truancy demonstration project.

The culmination of ten years of program experience and research has identified truancy and school engagement as the centerpiece of NCSE's work to improve outcomes for youth who are at the greatest risk of school failure and delinquency. We are national leaders in applying research to help communities prevent and reduce truancy.

Author: Kaki Dimock for the National Dropout Prevention Center

NCSE | National Center for School Engagement

School Policies that Engage Students and Families

National Center for School Engagement

July 28, 2006

Promoting attendance, attachment and achievement

School Policies that Engage Students and Families

School policies tend to either to engage students and families in the learning process or push students out of schools. Often, there is much variability across schools as to how these policies are implemented. In general, the National Center for School Engagement (NCSE) has identified the following policies that are more conducive to recapturing students in school.

☑ *Attendance Policies that Distribute Responsibility Broadly*
Many school and school district attendance policies place the responsibility for student attendance solely on the shoulders of parents/guardians and the student, themselves, without recognizing that teachers and school staff also have some accountability for attendance. Beyond accurate attendance monitoring, school personnel should consider what l motivates students to attend classes and school functions Additionally, schools must consider their response to chronic truancy. Schools should have a clear and consistent process in place for the first unexcused absence and for subsequent unexcused absences. This process must be communicated to students and parents at the outset of the school year. Staff must be available to track down truant students to find out what is the underlying cause of excessive absences. If supports and resources are needed, these should be provided through school social workers or psychologists. Teachers should be encouraged to make the necessary interventions including parent contacts or conferences. All parties must take responsibility for improving attendance. This includes students, parents, extended family, teachers, other school personnel and the community.

☑ **Grading Based on Attendance**
Grading based on attendance is becoming a more common practice in schools. It clearly communicates the importance of attendance and consequence of non-attendance. A student should be rewarded for participating in class discussions. At the same time, failing a student due to a pre-determined number of absences, without any appeals process, can be very detrimental to the students' success. Consider this example. If a student has already failed a class, what is the motivation to continue to attend this class? A student may choose to just leave school. Although some may start again the following semester or school year, often students find it easier to never re-enroll. Providing partial credit for completed coursework is a worthy alternative. Consequences for non-attendance are important, however when students are attaining passing grades, despite non-attendance, does it make sense to fail the student? Additionally, appeals should include a jury of impartial school and community members. Appeals processes for class credit must involve more than just the classroom teacher.

☑ *Withdrawals Due to Excessive Absences*
A common school district's local school policy is to withdraw students who are over the mandatory school age, due to excessive unexcused absences. Although many policies also indicate that substantial effort must be made to contact the pupil and/or parent to identify the reasons for non-attendance, in practice this is not always the case. Schools typically do not have the staff or resources to track down every chronic truant. Unfortunately, without this kind of effort, the dropout rate will only increase. Schools

need to explicitly describe the steps necessary before withdrawing disenrolling students. These steps should include a face to face visit with both the student and his/her parent/guardian. The school should develop a school re-engagement plan or offer other creative options such as a GED or alternative school. All efforts should be made to track down missing students.

☑ *Establishing a Statewide Common Student Identification Number*
In order to truly understand graduation and dropout rates, a statewide student identification number should be established. This ID should be assigned to students when they are first enrolled in elementary school and should follow them through to high school graduation. All alternative, charter and GED programs should use this same student numbering system. In this way, more accurate statewide dropout and graduation rates can be developed. More accurate data will help schools and communities understand the true extent of the problem and intervene accordingly.

☑ *Use Alternatives to Out of School Suspension and Expulsion*
Many schools suspend or expel students for excessive unexcused absences and most recognize that this consequence does not typically re-engage the youth in school, or prevent further truancies. Often students are pleased that they are allowed 3 days off school, which was the point of skipping class in the first place. In-school suspensions and detention are a viable alternative. Meaningful community service for excessive absences such as tutoring younger students or organizing a school event are good alternatives. Withholding privileges can be effective, such as no school athletics or field trips, however, we recommend that these are used as incentives as opposed to punishments. Sometimes extra curricular activities are the only thing that motivates students to attend and long term banning from these activities can motivate students to dropout. Additionally, catch-up classrooms are recommended for students to re-engage in learning while not holding back their other classmates.

☑ *Creative and Effective Communication to Notify Parents of Absence*
Although it is critical that parents are notified of their child's unauthorized absence from school, often students erase the voice mail message or toss the school letter before mom or dad know about the problem. Additionally, some chronic truants are homeless, do not have phones or are from families that do not speak English. Finding effective ways to communicate absence is critical. Given enough school personnel, home visits are ideal. Many truancy officers and school resource officers are beginning to do home visits with truants and their families. Often truants become delinquent (Gavin, 1997) so establishing rapport with the family early on is critical.

☑ *Coaching Students to Alternative Schools, GED programs or the Work Place*
Adults and children all have different ways of learning. Mainstream schools do not work for all students. However, schools cannot be too quick to coach students to alternative options. With high stakes testing, it is often tempting to encourage low achieving, chronically truant students to leave their home school for another alternative. Often it is these students that are "pulling down" the school average. A recent report from ETS (Barton, 2005) indicates that nationally one-third of our students are failing to graduate

from high school. This begs the question, if mainstream high schools are not working for one-third of our students, isn't it time for schools to change. Many feel that school reform is so difficult that it would be easier to establish a separate system of alternative and charter schools. However, others feel that these schools draw valuable and needed funding from our mainstream public schools. This debate will continue and probably not be resolved in this decade. In the meantime, schools must be cautious about coaching students out of school or pushing students out, too quickly

☑ ***School Finance Based on Average Daily Attendance***
School funding is often based on a fixed per pupil cost. However, how those pupils are counted varies widely between states. Some schools receive the funds based on the number of students enrolled at the beginning of the school year. Other states have one or several "school count" days. Often schools will hold large celebrations and pizza parties to get as many students as possible to school on count day. If a student has an unexcused absence on count day, schools often have the option of filing a truancy petition within a certain time period in order to recoup costs for that student. Unfortunately, after count day has passed, there is very little motivation for schools to keep students in the classroom. Overcrowding, limited school supplies, and high teacher-student ratios often encourage schools to let go of absent students. It is recommended that all states use an average daily attendance to calculate school finance. In this way schools have incentives to keep students in school to the end of the school year. Additionally, school finance will more closely approximate actual students served.

References

Barton, P. (2005). *One third of the nation: Rising dropout rates and declining opportunities.* Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Services.

Gavin, T. (1997). Truancy: Not just kids' stuff anymore. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, 66,* 8-14.

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Authors:
Ken Seeley Ed.D.
Heather MacGillivary, M.A.

Family and Youth Engagement

In-School Resources

It is not always clear to families what are the various roles of individuals in the school, or what resources may be available. This resource is designed to familiarize you with what each role or resource entails.

Response to Intervention Team or Problem Solving Team – can be used to identify cause of truancy and possible solutions for an individual student

School Resource Officer – works in collaboration with the school and community as a resource for safety and security issues

Student Assistant Counselor – for possible substance abuse issues; other personal issues

Behavior Specialists– to identify needs, build on strengths and create a plan for improvement

Psychologist – to identify problems, supports

Social Worker – can communicate with students, families and assist with referrals to other agencies

School Nurse – may be able to communicate with the student/family and identify possible health issues

Guidance Counselor – may be able to adjust classes, schedule; provide information on long-term career goals and work experiences to keep students engaged.

Advisors – Can assist in making personal connections with students and identify issues in their lives.

Academic Skill Assistance – to help students be successful in class

Special Education – Evaluation Team or IEP Team can be used if cause of truancy is related to a disability

Informal interventions – pair the student with a particular teacher that may be supportive, help the student get 'connected' (art teacher, music teacher, coach), informal mentor, advisor.   Have students get involved in special projects – requires attendance/before school.

After school programs – engage students in positive activities, mentors and positive adult relationships (May be in school or community-based, such as Boys and Girls Clubs) Review and modify policies, practices and procedures to identify those that inadvertently 'push out' students.

If you are not clear who to ask for assistance, start with your child's guidance counselor.

The Parents' Role in Preventing Truancy

- Understand the importance of daily attendance and the relationship between truancy and other negative outcomes.

- Parents need to communicate daily the importance of school attendance to their child, sometimes with support.

- Parents and school need to join forces in a common mission to promote good attendance for their student.

- Avoid the "blame game" where parents blame school and school blames parents.

- Be involved with your teen's school. Get to know their teachers, the school administrators by attending Parent Night and other school functions. Volunteer to help where you can. The more involved you are in your teen's school the less likely they are to try to get away with skipping class.

- Keep the lines of communication open with your teen when it comes to their school environment. Allow them to vent to you if they need to about a teacher, a certain class, etc.   If there seems to be a major problem, work with the school and the teacher to find an answer.

- Let your teenager know what the expectations are for school attendance. Find out what your local laws are for truancy, and if need be, have your teen talk to a local attendance officer.

- If truancy becomes a problem, set up an Action Plan. Write down all of your expectations, the limits, and consequences.

Your Child has been Referred to Truancy Court-Advice From Peer Mentors

- Connect with a Peer Mentor at the Parent Support Network of R.I. A peer mentor can help give you direction and guidance through the process.

- If your child is struggling with attendance and/or behavior issues, contact your local mental health center or FCCP (Family Community Care Partnership) and make a referral. A child involved in truancy is a child "at-risk".

- Have copies of current evaluations and/or recommendations from your child's doctor. If your child has a mental health diagnosis, make sure it is documented by a psychiatrist or other M.D.

- Call the district Attendance Officer and talk to them about what is going on with your child. Share with them what strategies you have tried with your child and be open to supports offered that may help the current situation.

- If your child has an IEP and is struggling with attendance issues, contact your child's case coordinator at school (special educator) and request an IEP review meeting. These are issues to be discussed as a TEAM.

- If your child does not have an IEP and is struggling in school academically, request an evaluation for special education services. If your child is struggling behaviorally, request a FBA (functional behavior assessment) and subsequent POSITIVE behavior plan.

- When going before the magistrate, be prepared to discuss all of the steps you have taken to help your child and family.

Parent Support Truancy Prevention Project

Providing Family Support to Parents and Students
A Pilot Project of The Parent Support Network of RI Peer Mentor Program and the Youth at Risk Coalition

What is the Parent Support Truancy Prevention Project?
This project provides an opportunity for parents to connect with a peer mentor who can provide emotional support; information and referral; attendance at school meetings and/ or court. Peer Mentors will learn about the current concerns and needs that parents are facing with their child. They will then work with parents to connect them to services and supports that are needed to improve their child's school attendance and achievement.

How do I access the Parent Support Truancy Prevention Project?
Parents, schools, or concerned community partners can call **467-6855 or 1-800-483-8844** and ask for Pam O'Brien, Truancy Prevention Coordinator. If your school or community agency would like to learn more about this project, a presentation can be arranged. Parents will be assigned to an experienced peer mentor. Website: www.psnri.org

When is a child considered truant?
When a child misses school or class without an excuse from his or her parent/guardian, leaves school without the permission of the teacher or principal, or is consistently late for school, he or she is considered **truant.**

Why do students miss school?
Some of the most common reasons for skipping school are oversleeping, wanting to hang out with friends, and just plain rebellion. A child's refusal to attend school may also be the result of health or mental health problems, school environment, bullying, living situations, academic failure, or alcohol/drug use.

How can parents play a role in reducing truancy?
Many schools are enforcing truancy policies by holding parents responsible for their child's failure to go to school. In Rhode Island parents may find themselves involved with truancy court. Parents understand that children can not learn if they are not in school. Getting up to speed on the truancy laws and school guidelines as well as monitoring things at home can provide key opportunities to impact attendance. Making sure that children are in school or class can ensure that they receive the education that is so critical to life success.

For more information On the Parent Support Truancy Prevention Pilot Project Please contact Parent Support Network at 467-6855 or 1-800-483-8844 or visit the website at www.psnri.org

Parent Support Network of Rhode Island
1395 Atwood Avenue, Suite 114
Johnston, RI 02919

Stay in School!

Did You Know?

Going to school helps you achieve your dreams.
Going to school helps keep you out of trouble.
Going to school is required by law.

There are many reasons students may not to go to school:

- They find school boring and difficult
- They fall behind in their work and feel they cannot catch up
- They have difficulties at home
- They need money
- They don't feel safe at school
- Drugs and alcohol
- They don't know where to get help

Here is what you should know:

- Almost any situation can be worked through
- You can get the help you need, you just need to reach out to your guidance counselor, the social worker, your favorite teacher or anyone you feel you can talk to
- Explain your situation and your feelings
- There are school and community resources that can help you and your family get the help they might need
- Staying in school is the key to your future

If you or your family need help or someone to talk to:
Call Ashley at Youth Speaking Out, a youth support and leadership group at Parent Support Network, 467-6855 or a.keenan@psnri.org

A Guide to Truancy

**Early Intervention and Prevention
Youth at Risk Coalition
Truancy Prevention Program**

What is Truancy?

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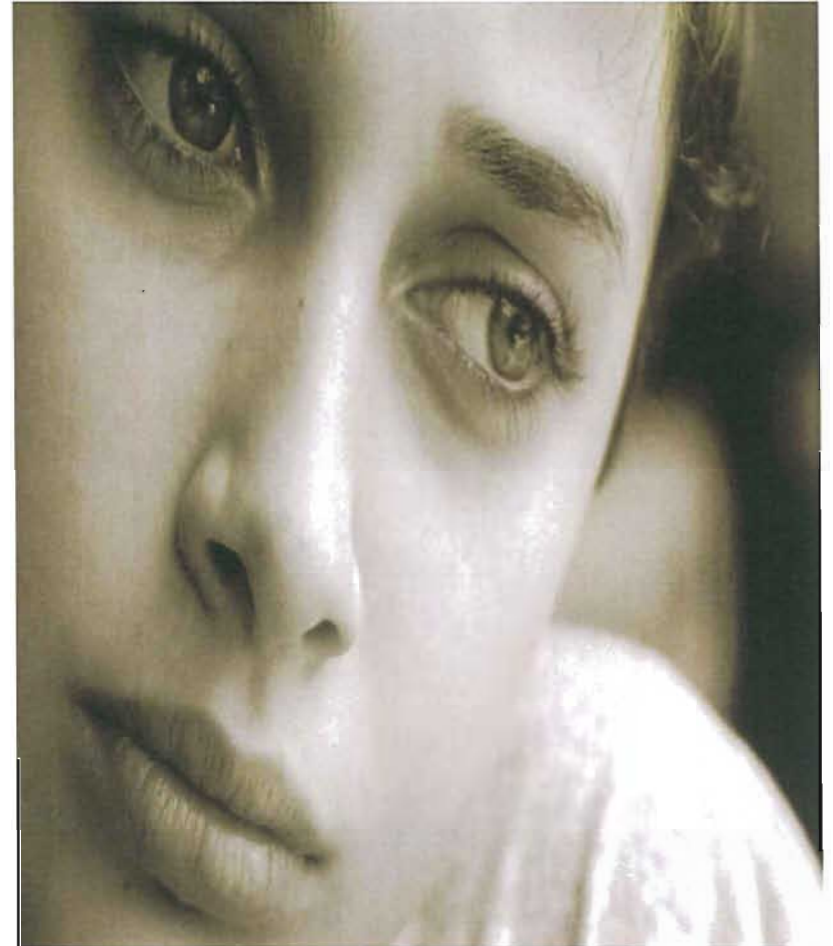
Why Do Students Miss School?

- Medical Problems
- Mental Health Issues
- School Environment
- Bullying
- Living Situations
- Academic Failure
- Alcohol & Drug Use
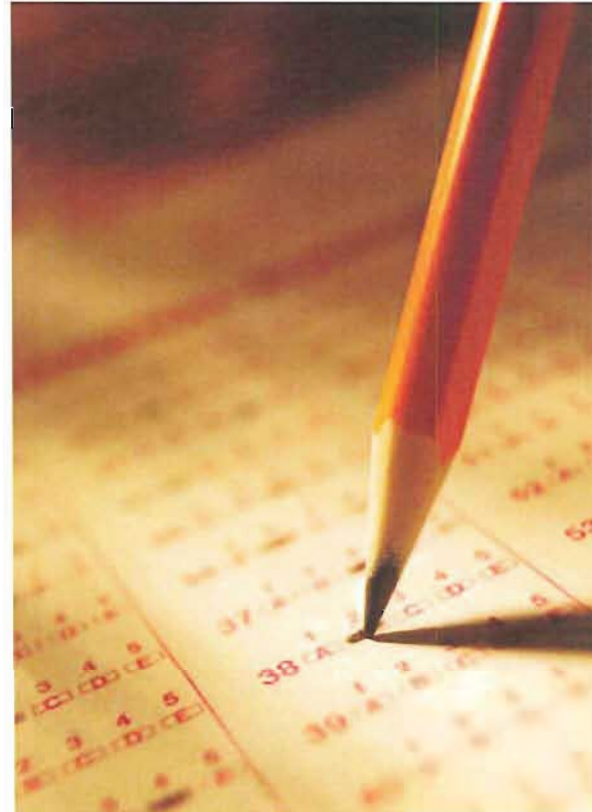
Truancy Predictors

- Disengagement from school
- Lack of success in school
- Association with delinquent peers
- Personal delinquent values
- Lack of family attachment

Truancy Outcomes
Increased Risk For:

- Poor academic performance
- School dropout
- Delinquency
- Teenage pregnancy
- Substance abuse

How Can We Prevent Truancy?

These are specific things we can do to keep our children in the classroom:

Set Boundaries
Ask Questions
Stay Informed
Be Prepared
Schedule Time
Plan Appointments
Plan Vacations

How Can We Reduce Truancy?

- Be Alert
- Look for Alternatives
- Be Pro-Active
- Maintain Your Routine
- Provide Incentives
- Talk About Consequences
- Seek Advice

How Can We Work with Our Children?

- Monitor Behavior
- Talk About Expectations
- Have Consistent Expectations
- Communicate with Your Child
- Be Supportive
- Educate Yourself
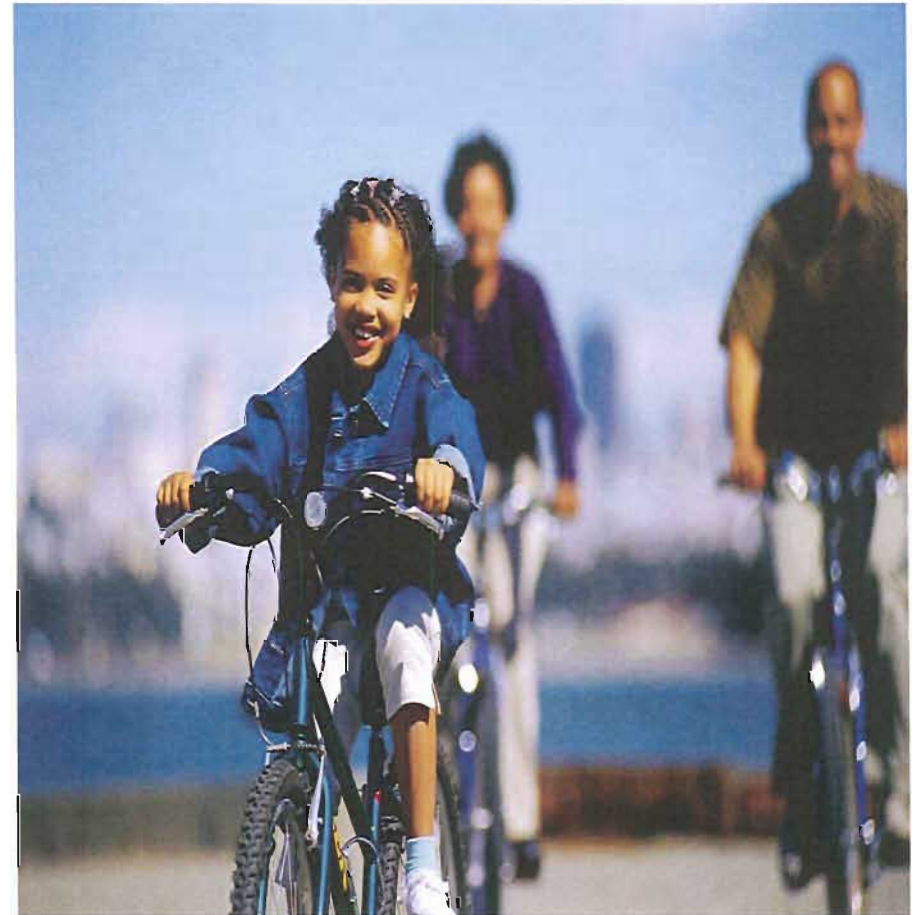
How Can We Work With Our Schools?

- Be Available
- Be Honest
- Help the Teacher Connect with Your Child
- Get Advice
- Get Involved
- Be Open-Minded
- Speak Up
- Collaborate
- Follow Up

Know the Options
Ask Your School About:

- Ending out of school suspensions for Truancy
- Eliminating failing grades and removing attendance as a factor in grading
- Making start times for secondary schools later in the morning
- Offer specialized classes such as Saturday or evening classes to support students who have fallen behind and need to catch up
- Eliminating "push out" policies that withhold learning opportunites from truant students

Who Are Community Partners?

- Law enforcement and juvenile/family courts
- Local government and businesses
- Public health and human services
- Transportation
- Child Welfare
- Local Community Action Agency
- Community Centers
- Faith based organizations
- Parent Associations (PTA)

How Can We Work With Communities?

- Participate
- Seek Out a Parent Network
- Create a Homework or Study Group
- Seek Consistency
- Be a Mentor
- Make School Relevant
- Vote

What Supports are Available?

- **Parent Support Network** – Peer Mentor Program, Family Leadership, Time Banks www.psnri.org
- **FCCP** (Family Community Care Partnership) www.dcyf.ri.gov
- **DHS** (Department of Human Services) www.dhs.ri.gov
- **Local Resources** (Community Action Agencies) http://www.ricommunityaction.org/welcome.asp
- **PTAs** (Parent Teacher Associations) www.pta.org
- **LACs** (Local Advisory Committees on Special Education) Contact your district special education department)
- **RIDE** – Rhode Island Department of Education www.ride.ri.gov
- **RIPIN** – Rhode Island Parent Information Network www.ripin.org

Resources

- National Center for School Engagement http://www.schoolengagement.org/

- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – Truancy Reduction Demonstration Program http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/programs/ProgSummary.asp?pi=36

- Parents' Guide to Truancy Booklet

  http://www.promoteprevent.org/resources/parent%E2%80%99s-guide-truancy

Where to Get Help

Do you have, or know of, a child struggling with behavioral, emotional or educational needs? Do you, as an educator, need information about where to refer a family whose child is in need of more intensive supports outside of the school setting?

There is a statewide program available AT NO COST to families with children experiencing challenges who are reaching out for assistance with parenting/family stress, education, housing, medical concerns and basic needs.

The Rhode Island Family Care Community Partnership
(or as it's more commonly referred to...
the *"FCCP"* program)

There are only a few simple steps to helping a family gain access to a wide range of supports and services in the local community!

Step 1: Refer the family in need to the FCCP program by giving them a program brochure and showing them the phone number to call to access services for their geographic location. A parent or legal guardian then calls the FCCP:

Northern 401 766-0900   **Urban Core 401 331-1350**
West Bay 401 789-3016   **East Bay 401 849-2300**

(With a signed release, a teacher or other service provider can make a referral by calling the Intake line.) During the Intake, the parent/guardian will be asked some basic questions about family members and the family's current needs. If the parent/caregiver needs help making the call, please discuss their concerns.
If possible, sit with them to provide support while they make the call.

Step 2: Based on the family's needs and location, they will be assigned a worker who will meet with them to begin building a ***personalized support team*** made up of people and agencies within the local community. This is called a ***Wraparound*** approach – a term the family might hear a lot while participating in the program.

Step 3: The family will work with their support team to tackle needs and address concerns. Services can be in place for as little as 30 days or long as a year, depending on what type of needs the family has. The worker helps the family identify strengths and set reachable goals.

Parent Support Truancy Prevention Project

Providing Family Support to Parents and Students
A Pilot Project of The Parent Support Network of RI Peer Mentor Program and the Youth at Risk Coalition

What is the Parent Support Truancy Prevention Project?
This project provides an opportunity for parents to connect with a peer mentor who can provide emotional support; information and referral; attendance at school meetings and/ or court. Peer Mentors will learn about the current concerns and needs that parents are facing with their child. They will then work with parents to connect them to services and supports that are needed to improve their child's school attendance and achievement.

How do I access the Parent Support Truancy Prevention Project?
Parents, schools, or concerned community partners can call **467-6855 or 1-800-483-8844** and ask for Pam O'Brien, Truancy Prevention Coordinator. If your school or community agency would like to learn more about this project, a presentation can be arranged. Parents will be assigned to an experienced peer mentor. Website: www.psnri.org

When is a child considered truant?
When a child misses school or class without an excuse from his or her parent/guardian, leaves school without the permission of the teacher or principal, or is consistently late for school, he or she is considered **truant.**

Why do students miss school?
Some of the most common reasons for skipping school are oversleeping, wanting to hang out with friends, and just plain rebellion. A child's refusal to attend school may also be the result of health or mental health problems, school environment, bullying, living situations, academic failure, or alcohol/drug use.

How can parents play a role in reducing truancy?
Many schools are enforcing truancy policies by holding parents responsible for their child's failure to go to school. In Rhode Island parents may find themselves involved with truancy court. Parents understand that children can not learn if they are not in school. Getting up to speed on the truancy laws and school guidelines as well as monitoring things at home can provide key opportunities to impact attendance. Making sure that children are in school or class can ensure that they receive the education that is so critical to life success.

For more information On the Parent Support Truancy Prevention Pilot Project Please contact Parent Support Network at 467-6855 or 1-800-483-8844 or visit the website at www.psnri.org

Parent Support Network of Rhode Island
1395 Atwood Avenue, Suite 114
Johnston, RI 02919

Additional Resources
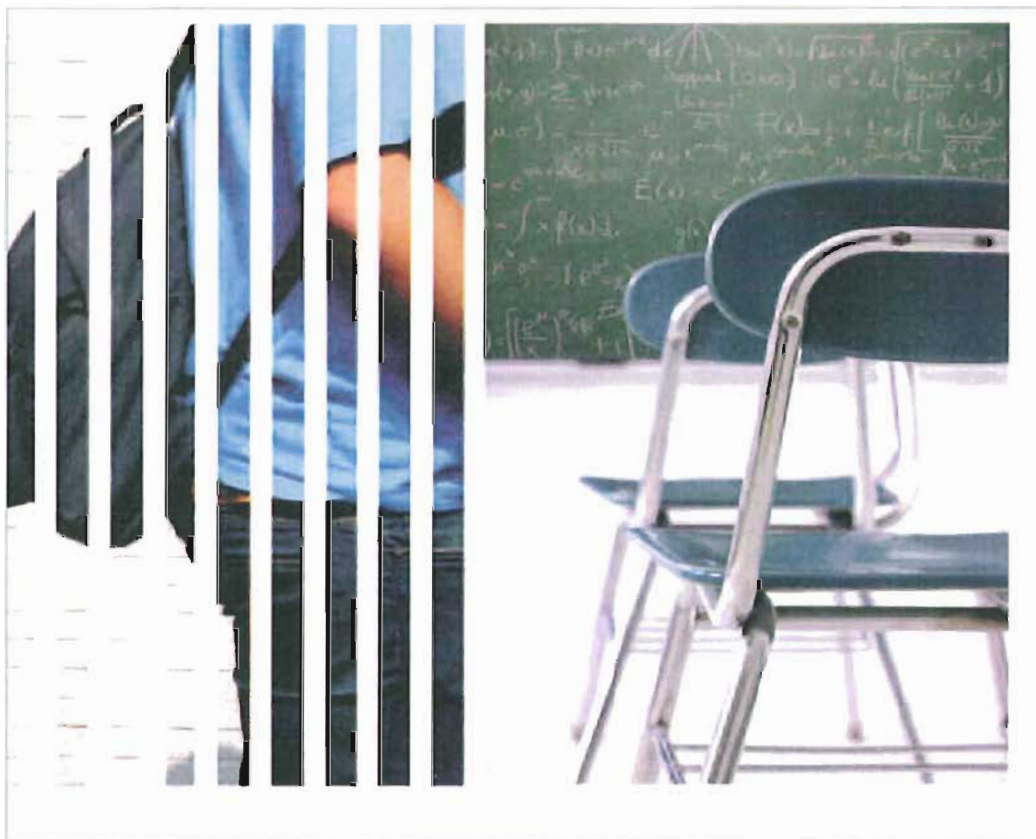
WEBINAR OPPORTUNITY **Web-Based Online Course (Nine Units) "Truancy and Dropout: Mending the Cracks in the Graduation Pipeline"** Go to www.schoolengagement.org for more information and to register.

National Center for School Engagement AAA (Attendance-Attachment-Achievement) Policy and Practice Assessment
This comprehensive assessment is designed to help school teams evaluate the extent to which school level policies and practices help students feel engaged and connected to this school community and whether they intentionally foster or unintentionally undermine student attendance, attachment and achievement. Go to www.schoolengagement.org for sample questions and information on the complete assessment.

Check and Connect – Check & Connect is a model of sustained intervention for promoting students' engagement with school and learning. Demonstrated outcomes include:

- decrease in truancy,
- decrease in dropout rates,
- increase in accrual of credits,
- increase in school completion, and
- impact on literacy.

Check & Connect is data-driven and grounded in research on resiliency and home-school collaboration. Student referral criteria include alterable warning signs of school withdrawal – primarily attendance indices (absences, tardies, or skipping class)—in the context of academic performance and emotional or behavioral problems
http://www.promisingpractices.net/program.asp?programid=170

For more information, please contact us at checkandconnect@umn.edu or toll-free at 866-434-0010.

Reaching Kids Through Positive Rap!

Have a fun and educational performance at your school with Mr. Deep Positivity!

Mr. Deep Positivity's (MDP) ingenious blend of positive lyrics and rap music engages students in his performance where he proves it is cool to be positive. His powerful, positive songs inspire youth to stay in school, handle bullies and peer pressure appropriately, avoid drugs and cigarettes, make wise choices and follow their dreams. Known as the positive rap educator MDP has songs for all ages and a proven track record of success.

MDP has been on a continuous tour in New England for the past eight years and has performed for thousands of students at hundreds of schools. He's written over 500 positive songs and has released a series of five motivational ***Lessons for Life CDs***. MDP's mission is to have every student receive one of his CDs to reinforce the *Deep Lessons for Life* he shares in his concerts.

MDP's most requested concert are...
• School Rules Reinforcement
• PBIS Kickoff Concerts
• Bullying Prevention
• Staying in School
• NECAP Testing Kickoff Concert
• Family Night Concerts
• Positive Behavior
• Safety

Currently five entire schools have been sponsored with free CDs for every student and nearly 4000 CDs have been given away to the youth of Rhode Island. MDP has also allowed several schools to use his CDs as fundraisers to help school acquire needed funds.

For more information about MDP or to schedule a performance contact James McBride at (401) 374-7306 or email him at deeppositivity@aol.com

You can also hear song samples and read a listing of MDP's many accomplishments at www.cdbaby.com/mrdeeppositivity

Mr. Deep's Lessons for Life!

What are the problems that youth face?
• Bullying
• Peer Pressure
• Drugs
• Safety
• Violence
• Poor Self Esteem
• Wrong Choices
• Bad Role Models
• Dropping Out
• Juvenile Delinquency

Local celebrity "Mr. Deep Positivity" James McBride's powerful **Deep Lessons for Life Program** addresses these issues in a fun way that youth relate to. Throughout the twelve week program students will be exposed to eleven Lessons for Life from Mr. Deep Positivity's (MDP) Lessons for Life CD Series. Students will gather with MDP and discuss the topic of the week. Before, during or after the discussion MDP will perform a song or two relating to the topic to further reinforce the positive life lessons. During this time students will participate by asking and answering questions, in class activities, singing along, and game playing.

The eleven topics covered are...
1. Following Your Dreams
2. Handling Bullying
3. Peer Pressure
4. Making Right Choices
5. Nonviolence (Conflict Resolution)
6. Literacy (Staying In School)
7. Positive Self Esteem
8. Safety
9. Avoiding Drugs & Cigarettes
10. Positive Behavior (School Rules)
11. Leadership (Being A Role Model)

MDP has a wealth of experience working with youth and has a proven track record of success. He has been a Nonviolence Instructor, All Stars Program Instructor, a Men 2 Be instructor, a Big Brother and a positive rap educator.

MDP has combined his powerful, positive songs with his training expertise to create this innovative program that will help youth be safe, smart and follow their dreams. Each student will receive a certificate of completion and Lessons for Life CD.

For More Information contact James McBride at (401) 374-7306 or by email at deeppositivity@aol.com

Collaborative Case Management......Making Services Work for Youth

Many youth experience multiple barriers to success. It's hard to navigate our system of services and opportunities and we all know that one agency can't do everything.

A Successful Pilot in Providence

A partnership of state agencies in Rhode Island came together in 2008 to test the impact of collaborative case management as a result of resources provided by the federal government as part of the Shared Youth Vision initiative. The Rhode Island partnership designed and implemented a collaborative case management pilot to:

- formalize cross-agency governance structure for at-risk youth
- standardize intake and assessment
- maximize access to resources and minimize duplication and gaps in services
- create multiple pathways to services
- increase the pool of resources available to RI youth

The results generated from the collaborative case management (CCM) pilot verified the ability of this model to address these issues by providing a practical and concrete platform for collaboration among youth workers.

For example, CCM provides youth workers the opportunity to share expertise and resources across systems, make referrals that are tailored to the youth they serve, and connect with state agency staff who can help clarify or resolve/remove policy barriers that often impede access to services.

The SYV State Team is replicating this project to demonstrate the power of collaborative case management and its impact on education, employment, and other key outcomes for Rhode Island's most at risk youth. We are committed to taking the lessons from the Providence collaborative case management pilot and expand into a statewide system that truly delivers on a "no wrong door" promise for youth.

We hope you will join us.

For additional information visit our website: www.risolutionsdesk.org or email Andy Beck at anbeck@schoolandmain.org or call 617-227-2100.

Pilot Outcomes	
Increase in Referrals	**79%** of all referrals came from the team process during collaborative case management sessions.
Increase in Resources for Youth	**32% more** goals were identified through the team than through a case manager acting alone.
Increase in Awareness of Community Resources	**100%** of the Case Managers reported that collaborative case management increased their awareness of community resources and their ability to connect youth to services.
Increase # of Connected Youth	**50% more** of the pilot youth were connected to school and work compared to the control group.

parent support network
OF RHODE ISLAND

a network of families
supporting families
by sharing experiences
and strengths

Mission & History

PARENT SUPPORT NETWORK OF RHODE ISLAND (PSN) IS AN ORGANIZATION OF FAMILIES SUPPORTING FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND YOUNG ADULTS WHO EXPERIENCE OR ARE AT RISK FOR SERIOUS BEHAVIORAL, EMOTIONAL, AND/OR MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES. PSN SEEKS TO STRENGTHEN AND PRESERVE FAMILIES AND REDUCE FAMILY ISOLATION BY BUILDING CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY COMPETENT SYSTEMS OF CARE THROUGH ADVOCACY, EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND INCREASED PUBLIC AWARENESS.

PSN BEGAN AS A PROJECT OF THE MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION IN 1988. AT THAT TIME A SMALL GROUP OF COMMITTED PARENTS CAME TOGETHER WHO HAD CHILDREN IN BRADLEY HOSPITAL. THIS GROUP OF PARENTS DEVELOPED SUPPORT GROUPS ACROSS THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND AT THE SAME TIME BEGAN TO EDUCATE STATE AND LOCAL PARTNERS AS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY AND PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIP IN THE SYSTEM OF CARE.

**1395 Atwood Ave, Suite 114
Johnston, RI 02919
401.467.6855 or 800.483.8844
www.psnri.org**

Peer Mentor Program

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SERVICES
Peer Mentors work with family members in person or by phone to discuss their child's strengths and needs, listen to concerns of the family, and provide emotional support and encouragement.

INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICES
Peer Mentors also work with family members to assist them in finding the most appropriate services and supports for their child and family. Assistance is available for filling out applications or arranging for appointments. PSN has a large resource library on many child and family topics. Resource materials include brochures, fact sheets, documents, books, tapes, and videos.

ADVOCACY SERVICES
Peer Mentors work with family members to help them prepare for meetings with schools, service agencies, and the courts. As they prepare, they will identify issues of concern and make recommendations. If available and if needed, Peer Mentors will attend meetings with a family member to assist in advocating for the most appropriate services for the child and family.

PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS
Parent Support Network offers parent support groups twice a month. Bi-lingual support for Spanish speaking families is provided as needed. PSN has information on other parent support groups that are taking place across the state.

PLEASE REMEMBER PSN WHEN MAKING YOUR CONTRIBUTION THROUGH UNITED WAY. OUR DONOR DESIGNATION NUMBER IS #4015. THANK YOU.

System of Care

A SYSTEM OF CARE IS A COORDINATED NETWORK OF COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES AND SUPPORTS THAT IS ORGANIZED TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SERIOUS MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS AND THEIR FAMILIES. FAMILIES AND YOUTH WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS SO SERVICES AND SUPPORTS ARE EFFECTIVE, BUILD ON THE STRENGTHS OF INDIVIDUALS, AND ADDRESS EACH PERSON'S CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC NEEDS.

Family Leadership Program

PSN provides ongoing training to support family and youth leaders who are interested in systems change.

AGENTS OF TRANSFORMATION TRAINING SERIES
The Agents of Transformation Training Series empowers family members wanting to build family-driven systems of care for children at risk for or who have serious emotional, behavioral, and/or mental health challenges and their families. "Agents of Transformation" become valuable voices in the prevention and early intervention efforts needed to support the social, emotional and overall wellbeing of children, youth, families and communities.

Family Leaders work in partnership with policy makers, service providers, and community partners to support the ongoing work of system transformation in an effort to better meet the needs of children and young adults with mental health challenges and their families. PSN strives to have meaningful involvement of families and youth participating on state and local policy and decision-making bodies and coalitions. This helps to support the development and implementation of legislation and policies that are family-driven, culturally and linguistically competent, and effective.

PSN ALSO OFFERS THE FOLLOWING TRAININGS:
Peer Mentor Certification, System Navigation and Advocacy, Family Leadership, and Understanding Wraparound.

Youth Speaking Out

Youth Speaking Out (YSO) is a dedicated group of youth leaders promoting and educating others about a positive view of mental health. These youth leaders provide peer-to-peer support and are involved in the community. They strive to promote positive youth development, and spread awareness and a unique perspective of the different mental health issues and related challenges affecting youth and young adults. YSO leaders are involved in local and national presentations and provide insight, advocacy, and leadership in various decision and policy making boards.

The group works together to provide support to each member and other youth in times of need. Most importantly, the group is able to hang out and have a good time in a safe, comfortable environment with peers.

Youth Speaking Out seeks to empower children and youth to be responsible decision makers and positive role models. To learn more about the program and/or how to get involved with Youth Speaking Out, please contact the Parent Support Network.

parent
support
network
OF RHODE ISLAND

red de familias, apoyando
a otras familias a traves de
sus experiencias comunes
y conocimientos

Misión y Historia

LA RED DE SOPORTE O APOYO (PSN) COMENZÓ COMO UN PROYECTO DE LA ASOCIACIÓN
DE SALUD MENTAL EN 1986. EN ESE TIEMPO UN PEQUEÑO GRUPO DE COMPROMETIDOS
PADRES CON NIÑOS EN EL HOSPITAL BRADLEY SE UNIERON. ESTE GRUPO DE PADRES
DESARROLLÓ GRUPOS DE SOPORTE O APOYO A TRAVÉS DEL ESTADO DE RHODE ISLAND
Y AL MISMO TIEMPO COMENZARON A EDUCAR COMPAÑEROS O SOCIOS DEL ESTADO
Y LOCALES SOBRE LA IMPORTANCIA DE LA ASOCIACIÓN DE FAMILIAS Y PROFESIONALES
EN EL SISTEMA DE CUIDADOS.

PSN ES UNA ORGANIZACIÓN DE FAMILIAS AYUDANDO A FAMILIAS CON NIÑOS, JÓVENES,
Y ADULTOS JÓVENES QUIENES EXPERIENCIAN EL DESAFÍO O RETO O ESTÁN EN RIESGO
DE PROBLEMAS SERIOS DE CONDUCTA, EMOCIONALES, Y/O SALUD MENTAL. PSN BUSCA
EL FORTALECER Y CONSERVAR LAS FAMILIAS Y REDUCIR EL AISLAMIENTO DE LAS FAMILIAS
CON LA CONSTRUCCIÓN DE SISTEMAS DE CUIDADOS COMPETENTES CULTURALMENTE
Y LINGÜÍSTICAMENTE A TRAVÉS DE LA ABOGACÍA O DEFENSORÍA, EDUCACIÓN,
ENTRENAMIENTO Y AUMENTO DE CONCIENTIZACIÓN PÚBLICA.

1395 Atwood Ave, Suite 114
Johnston, RI 02919
401.467.6855 or 800.483.8844
www.psnri.org

Programa de Mentores

SERVICIOS DE SOPORTES O APOYO INDIVIDUAL
Los Mentores trabajan con los miembros de familia en persona
o por teléfono para discutir las fortalezas o puntos fuertes y
necesidades, oyen las preocupaciones de la familia, y proveen
apoyo emocional y ánimo.

INFORMACIÓN &
SERVICIOS DE REFERIDOS
Los Mentores trabajan con los
miembros de familia en persona
o por teléfono para ayudarles a
encontrar los servicios y apoyos
más apropiados para su niño y
familia. Ayuda para llenar las
aplicaciones y el arreglo para citas
también pueden ser proveídos.
PSN tiene una biblioteca grande de recursos en muchos tópicos
de niños y familias. Materiales de recursos que incluyen folletos,
hojas de factores, documentos, libros, citas y videos.

SERVICIOS DE ABOGACÍA O DEFENSORÍA
Los mentores trabajan con miembros de familia para ayudarlos
a prepararse para reuniones en la escuela, agencias de servicios,
y en las cortes, mientras ellos se preparan, ellos identificarán
los problemas que le preocupan y hacen recomendaciones.
Los Mentores basado en capacidad atenderán reuniones con
un miembro de la familia para ayudar en la abogacía o defensoría
para los servicios más apropiados para sus niños y familias.

GRUPOS DE SOPORTE O APOYO PARA PADRES
La Red de Soporte o Apoyo para padres ofrece grupos de soporte
o apoyo para padres dos veces al mes. Soporte o Apoyo bilingüe
para familias que hablan español se proveé si es necesario.
PSN tiene información sobre otros grupos de soporte o apoyo
para padres que están reuniéndose a través del estado.

POR FAVOR RECUERDE A PSN CUANDO HAGA SU CONTRIBUCIÓN A TRAVÉS DE
UNITED WAY. NUESTRO NÚMERO DESIGNADO PARA DONACIONES ES #4915.

Sistema de Cuidados

EL SISTEMA DE CUIDADOS ES UNA RED COORDINADA DE SOPORTES O AYUDAS DE SERVICIOS
BASADOS EN LA COMUNIDAD QUE ESTÁN ORGANIZADAS PARA CONOCER LOS RETOS O
DESAFÍOS DE LOS NIÑOS Y JÓVENES CON PROBLEMAS SERIOS DE SALUD MENTAL, SUS
NECESIDADES Y LAS DE SU FAMILIA. LAS FAMILIAS Y JÓVENES TRABAJAN EN ASOCIACIÓN
CON ORGANIZACIONES PÚBLICAS Y PRIVADAS ASÍ LOS SERVICIOS Y SOPORTES O AYUDAS SON
EFECTIVOS, CONSTRUIDOS EN LAS FORTALEZAS O PUNTOS FUERTES DE LOS INDIVIDUOS,
Y DIRIGEN LAS NECESIDADES CULTURALES Y LINGÜÍSTICAS DE CADA PERSONA, UN SISTEMA
DE CUIDADOS AYUDA A LOS NIÑOS, JÓVENES Y FAMILIAS A FUNCIONAR MEJOR EN EL HOGAR,
LA ESCUELA, EN LA COMUNIDAD Y DURANTE LA VIDA.

Programa de Liderazgo
de la Familia

PSN proveé entrenamiento continuo para apoyar a los líderes de
familias y jóvenes que están interesados en el sistema de cambios.

SERIES DE ENTRENAMIENTO DE AGENTES DE TRANSFORMACIÓN
Este entrenamiento le da el poder a los miembros de familia que
quieren construir sistemas de cuidados guiados o conducidos
por la familia para niños que están en riesgo o que tienen serios
problemas emocionales, conducta y/o mentales. Estos Agentes
son voces valiosas en la prevención e intervención temprana de
esfuerzos necesitados para apoyar el bienestar social, emocional,
y en general de los niños, jóvenes, familias y comunidades.

Los Líderes de Familia trabajan en asociación con los que
hacen las pólizas, proveedores de servicios y socios de la
comunidad para apoyar el trabajo actual del sistema de transfor-
mación para conocer mejor las necesidades de los niños, jóvenes
y adultos jóvenes con desafíos o retos de salud mental. PSN lucha
por el envolvimiento de las familias y jóvenes para la participación
de la toma de decciones y en las coaliciones. Esto ayuda a el
desarrollo e implementación de pólizas que son guiadas o
conducidas por la familia y cultural y lingüísticamente competente.

PSN TAMBIÉN OFRECE LOS SIGUIENTES ENTRENAMIENTOS
Certificación del programa de mentor, navegación del sistema y
abogacía o defensoría, liderazgo de familias.

Los Jóvenes Hablan
Por Sí Mismos

Los Jóvenes Hablan Por Sí Mismos es un grupo de líderes
jóvenes quienes están dedicados para promocionar y educar
a otros sobre la visión positiva sobre salud mental. Los líderes
jóvenes están enfocados en proveer apoyo unos a otros y están
envueltos en la comunidad. Ellos trabajan hacia la promoción
del desarrollo positivo de los jóvenes, y propagando o
extendiendo la concientización de los diferentes problemas
de los jóvenes alrededor de la salud mental. Los líderes jóvenes
están envueltos en presentaciones a nivel local y nacional
y proveen ideas y abogacía o defensoría en varias juntas o
concejos de las tomas de decisiones y pólizas. El equipo trabaja
junto para proveer soporte o apoyo unos a otros y a cualquier
otro joven en momentos de necesidad. Más importantemente,
el grupo puede pasar un buen tiempo y tener un buen rato en
un entorno seguro y cómodo con los compañeros. Los Jóvenes
Hablan Por Sí Mismos es un grupo de jóvenes con la visión
de otorgar poderes a niños y jóvenes para ser responsables de
las decisiones que se toman y para ser modelo de conducta.
Para aprender sobre el programa y/o como ser parte de Los
Jóvenes Hablan Por Sí Mismos, por favor contacte al Parent
Support Network.

Raising a family can be an overwhelming experience and finding where to turn to for help is not always easy. Working with others in your community may help to handle the more difficult situations that arise. Whether coping with issues at school or at home, the Family Care Community Partnership can assist you with a plan to meet the needs of your family.

"The Family Care Community Partnership provides us with guidance, and we, as the family, have the strongest voice at the table and the power to turn our difficulties into opportunities."

DCYF: Transforming care for the brighter future of Rhode Island children.

Working Together to Strengthen RI Families

Family Care Community Partnership is funded by:

DCYF

Family Care Community Partnership

What is the Family Care Community Partnership?

What is the "Wraparound" Process?

The Family Care Community Partnership brings community-based service providers, family members and friends together to build a stronger, brighter future for your family. After meeting with you to assess your needs, the Family Care Community Partnership puts you, the family, in the center and wraps you with the right local services, community programs and family members and friends in an effort to craft an individualized plan.

You may be eligible

See Requirements Below:

- *Children birth to age 18 who have serious emotional, behavioral and/or mental health challenges*

- *Children who are enrolled in Positive Educational Partnership Schools and participating in early childhood settings*

- *Youth who are transitioning from the Juvenile Correctional Facility back into the community*

- *Children and families at risk of involvement with DCYF*

"They helped me trust when I didn't trust anymore. I have a team of people helping me now."

How do I get in touch with my Family Care Community Partnership?

The Family Care Community Partnership provides you with access to support closer to home and with the flexibility of meeting with you at any location. Call the office closest to you.

1 **Northern RI Family Care Community Partnership**
Family Resources Community Action
245 Main Street
Woonsocket, RI 02895
(401) 766 - 0900

2 **Urban Core Family Care Community Partnership**
Family Service of RI
134 Thurbers Avenue
Providence, RI 02905
(401) 331 - 1350

3 **West Bay Family Care Community Partnership**
South County Community Action
1935 Kingstown Road
Wakefield, RI 02879
(401) 789 - 3016

4 **East Bay Family Care Community Partnership**
Child & Family Services of Newport County
31 John Clark Road
Middletown, RI 02842
(401) 849 - 2300

Principles of the Wraparound Process

1 Family Voice and Choice
Each family's perspectives are prioritized during the wraparound process.

2 Team Based
A team, agreed upon by the family, is composed of people who have a strong commitment to the family.

3 Natural Supports
Support is actively sought out from friends, extended family, neighbors, co- workers, and community relationships.

4 Collaboration
Team members work cooperatively and share responsibility for developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the plan.

5 Community-Based
The team implements service and support strategies in the least restrictive settings possible and that safely promotes family integration into home and community life.

6 Culturally Competent
The process demonstrates respect for and builds on the values, beliefs and culture of the family.

7 Individualized
Each family has a customized plan uniquely tailored to fit their needs and consistent with these principles.

8 Strengths Based
The plan builds on and enhances the strengths, creativity, strategies and resources of families and their team.

9 Persistence
Despite challenges, the team persists in working toward the goals until the team reaches agreement that a formal wraparound process is no longer required.

10 Outcome Based
The team ties the goals and strategies of the plan to measurable indicators of success, monitors progress in terms of these indicators, and revises the plan accordingly.

Family Care Community Partnership

East Bay

*Child & Family Services
of Newport County*
31 John Clarke Road
Middletown, RI 02842
(401) 849-2300
www.childandfamilyri.com

Partner Agencies:

Child and Family Services
of Newport County

East Bay Community Action Program

East Bay Center

Newport County Community
Mental Health Center

Serving:

Barrington	Middletown
Bristol	Newport
East Providence	Portsmouth
Jamestown	Tiverton
Little Compton	Warren

Family Care
Community Partnership

West Bay
South County Community Action Agency
1935 Kingstown Road
Wakefield, RI 02879
(866) 840-6532
www.sccainc.org

Partner Agencies:
Family Service of Rhode Island

West Bay Community Action

Thundermist Health Center

WellOne

South Shore Mental Health Center

The Kent Center

Serving:

Charlestown	North Kingstown
Coventry	Richmond
East Greenwich	South Kingstown
Exeter	Warwick
Hopkinton	West Greenwich
Narragansett	West Warwick
New Shoreham	Wakefield
Westerly	

Family Care Community Partnership

Northern
Family Resources Community Action
245 Main Street
Woonsocket, RI 02895
(401) 766-0900
www.famresri.org

Partner Agencies:
Comprehensive Community
Action Program

NRI Community Services, Inc.

Gateway Healthcare, Inc.

Serving:
Burrillville
Cumberland
Foster
Glocester
Johnston
Lincoln
North Providence
North Smithfield
Scituate
Smithfield
Woonsocket

Family Care Community Partnership

Urban Core
Family Service of Rhode Island
134 Thurbers Avenue
Providence, RI 02905
(401) 331-1350
www.familyserviceri.org

Partner Agencies:
John Hope Settlement House

Children's Friend

Comprehensive Community
Action Program

TIDES Family Services

The Providence Center

Serving:
Providence
Central Falls
Pawtucket
Cranston

CHILD IN EMOTIONAL CRISIS?

CALL US. **Is your child:**

- Hurting himself or others?
- Feeling excessive anger or sadness?
- Lashing out at siblings and adults?
- Having behavior problems at school?

It's confusing and scary, for you and your child. How do you get help? Each child is different, each problem is different, and each needs a different kind of help.

Now there's one number to call: **Kid's Link.** It's a central emergency hotline for kids in emotional crisis, connected to all the children's services in the state.

Call us anytime. It's confidential. It's free.

We're here to help, no matter where you live in Rhode Island, even if you don't have insurance.

Call us, day or night. **Because when a child is in crisis, the whole family hurts.**

1-866-429-3979

Sponsored by the Department of Children, Youth and Families and in collaboration with Gateway Healthcare, East Bay Mental Health Center, The Kent Center, Newport County Community Mental Health Center, NRI Community Services, The Providence Center, and South Shore Mental Health Center.

Kid's Link RI
HOTLINE FOR CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL CRISIS

Confidential. Free. 24 hours.

Is your child:
- Hurting himself or others?
- Feeling excessive anger or sadness?
- Lashing out at siblings and adults?
- Having behavior problems at school?

Call us ANYTIME 24 hours a day 7 days a week!

Kid's Link RI
HOTLINE FOR CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL CRISIS

1-866-429-3979

¿NIÑO CON CRISIS EMOCIONAL?

LLÁMENOS. Su niño:

- ¿Se lastima o lastima a los demás?
- ¿Está muy enojado o triste?
- ¿Golpea a sus hermanos o a los adultos?
- ¿Tiene problemas de conducta en la escuela?

Eso es confuso y peligroso para usted y para su niño. ¿Cómo podemos ayudar? Cada niño es diferente y cada uno necesita un tipo de ayuda diferente.

Ahora existe un teléfono al que puede llamar: **Kid's Link.** La misma es una línea de emergencia central para niños con crisis emocionales que se encuentra conectada a todos los servicios para niños del estado.

Llámenos en todo momento. Es confidencial. Es gratis.

Estamos para ayudarle, donde sea que viva en Rhode Island, aún cuando no tenga seguro.

Llámenos de día o de noche.
Porque cuando su niño tiene una crisis sufre toda la familia.

1-866-429-3979

Confidencial. Gratis. Las 24 horas.

Su niño:
- ¿Se lastima o lastima a los demás?
- ¿Está muy enojado o triste?
- ¿Golpea a sus hermanos o a los adultos?
- ¿Tiene problemas de conducta en la escuela?

¡Llámenos en TODO MOMENTO, las 24 horas del día los 7 días de la semana!

1-866-429-3979

FOSTER & RESIDENTIAL CARE

A highly interactive CDROM that responds to individual choices and is specifically designed to address the unique communication and compliance needs of foster parents and residential care staff by addressing:

- Peer Aggression
- Defiance of Authority
- Stealing
- Bullying
- Hygiene Problems
- Privacy Issues
- Vandalism
- Supervision
- Assertive Discipline
- "I" Statements

To learn more about this Parenting Wisely Program visit our website at www.psnri.org

"Sometimes being a parent can be difficult. There are days when I feel effective and other days when I am frustrated. By discussing and practices parenting skills in this training I am now more confident and a have lots of support in my actions." Parent Testimony

To learn more about our individual and group offerings contact:

Parent Support Network of RI
1395 Atwood Avenue, Suite 114
Johnston, RI 02919
Phone: 401-467-6855
Fax: 401-467-6903
Toll Free: 1-800-483-8844

Email: b.alejo@psnri.org
www.psnri.org

FUNDING PARTNERS:

RI Department of Children, Youth and Families
RI Department of Education
Rhode Island Positive Educational Partnership
Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

parent
support
network
OF RHODE ISLAND

PARENTING WISELY

Promoting Social, Emotional Health and Well-being in Children, Youth, and Families

OVERVIEW

Parenting Wisely is offered to parents in Rhode Island. Referrals are received from Family Care Community Partnership System of Care Initiative, as well as from schools, family court, and families.

Parenting Wisely is an interactive parenting skills multi-session education program developed by Family Works Inc. The program is available in three models; young children (4 – 8), youth/teen (9 – 18) and Foster & Residential Care.

The program teaches parents by providing enacted scenarios in video scenes, providing multiple solutions and critiquing both effective and ineffective parenting methods. Family Leaders facilitate the program by sharing personal experience.

Designed by experts with proven results for positive change *Parenting Wisely* is an award winning program that teaches valuable communication and behavior management skills.

GOALS

The Parenting Wisely Programs are designed to support and strengthen the learning of skills for the healthy well-balanced raising of children from age 3 to 18. They are proven to reduce problem behaviors and increase communication and family unity.

Using video technology and peer support, *Parenting Wisely* teaches parents how to:

- Discipline effectively and fairly.

- Explain what you expect from your child.

- Explain rewards and consequences of behavior to your child.

- Let your child know you hear him/her and you're trying to understand.

YOUNG CHILDREN

Typical problem situations are presented that are unique communication and compliance needs of parents of younger children. The program addresses the following parenting skills:
- Redirection
- Active Listening
- "I" Statements
- Nondirective Play
- Fostering Social Skills
- Communicating with School
- Time Out
- Setting Limits/Consequences

YOUTH/TEEN

Typical problem situations are presented with both effective and ineffective solutions depicted. Parenting and communication skills learned include:
- Significantly reducing verbal and physical aggression.

- Significantly reducing the frequency and severity of teen/preteen problem behaviors.

- Improving and strengthening family relationships
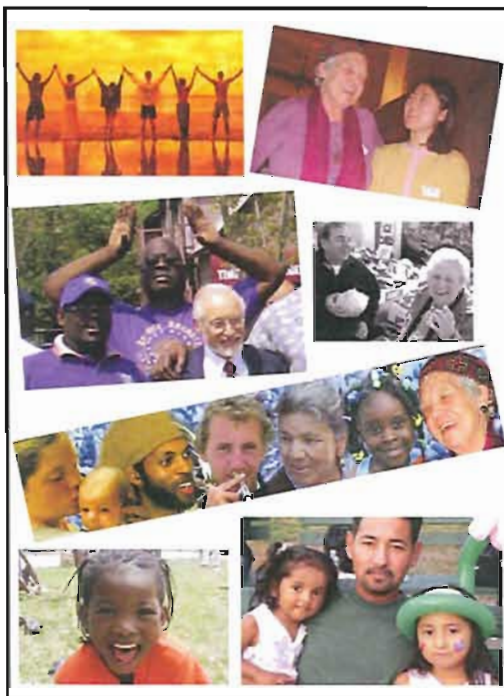
RI TimeBank Initiative

Reweaving Community, one Hour at a time

A TimeBank is a community of people who help each other by sharing their abilities, talents and experiences. We all have needs and gifts to share.

When you provide a service for another TimeBank member, you earn one Time Dollar for each hour. You can then exchange your Time Dollars for services provided by other members of the TimeBank.

To learn more about time banking, go to www.timebanks.org

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parent support network
OF RHODE ISLAND

Parent Support Network

1395 Atwood Avenue,
Suite 114
Johnston, RI 02919 U. S. A.

Phone: 401-467-6855
Fax: 401-467-6903
www.psnri.org
Email: l.tapozada@psnri.org

TimeBanks
www.timebanks.org

RI TimeBank Initiative

Tel. 401.467.6855
1.800.483.8844

http://community.timebanks.org

RI TimeBanks

Do you need help with transportation, child care, yard work or home maintenance? Do you want to learn a language or how to play an instrument? Do you just want to know that there are people you can call on if you need help?

RI TimeBanks is a diverse group of people, of all ages and backgrounds, coming together to build a sense of community. Through sharing our unique talents with one another, we can offer each other support, and access to services that we might not otherwise be able to afford.

Our members are exchanging services such as child care, transportation, home improvement, translation, tutoring, yard work, office work, marketing, computer help, and more!

"We have what we need if we use what we have."
Edgar Cahn, TimeBanks Founder

FAQS

How do I become a member?

You can enroll online at

http://community.timebanks.org

or call 401.467.6855 and ask for TimeBanks.

Is there a minimum commitment that members need to make?

There are no requirements for members. Members can be as active as they like.

Do I have to earn time dollars before I can spend them?

No. It is common for members to fluctuate between positive and negative balances.

Are there any costs involved?

Individual members participate in the TimeBanks free of charge. For organization members, we request a volunteer donation.

What benefits are there to joining as an organization?

Organizations can raise awareness for the causes it works for. In addition, organization members can earn time dollars when they volunteer.

Core Values

Assets

Every human being has something to offer. From the youngest to the oldest, we all have unique strengths.

Redefining Work

Some work is beyond price, like work that builds strong families, revitalizes neighborhoods, advances social justice, and makes the planet sustainable.

Reciprocity

Helping works better as a two-way street. We can work together to build a better world.

Social networks

We need each other. Networks are stronger than individuals and can weave a community of support.

Respect

Every human being matters and deserves respect.

What to Expect:

By taking part in **Project GOALS**:

- Families will work with a trained counselor and receive a thorough assessment and discussion of teen issues, such as substance use, school attendance, and risky sexual behaviors.

- The program aims to promote healthy family discussions regarding substance use and other teen issues.

- No Concerns, No Hassles -

It's FREE – It is free throughout the duration of the program.

It's PRIVATE – All the information you and your teen provide will be kept confidential.

It's CONVENIENT – We can make every appointment as convenient as possible.

It's FLEXIBLE – Follow-up appointments are scheduled at your family's convenience.

For more information or to set up an appointment, please contact us at:
401-863-6669 or
TSPP@brown.edu

Project **GOALS** is sponsored by:

Brown University, Providence, RI

BROWN
www.brown.edu

and

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

www.nih.gov

Project GOALS

Brown University

Contact us at: 401-863-6669 or
TSPP@brown.edu

Project GOALS

Helping Adolescents Achieve Healthy Goals

A Program Designed for TEENS and PARENTS

Addressing Substance Use, Truancy and other Health Risks

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

A Brown University Research Study

(401) 863-6669
TSPP@brown.edu

If you have a teen who is beginning to experiment with or who is using marijuana, alcohol, or other drugs, NOW is the BEST time to address it — BEFORE serious problems arise.

Many parents wonder what they can do to help their adolescents reach healthy goals and make good decisions regarding school, drugs, and sex.

We can provide you guidance based on our experience with other adolescents.

This program is available for teens (ages 13 to 17) who are already experimenting with alcohol or drugs and skipping school.

Project
G⚽ALS

This is a Brown University research program designed to help parents and teens with issues related to alcohol, drug use, school truancy, and other health risk behaviors.

Parents and teens **may** each receive up **to $250** for the time it takes to participate in the project.

This brochure provides an overview of the program and some of the ways it may benefit your family.

For more information, please contact us at: 401-863-6669 or TSPP@brown.edu

The Program

There are two types of programs we offer. We are comparing them in a research project designed to see which families do best with which program. Each program only involves two initial meetings. We believe both of these programs are helpful.

All families first complete questionnaires and interviews about teen substance use, teen behaviors, and family life. Families then take part in <u>one</u> of two family counseling programs in which they are randomly assigned.

◆ Family Education
In this program, parents and teens will receive information from a counselor about teen alcohol and drug use, truancy, and sexual risk behaviors. This will take about an hour and a half. Families then take part in 2 follow-up interviews over the next six months.

◆ Family Discussion
In this program, parents and teens return to meet with a counselor and talk about the family discussion. This will take about an hour and a half. Families then take part in 2 follow-up interviews over the next six months.

RHODE ISLAND PARENT INFORMATION NETWORK

RIPIN

EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS
through information, education and support

information

support

education

inform
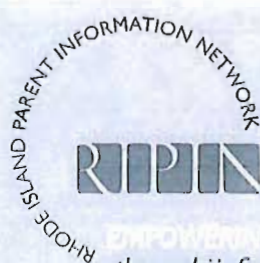
support

educate

advocate

empower

800.464.3399
401.270.0101
www.ripin.org
info@ripin.org
1210 Pontiac Avenue
Cranston, RI 02920

RHODE ISLAND PARENT INFORMATION NETWORK

RIPIN

EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS
through information, education and support

Information & Support

» Telephone consultation
» Information and referral
· Mentoring
· Home visiting
» Peer to peer support
» Systems navigation
   Policy development
   Family to family linkages

Education & Training

· Parent involvement
· Education
· Special Education
   Healthcare
   Early childhood
» Advocacy
» Transition
» And, much more!

To learn more
**Contact our
Resource Center**

800.464.3399
401.270.0101
www.ripin.org
info@ripin.org
1210 Pontiac Avenue
Cranston, RI 02920

inform

support

educate

advocate

empower

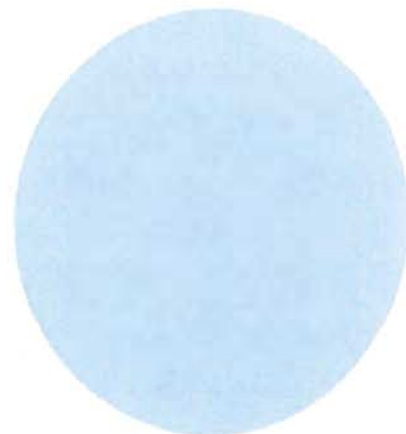**P.A.V.E.** *Partnership to Address Violence through Education*

STOP

Youth Violence

P.A.V.E.

Partnership to Address Violence through Education

P.A.V.E. is a multi-faceted approach to educating communities about the ever-growing incidences of bullying and youth violence. The goal of P.A.V.E. is to present information that is up-to date and relates to real life situations . We are committed to transforming, enlightening and enriching the lives of children with the message that violence is not the answer.

WHAT IS P.A.V.E.?

P.A.V.E. (Partnership to Address Violence through Education) is a program which addresses the critical issues of bullying and violence among our youth in schools. Bullying has become a serious issue and is no doubt an act of violence. Many of our youth have learned to be aggressive through the media, in their schools and communities and even sometimes in their homes.

P.A.V.E. developed a complete curriculum to begin to change the culture of youth violence and offer options to discourage these acts against others.

P.A.V.E. programs are interactive and creative, using role-play, games and other activities that are designed for kindergarten to high school grade levels and can be presented in classrooms, assemblies or after-school formats. Program content includes: Identifying and defining bullying; Types of bullying behaviors; The role of bystanders; Violence and its categories; Identifying interventions in bullying situations; and Assertive vs. Aggressive behavior.

In addition, P.A.V.E. operates a Leadership Camp, which offers middle school students a week of adventure-based learning on a premier challenge course, along with lessons in bullying intervention strategies, conflict resolution and anger management skills. Youth have an opportunity to swim, boat, bike and play field games as well.

A new program of P.A.V.E. called SUCCESS (Students Understanding Choices & Consequences to Ensure a Successful Self) is also being introduced to middle and high school-aged students. SUCCESS addresses violence, anger, substance abuse, communication and assertion, rules and roles in a relationship, changes, choices and consequences, and more.

Enclosed in this packet, you will find more information about each of the programs P.A.V.E. offers. You may also go to P.A.V.E.'s website, www.paveri.org, for more information. Thank you for your interest in P.A.V.E. Together, we can reduce the incidence of bullying and youth violence!

Lt. John Reis, Ret., P.A.V.E. Director

P.A.V.E. *Partnership to Address Violence through Education*

STOP

Youth Violence
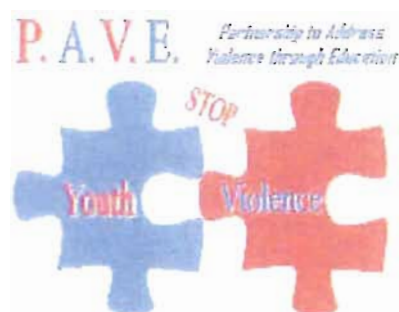
P.A.V.E. offers the following services to schools and community organizations statewide:

- Adventure-Based Learning

- After-School Programs

- Assemblies

- Dinner Conversations (for parents and youth)

- Leadership Camps

- Professional Development

- Workshops

The following pages offer detailed descriptions of each of the above services. For more information or to discuss scheduling any of the above services in your school or community, please contact Lt. John Reis at the P.A.V.E. program at (401) 464-2004 or via email to ljrpats1@cox.net.

www.paveri.org

P.A.V.E.

133 Delaine Street, Providence, RI 02909 • (401) 464-2004 • ljrpats1@cox.net

P.A.V.E. *Partnership to Address Violence through Education*

STOP
Youth Violence
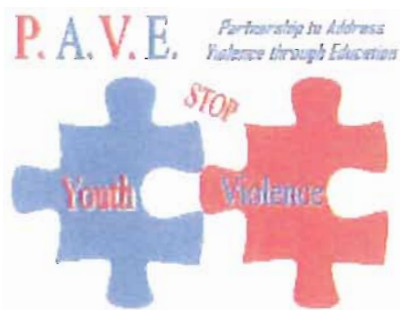
Classroom Sessions: Skills To Obtain Personal Power (S.T.O.P.P. Bullying Now) is a series of 6-8 classroom sessions that cover defining and identifying bullying; violence and its forms; cyber-bullying and the 12 rules of cyber safety; the role of bystanders; and assertive responses to bullying. Classes include a bully journal (5th-8th grade levels only), handouts and activities, and a completion certificate and t-shirt*. (*Upon request, additional fee). Classroom sessions utilize age-appropriate material for grades K through 12.

Adventure-Based Learning: Teaches 5th-12th grade children conflict and bullying prevention and intervention skills by com-pleting increasingly challenging physical activities to help develop self-directed goals, trust, communication, teamwork, confidence-building and problem-solving skills.

After-School Programs: K-8th grade programs developed for gender and behavior-specific groups.

Assemblies: K-12th grade program for up to 300 students. Topics in defining and recognizing bullying; bullying prevention and intervention strategies; and "Teen Truth: a look at bullying and school violence".

P.A.V.E.

133 Delaine Street, Providence, RI 02909 ● (401) 464-2004 ● ljrpats1@cox.net

Dinner Conversations (for parents and youth): Parents and children come together to look at bullying and how to stop it. Includes "Bully Bingo" and other activities and family "homework". This program can be tailored for grades K through 12th.

Leadership Camps: Weeklong camp for middle school through high school age students (5th-12th) that includes adventure-based learning, violence prevention curriculum presented in a fun and unique way, boating, swimming, biking and more.

Professional Development: Sessions from 90 minutes to all-day workshop designed for educators, youth service providers and law enforcement. Topics include: "sticks and stones", a look at bullying; gangs 101; conflict mediation for youth; and "This is not a video game, a look at youth violence from birth to adolescence".

Workshops: P.A.V.E. is proud to tailor youth workshops to the needs of schools and communities including S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (Students Understanding Choices & Consequences to Ensure a Successful Self). This can be presented as a one-time opportunity or in multiple sessions.

Sample 6th Grade Lesson

What is Violence?

In this lesson, students are given a handout and are asked to answer the questions: "What does violence mean to you?" and "How has it affected you and those around you?"

After students volunteer some of their responses, the definition of violence is given. Students are shown that most of their responses to what violence is involved physical actions. Students are then asked to identify other ways that we hurt others.

A list of 6 categories of violence is identified (physical, verbal, emotional, mental, social, sexual), and through role plays and discussion students learn that verbal actions usually precede most bullying acts, that emotional and mental violence can cause the most harm (reasons why are identified), and that social bullying involves rumors and gossip and exclusion. *Sexual violence is discussed within the context of damaging reputations and name calling.
(*Discussion of sexual violence is optional.)

Students will learn:

- the definition of violence
- the 6 categories of violence
- that verbal violence usually occurs first
- that emotional and mental violence can be the most harmful
- that social violence involves spreading hurtful messages and excluding others
- that sexual violence damages reputations and peer relationships* (optional)

www.paveri.org

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a form of repeated aggression that is directed by one or more people towards another person. It tends to occur in places from which escape is difficult, such as school. School bullying takes four main forms.

Physical bullying, where a student uses physical force to hurt another student by hitting, pushing, shoving, kicking, pinching or holding them down. Physical bullying also includes taking or breaking a student's belongings or stealing or extorting money.

Verbal bullying is when a student uses words to hurt another student. This includes threatening, taunting, intimidating, insulting, sarcasm, name-calling, teasing, slurs, graffiti, put-downs and ridicule. It also includes hostile gestures such as making faces, staring, giving the evil eye, eye rolling and spitting.

Relational bullying occurs when students disrupt another student's peer relationships through leaving them out, gossiping, whispering and spreading rumors. It includes when students turn their back on another student, giving them the silent treatment, ostracizing or scape-goating.

Cyberbullying refers to the use of cell-phones, text messages, e-mails, instant messages, web blogs and postings to bully another student in any of the ways described above. Examples of cyberbullying are sending threatening or insulting messages by phone and e-mail, and spreading destructive rumors.

When bullying is also harassment. Bullying is part of a continuum of student violence and may, at times, amount to harassment. **Harassment** occurs when a student is the recipient of threatening, disturbing or unwelcome behaviors because of a particular characteristic. Many forms of harassment are prohibited by federal and state laws, the most well known being harassment based upon a student's race or sex.

Students are often bullied for reasons beyond those prohibited by anti-harassment laws. Particularly at risk are students who are perceived as gay or lesbian or who do not conform to stereotypical gender expectations. Students are also targeted for not belonging to the dominant race or class, because they are disabled or obese, for being less (or more) intelligent, athletic, attractive, confident or simply because they dare to be different. If we allow harassment and bullying to continue at our schools, we fail to protect the diversity of our children and ultimately our whole culture.

How common is teen bullying?

Almost 30 percent of teens in the United States (or over 5.7 million) are estimated to be involved in school bullying as either a bully, a target of teen bullying, or both. In a recent national survey of students in grades 6 to 10, 13 percent reported bullying others, 11 percent reported being the target of school bullies, and another 6 percent said they bullied others and were bullied themselves.

While both boys and girls say others bully them by making fun of the way they look or talk, boys are more likely to report being hit, slapped, or pushed. Teenage girls are more often the targets of rumors and sexual comments. While teenage boys target both boys and girls, teenage girls most often bully other girls, using more subtle and indirect forms of aggression than boys. For example, instead of physically harming others, they are more likely to spread gossip or encourage others to reject or exclude another girl.

How does school bullying affect teens who are the targets of bullies?

Teen bullying can lead teenagers to feel tense, anxious, and afraid. It can affect their concentration in school, and can lead them to avoid school in some cases. If teen bullying continues for some time, it can begin to affect teens' self-esteem and feelings of self-worth. It also can increase their social isolation, leading them to become withdrawn and depressed, anxious and insecure. In extreme cases, bullying can be devastating for teens, with long-term consequences. Some teens feel compelled to take drastic measures, such as carrying weapons for protection or seeking violent revenge. Others, in desperation, even consider suicide. Researchers have found that years later, long after the bullying has stopped, adults who were bullied as teens have higher levels of depression and poorer self-esteem than other adults.

What are the long-term consequences of teen bullying behavior?

Teen bullying is often a warning sign that children and teens are heading for trouble and are at risk for serious violence. Teens (particularly boys) who bully are more likely to engage in other antisocial/delinquent behavior (e.g., vandalism, shoplifting, truancy, and drug use) into adulthood. They are four times more likely than non-bullies to be convicted of crimes by age 24, with 60 percent of bullies having at least one criminal conviction.

Bullying is a big deal. Let's teach it

Suicide.

The third leading cause of death for youth ages 15-24. The number one reason they commit suicide is bullying. You know the adage, "Boys will be boys" and as one local teacher recently stated "Bullying has always been around, what's the big deal?" Well, the big deal is that it is violence.

Name calling, isolation, cyber threats, pushing and shoving and, oh yes, murder. Just ask the citizens of Littleton, Colo., home of Columbine High School.

The U.S. Secret Service says that most school shootings are in retaliation for bullying acts. Studies show that most bullies will be arrested by the time they are 24 years old.

Over 3 million students have reported being taunted with anti-gay slurs. Thousands of students stay home every day because of a fear of being bullied. And it doesn't stop after graduation.

The man in Warwick who recently beat and stabbed his girlfriend to death and left her in a bathtub: bully. The disgruntled worker who opened fire in (any town U.S.A.) and killed (anyone, U.S.A.): he was a victim of workplace bullying.

The gang members who beat, shoot and murder. Bullies. You see, it is a very big deal.

Every time we bury a young person or incarcerate another, it's a big deal. Every time a student stays home from school with a "stomachache," it's a big deal. Every time a young man or young woman puts a gun to their head or cuts their wrists or downs a bottle of pills, it's a big deal.

So how do we help stop it? How do we save lives of our children?

We educate.

We educate teachers, administrators, and police. We educate parents, social workers and bus drivers. We educate bullies and victims. We educate kindergartners and we educate adults. We teach everyone that bullying is a very big deal. No one has the right to hurt you and you don't have the right to hurt anyone else.

Let's teach it!

Lt. John J Reis (retired)

Brochures – Plastic Insert

Parents' Guide to Truancy - http://www.hamfish.org/
This 36-page, 4" x 5" booklet, based on best practices, provides parents and guardians with pro-active strategies for preventing and reducing incidences of truancy.

P.A.V.E. – Partnership to Address Youth Violence
http://partnershiptoaddressviolence.com/
P.A.V.E., the partnership to address youth violence through education, is a multifaceted approach to educating communities about the dangers of youth violence.

KIDS LINK RI
http://www.gatewayhealth.org/KidsLinkRI.asp
Rhode Island's First Children's Emergency Services Hotline

Parent Support Network of RI
www.psnri.org
Parent Support Network of Rhode Island (PSN) is an organization of families supporting families with children, youth, and young adults who experience or are at risk for serious behavioral, emotional, and/or mental health challenges.

Parenting Wisely
http://www.familyworksinc.com/
The Parenting Wisely programs are designed to facilitate the learning of necessary skills for the healthy well-balanced raising of children from age 3 to 18. Proven to reduce problem behaviors and increase communication and family unity, Parenting Wisely offers well documented and tested programs that guarantee results.

Time Banks
www.timebanks.org
A Time Bank is a community of people who help each other by sharing their abilities, talents and experience. When you provide a service for another Time Bank member, you earn one Time Dollar for each hour. You can then exchange your Time Dollar for services provided by other members of the Time Bank.

Project Goals
This is a Brown University research program designed to help parents and teens with issues related to alcohol, drug use, school truancy, and other health risk behaviors.
For more information please call 1-401-863-6669 or TSPP@brown.edu

FCCP Brochure
http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/
Raising a family can be an overwhelming experience and finding where to turn to for help is not always easy. Working with others in your community may help to handle the more difficult situations that arise. Whether coping with issues at school or at home, the Family Care Community Partnership can assist you with a plan to meet the needs of your family.

Thrive

http://www.thriveri.org/

Thrive is Rhode Island's Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP). A nine-component program developed in 1994 with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **thrive** was designed to prevent serious health problems and to improve educational outcomes.

RIPIN – Rhode Island Parents Information Network

http://www.ripin.org/

The Rhode Island Parent Information Network provides information, support, and training to help all Rhode Islanders become their own best advocate at school, in healthcare ... and in all areas of life.