



# **IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES**

A “How To” Manual  
for  
Coordinators, School Staff and Providers

Hamilton County Family and Children First Council



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## INTRODUCTION

The Hamilton County Family and Children First Council's Children First Program is a comprehensive school-based program that provides services in eleven schools within Hamilton County. The Children First Program (CFP) promotes school achievement, positive youth development and family involvement while focusing on specific outcomes.

Programs provided within each school range from long-term, intense, individually oriented interventions such as mental health and substance abuse treatment, school nursing services, social skills building groups and services for grieving children to broad-based events such as after-school art programs, recreational activities and health and family fun fairs, which enhance student and family connections with the school. The Family and Children First Council (FCFC) contracts for many of the services it offers in the schools; other services are donated by agencies or community organizations free of charge.

Services in each school are selected according to school needs and school preferences and change from year to year depending on effectiveness. Services and programs are designed with input from teachers, students, parents, and the administration. Though there are some similarities in the programs offered at the Family and Children First Schools, there are also many programs that are unique to each school, as one of the hallmarks of this program is its ability to tailor programs to meet the individual needs of each school.

Probably the most important component of the Children First Program is the FCFC coordinator. Though employed by the Family and Children First Council, the coordinators are each housed at the schools they service and are an integral – and usually essential – part of the school.

Overall, the coordinator has responsibility for designing, implementing and overseeing a school-wide program that will help students reach their full potential. The many job duties of the FCFC coordinators include soliciting providers, monitoring the provision of services, coordinating services between providers and teachers and among providers, developing training and consultation for teachers, forming relationships with the community and fostering a family friendly environment in the school. The roles the coordinator fills are varied and frequently changing and depend largely on the needs of the school and the principal.

The FCFC Children First Program is an unusually comprehensive program that has been heralded by the schools it serves as a one of a kind program that is indispensable to the schools in which it operates. A more complete description of the CFP can be found in the next section of this manual.

While it would be ideal for many schools to have a program like the CFP, the feasibility of obtaining funding to pay for a program of this magnitude makes it unlikely that wide

spread replication could occur. However, there are many components of the program that can be implemented even if the entire program cannot be duplicated. This manual was written with that purpose in mind.

This manual is designed to be useful to a wide audience. It should prove equally valuable for agency or community coordinators, school social workers, visiting teachers, parent or resource coordinators, school administrators and agency providers. Program components are described individually and can be replicated without replicating the entire CFP. The “tips and pitfalls” found in each individual section should prove helpful to anyone wanting to implement any of the programs or activities described herein. Whether the reader is a coordinator, service provider, a school administrator or school staff member, the implementation issues are similar.

While it is optimal to have a coordinator to oversee any community services that are brought into a school, this is not always feasible. School administrators should not feel that they cannot have selected programs offered at their school just because they do not have a coordinator to oversee and coordinate all of them simultaneously.

Similarly, while it is highly desirable to have a set of social services that function as part of a network of services, administrators should not feel prohibited from housing a few selected services just because they do not have a complete package of comprehensive services. Sometimes a school may be presented with opportunities to utilize a few services or programs which are valuable as stand alone services even if they are not part of a larger program. This manual attempts to offer a “how to” blueprint for designing and managing a host of school-based programs and services, either as stand alone services or as part of a comprehensive package, with or without the benefit of an overall community resource coordinator.

In most of the “how to” sections, reference is made to the coordinator. In the best of all worlds, all schools will have a coordinator whose job is to design and oversee all community services that are brought into the school. If that is not possible, however, someone should at least be in charge of coordinating each service that comes into the school. Therefore, the term “coordinator” in the “how to” sections of this manual applies to either a full-time coordinator or to the person who is coordinating that particular service of program.

This manual was written in the hopes that others interested in community schools, full service schools or selected school-based services or programs can benefit from the knowledge FCFC has gained in providing the Children First Program for many years. While the CFP is now a very well functioning program, it has certainly not been without many mistakes being made along the way. We hope that by sharing the lessons learned from experience, others can avoid learning how to offer school-based services through trial and error and move quickly into providing much needed programs and services for the families and children in their school communities.

**HAMILTON COUNTY FAMILY AND CHILDREN FIRST COUNCIL  
CHILDREN FIRST PROGRAM**

The Hamilton County Family and Children First Council (FCFC) is an organization that represents close to eighty child serving agencies. Since 1997, the Council has provided full service schools (called the Children First Program or CFP) in up to twelve schools in Hamilton County. The CFP aims to promote school achievement, positive youth development and family involvement in those schools. The overall goal of the CFP is to concentrate services and structures and to use flexible dollars and creative strategies in a group of schools in Hamilton County to improve several school level outcomes known to be associated with the well-being of school-age children and adolescents.

Annual evaluation results have been promising in many of the key areas the program is attempting to impact. Statistically significant improvements have been noted in several of the FCFC schools in the areas of truancies, absences, expulsions, risk-taking behaviors and parent involvement.

The hallmark of the Children First Program is the FCFC coordinator. Employed by the Family and Children First Council but housed at the school, the coordinator plays an integral role in overseeing the CFP, soliciting and monitoring providers and working with teachers and administration to help design a program that will meet the needs of the students and their families.

The FCFC coordinator arranges for many programs at the school; most of the services are paid for by the Family and Children First Council through contracts with private community providers. Programs range from long-term, intense, individually oriented interventions such as mental health and substance abuse treatment, school nursing services, groups for grieving children to broad-based events such as after-school art programs, recreational activities and health and family fun fairs, which enhance student and family connections with the school. Services in each school are selected according to school needs and change from year to year depending on effectiveness. Coordinators periodically conduct needs assessments in their schools to help determine what kinds of programs are most needed.

Listed below are the main examples of core programs offered in most of the schools from year to year:

<b>Core Programs at Most Schools</b>	
Abstinence Programs	Mental Health Assessment and Treatment
Alcohol and Drug Prevention Groups	Nutrition Presentations
Alternatives to Suspension Programs	Open House with Service Providers
Anger Management/Conflict Resolution	Parent Coordinator/Liaison
Attendance Incentive Program	Parent Resource Center/Area
Baby Think it Over Dolls	Peer Mediation Program
Bereavement Groups	School Staff Training and Development
Drug and Alcohol Assessment and Treatment	Social Skills Training/Life Skills
Health Services	Transition Programs
Integrated Services Team Within School	Truancy Prevention Programming
Leadership Programs	Tutoring and Recreational Programs

Unique programs that are individually tailored for each school are also offered during the school year.

#### Target Population

The primary target audiences for the CFP are those students who are at risk but who are felt to have the potential to show improvement as a result of receiving services. Over the years there has continued to be tension in terms of demands on time and resources between providing broad-based prevention services (which generally have been shown to have the greatest impact) and the need to provide crisis oriented and treatment services to the most troubled students. All Children First Programs are offered in K through 8 schools, with the exception of one high school, where services are offered to 9<sup>th</sup> grade students.

#### Cost

The Executive Committee of the Hamilton County Family and Children First Council jointly funds the Children First Program. Funds of approximately \$1,000,000 per year are placed in a pooled fund for the Council to use to implement this program. At this time, the cost per school is roughly \$170,000 per school site; in smaller districts one “site” may consist of two or three schools in close proximity to each other. This cost includes contracted services, coordinators’ salaries and fringes, administrative overhead at the Family and Children First Council office, and summer programs. The Council contracts with twenty-five to thirty community agencies at any given time to provide services at one or more of the schools. Many other services are also provided free of charge.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS DERIVED FROM CHILDREN FIRST PROGRAM EVALUATION**

The Family and Children First Program in twelve schools was evaluated annually for the first six years of the program by the Institute for Health Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati.

The following are policy implications for school-based programs that resulted from examining the evaluation results over a period of six years. These recommendations have been implemented in the FCFC schools and should be considered by any provider or school that is planning a school-based program.

1. Look for principals who are strong, positive leaders. The most successful Children First Program schools were those in which there were principals who were good leaders, supportive of the full service school program model, committed to both prevention and treatment/remedial programs or services and who gave some authority to the coordinator.
2. Focus on programs in elementary schools and work more intensively with younger grades in those schools. Evaluation results were most promising in K through 8 schools; there were few positive trends seen in the high schools. If the program is in a high school, focus majority of services on 9<sup>th</sup> grade class. In elementary schools, increase emphasis on programming in grades K through 3. Encourage classroom interventions and teacher referrals in younger grades. Place emphasis on pre-school programs where they exist in the schools. Work with parents of pre-school children at the school. Most of them pick their children up at school; this is a good venue to make contact with them and encourage them to participate in parent programs as well as other services and programs.
3. Establish long-term program commitments, preferably for several years. It takes several years to really establish a school-based program that becomes an integral part of the school. It is also disruptive for a school when services or programs are present for a year or two and then gone and leads to lack of trust on the part of the school staff.
4. Focus on a broad spectrum of programs that address attitudes and risk-taking behavior. Over a period of time, prevention groups and presentations that focused on the risks of certain behaviors and lifestyles resulted in significant changes in attitude among a majority of students in most FCFC schools. Look for providers that are adept at presenting interesting, appealing and age-appropriate educational programs about risk-taking behaviors and repeat these programs often. Be patient, as it takes time to see the impact of these types of activities.

5. Focus on addressing school mobility. Student mobility is a major problem for providers and schools alike. It is very difficult to impact students emotionally or academically if they are not present in the same school for the entire school year . There are several creative ways to try to address this problem. See appendix for a sample letter that is sent out from all CFP principals to families at the beginning of the school year on this issue.
6. Use fewer providers for larger blocks of time. The more successful CFP schools used a smaller number of providers who became known to the teaching staff and students and who functioned to some degree as a part of a team. This is preferred to having many providers come in to provide a variety of services.
7. Develop programs that increase two-way communication between teachers and parents. Annual teacher surveys demonstrated that teacher/parent communication is an issue for both parents and teachers. Provide technical assistance for teachers on how to communicate with parents. Provide workshops or trainings, including role playing for teachers. Employ parents to provide part of the trainings.
8. Utilize groups that address emotional and social issues such as grief and social skills. Groups, if properly run, are a more cost-effective way to provide services than individual services.
9. Tie programs into every school's Discipline Plan. The most successful CFP schools were those in which the CFP program was an integral part of the school in every respect including disciplinary functions. Though overall suspensions did not decrease over time in CFP schools, length of suspensions did decrease. Encourage principals to use some of the school-based programs to ameliorate discipline terms for appropriate students.
10. Continue focusing on connecting the community and the school. Whenever possible, it is important to engage the surrounding community with the school, its students and its activities. Though this is always a challenge, it is nevertheless very important to the health of the school and the success of a school-based program.
11. In evaluating programs, use measures that are more related to students' health, well-being and behavior rather than those that are in the control of the principal or that are bound by district policy. It is difficult to genuinely evaluate the effectiveness of a school-based program if some of the things being measured are determined by others, such as the principal or school policy. Look for measures or indicators that measure the program itself, not overall school performance.

## **ROLE OF THE COORDINATOR**

In the CFP schools, the coordinator is the lynchpin of the Children First Program. It is the coordinator's responsibility to solicit providers, monitor providers and to work with the many school constituents to develop a school-wide program that is uniquely tailored to the needs of that school and community.

One of the primary roles the coordinator fills is that of communicator. This includes communicating with staff and administration about services that are brought into the school, communicating with providers about the needs of students, facilitating communication between providers and teachers, informing parents and families about available resources and communicating directly with the principal about a variety of issues. The coordinator is also expected to troubleshoot and to respond effectively and efficiently in a crisis, whether it is an individual student's crisis or an event which impacts the entire school.

A coordinator is not a therapist, however, or a social skills group leader. If the coordinator becomes bogged down with providing individual or group services, there will be little time to perform the most essential functions of the coordinator position. The coordinator also runs the risk of losing objectivity with the teachers and the administration and interaction with school staff may be colored by other factors.

In the CFP program, the coordinator works for the Family and Children First Council, though the coordinator is housed full-time at the school. There are many advantages to having the coordinator employed outside of the school system. It allows the coordinator to be seen autonomously and affords staff and the administration the opportunity to relate to the coordinator independently of the school hierarchical structure. Optimally, the coordinator is seen as a professional person who is available to all the school constituents equally, without alliances to any one group or person and without being dependent on any school employee for evaluations, raises or disciplinary practices.

The best system is one in which the coordinator's home agency contracts for the services that are brought into the school. Paying for the services and holding the contract gives the coordinator the authority to select the providers that are most appropriate for their school, monitor and set limits on the provider and terminate contracts if services are not being provided appropriately and cost effectively.

It is important for the coordinator to avoid getting involved in school "politics." Schools, like places of business, often have their cliques and factions, sometimes subtly and sometimes not so subtly. The coordinator must remain apart from these factions at all times and must avoid gossiping to be respected and appropriately utilized by all school staff. Once the coordinator is seen as taking sides in school politics or between staff groups, the integrity of the entire program can be jeopardized.

In the Children First Program, the coordinators work closely with the principal and school staff, but the coordinators report directly to the Family and Children First

Council director. Another model that is used by some schools that are not CFP schools is the “lead agency model,” wherein a coordinator from a service provider agency works part or full time in the school to coordinate and sometimes provide social service resources. Typically, however, lead agencies do not contract for services on behalf of the school and do not have authority for quality control over external providers.

If it is not possible to have an outside agency provide a coordinator of some type, the school should delegate someone within their school to function as the coordinator of community resources. It is highly preferable that there be only one person assigned to this function because the chances for miscommunication and duplication of efforts are very high if several people are trying to do this at one time. If that is not possible, at the very least one person has to be responsible for coordinating any specific activity brought in by an outside provider.

Whether the coordinator is employed outside of the school system and assigned to the school by an external agency or is a school employee, many of the job functions, qualifications and skills needed are the same. The next few sections of this manual are applicable to any coordinator who is working in a school system, whether they are employed internally or by an external agency.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE COORDINATOR

- Coordinator is knowledgeable about a variety of community resources and is willing to explore and ferret out new resources.
- Coordinator is creative and able to think out of the box, particularly when it comes to designing or shaping programs to meet individual needs of the school, its students or its families. Coordinator exhibits creativity in publicizing or promoting programs, activities, parent programs and student achievements.
- Coordinator is flexible and able to work with many different constituent groups.
- Coordinator is available to work odd hours, including before school and after school, depending on activities that are scheduled. Coordinator must be willing to wear lots of different hats and be able to switch roles at a moment's notice.
- Coordinator is able to set limits and be firm with providers and other constituent groups.
- Coordinator has good written and verbal communication skills. Coordinator effectively represents the school with community groups, providers and parents.
- Coordinator is likable and is able to get along with many different types of groups. A good sense of humor is essential.
- Coordinator exhibits contagious enthusiasm about programs and activities.
- Coordinator is very organized and able to juggle many different activities and demands simultaneously.
- Coordinator has an excellent understanding of the school structure, hierarchy and culture. Coordinator is knowledgeable about the school district, its rules and regulations and district personnel.
- Coordinator totally respects confidentiality boundaries. Coordinator *never* violates the confidential nature of any conversations or discussions with the school principal.
- Coordinator exhibits maturity. Coordinator is able to avoid getting in the middle of personal squabbles or power struggles among school staff.
- Coordinator possesses the skills to function as a mediator in a variety of situations.
- Educational and experience requirements for a coordinator should be a bachelor's degree in social services arena and at least five years experience in human services. Some experience with school systems is preferred.

## **SCHOOL COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION**

The coordinator will have overall responsibility for developing and implementing a cohesive network of services and programs that enables students and families to achieve their full potential in the school setting. Specifically, tasks and responsibilities include:

1. Work with school administration, faculty, students and families and surrounding neighborhoods to tailor an overall program design to fit school site's needs and characteristics.
2. Build enthusiastic and energetic coalition among school administration, faculty, students and families and surrounding community.
3. Engage community resources, providers and neighborhood organizations to become involved in school activities and programs. Seek out community/church/neighborhood partners. Serve as the liaison between the school and community. Troubleshoot when problems occur.
4. Solicit providers for services or programs to meet the needs of students and their families. Help providers tailor programs to meet the unique needs of the school and the school population.
5. Coordinate all non-educational services to be brought into school site. Monitor performance of providers. Facilitate communication between providers and school staff and with each other. Assure that providers meet contractual obligations for services that are contracted.
6. Serve as a resource to teachers in obtaining necessary services, programs and in class presentations for their students. Assist teachers in problem identification and problem solving techniques. Design staff trainings on specific topics as needed.
7. Communicate regularly with principal about programs, activities and providers that deliver services in the school. Be available to principal for consultation, discussions and problem solving.
8. Arrange for crisis intervention services when needed.
9. Develop and implement strategies for parent involvement in school. Work closely with parent coordinator if there is a parent coordinator at the school.
10. Seek grants to fund specialized programs within the school. Keep abreast of various funding possibilities for services.
11. Other duties as assigned.

## **BLUEPRINT FOR A SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COORDINATOR AND PRINCIPAL**

The relationship between the coordinator and the principal is key to the success of any full-service or community school. In the best of circumstances, the coordinator functions as the principal's "deputy" and fills many roles, ranging from trouble shooter to crisis interventionist to program specialist to confidante.

Unfortunately, this is easier said than done. Principals are sometimes understandably wary of social service programs and providers who enter the school. Many principals have had occasional negative experiences, ranging from providers who are not always reliable to providers who have limited understanding of school policies and thus cannot work smoothly in the school setting.

Similarly, some social service providers have had less than ideal relationships with school administrations, including principals. Principals are sometimes seen as having such an intense focus on academic achievement and discipline that all other needs of the child are more or less disregarded.

However, if there is not a good relationship between the coordinator and the principal, the program will undoubtedly suffer, so it is well worth putting time and energy into making this a good, working partnership.

In order for this relationship to work well, the principal must be able to trust the coordinator on several levels: ability to oversee sound programs, understanding of school policies and priorities, knowledge of community resources, ability to get help quickly for individual students when needed, ability to respond efficiently in a crisis and the ability to relate diplomatically with staff and parents alike.

The coordinator, on the other hand, must feel that the principal is committed to the concept of prevention, that the principal actively supports the operational needs of the coordinator through the provision of office space, phone and supplies, for example, and that the principal is willing to promote the programs the coordinator brings to the school. In time, the coordinator should come to feel that the principal trusts the coordinator's judgment.

The relationship between the principal and the coordinator does not form overnight. Like any other relationship, it takes time to build and mature. It must be based on trust, mutual earned respect, a history of positive experiences and clear communication.

While one of the ingredients of a successful coordinator-principal relationship is a kind of indefinable chemistry, many of the essential characteristics of a principal who is effective in a full service or community school and an effective coordinator can be defined. In the previous section, the qualities of an effective coordinator were delineated. The next section addresses the attributes and skills that an effective principal in a school-based program should possess.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE PRINCIPAL IN SUPPORTING SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES**

- Meets regularly with coordinator; keeps abreast of programs through meetings with coordinator and review of coordinator's written summaries. Has open door policy with coordinator.
- Invites coordinator to attend staff meetings. Gives coordinator time on the agenda to discuss programming, etc. Makes coordinator a part of orientation for new staff.
- Works with coordinator to provide appropriate and consistent space for programming.
- Provides office for coordinator and ensures appropriate office support.
- Advocates utilization of in-school social service programs with teachers and parents; encourages staff to make referrals when indicated.
- Provides venue for coordinator to communicate with staff and parents (newsletters, bulletin boards, etc.)
- Willing to use specially designed programs as alternative to suspension or as a way to decrease length of suspension when appropriate.
- Provides welcoming environment for parents.
- Communicates concerns about programming or providers to coordinator when indicated.
- Invites coordinator to be part of staff and or parent committees, such as LSDMC (Local School Decision Making Committee), ILT (Instructional Leadership Team) and PTOs (Parent Teacher Organization).
- Allows coordinator to be actively involved in planning for use of auxiliary funding designated for similar programming, such as Safe and Drug Free funds so that all funds can be maximized.
- Allows coordinator to coordinate all outside agency activities within the school.
- Encourages coordinator to arrange for in-service trainings for staff on relevant topics.
- Includes relevant social services programs in school's discipline plan.
- Demonstrates cultural competence: a set of academic and interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups. This requires a willingness and ability to draw on community-based values, traditions, and customs and to work with knowledgeable persons from the community in developing focused interventions, communications, and other supports.
- Includes and/or notifies coordinator of school-wide changes or interventions.
- Communicates specific needs to coordinator so that appropriate programming can be developed.
- Discusses school-based program with prospective new hires.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF PROVIDERS AT SCHOOL SITES**

Agencies that provide services to clients or organizations are typically referred to as “providers.” Many providers are willing to deliver their services or programs in the school setting. Services can be ongoing individual services, such as mental health treatment, weekly groups, such as social skills groups or conflict resolutions groups, after-school recreation programs or one time classroom presentations, to name a few. Sometimes there is a charge for the program, whereas other times agencies receive funding from other sources and can supply the service at no cost to the school.

Optimally, the school will have a coordinator whose responsibility it is to coordinate the services that come into the school, to make sure that things run smoothly and to assure there is communication between the relevant school personnel and the provider. If there is no coordinator, at the very least there needs to be one person who functions as the school liaison with outside providers. This may be the school social worker, the visiting teacher or a school administrator. For purposes of this manual, the person assuming that role will be referred to as the coordinator.

No matter what the service, who the provider is or whether there is a cost, schools who utilize outside providers should make it clear that there are some specific expectations of any provider who enters the school. The following are a list of those basic expectations. This list should be distributed to and discussed with any provider prior to the onset of any program or activity within the school.

### Punctuality

Providers *must* be on time for groups, individual services or classroom presentations. If, for an unavoidable reason, the provider is going to be late, the coordinator must be notified as soon as possible that the group/program will not start on time. Provider should make sure to actually speak with the coordinator or other person; a voice mail may not be picked up before the students have already been sent to a group or activity with no adult present to supervise them.

### Cancellations

*A provider should never cancel a group or activity unless absolutely necessary.* Every attempt should be made by the provider to arrange for a substitute rather than cancel a group or activity. If the group must be cancelled, the provider should contact the coordinator as soon as possible. Again, providers should speak to a person about a message that is important; leaving a message on voice mail or sending an email is not sufficient.

Conversely, the coordinator should notify providers ahead of time if there is a change in the school schedule that would necessitate canceling the activity, such as proficiency tests, in-service days or field trips.

### Groups

Providers should never release students from the activity until the scheduled time of dismissal. The school administration counts on students being under the supervision of the provider for the entire time of the activity.

Restroom visits should be kept to a minimum. Students should not be wandering in the halls unsupervised.

Providers should submit a schedule of planned groups/activities to the coordinator in advance so they can be placed on the school calendar or in a parent newsletter.

### Recruitment

Providers and the coordinator should determine in advance who will do the recruitment for groups and who will obtain parental permission slips if needed. If the provider is in doubt as to whether the activity requires a slip, the provider should always check with the coordinator rather than proceeding without one.

### Snacks and Supplies

Providers should not bring snacks to groups without checking with the coordinator to make sure this does not interfere with school policy. Providers are responsible for clean up after the conclusion of a group or activity. This includes cleaning up after snacks or meals that occur during the activity.

The provider and the coordinator should determine prior to the onset of the group/activity who is responsible for copies and supplies.

### Parental Permission

Many ongoing services require a permission slip from parents. Field trips in particular almost always require written parental permission. The provider and the coordinator should agree long before the activity who is responsible for obtaining the permission slips. A copy of the signed permission slip should be given to the coordinator; the provider should maintain the original in their files.

### Teachers

Providers should take the initiative to meet with teachers and school staff during the course of the school year. Teachers very much appreciate the input and suggestions of providers who know their students.

### Space

Providers should schedule space for services through the coordinator. Providers should never assume that a room will be available unless it is reserved through school personnel. It is the responsibility of the provider to leave the space the way it was found.

### Phone Calls

Providers should be advised that they are to be called at the school's main number for emergencies only.

### Mailbox

In many schools there will be a place for providers to receive written information from the coordinator or school administration. If there is a mailbox, providers should be sure to check their mailbox every time they arrive at the school.

### Communication with Coordinator

Providers should let the coordinator know immediately about any potential problems. If an individual student seems to be having an unusual amount of difficulty or stress, either during the group or because of things that have been discussed in the group, the provider should let the coordinator know about it as soon as possible. It is also advisable to alert the teacher if the child is returning directly to class while still upset.

### Cost

If there is to be a charge to the school or the contracting agent for the activity, be sure and get the full cost in writing before the activity is scheduled. It is very important to clarify if cost includes travel, preparation time, supplies, consultation or meetings with school staff or if these items are going to be billed separately. There should always be a contract or a letter of agreement between the school/the purchaser of service and the provider delineating all costs, how many activities are to be provided and the maximum amount that can be billed for the service over the course of the school year. A sample Letter of Agreement can be found in the appendix of this manual.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE PROVIDER**

- Provider is reliable. Always shows up for scheduled activity/service. Does not cancel activity or service without ample notice. Does not send substitute unless it is an emergency. Always notifies the coordinator if it is necessary to send a substitute.
- Provider is punctual. Always arrives at school prior to the scheduled activity. Does not leave early.
- Provider is organized and prepared. Arrives at school with supplies and needed number of handouts or materials.
- Provider communicates with staff. Provider lets coordinator and/or teachers know if problems arise during activity or if a student in the activity is upset because of something that occurred. If provider is delivering an ongoing service, provider communicates with teachers on a regular basis about progress or lack of progress the students are making.
- Provider is responsive. Provider responds to teachers' requests for assistance with individual students. If unable to do so, provider helps find appropriate source of assistance.
- Provider gives feedback to teachers within confidentiality confines.
- Provider is flexible. Provider works with coordinator and/or school staff to adapt programs to meet individual needs of school.
- Provider understands the school structure, i.e. rules, space limitations, administrative structure, decision-making hierarchy.
- Provider works well with other providers.
- Provider's services are cost effective.
- Provider has a plan for evaluating their services/program.

## **DIFFERENT TYPES OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

While all schools have some similarities, there are also some significant differences based on the type of school district the school is located in that should be taken into account when planning school-based services.

Inner city schools typically are schools that are part of the school district that serves the largest city in the county. Most often the school district is very large and consists of many schools. The poverty level of the students is generally high, with many if not most students being eligible for free lunch. Families most often live in poor socio-economic conditions. The majority of inner city schools across the country struggle with low achievement scores, minimal parent involvement, overcrowded classrooms, high student mobility, a sizable portion of children in special education and strained financial conditions. Schools may or may not be in close proximity to the homes of the children who attend the school and many are not “neighborhood schools” in the traditional sense of the word. Opportunities for after-school recreational activities for students are typically sparse, due to the district’s financial constraints. The surrounding community may not feel a sense of ownership of the school and, thus, obtaining community involvement in the school that is within its confines may be a challenging task.

Urban schools are those schools that are located in densely populated districts in incorporated municipalities within the county. They have similar socio-economic conditions to those of inner city schools, but the school district is typically much smaller than the district that governs the inner city schools. They are usually walking districts and bus transportation is limited, if existent at all. The schools are highly visible in the community and the community is often very involved with its school system. It is not unusual for parents and even grandparents to have attended the same school as their children and grandchildren. Urban schools also struggle with difficult financial conditions and their students have many of the same challenges in their home lives as those students who attend inner city schools.

Rural schools are typically those schools that are in districts that are not heavily populated and are not near a metropolitan area. They are located in small towns or rural areas. These schools are often characterized by geographic and social isolation for students and their families, housing shortages, poverty, limited opportunities for professional development because of distance from the nearest institutions of higher education, and the necessity for teachers to teach more than one grade or subject. Many students cannot walk to school and there is a dearth of extra curricular activities.

Suburban schools are located in less densely populated and more affluent communities than the other types of schools and are located in the surrounding areas of the county. Usually they are financially more comfortable than the inner city, urban and rural schools. Suburban school districts tend to have more two parent families, a higher level of parent involvement, better achievement scores and more community resources available to them. They usually can afford to have auxiliary programs such as athletics

and clubs and there are ample opportunities for students to be involved in extra curricular activities. The crime rate in the community is generally low and the socio-economic factors of the families who live there is much higher than inner city and urban families. The community places high value on the quality of its school system and exhibits an investment in its schools that is not typically seen in inner city, rural and urban schools.

Urban, suburban, rural and inner city schools each have their own set of strengths and weaknesses. When designing a program or bringing services into a school, it is critically important to understand the composition of the school, the community and the school district. An effective school-based program cannot be a “one size fits all”, so be sure to understand what type of district your school is located in before planning programs or services.

Each school program regardless of location should be individually tailored to meet specific needs or requests. Consider the following characteristics of your school setting in developing programming.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFERENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

	Inner City	Urban	Rural	Suburban
<b>Community Differences</b>				
<i>Socio-economics</i>	High poverty	Range: poverty-middle class	Range: High poverty	Range: Middle to upper class
<i>Community resources</i>	Limited resources Limited access	Moderate resources Moderate access	Limited resources	Limited resources High access
<i>Transportation</i>	More dependent upon public transportation	Schools within walking distance	Minimal walking access to school; some school buses	Private transportation or school provided bus service
<i>Neighborhood identification</i>	Limited connection to community	Strong connection to community	Limited connection to community	Medium connection to community
<b>Staff/Facilities</b>				
<i>Parent-teacher relations</i>	Poor relationships due to perceived differences (educational values, goals)	Poor relationships due to perceived differences (educational values, goals)	Poor relationships due to perceived differences (educational values, goals)	Mutual respect among teachers and parents, sense of equality between parents and teachers
<i>Technology</i>	Limited	Moderate resources Moderate access	Limited	Advanced
<i>Logistics, appropriate space</i>	Old buildings offer limited space for services, overcrowding	Old buildings offer limited or inappropriate space for services	Old buildings offer limited or inappropriate space for services	Adequate space for services
<i>Safety concerns</i>	Security required for activities	Security occasionally needed	Security occasionally needed	Security occasionally needed
<b>Students</b>				
<i>Primary care needs</i>	Basic needs, food shelter, clothing, safety (i.e. domestic violence, street violence)	Some basic needs (food, shelter, clothing) more safety (i.e. bullying, domestic violence) and family concerns	Basic needs, food, shelter, clothing	Some safety needs (i.e. bullying) more family issue or academic concerns
<i>Mobility</i>	High	Moderate	Moderate	Stable
<b>Parents</b>				
<i>Parent participation</i>	Need to have flexible opportunities to participate due to work schedules. Transportation might be an issue.	Need to have flexible opportunities to participate due to work schedules	Need to have flexible opportunities to participate due to parents' schedules. Transportation may be an issue	Scheduling will be easier with more flexible parent schedules.
<b>Programming</b>				
<i>Transportation</i>	Must be provided for activities after-school	Most students walk or are picked up by parents	Must be provided for activities after-school for most students	School provided transportation or private transportation
<i>Provider concerns</i>	Safety	Cultural differences	Geographic and social isolation; mixed classes of different age groups	Distance for provider

## HOW TO OPERATE SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

### Purpose

- Provide easy access to mental health and substance abuse identification and treatment services by providing those services in the school.
- Provide early intervention in mental health and substance abuse services, which often serves to abbreviate the length of treatment.
- Maximize benefit of services, as collateral work can occur with child's teachers as well as family.
- Increase parents' perception of school as a resource for family problems.
- Provide crisis intervention services when appropriate, attempting to stop crisis from escalating.

### Suggested Activities

- Mental health or substance abuse assessments
- Mental health or substance abuse treatment
- Crisis intervention
- Consultation for school staff on individual students
- Consultation for school staff on behavior management techniques
- Referral and triage
- Education for staff, students and parents on mental health or substance abuse

### Design/Implementation

- Develop a referral process that is easy to follow. Have a central place where referrals are placed. Have referrals placed either in a box or in an envelope so that the information on the referral form is not visible.
- Develop a referral form that clearly asks for problem identification, what the referral source expects from the referral and a place to indicate that parental contact has been made and parental consent has been received. A sample referral form is in the appendix of this manual.
- Make sure there is a space for the mental health and substance abuse service to be delivered in a confidential manner. This can sometimes be difficult in a school, as space is often not in abundance.
- Provide access to a phone for the provider to use in privacy.
- A space that is too small is better than one that is too big. A student is likely to be overwhelmed by a large open space; the intimacy of a small space is much more conducive to personal conversations and will make the child feel more secure.
- Make it clear to staff that when therapy is in session *no one* can enter the room.
- Communicate procedure for referrals to other social service providers or group leaders in the building.
- Have one person who functions as a gatekeeper. If referrals come through several sources, it is probable that some will be lost along the way.
- The gatekeeper should be responsible for making sure the referral gets to the right place and follows up to make sure the service was delivered.
- A mechanism for feedback to teacher or whoever makes the referral must be

developed and adhered to, within the limits of confidentiality restrictions. Teachers will not continue to refer if they never know the outcome of their referrals.

- Parental permission must be obtained for mental health or substance abuse services. Different jurisdictions have somewhat different restrictions about how often a child can be seen without written parental permission. Always obtain verbal permission before seeing a child once; obtain written permission at the earliest possible juncture.
- Parental permission is much easier to obtain if the person making the referral contacts the parent directly and explains why they are concerned about the child.

### Recruitment/Marketing

- Provider should present to teachers and teams of teachers regarding types of services available, when referral is appropriate, and referral process.
- Send letter or email to teachers informing them of availability of service and letting them know how to access it.
- Provider makes presentations at parent meetings (e.g. Parent Center activities, PTA meetings, open houses).
- Provider attends teacher in-service trainings and offers to present on topics that are of interest to teachers in mental health or substance abuse arena.
- Provider is available to teachers for consultation and is visible around the school building.
- Provider familiarizes principal with mental health and substance abuse services and demonstrates when it is appropriate to refer.
- Coordinator explains to principal how these services can be used as an adjunct to discipline plan.

### Hints/Pitfalls

- Referrals should not be accepted unless teacher has filled out a written referral form. Verbal referrals are sometimes forgotten or get lost in the shuffle, verbal information is often incomplete and expectations are unclear.
- It is essential that the person who makes the referral contact the parent prior to making the referral. A parent should know who has made the referral and why and is entitled to hear this directly from the referral source and can discuss it with them in detail and ask questions.
- Design the referral form carefully, as the referral form can set the stage for the process to follow. At the very least, make sure referral form includes the problem child is being referred for, what strategies teacher has already tried, what teacher's expectations of the referral are and what teacher perceives as the child's strengths. Checklists of problem behaviors and strengths often work better than narratives. A sample referral form is in the appendix of this manual.
- If there is more than one program in the school building, make sure referral forms and processes are aligned.
- Clearly define for staff what "urgent" means. This term is often overused, which can lead to misunderstandings between staff and providers.

- If you are fortunate enough to have several social service providers in the building, it is wise to have a team of those providers review of referrals so that the referral can go to the most appropriate provider.
- Place blank referral forms in envelopes so teachers will have easy access to envelopes for return of referral forms.
- Schools can often be noisy, no matter what room you are in. Use white noise machines to drown out outside and distracting noises while conducting a mental health or substance abuse session.
- If possible avoid using space in the main office area for assessments or treatment, as the office is typically associated with punishments or getting in trouble.
- Find out what information you can legally give to teachers with verbal parental permission and what you can give with written parental permission.
- At a minimum, a follow up form should be given to everyone who makes a referral giving some information about what happened to the referral, even if the information is brief. Teachers get understandably frustrated when they do not know the outcome of their referral.
- Educate teachers and administrators about what an appropriate mental health or substance abuse referral is and what they can reasonably expect to happen as a result. Some school staff members think that mental health treatment is a magic bullet that can make all behavior problems immediately disappear and they are disappointed when this does not happen. If their expectations are realistic going in, they are much less likely to be disappointed with the results.
- Encourage teachers to refer at the early signs of a developing problem rather than when it has reached crisis proportion.
- Expect a lot of inappropriate referrals at the beginning; this will improve with time, patience and staff training.
- Clarify (over and over again) that mental health assessment or treatment is not to be used as discipline or time out for a student.

## HOW TO WORK WITH TEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFF

### Purpose

- Provide teachers and staff with the skills to interact with their school population.
- Help teachers and administrative staff communicate more effectively with parents.
- Help school staff understand how psychosocial factors create barriers to learning.
- Provide opportunities for professional growth for teachers.
- Help school staff understand different cultures, especially the cultures of their school population.
- Help teachers and staff gain a better understanding of what today's youth confront on a daily basis.
- Assist teachers in handling problematic behaviors in the classroom.
- Provide support for teachers and increase teacher morale.

### Suggested Activities

- One-on-one teacher consultation about individual students.
- Staff Development activities, such as seminars, lectures, group trainings. Staff development topics might include stress management, conflict resolution, cultural differences, grieving/bereavement, identification of mental health issues, substance abuse, gangs, and effective communication with parents.
- Teacher Appreciation Days.
- Provider Open Houses for teachers.
- Teacher Get Togethers/Team Building activities.

### Design/Implementation

#### For Consultation Services:

- A procedure for referrals to any social services occurring in the school should be put in place. Make sure teachers are very aware of the referral mechanisms.
- Within confidentiality guidelines, develop a mechanism for letting teachers know the outcome of their referrals.
- Learn what the confidentiality restrictions are in the school district and in the agency. Make sure both are observed.
- Confidential records about a student or family from a service provider should rarely be kept in the school building; they should always be kept in the agency's home office. If the provider is at the school full-time or close to full-time and wants to keep his/her records there, they need to be kept in a securely locked cabinet.
- Referral information about individual students usually cannot be kept in the student's cumulative records.
- Be available to consult with teachers during planning periods. Adjust to their schedule rather than vice versa.

### For Staff Development Activities

- Obtain administrative support for all trainings offered. Make sure the principal is aware of what is being offered and approves of it.
- Meet with key groups of staff members to determine staff development/training needs. Most schools have committees that deal with staff training issues; see if you can sit on this committee.
- Consideration of staff development needs should be based on diversity of staff, students and community.
- Determine what the district wide and statewide training and staff development requirements are and adapt trainings to those requirements.
- Arrange for teachers to earn certificates of attendance for accreditation purposes if possible.

### Recruitment/Marketing

- Survey teachers to determine their interest level. Circulate the results to all teachers so they know you are responding to their needs, rather than simply picking a topic for training.
- Meet with teachers at a convenient time for them. Make your schedule fit theirs rather than vice versa.
- Ask principal for time allocation during staff meetings either to promote upcoming staff development activities or to use the time for short presentations.
- Use school-wide emails to communicate to staff about upcoming events, as well as traditional communication vehicles, such as bulletin board or mailboxes.
- If you are promoting a specific service, make sure the service provider comes to meet with teachers or team of teachers personally. Teachers are more likely to refer a student for something if they personally know who will be working with their student.

### Hints/Pitfalls

- Always remember, this is their school and YOU are the visitor, unless you are a school employee. Behave accordingly.
- Make sure that trainings are meaningful, experiential and interactive. Lectures are usually ineffective, particularly at the end of the school day.
- Determine if the Teacher's Union contract dictates time limitation for staff development activities.
- Look for external presenters or trainers who are willing to come to the school for a very low cost or for free. Many social service agencies are paid through other funds to provide trainings and presentations so these can be offered to the school at no cost.
- If possible, have trainings in a cheery, comfortable setting within the school.
- Establish credibility as soon as possible. Do not promise something and then not deliver.
- Don't talk down to teachers or school staff. The damage will be irreparable.

- Trainings sometimes work better with small groups, like teams of teachers, as opposed to all staff meeting.
- Educate teachers in what are appropriate expectations regarding the outcome of referrals.
- Food, food, food!

## HOW TO WORK WITH EXISTING PROGRAMS

### Purpose

- To work effectively with services being offered simultaneously in the school
- To work effectively with services or programs that have been operating in the school prior to implementation of new program or services
- To avoid duplication of services or programs in the school
- To integrate services within the school
- To identify unmet needs
- To improve the way services are delivered
- To build on the strengths of current providers
- To maximize current resources
- To increase accessibility of services

### Suggested Activities

- Community/School Coalition Meetings
- Collaboratively sponsored programs, such as Family Fun Nights
- Multi-program marketing materials

### Design/Implementation

- Create an all-provider team that includes everyone who is bringing services to the school, both internal and external, and schedule regular “team” meetings. Quarterly meetings are often enough.
- Develop strategies as a team that will enhance integration of services.
- Establish in-house team of services providers and appropriate school staff to discuss and assign or refer student to outside agencies. Have one person in charge of following referral through until student is assigned to an agency.

### Recruitment & Marketing

- Identify all services available through the school. Be broad in your thinking about what a “service” or resource is. Providers may be internal or external to the school. Internal “providers” may include school counselors, visiting teachers, school social workers, library or media center staff and intervention specialists, for example.
- Schedule a “provider” open house where all programs/providers can display something about their services. School open houses are often a good way to publicize these services to parents.
- Have a separate open house for teachers at the beginning of the school year, perhaps during an in-service day, so that teachers will learn what is available in their school for their students.
- Jointly market programs and services whenever appropriate.
- Design a school calendar that lists all events/activities/programs provided every month. Put calendar in school newsletter if there is one.

### Hints/Pitfalls

- Be sensitive to the histories and intentions of complementary or similar programs. Don't march ahead with an effort to drastically improve an issue, initiative or program without consulting all groups that have been working on the issue.
- Communicate clearly and regularly with more people than you might imagine need to know. Too much communication is always better than too little. Send out memos to the entire staff, especially custodial, secretarial and all staff involved in non-academic activities with students when it might be relevant to them. Too often information is sent only to classroom teachers and principals.
- Always assume that everyone has good intentions. They usually do, even though it may not seem like it at the moment. If someone says or implies something about your program that seems offensive, ask for clarification rather than jumping to conclusions or responding with a knee jerk reaction.
- If at all possible, avoid turf issues and power struggles; this is easier said than done. Be willing to compromise. Be patient. Time can go a long way towards reducing the intensity of a situation.
- Look for common goals of programs and keep the focus on the needs of the students and families.
- If issues cannot be resolved between providers or programs, you may have to talk to the principal; however, do this only if necessary. Principals do not like to get involved in power struggles or "turf" problems. On the other hand, do not wait till a problem reaches crisis proportions to mention it to the principal. Keep the principal informed along the way if problems are brewing.
- Intensity of needs, limited time, limited funds and poor or hasty communication are often the cause of misunderstandings.
- Employ humor with yourself and with all members of the school team. Show appreciation for the efforts of others working with students and their families through verbal comments, e-mails and written thank you notes.

## HOW TO OPERATE PARENT ACTIVITIES

### Purpose

- Increase parents' positive feeling about the school
- Increase parents' connection to the school
- Provide opportunity for personal development
- Develop opportunities for parent leadership
- Provide access to community services

### Suggested Activities

- Parent book club
- Scrapbooking class
- Guest speaker series
- Dads' summit
- Parenting classes
- Clothes closet
- "Guess who is coming to lunch?" series
- Parent support groups
- Dads and Moms clubs

### Design/Implementation

- If possible, develop a Parent Center within the school with a warm, inviting room for parents to meet and congregate. This should be the space for most parent activities if space permits. Try to negotiate with school administration for a prominent location within the school. Decorate it to make it cozy and inviting. Offer coffee/tea and occasional snacks
- A parent coordinator, whose sole responsibility is to plan parent activities, is the optimal way to increase parent involvement. The parent coordinator position is often a part-time position and sometimes can be paid for with Title I funds if the principal is willing to do so. A parent coordinator does not need to be a professional with a college degree. Instead look for someone who is creative, friendly, has good people skills and a passion for helping other parents.
- If you do not have a parent coordinator, make sure that at least one staff person is in charge of any parent activity and will be present before, during and after the activity.
- If you cannot use or do not have a Parent Center for a specific activity, secure space within the school for the activity ahead of time. Be sure the principal approves the use of the space prior to advertising it. Double check to make sure there is nothing else scheduled for that space at the time you need it.
- If the event is in the evening, determine whether you will need security at the time of event. If so, discuss with the principal how this will be arranged and who will pay for it.

### Recruitment/Marketing

- Survey parents at beginning of the school year to find out what activities may be of interest to them.
- Send flyers home with students about specific activities for parents.
- Phone calls or verbal invitations to parents are the most effective marketing tool.
- Include teachers in marketing the program.
- Use school-home communication tools such as newsletters, marquees and school calendars to advertise upcoming events.
- Send reminders home a day or two before the event.

### Hints/Pitfalls

- Begin with a core group of parents, anywhere from three to six. It only takes a few committed parents to get the ball rolling. Eventually, others will join.
- Do not be disappointed if your first few events are not well attended. They will grow, as word of the events begins to spread.
- Have activities at different times. Not everyone has the same schedule and many, many parents cannot be available during the school day.
- If you are arranging an evening activity for parents, have child care available if at all possible.
- Good refreshments are always a draw.
- Make sure the principal really wants parents in the building. Some principals are wary about having parents in the building, particularly if there is no one “in charge.” A few successful events may change the principal’s mind so make certain your first several events are well organized.
- Alert the teachers to the fact that there will be parents in the building for specific activities. Do not assume that teachers necessarily want parents in the building. To the contrary, many teachers are uncomfortable with the idea of having parents in the building for anything other than parent-teacher conferences or open houses. This can change over time, particularly if the events are positive experiences for everyone.
- It is important as your parent involvement increases to give parents increasing responsibility for the events, rather than doing everything for them. On the other hand, there should always be a Parent Coordinator or staff person assigned to work with the parents and help plan the activities. A staff member should always be in charge of funds, supplies, scheduling space and oversight of the budget for activities.
- Always ask for RSVPs but expect the number of responses to be inaccurate.
- Most events will probably not go the way you wanted them to. Plan for contingencies.

## HOW TO OPERATE FAMILY ACTIVITIES

### Purpose

- To increase the connection students and parents feel with their school
- To provide family activities in a family-friendly environment
- To provide opportunities to develop parenting skills through modeling
- To provide opportunities for parents and school staff to interact in a positive way around a non-threatening event

### Suggested Activities

- Family fun nights
- Back-to-school fairs
- Holiday celebrations
- Attendance breakfast
- Health fairs
- Kids' performances
- School-wide picnics
- Date with dad
- Mom proms
- Mother/Daughter lunches

### Design/Implementation

- Discuss the planned event with the principal prior to publicizing it. Make sure you and the principal have common goals for the activity.
- Survey parents and students to find out what activities they might enjoy together.
- Make sure you have ample space. If it is too crowded, you can have a real problem on your hands.
- If event is right before or right after school, ascertain where parents will park during the event.

### Recruitment/Marketing

- Personal invitations, whether by phone or verbally when parents pick up children, are most effective.
- Create specialized invitations to special events; design the invitation to reflect what is special about the event.
- Place displays that feature pictures of past family activities and post them in a prominent place in the school.
- Utilize core parent group (if you have one) to recruit other families
- Include teachers and staff in marketing of programs. Encourage them to promote the family activities to their students, who in turn will talk them up to their parents.

### Hints/Pitfalls

- Involve parents in planning future activities and solicit feedback on a regular basis.
- Develop a committee or team to organize large events but make sure one staff person is in charge of the event.
- Refreshments and door prizes are effective incentives.
- Get as good an estimate as you can as to how many people will attend. Ask for RSVPs but don't expect them to be accurate. It is harder to deal with more people showing up than less people, so plan for more than you think will be there.
- If your event is for dinner and includes a kids' performance, expect to have a very large attendance.
- Decide ahead of time whether you will allow children in without an accompanying adult and make that policy known. Children almost always want to come to these activities even if their parents do not, so be prepared with a policy about how you will handle children who are unaccompanied by an adult.
- Make sure there are several staff helping out. Recruit teachers in particular. This is a great opportunity for parents and teachers to interact in a friendly, warm environment.
- Keep events on school grounds until you have had ample experience with family events. Managing an event off-site can be a difficult task.
- Interactive activities require more staff supervision than performance activities.
- Make sure it is clear who will clean up afterwards, who will lock up and who will be sure that every child gets home after the event.
- Arrange for security, particularly if the event is expected to be large.

## HOW TO OPERATE SOCIAL SKILLS GROUPS

### Purpose

- To increase social skills of students and increase their ability to function in a group situation
- To remove socialization barriers
- To increase coping skills

### Suggested Activities

- Anger management groups
- Leadership development groups
- Conflict resolution groups
- Ladies First groups; Men of Distinction groups
- Peer mediation groups
- Support/education groups for children of substance abusing parents
- Bereavement groups
- Success in School groups; homework clubs (study skills, appropriate behavior)
- How to Make and Keep Friends groups

### Design/Implementation

- Identify providers to facilitate groups. Introduce providers to teachers. Providers can be from outside agencies or internal staff, such as counselors or school psychologists, or a combination of both.
- Parental permission must be obtained for a child's inclusion in a group. Develop mechanism for who will send permission slips home and who will follow up if permission slips are not received. Decide where permission slips will be maintained.
- Set up communication tools for each provider; for example, set up a mailbox for each provider in a central location so that teachers can communicate with them.
- Make sure teachers know when the group will occur. If it is during the school day, make sure it is alright with teacher if child is excused from class for that group period.
- If group is after school, make sure there is a safe way for children to get home. Be sure parents know how child is to get home and what time the group will be dismissed.
- Identify and secure a space for the group to take place.
- Emphasize to provider that they will be responsible for clean up after the group.
- If refreshments are served, make sure this is okay with the school personnel. Check on whether any children have any dietary restrictions.
- If group is during school, develop a mechanism for students to leave class at appropriate time. Decide who will give hall passes or summons if needed. This should not be the provider's job, unless the provider is a part of the school staff.
- Ensure good communication between teachers and school and provider throughout term of the group. Support communication with parents when appropriate.

- Utilize evaluation instruments to track progress of students and programs. Report results to teachers.

### Recruitment & Marketing

- Identify students through teacher and parent referrals.
- Have the group leader present group topics to classes. Make sure presenter is someone who is interesting and appealing to kids.
- Have group leader present the topic and purpose of the group to teachers.
- Send information home to parents about the group.
- Tell students that space is limited. This usually motivates kids to sign up.
- Give kids a demonstration of one or two of the group activities when possible.
- Market to specific grades or groups of kids, rather than school-wide recruitment.

### Hints & Pitfalls

- Decide ahead of time if group is to be offered on a first-come first-served basis. If so, advertise that fact.
- Do not pressure kids to join a group. If they do not want to be there, they will make the group difficult for everyone.
- Decide ahead of time what your screening process is to be and make that known to teachers.
- Don't stack the group with all problematic kids or all very well behaved kids. Mixed groups tend to work better and be more manageable.
- Emphasize to providers that they *must* show up for groups. If they are not coming, they must call in advance so students and teachers can be notified in ample time that the group has been cancelled. Nothing is more guaranteed to antagonize teachers or principals than a group of disappointed children who are unsupervised as well.
- Emphasize to teachers that they must notify provider/coordinator (if there is one) when a field trip or testing is going to occur during the same time as a scheduled group so providers know if students are not going to be available for a group.
- Don't promise something you cannot deliver. If there are only ten slots in a group, do not advertise to the whole school. There will be too many disappointed kids and teachers.
- If possible, arrange for provider to meet with potential group members to make sure they are appropriate for the group and to assure that the group is a good mix of kids.
- Set up a procedure for outside providers to register when they enter the school so school staff know who they are and why they are there.
- Be able to respond to teacher identified need for groups.
- Space for groups may be limited around certain parts of the school year, for example during proficiency testing.

## HOW TO OPERATE AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

### Purpose

- Provide safe and productive environment for students during prime hours for high-risk behavior
- Enhance academic and social skills
- Increase school connectedness
- Utilize school as a community resource

### Suggested Activities

- Rites of passage groups
- Extra-curricular – choir, dance team, step team, athletics, band, orchestra, etc.
- Life Skills/healthy relationships
- Fitness and healthy lifestyles
- Academic enhancement – tutoring, homework clubs
- Special interest groups – chess, student council, girl scouts, boy scouts, modeling club, photography club, etc.
- Leadership groups

### Design/Implementation

- Determine where activities will be held; work with school administration and custodian to determine availability of required space.
- Ensure that restrooms, adequate lighting and access to handicapped facilities are available near the space that you are planning your after-school activity.
- Be sure to inform custodian and security that an after-school group will occur. Never assume that just because you have put the activity on the school calendar the custodial or security staff will be aware of the activity. Always notify them personally.
- Building permits are sometimes needed for activities in the school after the school day has ended. Be sure to check whether this is necessary in your school/district.
- Parental permission slips are required for any off-site activity. Have a system in place for who will obtain the slips and where they will be filed.
- The original permission slip must be left in the administrative office during off-site activities; the student chaperone should have a copy at all times.
- Make sure emergency medical information, emergency phone numbers, special dietary or physical restrictions are specified for each child on the after-school activity enrollment form. Those forms should be readily accessible to the group leader.
- Specify how students will get home after the activity and notify parents accordingly.
- Determine if it is necessary to have an on-site security officer for after-school activities. If so, discuss with principal who will arrange and pay for it.
- Keep area locked from outside to keep intruders out. Make sure hallways and

doorways are well-lit. If neighborhood is unsafe and students are to be walking home, request students be picked up by parent/guardian.

- If buses will be needed for transporting students to and from an activity, make arrangements with the purchasing agent as far in advance as possible.
- A few adults besides the bus driver should always be on an activity bus. Sometimes instructional assistants can help with this.
- Work with school/district to provide an activity bus if activities are ongoing and consistent.
- In small districts, sometimes the city provides the transportation rather than the school.

#### Recruitment/Marketing

- Daily announcements on PA system
- School newspaper
- Flyers/banners
- Teacher referral
- Bulletin boards
- Word of mouth

#### Hints/Pitfalls

- All activities must end at the specified time; ending early or late is unacceptable for waiting parents/guardians.
- Never leave students alone without adult supervision.
- Food/snacks are great motivators for attendance.
- Weather will impact attendance.
- Always recruit more students than you actually want for a group; typically, no more than 80% of those who committed will attend.
- Always plan activities for younger students to end before dusk if students are to walk home.
- The adult in charge should always have access to a phone or two-way radio.
- Activities should be highly structured; it is better to have too much to do than too little.
- Be firm and consistent; establish rules and define expectations immediately; follow through.
- Interest in different types of groups can change from year to year; don't be surprised if a group that is very successful one year is a flop the next year.
- Make sure kids never leave prior to the end of the group without permission.
- Have all kids sign in when they come in and sign out when they leave.

## HOW TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

### Purpose

- Provide an opportunity for the community to see the school as a resource.
- Provide an opportunity for the school to see the community as a resource.
- Provide an opportunity for both the school and the community to be good community citizens.

### Suggested Activities

- Exchange programs among students in public schools and/or private or parochial schools in the neighborhood.
- Student volunteer programs in the community.
- Open some school facilities for use by the community; e.g. gym, greenhouses, space for community meetings, ball fields.
- Career Day, utilizing people from the community to present to classes about careers available in the neighborhood.
- Back-to-School Fairs, featuring businesses and resources from the community.

### Design/Implementation

- Have one designated person in the school be the liaison between the community and the school.
- Start with government entities, such as local police department, fire department, libraries, mayor's office, etc. They are usually happy to help the schools in the neighborhood and can also offer introductions to business contacts within the community.
- Churches are particularly receptive to working with the local schools.
- When contacting a business or organization, define opportunities for involvement that are pertinent to their businesses. Be specific in describing what you need.
- Always express appreciation for anything a local business or community group does for the school. Thank you notes from the students themselves are very effective and are also a good way to teach students about the importance of saying "thank you."
- Public expressions of appreciation, such as visibly displayed signs or banners, are very effective expressions of gratitude.
- Keep the school district's public relations person informed about any projects your school is undertaking with an organization or business. Local businesses like to see their names in the paper and the district's public relations staff member can make this happen.

### Hints/Pitfalls

- When purchasing items for your school, try to buy from local businesses if possible.
- Local businesses will often give discounts or coupons to students from the local school. This is a "win-win" for everyone.

- When approaching a neighborhood business, don't ask for money! There are many things businesses can offer besides money and businesses get tired of being asked for money. Ask for the use of their expertise or some technical assistance instead.
- Invite community members to be on school planning committees. Let them know they are a valuable part of the school family.
- It takes a long time to build community relationships. Be patient. Nurture the relationship once it has formed.
- Think about projects the school can do for the community, like "Beautifying the Neighborhood" projects. The school-community relationship should not be a one way street. Both partners should contribute.

## **HOW TO OPERATE TRANSITION PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS MOVING FROM ONE GRADE/BUILDING TO ANOTHER**

### Purpose

- Decrease anxiety for students entering a new school
- Decrease parents' anxiety about their child entering a new school
- Familiarize students and parents with resources at their new school
- Increase students' level of confidence
- Familiarize students with expectations, rules and norms of the schools

### Activities

- Transition camp: one to two week program during the summer
- In-school orientation
- Big Brother/Big Sister programs

### Design/Implementation

- A short, concentrated period of time works best. About one week of 2 to 5 hours a day is optimal. Using a longer time, you will probably lose the students' interest and enthusiasm.
- Hands-on interactive experiences are most well received. Lectures or discussions in typical classroom settings do not go over as well.
- Activities should all connect to the transition experience. An example might be serving breakfast in the cafeteria to help students become familiar with the cafeteria layout and procedures.
- Use student leaders from the school as "experts" or leaders; kids relate better to other kids. Allow time for them to be together in a relaxed, comfortable setting, in addition to any formalized presentations.
- Arrange for key school staff to meet with students. Familiarity eases the anxiety of the unknown.
- Offer an orientation for parents.
- If the transition program is for younger students, do it earlier in the summer if possible. Their anxiety level rises as the summer progresses. For older students, it is advisable to offer this right before school starts, as those who have summer jobs are likely to begin working as soon as school is out.
- Use as many team-building activities as possible. This gives the students a sense of connection with others.

### Recruitment/Marketing

- Mail fliers to parents of incoming students.
- Ask teachers in outgoing school to promote the transition program to their students.
- Send colorful cards/invitations to the transition program home with incoming students.

### Hints/Pitfalls

- Some useful activities are: scavenger hunts through the building to help the kids learn the building layout, activities related to conflict resolution and bullying, skits about school life by current students, breakfast or lunch with the principal.
- Use current students to follow up with incoming students, either through a phone call or sending a letter to each incoming student who attended transition camp.
- Orient the students to the community the school is in, as well as the school itself. Involve community members in the transition camp/orientation (e.g. police, fire, business, and social service agencies). They are often happy to help orient new students.
- Make sure transition activities occur in the new school the students will be attending, even if there is no air-conditioning. One of the primary purposes of the transition camp is to help the students feel comfortable in their new surroundings; this cannot be accomplished if the program takes place away from the new school.
- Transition camps/orientations have to do with social skills and comfort level. Academics are a separate issue. Both can be addressed in the transition camp but they should be addressed through separate activities.
- The program does not have to be expensive but there does need to be food, preferably either breakfast or lunch. Typically the U.S.D.A. has funds for food for summer programs but these must be arranged several months ahead of time. Check this out with your school district; the district has no doubt used this program before and will be able to advise you on how to access these meals.
- Be sure the principal of the new school is well aware of all of the transition activities that will take place during the transition camp or orientation. A surprised principal is typically not a happy principal!

## **HOW TO OPERATE MENTORING PROGRAMS WITH THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

### Purpose

- Provide students with the opportunity to develop relationships with a caring adult for social or academic enrichment
- Provide an opportunity for businesses to contribute to the school community

### Suggested Activities

- E-mentoring
- Lunch buddy mentoring program
- Tutoring

### Design/Implementation

- Make sure there is one person in charge of the mentoring program. Coordination needs for this type of program are complex and cannot be handled by a group or a committee.
- Design recruitment process for mentors/tutors.
- Develop method of screening potential mentors (i.e. police checks, references).
- Develop application process for students.
- Develop referral form for teachers to refer students for mentoring.
- Design a plan for matching students with mentors.
- Hold orientation for both mentor and students.
- Provide ongoing training, support and debriefing sessions for mentors.

### Recruitment/Marketing

- Connect and develop a relationship with key manager, human resources director or president of company.
- Companies or businesses that are in physical proximity to the school are good candidates for in-school mentoring programs.
- Develop a recruitment packet for mentors that explains the program succinctly. Describe expectations of mentors, including length of commitment.
- Ask your contact person in the business to become the recruiter for mentors within their business.
- Present program to key school staff who might refer students.
- Have complete information packets about the mentoring program distributed to parents of referred students.
- Decide ahead of time which students will be eligible for the mentoring program and only present the program to those students.

### Hints/Pitfalls

- Find consistent and appropriate space within the school for mentors and students to meet. Too many people in one area can become difficult to manage and may be overwhelming for mentors.
- Debrief with mentors on a weekly basis.

- Make sure the mentor coordinator is available for mentors to go to if they encounter a problem – and they will!
- Have a mechanism in place to let mentors know if a student is not in school on the day the mentor is supposed to meet with the student.
- Stress to mentors that if they are not going to be able to meet with their mentee at their regularly scheduled time, they need to notify the mentor coordinator as soon as possible.
- The coordinator should arrange for hall passes or summonses if students are to meet with their mentor during the school day. The procedures for this should be clear to students, mentors and teachers.
- By virtue of their position, volunteers are automatically mandated reporters of child abuse. Orientation for volunteers should include a review of laws about reporting child abuse and procedures for what to do should they encounter a situation they consider possibly abusive.
- Sometimes the expectations of both the mentors and the mentees are unrealistic. Before assigning mentors, ask both the students and the mentors what their expectations are of the mentoring experience.
- Prior to the onset of the program, set guidelines that are known to both mentors and mentees about buying gifts, going shopping, providing transportation and time spent away from school. This will help avoid misunderstandings and disappointments in the long run.
- If there is to be any gift giving (not necessarily a good idea, by the way), have a firm policy about limits on how much the mentor can spend. Consider suggesting a uniform gift, such as a book, for any mentor who wants to buy his/her mentee a gift.
- Make sure that parents understand the purpose of the mentoring program and the limits of what a mentor is supposed to do. Parents can also have unrealistic expectations of the mentors.
- People become mentors because they want to be helpful to someone. As a result, they often have a desire to “fix” things for their mentees. Be alert to those who desire to “rescue” their mentees. Work with them on setting limits and help them to understand personal boundaries.
- Educate teachers on what type of child needs a mentor. Occasionally, you may run into a teacher who feels a child does not “deserve” a mentor, when, in fact, that child may be one of those who needs a mentor most. Explain that mentoring is not necessarily a reward for good behavior but can fill a need in a child’s life that will lead to improved behavior.
- Remember that sometimes volunteers can be unreliable. Have a contingency plan for children whose mentor drops out of the program or who does not show up consistently.
- Mentoring programs are very popular and almost all kids want a mentor. There are rarely enough mentors to meet the demand in any school. Develop clear eligibility requirements before advertising the program. Let teachers and students alike know how many spaces are available. Do not advertise the program school wide. Start by opening the program to one class or one grade.

Add new classes or grades as you get more mentors.

- It is much easier to get mentees than it is to get mentors.
- Coordinating a mentoring program takes much more time than one might expect. The coordinator should be prepared to spend many hours a week getting the program up and running and maintaining it.

## HOW TO OPERATE CLASSROOM PREVENTION PROGRAMS

### Purpose

- To deliver information about healthy behaviors and healthy life skills to a large number of students at one time
- To prevent risk-taking behaviors from escalating
- To assist students in self-identifying for individualized help/attention

### Suggested Activities/Topics

- Substance abuse
- Bullying
- Health education/issues
- Nutrition
- Conflict resolution/anger management
- Grieving/bereavement
- Gang violence
- Character Building Presentations
- Study skills
- Teen dating violence prevention
- Abstinence education

### Design Implementation

- Design a written process for teachers to request presentations. Include a listing of time of day and time of year they want presentations.
- Confirm speaker's attendance a few days before the presentation with both teacher and speaker.
- Create an information form to give to teachers after speaker is confirmed which includes date, time, contact person, program goals, and background information about the person presenting.
- Let principal know what topics are being presented and who is presenting ahead of time to make sure it is alright. The principal has final approval over any topics that are presented in the school.

### Recruitment/Marketing

- Send a survey out to teachers at beginning of school year asking what topics they might like to have for classroom presentations. Give them a list of options and ask them to rank the list, rather than leaving it open ended.
- Arrange for possible presenters to meet with staff or teams.
- Have provider/supervisor meet with the team.
- Email lists of available topics to teachers early in the year and again at the beginning of each quarter.
- Let teachers know that you can arrange for presentations during the year. Have a mechanism in place for them to let you know if some specific issue comes up that they need some help with.

### Hints/Pitfalls

- Check the school master schedule to make sure that there are no school-wide activities, such as testing or field trips that interfere with the scheduled presentations.
- If this is an ongoing series of presentations, regularly touch base with the classroom presenters and teachers in order to make sure that everything is going smoothly.
- Make sure that teacher knows to remain in the classroom during the presentation. It is not a “free bell.”
- Clarify that teacher is responsible for handling any behavior problems that may arise during the presentation. This is not the responsibility of the presenter.
- Tactfully remind teachers that they model behavior for students. If the teacher is actively listening, it is more likely that the students will, too.
- Be aware that some presentations may “trigger” issues with students. Certain types of programs may stimulate students to talk about their own experiences, some of which may be traumatic. It is a good idea to let your school therapist, psychologist, school social worker, or school nurse know in advance that they might be asked to talk with some students. Many times the presenters aren’t trained to handle individual situations.
- If provider notices a child during presentation that may need intervention or assessment, provider should discuss it with the teacher *after* the presentation.
- Do not try and talk teachers into having a classroom presentation. If the teacher does not really want it, it will not be effective.
- Respond quickly to teachers if they request a presentation on a specific topic. Word will travel fast if you are responsive to teachers’ needs.
- Find out ahead of time if there is going to be a pre- and post-test for the class regarding what they have learned. Let the teacher know if this is the case. Allow time for the pre- and post-test when scheduling the presentation.
- Many agencies will do these types of presentations for free, as they often receive funds from their funding sources for prevention activities.
- Get feedback from teachers regarding the effectiveness of the presentation. If the presentation was not effective, find out why. Consider this information before scheduling the same speaker again with another class.
- Stress to presenters that they must be on time for classroom presentations and that they must end on time.

## HOW TO OPERATE STUDENT LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

### Purpose

- Enhance students' self-esteem
- Help students learn to work as a team
- Increase school connectedness
- Develop interpersonal skills
- Involve students of all achievement levels in making positive contributions to school and community
- Positively influence school culture
- Teach students to lead by example
- Reward students for positive behaviors
- Rechannel inappropriate behaviors
- Focus on students' strengths

### Suggested Activities

- School/community clean-up and beautification projects
- School-wide recycling project
- Graffiti patrol
- Participation in charity events, e.g. Red Ribbon Week, Great American Smoke-Out, March of Dimes, Walk-As-One, Heart Association Marathon, Walk for the Cure, etc.
- Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Programs
- Older students assist with transition for younger students to school, i.e. Big Brothers/Big Sisters; Summer Bridge; new student and parent orientation
- Volunteer experiences in soup kitchens, nursing homes, food pantries, Habitat for Humanity
- Voter Registration Drives
- Student Leadership Council
- School Ambassadors

### Design/Implementation

- Decide if you want to have a large, ongoing group of students for a variety of leadership projects or if you want to have a specific group for a specific type of leadership activity. Either type of group works well.
- Develop framework for initial meetings and activities. Establish consistent meeting time and place.
- Make sure parents know that their child is participating in leadership activities and invite parental assistance/support.
- Involve community groups with the student leaders. Arrange for the student leaders to meet with members of local councils to determine mutual goals.
- Involve student leaders in decision-making positions within the school if possible.
- Begin with one project that will bring recognition to the group while effecting

change within the school community.

- Engage school administration for support.
- Do not exclude special education students; they can become some of your best student leaders.

#### Recruitment/Marketing

- Define student “leader” when recruiting for groups; they do not need to have the typical profile of a student leader.
- Recruit student leaders for specific activities rather than for student leadership in general.
- Meet with key group of staff members; ask for recommendations for student leaders.
- Utilize school announcements and newspaper.
- Connect the specified activity with the opportunity to be a student leader.
- Let students know they have been selected to be part of an elite group.

#### Hints/Pitfalls

- Have high expectations; students will usually rise to the expectations you have for them; if you believe they will achieve, they will.
- Make the student leaders visible; this will ensure a sense of pride and will also make other students want to emulate them and become student leaders themselves.
- Allow for celebration of successes and reflections about what worked, how it felt, etc.
- Have a bulletin board or display case near the front of the school for displaying chronicles of student leadership activities.
- Make sure the requirements for grade averages and attendance are well-known to the students when they begin the group. Monitor grades and attendance and be firm in setting limits if grades or attendance fall below acceptable levels.
- These groups require the same amount of adult supervision as other groups. Just because they are student “leaders” does not mean they are immune to the same temptations and juvenile behavior as other kids.
- If you expand the definition of leadership and take different kinds of students than your typical student leaders, expect some resistance from teachers, who may not understand this concept.
- Some kids may use the student leadership activities as an excuse to get out of class, so be alert to this possibility.
- Teach empathy; conflicts will be minimized if students have the ability to empathize with others.
- As the adult supervisor, do not make promises you cannot fulfill; nothing will turn off students as quickly as adults not following through.
- Leadership activities must be fun as well as productive.

## HOW TO OPERATE INCENTIVE PROGRAMS FOR ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOR AND GOOD CITIZENSHIP

### Purpose

- To reinforce positive behavior

### Suggested Activities

- Award breakfast or reception
- Final Friday celebrations (free gym time/movies & popcorn)
- Invitation to an outside activity, such as lunch or a play
- Quarterly after-school parties, pizza parties
- An annual outing event such as a riverboat cruise or picnic for students who reach certain achievement levels, such as passing all portions of the proficiency test
- “Caught Being Good”
- Special event, such as “May Day” to reward good behavior
- Announcement over PA system of award winners; preface with a drum roll
- Displayed banner in the classroom that lists the best attendance each month per grade
- Solicit local businesses for food coupons to use as incentives
- Award T-shirts to students whose attendance is in top 10%

### Design/Implementation

- Develop programs that honor different gradations of achievement; for example, perfect, excellent, and most improved attendance.
- Recognize and invite parents to a celebratory breakfast or reception on a quarterly basis.
- Implement monthly celebrations for students who have not been referred to the office for disciplinary infractions.
- Use perks such as field trips, retreats, and other rewards as incentives for good behavior.
- Award official school certificates signed by principal and/other school officials recognizing attendance, behavior, or other significant achievements.

### Recruitment/ Marketing

- Colorful flyers advertising incentive programs
- Prominent display of student achievers on bulletin boards, in school newsletter, and public announcements
- Congratulatory letters to parents on student achievement
- Creatively designed invitations to recognition events
- Plaques commemorating student achievers

### Hints/Pitfalls

- Don’t plan these events in isolation; get buy-in from principals and teachers before proceeding.

- Make sure teachers are included in the discussion of who is selected to receive recognition or awards.
- Develop very specific criteria for recognitions and make sure everyone knows what the criteria are. For example, if the award is for perfect attendance, decide up front whether perfect attendance includes or excludes excused absences, tardiness, etc.
- Don't expect all teachers to agree on who recipients should be. Have a predefined method of final selection that all teachers are aware of prior to participating in the "nominating" process, such as majority rules or principal selection.
- Decide ahead of time if there are to be any exclusionary criteria, such as not paying school fees, and let everyone, teachers and students alike, know what the exclusionary criteria are.
- All parents love to see their children recognized for something positive. Recognition events to which parents are invited are a great way to get parents to come to the school.
- If the event is to include parents, be sure to give parents plenty of advance notice so they can make arrangements to attend.
- Recognize and reward small achievements. Include "most improved" recognitions or awards when possible. Positive reinforcement goes a long way, especially for children who typically do not receive many strokes.
- If event to which parents are to be invited is given on some kind of a regular basis, such as quarterly, consider rotating the time of the event so that parents with different work schedules can attend periodically.
- If parents are invited, do not schedule event for a time when school buses are arriving or departing. This is often a somewhat chaotic time and also makes parking difficult.
- If award/recognition/incentive event is during the school day, make sure it does not run late. Students must return to their classes on time or you will have some unhappy teachers.
- Designate someone to give hall passes to children who are attending a special event during the school day if it is not to take place in their classroom.
- Photographs are great incentives. Both kids and parents love them. If you have a digital camera, photos are very inexpensive. Even if you have a regular camera, prints do not cost very much if you look for specials.
- If your event is going to take place away from school, remember that you will need a lot of up front planning and coordination. In-school events or parties are substantially easier to organize and can be just as exciting for the students if you do it with a little pizzazz.

## HOW TO OPERATE SUMMER PROGRAMS

### Purpose

- To provide students with summer recreation in a structured environment while continuing an educational focus and providing social skills enhancement

### Suggested Activities

- Summer arts enrichment program
- Bridge/transition program
- Social skills/recreational program
- Peer mediation program
- Leadership development

### Design/Implementation

- Discuss your plans with principal several months ahead of time.
- Obtain building permit if necessary.
- Select space to be utilized, get permission from principal and immediately communicate this to maintenance staff.
- Develop all forms that will be needed for program, including parent permission forms, emergency information form, phone lists and a very specific schedule of activities.

### Recruitment/Marketing

- Let all teachers of eligible students know about the program ahead of time. If the teachers talk it up, the students are more likely to be interested in attending.
- Begin recruiting in April, specifically after proficiency tests and before spring break.
- Send fliers home with students to their parents describing the program.

### Hints/Pitfalls

- Send postcards home or make phone calls to parents the week before the program starts to remind them of the start date.
- Don't be surprised if only 50% of those who signed up attend the first few days. Attendance will build with each passing day, although it is highly unlikely that everyone who signed up will attend.
- No matter how much advance work you do, you still will have to make an extra effort at recruitment when the program begins.
- Kids will want to bring friends to the summer program. Remember, you cannot accept them without a parental permission slip and accompanying emergency contact and medical information. Have a plan for what you are going to do with unregistered participants.
- Try to get a few of the kids who are leaders to sign up for the program. Once that happens, others will quickly follow.
- There are pros and cons to charging even token fees for the program. Be sure and think through the implications of charging or not charging before making a

decision about whether you will charge fees.

- Be sure to have emergency medical kits and include items that are applicable to the summer, like bee sting kits.
- If you are employing student “leaders” or older students to help run the program, only take the number of students you need. If you have too many, it will become a party for them, in spite of their leadership status or abilities.
- If you are using other providers or non-school staff, be sure and emphasize that they cannot take vacation while the program is in session unless they have arranged for coverage. You may think this would be obvious but that is not always the case. You will be in a real bind if someone tells you at the last minute they will be on vacation some time during the program.
- Know the emergency procedures for things like fire alarms, reporting unusual incidents, etc. Principals and other administrators that typically handle these kinds of situations are often not around as frequently during the summer. You may end up handling them yourself so you better know what to do in case of an emergency.
- Food is a necessity. Try to get the free lunch or free breakfast program. Many, many schools qualify for this but you must plan this several months in advance, and it must be planned through the school district.
- Asking kids to bring their lunches is risky. Some children will forget or not have the funds to do so and will show up with no lunch in hand. It is much safer to provide lunch for everyone, even if it is a little more trouble.
- If there is a summer school, programs that occur immediately following the summer school day typically get better attendance.
- If at all possible, get a room that is air-conditioned.
- Decide ahead of time whether you will need security during the program and, if so, plan for it in advance.
- Even though you will have notified maintenance a few months ahead of time (see design/implementation section) where you are planning to have the summer program, be sure to remind them again as the program is about to begin.
- Find out when the maintenance staff needs you to vacate the room. The maintenance staff typically has different hours during the summer than they do during the rest of the school year so you need to make sure that your schedule coincides with theirs.
- Work *very* closely with maintenance. They can make your life very easy or very hard. Easy is a lot better.
- Assume that some kids will come early, no matter how emphatic you are about the starting time of the program. Some students will also bring their younger siblings, so decide ahead of time how you are going to handle this.
- Make sure the “pick up” procedure is clear. Have a contingency plan for children who are not picked up at the appropriate time.

## HOW TO WORK WITH THE SCHOOL NURSE

### Purpose

- To create and maintain collaborative objectives between health and social service components
- To provide a system that links health services with other existing services or community resources
- To integrate medical and pharmacological concerns with student behavior issues and attendance issues
- To provide health education and promote positive, healthy behaviors among the student population
- To screen students so that they are physically healthy

### Suggested Activities

- Health screenings and parent contacts
- School staff consultation
- Classroom health education presentations
- Health or wellness groups
- Case management for children with chronic illnesses
- Educating teachers on how to deal with children with chronic illnesses

### Design/Implementation

- The nurse will need a private room that has a phone, a place to lock files, access to a sink and a bathroom and space for supplies.
- Recruit nurse to become a member of any resource/services team you might have in your school. The nurse has valuable information to contribute and often knows the students in different ways than anyone else in the school.
- Include nurse in planning activities regarding health or wellness programs offered at the school
- Student referral forms for any social services should always include a section that asks for *Health Problems*.
- Provide support services for health education and other school-linked health services.

### Recruitment/Marketing

- You won't have to worry about this. Once the nurse is there, they will come!!!

### Hints/Pitfalls

- The nurse can sometimes communicate better with parents than other school personnel because the nurse is often seen as a neutral person.
- The nurse can educate parents about overall health issues. Parents respond well to this type of information.
- Different districts have different policies regarding who pays for school nurses. Check this out with your district if you are looking for funding for a school nurse.

- Many of the children who come to the nurse have mental health rather than physical health problems. Have a referral mechanism in place so that the nurse can easily refer for mental health services.

## USEFUL WEBSITES

### **SCHOOL-BASED MENTORING PROGRAMS**

Topic: Organizing Effective School-Based Mentoring Programs: a Step by Step Guide

Website: National Mentoring Center

[www.nwrel.org/mentoring/](http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/)

Topic: Tips for Mentoring Programs That Work, Developing a Mentoring Program...School Benefits

Website: Education World

[www.education-world.com](http://www.education-world.com)

Topic: Yes, You Can: Guidelines for Mentoring Program

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/YesYouCan/index.html>

Topic: After-school Program Clearinghouse

Website: National Mentoring Partnership

[www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org)

Topic: Examples of Best Practices in Mentoring

Website: Mentors Peer Resources

[www.peer.ca/mentor](http://www.peer.ca/mentor)

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Project Appleseed.Org

[www.projectappleseed.org](http://www.projectappleseed.org)

National PTA Parent Involvement

[www.pta.org/parentinvolvement](http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement)

Center for Social Organization of Schools

[www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000)

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education

[www.ncpie.org](http://www.ncpie.org)

### **AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING**

ED.gov

[www.ed.gov/index.jhtml](http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml)

Afterschool.gov

[www.afterschool.gov](http://www.afterschool.gov)

The Finance Project

[www.financeproject.org](http://www.financeproject.org)

Afterschool Alliance  
[www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)

## **GRANTS AND FOUNDATIONS**

US Dept of Education  
[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

Fundsnet Services Online  
[www.fundsnetervices.com](http://www.fundsnetervices.com)

Needykids.com  
[www.needykids.com](http://www.needykids.com)

School Grants  
[www.schoolgrants.org](http://www.schoolgrants.org)

## **SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools  
[www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu](http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu)

National Assembly on School-Based Health Care  
[www.nasbhc.org](http://www.nasbhc.org)

Center for Health and Health Care in Schools  
[www.healthinschools.org](http://www.healthinschools.org)

National Mental Health Information Center  
[www.mentalhealth.org](http://www.mentalhealth.org)

National Mental Health and Education Center  
[www.mentalhealth.org](http://www.mentalhealth.org)

## **COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

Coalition for Community Schools  
[www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org)

American Association of School Administrators  
[www.AASA.org](http://www.AASA.org)

Children's Aid Society  
[www.childrensaidsociety.org](http://www.childrensaidsociety.org)

Ohio Council of Community Schools  
[www.ohioschools.org](http://www.ohioschools.org)

## **ATTENDANCE**

Topic: Youth in Crisis

Website: Clearinghouse on Educational Policy and Management

[www.eric.uoregon.edu](http://www.eric.uoregon.edu)

Topic: Re-engaging Youth in School Presentation

Website: National Center for School Engagement

[www.truancyprevention.org](http://www.truancyprevention.org)

## **TEACHER COLLABORATION**

Topic: Urban Teachers and Collaborative School Linked Services

Website: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management

[www.ericfacility.net/extra/index.html](http://www.ericfacility.net/extra/index.html)

Topic: Education & Community Building: Connecting Two Worlds

Website: Coalition for Community Schools

[www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org)

Topic: Integrating Services for Young Children & Their Families

Securing a Knowledge Base for Democratic Teaching

Website: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory

[www.ncrel.org](http://www.ncrel.org)

Topic: Collaboration Between Schools & Social Services

Website: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management

[www.ericdigests.org](http://www.ericdigests.org)

Topic: How to Engage the Community

[www.ymcacivicengagement.org](http://www.ymcacivicengagement.org)

## **INCENTIVES FOR STUDENTS**

Book It!

[www.bookitprogram.com](http://www.bookitprogram.com)

Flour Bluff Independent School District

[www.flourbluffschoools.net](http://www.flourbluffschoools.net)

Fowler Elementary School District, Phoenix Arizona

[www.fesd.org/fowl](http://www.fesd.org/fowl)

## **BOOKS AND OTHER PRINTED RESOURCES**

Search Institute

[www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)

Free Spirit Publishing

[www.freespirit.com](http://www.freespirit.com)

**ALSO OF INTEREST**

Topic: Financing and Evaluation of School Linked Services

Website: The Future of Children

[www.futureofchildren.org](http://www.futureofchildren.org)

Hamilton County Family and Children First Council; Children First Program (CFP);  
Program and Contact Information

[www.hamilton-co.org/hcfcfc/](http://www.hamilton-co.org/hcfcfc/)

# APPENDIX

## SAMPLE PROGRAMS

The following pages contain brief descriptions of some of the more unique programs referred to in the “how to” section of this manual. All of the following programs have been successfully implemented at one or more of the Children First Program schools. The program descriptions are relatively brief but hopefully contain enough information that most of the programs could be duplicated without a great deal of difficulty.

Anyone wishing more information about the specifics of the sample program is advised to go to the Hamilton County Family and Children First website at [www.hamilton-co.org/fcfc/](http://www.hamilton-co.org/fcfc/) and go to the Children First Program section under the programs link. The names, phone numbers and email addresses of the CFP coordinators can be found there; they will gladly respond to any requests for technical assistance about any of the programs described in this manual.

## **SAMPLE PARENT PROGRAMS**

### Mother/Daughter Luncheon

This event is held in May on a school day just before Mother's Day weekend. Students from K-8th grades are given the opportunity to invite their mothers or female guardians to lunch. The only requirement is that they must RSVP by a specified date in order to allow for proper planning. Through this exercise, students learn about the courtesy of the RSVP, and they assume responsibility to make it happen. At the luncheon, students are given the spotlight through impromptu testimonials to tell their loved ones why they are valued. Have an essay contest prior to the event where students write about what their mother/significant female means to them. Have a group of teachers select a winner for each grade and ask the winning student to read their essay at the luncheon. At the luncheon, each student receives a flower to give to their honored guest; a local florist will often donate carnations for this purpose. Students are encouraged to "dress up" for this luncheon. This is a feel good event that's very special to all concerned, and it helps to increase the connection parents and students feel for each other and their school.

### Guess Who's Coming to Lunch?

Local community leaders, politicians or celebrities are invited by the parent group to attend a "Guess Who's Coming to Lunch" meeting. Parent participants are invited to bring a brown bag lunch. Dessert and beverages are provided by the school or coordinator. The featured guest presents a 15 – 20 minute talk on a topic of interest to the parents. A question and answer session follows. At the end of the session, a short period of time is allowed for social interaction. Many local community leaders are more than happy to participate in this event. This is a non-threatening and entertaining way of informing parents about politics and other topics that directly impact their community.

### Clothes Closet

Parent Centers with enough space can have a "Clothes Closet" with several racks of children's and adult clothing where parents can "shop." Clothes are free and there is no income requirement to shop. It is up to whoever monitors the Clothing Closet to determine what kind of limits should be placed on selecting items (i.e. two bags, or a certain number of items per person in the household). School staff, community members and parents keep the Clothes Closet stocked by donating gently used clothing. It is important to keep the clothing racks neat, orderly and seasonally appropriate. Discard any clothing that is not suitable for distribution.

### Donuts with Dads/Muffins with Moms

This event is done in the morning prior to the start of a school day. Publicize the event a couple of weeks before so that working parents have a chance to adjust their work schedule. Dads and Moms are invited to have breakfast with their student at school. A variety of donuts or muffins and coffee and juice are provided. In some instances a speaker may be invited to give a short talk to the audience. It is a good way to reinforce the parent/child relationship. Additionally, the event invites parents into the school and helps them feel more connected to the school.

### Dads Clubs

Dads Clubs are developed to help increase the involvement of dads in their child's school and also to increase dad's involvement in their children's lives. Typically started by a few motivated fathers, the group will quickly grow. It is very important to staff the Dads Club with a coordinator or school liaison to help keep them focused, motivated and on task. If possible, the coordinator needs to find some funds to help defray expenses. The dads are typically quite creative. Some of the activities that the Dads Clubs have developed include:

- Open House – Dads Club had a booth to recruit dads during Open House.
- Spring Festival – Dads Club provided activities to raise funds for group outings they could attend with their children.
- Staff vs. Parents basketball game – This allowed parents to become more familiar with school staff and improve communication between the two groups.
- Father-Daughter Dance – This again allowed fathers to become involved in an activity at the school (see below for details).

One of the CFP Dads Clubs started with two dedicated dads and by the end of the school year they had recruited twelve dads. It has grown larger every year. The dads reported that they felt more comfortable at the school and felt communication with staff had improved.

### Date with Dad/Mom Prom

These are father/daughter and mother/son dances that have been extremely popular and successful. Arrange for the event to occur in a place conducive to dancing (cafeteria or gym.). Begin advertising approximately one month prior to the event. Use flyers with RSVP tear offs. Either hire or find a volunteer DJ or entertainer. Plan to have light refreshments, punch and cookies or chips. Decorate the space for a party, using plenty of balloons and coordinating table covers. Make the event a special time for everyone. Recruit a local florist to donate carnations for fathers to give to daughters or sons to give to mothers. Have a photographer available to take pictures of the father/daughters or mother/sons. Fathers can be any man who is involved in the life of the girl (i.e. step-father, grandfather, uncle, friend of family, older brother.) Likewise, mothers can be any female who is involved in the life of the boy (step-mother, grandmother, aunt etc.) It is important to maintain the structure of the event and not allow moms to bring their daughters if there is not a father in the home. Encourage families to find a male or female role model as appropriate to the situation if a mother or father is not in the home.

This is a great opportunity for fathers and daughters or mothers and sons to dance, laugh and spend time together and is a particularly nice event for children who do not live with their same sex parent. This was a particularly successful event at one of the CFP schools and the second annual Date with Dad dance had 450 attendees!

### “Fat Tuesday” for Fathers

During February, have a “Fat Tuesday for Fathers” event to celebrate Mardi Gras. This is a unique event that draws a lot of dads and their children.

Ask the art teacher to construct a back-drop of Mardi Gras colors and decorations for the students to have a photo taken with their parent. Decorate the area where the event is taking place with Mardi Gras colors and designs, and play Mardi Gras music. Serve King Cakes and cookies which are donated by local merchants. You can purchase an inexpensive case of Mardi-Gras beads to hand out; the kids love the beads.

Arrange for the event to occur in an area where there is a stage and tables to work at. As the families come in, each person is given a paper plate cut in the shape of a mask, and each plate has a popsicle stick stapled to it as a handle. Multiple tubs of mask-making supplies such as feathers, colored beads, ribbons markers and paints are placed throughout the tables. Each family makes masks and poses for a digital photo with their children; one copy of the photo can go to the family and you can place a second copy for the school bulletin board after the event. Have a mask competition where the contestants stand on stage and the winners are determined by the level of applause they receive.

The fact that this is an unusual event at a typically not very busy time of the year almost guarantees that there will be a big turnout if you publicize it well. This is also a good way to get fathers into the school and to provide a structured fun activity for fathers to participate with their children.

#### Book Club for Parents

The parent group meets weekly to discuss a pre-selected Book of the Month. Prior to beginning discussion of the book, one of the group leaders presents a biographical sketch of the author. Group leaders volunteer to facilitate book discussions each week. At the end of the month, the group views a video or movie that is either based on the book or relates to the issues discussed during the month. Light refreshments are served each week. One of the benefits of this activity is that low functioning readers are motivated through video and interactive dialogue to read and discuss issues of personal importance to them and their children.

#### Grandparents Day

With the increasing number of grandparents serving as caregivers to school-age children, Grandparents Day serves to: (1) acknowledge and honor grandparents; (2) develop a relationship with grandparents and (3) involve grandparents in their grandchild's education. A special event is planned for grandparents. This can be anything from an hour where grandparents visit their grandchildren in the classroom to an after-school reception or a before school breakfast.

## SAMPLE INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

### May Day Event

May Days are incentive events to reward those students who have exhibited “good” behavior during the fourth quarter of the school year. Specific criteria are used to determine which students are eligible and may include no discipline referrals, no unexcused absences or teacher nominations. A marketing campaign, that includes posters, student announcements in the classrooms and newsletter articles, begins early in the quarter and builds in intensity to the last Friday before the event. Participating students receive invitations for their parents to attend. Provide a picnic with healthy food if you can. Highlights of the day can include:

#### K-3 May Day Event Highlights

Carnival Booths (Good and Bad Choices, Obstacle Course, Face Painting)

Local Library Story time

Refreshments and Prizes

#### 4-8 May Day Event Highlights

Volleyball Game: Teachers vs. students

Poster Contest: The Importance of Being Drug Free & Healthy

Provider Health Fair

Annual Awards (Peacemaker, Perfect Attendance, Student Leader)

### Final Friday

This incentive program focuses on the students who usually manifest good behavior in the classroom. It's an attempt to celebrate those students who are sometimes taken for granted by staff. It's also a way of motivating students who are on the borderline behaviorally and show improvements in their behavior. Toward the end of each month, teachers are given a simple form to return to the office identifying students who have not been referred to the office for disciplinary infractions during the month. These students are invited to a Final Friday celebration at the end of the month. They may participate in open gym, see a movie, play games and win prizes etc. Whatever the activity, it is accompanied by good food and fun! The principal also drops by to reinforce the positive message. It is usually more effective to divide the students by grade. You can determine if this incentive program is effective if the number of students attending the program each month gradually increases.

### Caught Being Good

This can be used school-wide or within a single classroom to reward pro-social behavior. Determine what behaviors will be rewarded and what rewards will be used. Place a colorfully decorated Caught Being Good box in a high traffic area easily accessible to teachers and other staff members. Announce to students and teachers that any student “Caught Being Good” by a staff member will have their name placed in the box. Students can be nominated by more than one staff person and for more than one occurrence of good behavior. At the end of each week, a name is drawn from the box and the student is awarded a prize. Food coupons, gift certificates, school supplies, event tickets, etc. are great incentives.

### The Peer Mediation Summit

This summit is an end-of-year culminating event for all students, both elementary and secondary, who have participated as peer mediators. Students from several schools are brought together for a day of fun-filled, team-building activities in celebration of their good work as peacemakers. Choose a central location with lots of room for large groups but with areas for small groups to meet as well, ideally a park with a shelter in the event of rainy weather. High school mediators assist with the planning and development of the event, and lead the groups. As students arrive, they are assigned to different groups so that all schools and age groups are represented across groups. Games such as sack races, three-legged races, balloon tosses, egg rolls, etc. not only promote team work but are great fun for the students. The competition is not in winning, but on which group is the most cooperative and works together the best. Take time for each school group to meet by themselves to reflect about what worked well during the year and what improvements can be made for the upcoming year. And always have lots of good food on hand!

### Attendance Breakfast

Quarterly celebrations are held to recognize students who have perfect attendance, excellent attendance, and most improved attendance. Parents and guardians are also invited to the breakfast. Parents are remarkably proud of their children at this event. In addition to celebrating the achievements of the students, the role of the parents is recognized. The family with the highest attendance record for all members of the family who attend the school also receives an award. If possible, invite local celebrities as speakers to reinforce the importance of the occasion.

## **SAMPLE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS**

### Career Day

This is a great way to integrate community organizations, parent groups and business partners with the school. Invite individuals from the community to come speak to classes about their jobs. While traditional jobs such as police, fire and health care are certainly good choices, think more broadly in scope to expose students to possibilities they might not otherwise consider. The more visual and hands on a presenter can be the better. For example, a farmer who brings a goat or pig, a helicopter pilot who lands his helicopter on the playground, a jewelry maker or costume designer who bring samples and has the kids model them and programs of this type are bound to be a hit.

Help volunteers find ways to make what they do “real” to students. Match volunteers with age groups they feel comfortable handling and make sure that teachers stay in the room to manage behavior while the guest is there. Keep presentations short (about 20 minutes for younger grades and up to 40 for middle school/high school.) Allow time for questions and demonstrations. Have students write thank you notes to the volunteers after career day is complete.

### Positive Outreach Program

In many instances in inner city schools, many of the students and families may live in a nearby housing complex or development. Have an annual outing where you bring the school to the neighborhood. The principal, teachers and coordinator come to a central meeting place in the housing complex and meet families, talk with them about the school and the activities their children can be involved in. Plan for refreshments and publicize the event ahead of time. Families are surprised and excited about the team visiting “their home.”

### School and Community Beautification

A school or community beautification project can be a powerful way to bring students and community members together for a common cause. Plan weekly or monthly clean up times and coordinate with the local governing group to make this a community project. Nothing more than rubber gloves, trash bags and cleaning materials for graffiti removal are needed. Talk with local environmental groups to see if funding is available for supplies; many city governments offer grants for community beautification. School and community recycling is also available in many areas. Waste collection companies often donate boxes and provide free monthly pick up for recyclables. Involve students in landscaping projects at the school and within the community. Garden Club members are usually very receptive to the idea of working with schools. If the school has a greenhouse, offer it for use to the Garden Club in exchange for plants and materials for school beautification projects. Most park boards have horticulturalists on staff that are happy to talk with students about local flora and fauna; these projects are easily tied in with environmental science curricula.

### Organization Training

Recruit a local business to provide student workshops on goal setting and organization skills. Many schools use some form of a student planner. Often a local business person who has some training in the Franklin-Covey system is able to develop overheads illustrating strategies for students to learn how to be successful in organizing themselves and their lessons during the school year. Plan to have the individual to train the students, classroom by classroom. Large groups for this kind of activity are generally not successful. Be sure that teachers remain in the classroom to assist the trainer as necessary. This is a great use of business partners and is a good way to involve them in the school without asking for financial donations.

### Nursing Homes

Contact a local nursing home to develop opportunities for student volunteers. Plan to visit at least once each month. Work with the activities coordinator from the nursing home to develop themes. Most activity coordinators will be thrilled for the collaboration! Themes should be developed around holidays and special events. Making Easter bonnets, decorating pumpkins, and Christmas decorations are easy activities. Presidents Day and Memorial Day are great holidays to learn some history lessons. Seniors who may not have good short-term memory will still be able to recall who was president when they were young, what the world was like during WWII and so on. Presidential jeopardy is a fun game for young and old, just develop questions about specific events or quotes of presidents who were in office during the lifetimes of the seniors. Always accompany students and never go unprepared! Before you begin your visits, have discussions with students about what to expect.

## **SAMPLE FAMILY PROGRAMS**

### Family Fun Night

Parents and children are invited to the school to participate in family activities. These events (generally occurring in the evenings) can be organized around a theme (e.g. fall festival, holiday season, bedtime stories, Harry Potter night) or student performances. These activities should be general enough to engage a wide range of ages. The purpose of Family Fun Nights is two-fold. First, families who often do not have the financial resources or the ability to carve out time for family activities are able to spend an evening together developing their relationships. Secondly, activities are held in the school allowing parents and staff to meet and get to know each other. This increases positive feelings that parents have about the schools. Family Fun Nights can be organized through the PTA or a parent involvement committee. They should be well publicized and offer refreshments and door prizes. Make sure that teachers participate. This is a wonderful way for teachers and parents to interact in a positive fashion in a relaxed environment. Prior to the event, it should be decided how to handle children that come without parents.

### Back-to-School Fair

Provider and neighborhood agencies team up to put together a Back-to-School Fair. School supplies, purchased with donations from neighborhood business and community groups, are provided to the students who attend.

At the fair, there are vision and speech/hearing screens performed, free haircuts, and information booths that include services of local agencies, tutoring and nutritional information. Tabletop displays from agencies that serve children and families are usually present. Each exhibit table should be operated by a representative of the agency.

Parents and children are required to attend together. The fair is set up so that the families walk by the booths and screenings in order to reach the school supplies.

Publicize the event all around the community. Design and distribute posters to area businesses and advertise in local newspapers and church bulletins.

Prominently display a poster at the event acknowledging donors and participating agencies. Make a copy of the donor list to put in school supply bags; this will encourage local businesses to contribute. Send thank you notes to all agencies and businesses that participate.

Have games and activities available. Make this a fun occasion for the whole family. Arrange for entertainment, if affordable.

Recruit volunteers to help with the event. Attendance can be very large. Be sure and have a system in place to assign volunteers to their area of responsibility. Arrange for food and water for the volunteers during the fair itself.

### Health Fair

This is an event that can be offered to families of students attending the school and families in the neighborhood. Providers staff tables that display health information and are on hand to talk about their services and answer questions. Free screenings for blood pressure, speech and hearing and eye testing can be done. The mammography van can be involved if eight people or more register. Organizations such as the local fire department and local police department will usually come to talk about safety issues, such as the car seat program, the bike riding helmet program etc. Other agencies to contact include the American Red Cross, city or county health departments, hospital representatives, the nutrition council, alcohol and drug prevention agencies and spa representatives for massages. Be creative about who you invite to participate. Lots of places are willing to provide displays, services and sometimes gift certificates.

Simultaneously, offer games and entertainment, such as the school choir or drill team, face painting and other activities that the students will consider fun. Be sure and provide food. Cookouts are usually inexpensive and very popular.

Give door prizes during the event. Prizes can be stuffed animals that are donated by companies, clothing stores, fruit baskets, gift certificates from department stores, etc. Drawings should occur every hour to keep it exciting and to keep people invested in participating. There should be drawings for the children and adults. Have at least 3 to 4 big gift drawings.

Schools can give health fairs as a beginning of the year kickoff, or at the end of March to kick off spring. It is best to offer this event on a Saturday so that working parents can attend. Contacts should be made with local radio to advertise the event and fliers should be distributed in the community, to area businesses and sent home to parents.

If parents are not living in the community where the school is, transportation for pickup should be arranged. A bus that runs every half an hour can transport families back and forth from the school to the community.

This event requires a lot of planning. Service providers, school staff and parents will need to come together to plan an event of this size but it is well worth the effort. This is a great way to get families to the school for a positive experience while also providing important information about healthy lifestyles and behaviors.

## **SAMPLE TEACHER PROGRAMS**

### Whine and Cheese

Whine and Cheese is an activity that can be used to increase staff morale and cohesiveness. Have the after-school event in the school but preferably in someplace other than a classroom. Serve hors d'oeuvres and then conduct a group discussion or focus group to determine the concerns of the staff and suggestions to improve morale.

The next Whine and Cheese might include an activity where each person either verbalizes or writes about a success and a failure related to their career. These can become very emotional offerings and staff receives a great deal of support from one another. Some of these are very funny while others can be quite sad. Celebrate by awarding a prize for the best in each category. The prize is passed on from month to month.

Whine and Cheese can take place on or off campus. If it is going to be on campus, everyone contributes to the pot to purchase refreshments for the next event. If it is off campus, everyone is responsible for himself or herself. Possible activities away from campus include tailgate parties before the home football games, meetings with holiday themes, and special event activities.

While district and school changes inevitably go on and teachers face many challenges, this ongoing Whine and Cheese activity serves the purpose of making staff more cohesive, feel more supported and feel better about their job. It is a very good morale booster.

### Teacher Appreciation Week

Teacher Appreciation Week should never go by without recognizing the dedication and hard work of the staff. There are many ways to show appreciation, for example, having students make daily announcements, placing chocolates in teachers' mailboxes, or having a massage therapist on hand for a day for 15 minute massages for staff members. Inform students that Teacher Appreciation Week is coming up and have a discussion about what qualities they appreciate in their teachers. Usually, when this process begins, the wheels begin to turn and students come up with many ways to show their appreciation. For elementary students, it may be writing letters or making cards. High school students may decide to choose to honor teachers for different categories, such as most school spirit, most encouraging, most involved, and so on. Presenting these awards at a dinner or assembly after school is a great end-of-week event. Get parents involved also. If there is an active parent group within the school, plant the seed with them as well that teachers need to be acknowledged for the good work they do. You can also plan a stress reduction workshop for teachers that week. If you couple it with food, they will especially appreciate it.

### Provider Open House

Teachers and staff who understand services offered by outside providers are more likely to utilize them. One way to familiarize staff with these services is to hold an open

house. Generally, before or after school or during a staff meeting are the best times. Cafeterias or libraries are most conducive to this kind of activity. Invite service providers to set up informational tables or displays explaining their services. They should also be present in order to talk about the program and answer any questions. Teachers and staff can browse from table to table, pick up information and ask questions. Refreshments and a festive atmosphere (a balloon or two and some door prizes) will encourage staff to participate and make the event fun.

### Staff Development

There are many, many topics that can be offered for staff development. One of the more successful topics in a CFP school has been “culture briefings” to familiarize teachers with the culture their students come from. While the trainings should include some didactic presentations about the culture, a more unique and popular feature is a neighborhood tour, which concludes with a snack or a meal at a local restaurant. This can be followed by a discussion on the culture, a presentation on how to create curriculum applying the lessons learned, and perhaps a presentation by a well-known person from the neighborhood.

If possible, work out a plan for teachers to get certificates of attendance if they attend the seminar and complete the assignments. This will definitely improve attendance.

## **SAMPLE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS**

### School Ambassadors

A select group of students in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades are selected to be “school ambassadors.” They receive training in conflict resolution and peer mediation techniques. During the school year, these students meet on a weekly basis with an adult group leader to reinforce skills and to discuss ways of improving the school community. These students serve as role models for the rest of the student body and have prominent roles at larger school events. They also welcome new students into the school. Kids are very proud of being “ambassadors” and most take their responsibilities seriously. They also develop a sense of pride and connection to their school.

### Student Leadership Exchange Program

This program promotes positive relations among students attending different schools in the same community. Students visit neighbor schools, including private schools and parochial schools to participate in organized social and educational activities. This provides opportunities for students from all participating schools to work on their communication and social skills, as well as expand their knowledge of diverse populations.

### Team Building

Team building can entail anything from quarterly to weekly events for students. The overall goal is to build cohesion and cooperation among students in the same grade or class.

Students and their classroom teachers attend one session weekly to discuss such topics as healthy relationships, substance abuse prevention, study skills, anger management, communication skills, dating violence, etc. The sessions are highly interactive and teachers must participate along with students. Sessions take place throughout the school year. The team building experience should be peppered with fun activities and opportunities for students to interact with other students they would not typically mingle with.

### Leadership Team

Leadership Teams typically consist of a group of students who work to positively change the culture of their school through acts of community service and good citizenship. Community services can be done at school, in the school community or in the community at large. Examples are: Keep Our School Beautiful (campus cleanup and beautification), Big Brothers/Big Sisters, school-wide peace projects, partnering students and seniors at local nursing homes, Make a Difference Day activities, voter registration, recycling, food drives, March of Dimes, United Way, Ronald McDonald House, and many more.

What makes this program unique is how students become involved, the celebration and reflection that integrate service with individual and group introspection, and the collaboration that makes the program possible. Usually any student in the school can

participate. Students are invited to attend a few meetings to see if they like what goes on. Other students come because their friends are coming. Many parents want their children to become involved and they talk to sponsors about their children participating because they know the activities are safe and worthwhile. Finally, some students come because it becomes the “in thing” to do at school.

Funding can come from a variety of sources, including local philanthropic organizations and the local community council. Students also do fund-raising for specific activities.

## **SAMPLE MENTORING PROGRAMS**

### Lunch Buddy Mentoring

Lunch Buddy Mentoring matches a student to a mentor, usually a local business person, within the community. The mentor meets with the student on a weekly basis. The mentor brings lunch for the student, most often from a nearby fast food restaurant. The mentor and the student spend a lunch bell discussing whatever issues or concerns the student might have. It is not uncommon for students to turn to their mentors for advice or bring up a concern that in turn causes the mentors to seek additional help (i.e. abuse/neglect, substance abuse issues) or look for outside resources for the child.

A mentoring coordinator oversees the recruitment of both students and mentors. The coordinator screens, trains and supervises mentors. Additionally, the coordinator functions as a case manager for students in the program, collaborating with teaching staff, mentors, parents and other service providers.

The benefits of Lunch Buddy Mentoring include:

- Individuals are able to volunteer in a manner that does not interfere with their jobs, families or finances.
- Businesses are able to make a meaningful contribution to schools without a monetary requirement.
- Students have the opportunity to develop a relationship with a positive caring adult.
- Students have the opportunity to see an adult who is successful in his/her place of employment which encourages students to think toward their future.
- Students are connected to additional services or programs as needs are identified throughout the year.

### E-Mentoring

A group of individuals, usually in the same business, commits to contacting assigned mentees once weekly by email over the course of the school year. There is a social event planned at the beginning of the school year for participants to meet each other. It usually works best when the business group works with one classroom and the teacher agrees to follow up to make sure the students fulfill their weekly responsibilities to respond to their mentor through email. Communication can focus on getting to know each other personally or help with homework projects or school work. A successful activity is for the mentor and mentee to read a book together and then discuss it via email. Toward the end of the school year, students are invited to tour the work place of their E-mentors. This project is great for improving computer skills as well as introducing students to different career options.

# Family & Children First Referral Form

Phone

Fax

\*\*\*\*\*

Date of Referral \_\_\_\_\_

Type of service being referred for:

Mental Health Assessment \_\_\_\_\_

Drug and Alcohol Assessment \_\_\_\_\_

After-School Recreation \_\_\_\_\_

Mentoring \_\_\_\_\_

Conflict Resolution/Anger Management \_\_\_\_\_

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ HR \_\_\_\_\_

Person Making Referral \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please check all the qualities below that the student exhibits:

Cooperative

Respectful

Supportive family

Good attendance

Positive peer relations

Healthy

Participates in class

Completes assignments

Conflicts with authorities

Conflicts with peers

Anger problems

Lies

Depressed

Easily distracted

Anxious

Attention seeking behavior

Attendance problems

Frequent physical complaints

Academic problems

Suspected drug/alcohol use

Poor impulse control

Other \_\_\_\_\_

What are the reasons for referral?

Does child have any known medical problems? If so, what?

What interventions or services have already been attempted?

What are the child's strengths?

What is the parent/guardian's response to the referral? Parent or guardian must be notified prior to making referral.

Specifically, what do you hope to happen as a result of this referral?

# Family and Children First

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## Referral Follow-up

Date received \_\_\_\_\_ Date entered \_\_\_\_\_

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_ Referral date \_\_\_\_\_ Date of initial contact \_\_\_\_\_

This acknowledges receipt of your referral for the above named student to an FCFC program. The following action was taken regarding this referral:

- Mental health assessment/treatment
- Drug/alcohol assessment/treatment
- Parents contacted/invited to programs
- Student contacted/invited to services
- Seen by nurse practitioner
- Other:
  - Referred to outside agency:
  - Currently involved in counseling:
  - Referred to school-based support group:
  - Referred to other FCFC programs:
- Parents refused services
- Case opened

Comments:

**SAMPLE LETTER ABOUT MOBILITY  
TO BE SENT BY PRINCIPAL AT BEGINNING OF SCHOOL YEAR**

Dear Parent or Guardian,

As we prepare for a new school year, I want to assure you that NAME OF SCHOOL staff and I are diligently preparing to make this the best school year ever for you and your child. However, we cannot do it alone. School success depends on us working together.

We know that you, as parents and adults involved in your child's life, are the first and the best teachers they will ever have. While we will do everything we can to provide the best possible instruction, we need your help.

Research tells us that the best predictor of school success is the support and involvement of parents in a child's life. Knowing the teacher and principal, being aware of the academic requirements, checking homework, attending school events, and having high expectations are all necessary to help a child achieve academic success.

Another important factor is **keeping a child in the same school throughout the school year. Studies show that children who change schools frequently are two times more likely to be retained in grade than students who stay in the same school.**

There are times when it is necessary to move from one place to another, requiring a school transfer. I know that problems with housing occur from time to time. However, there are other times that parents and students make the decision to transfer to a different school because there are academic and/or social problems. The thinking is that changing schools will solve the problems, but we know that moving to a new school often **increases** the problems. Class work and teaching styles may vary, and being the "new kid" often creates more problems than before. Often, the student ends up falling farther behind.

If your child experiences academic or social problems, I ask you to please contact me to discuss the issues before making the decision to change schools. Together, we will look for ways to assist your youngster. There are parent-teacher conferences each quarter, but you don't have to wait until then to talk to your child's teachers! You are welcome to make an appointment to see your child's teacher throughout the school year. Our NAME OF COORDINATOR is also available to talk with you at any time. Please, let's work together to keep your child in school every day, and in the same school throughout the school year.

I am enclosing addresses and phone numbers of community resources that might be helpful if you are experiencing difficulties with finding housing or if you have landlord disputes. Also, our NAME OF COORDINATOR can work with you to reach these resources if you have difficulty.

I am looking forward to working with you to make this a productive and positive school experience for your child this year.

Sincerely,

Principal's name

**SAMPLE LETTER OF AGREEMENT FOR PURCHASE OF PROVIDER SERVICES**

This agreement is entered into between the PURCHASER-INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL and INSERT NAME OF AGENCY, hereinafter called "PROVIDER" to purchase INSERT NAME OF SERVICE BEING PURCHASED sessions at INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL for the period of INSERT BEGINNING OF PROGRAM through END OF PROGRAM.\*

The PROVIDER is responsible for administrating the XXXX Program sessions to students as particularly described in the attached service proposal (ATTACH PROGRAM DESCRIPTION WIRTTEN BY PROVIDER). All sessions will be scheduled in coordination with the coordinator for the school. Both parties understand that all liability for activities and personnel is the responsibility of PROVIDER.

The SCHOOL OR PURCHASER will reimburse PROVIDER at the rate of \$XX per unit per the rates and number of units listed below:

<u>Site</u>	<u># of units</u>	<u>Unit Rate</u>	<u>Total</u>
(where service is to be delivered)	(how many groups/ programs will be provided during course of school year)	(Cost per session)	(# of units for year x cost per unit)
Total			

For the purpose of this Agreement, a unit is defined as DEFINE WHAT UNIT OF SERVICE IS and includes staff time, supplies, preparation time, travel time and materials as particularly described in the attached proposal, serving approximately xx students over the term of this Agreement.

**PUCHASER will reimburse for a maximum of xx units as described above, for a total contract value of no more than xx dollars over the course of the year.** PROVIDER is responsible for all other costs associated with each unit of service.

The amount of funding from NAME PURCHASER, as noted above, shall not exceed the period of DATE OF BEGINNING OF CONTRACT through DATE OF END OF CONTRACT. Any claim or liability arising from the PROVIDER staff and their participation in their duties at SCHOOL SITE shall be the responsibility of PROVIDER, as allowed by law.

PROVIDER agrees to maintain adequate professional liability insurance for the complete term of this Agreement.

This agreement can terminate by mutual agreement of both parties, put in writing, or by written notification of one party to the other, with ten (10) days notice of termination.

Unless otherwise agreed to by both parties, in writing, this agreement will expire effective END DATE OF CONTRACT.

Signatures:

\_\_\_\_\_