PRACTICE GUIDE

Providing Individually Tailored Academic and Behavioral Support Services for Youth in the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems

Preface

In May 2010, the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR) at Georgetown University released the monograph *"Addressing the Unmet Educational Needs of Children and Youth in the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems"* (Leone & Weinberg). The monograph examined a number of topics relevant to the education and experiences of youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and "crossover youth" who find themselves at some point in their lives involved with both systems. The authors' intent was to review issues concerning, and provide information about, youth whose educational needs have been inadequately addressed by agencies enlisted to meet some of these youth's other pressing needs. The monograph was primarily designed as a source of information for policymakers and practitioners interested in improving education services for these vulnerable youth. It examined challenges faced by these youth, barriers to providing effective services for them, and the policies and practices of several jurisdictions that have attempted to meet their unique needs. The monograph concluded with a discussion of principles and the design of systems "to serve these youth and ensure they experience more positive outcomes in school and ultimately, in the community as young adults" (p. 8).

In partnership with CJJR, the National Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk (NDTAC) is developing a series of practice guides that build on the monograph's principles and their respective practices by providing the field with concrete strategies for adopting those principles and practices. The strategies were developed by NDTAC and are drawn from the experiences of the authors and supported by general research. It is NDTAC's and CJJR's hope that these guides provide administrators and practitioners in juvenile justice, child welfare, and beyond with the "how-to's" they need to achieve the type of comprehensive system envisioned by the CJJR monograph.

This NDTAC practice guide examines the principle that **individually tailored academic and behavioral support services should be provided** to foster better outcomes for youth involved with the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. This principle focuses on the fact that, to address the academic hardships faced by youth involved with these systems—changes in placement, family mobility, disabling conditions, economic disadvantage, and involvement in the justice system—education providers need to provide supports that address students' unique needs. As Leone and Weinberg (2010) noted, the evidence-based academic and social skill interventions described in their monograph need to become standard practice for these youth across educational settings. "Just as schools and school districts find ways to ensure that all youth receive required vaccinations prior to entering school so too do systems "need to ensure that the most vulnerable youth receive supports essential to their success in school" (Leone & Weinberg, 2010, p. 48). Although high-quality curriculum and instruction are important for all students, those students most at risk for not achieving to their potential should be afforded the supplemental support and encouragement needed to overcome barriers and meet high expectations. To not do so ignores the effect that systems involvement has on these youth and denies far too many young people the educational opportunities and achievements they deserve.

Contents

Introduction

Youth who are involved with the juvenile justice and child welfare systems face many challenges and barriers to academic and vocational success. Regardless of the reasons for their involvement, youth in these systems are "disproportionately children and youth of color who currently have, or have experienced, a host of risk factors that are associated with poor academic achievement, delinquency, recidivism, substance abuse, and mental health issues" (Osher, Gonsoulin, & Lampron, in Leone & Weinberg, 2010, p. 1). Whether due to high rates of mobility, mental and/or behavioral health needs, living in poverty, or delinquent involvement, these youth often face struggles that their non-system-involved peers do not.

And these personal struggles are often exacerbated by poor experiences in schools, including "issues with enrollment, the transfer of academic records, retention, inappropriate class placements, restrictive special education placements, suspension, mobility, and a lack of coordination among juvenile justice and child welfare agencies and schools" (Leone & Weinberg, 2010, p. 1). As such, "youth in the juvenile delinquency and foster care systems, perhaps more so than other youth, need high-quality education services and supports to make successful transitions from adolescence to adulthood" (p. 7).

Specifically, educators need to provide these youth with individually tailored support services to address their academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs. School and classroom environments have a large effect, both positive and negative, on the academic success of these students. Poorly managed schools and those that rely on punitive responses to undesirable student behavior may reinforce antisocial behavior and discourage student engagement. On the other hand, highly structured and supportive learning environments, and teachers and administrators who use recognized academic and behavioral interventions and supports, may make all the difference in a youth thriving academically and socially. The conditions for learning vary across educational settings, with many of the settings in which youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems find themselves—group homes, detention centers, correctional facilities—heightening their sense of a lack of safety and support and the feeling that few staff care about their success.

What is needed to break the cycle of negative educational experiences for many youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems is a commitment on the part of educators, administrators, and all child-serving agencies to provide them with the highest quality education while using academic and behavioral support practices that address gaps in learning, mental health needs, learning and other disabilities, and the situational trauma many of these youth face as a result of their system involvement. Title I, Part D, can play a vital role in supplementing schools' quality core education with programs and practices aimed at meeting these unique needs. But such funded programs are not sufficient to ensure the systems transformation necessary to make support for these students the way "business is done," nor should the absence of such funds preclude systems from implementing sound practices.

This guide provides a range of practices and implementation strategies designed to foster a supportive educational system that addresses individual student needs and help students overcome the barriers and challenges to their academic and vocational success. It is not expected that these practices and strategies be implemented in isolation. On the contrary, the juvenile justice, child welfare, education, and other child-serving agencies will need to work together to ensure not only that such services exist and are equitable and of high quality across settings, but also that students can access them regardless of placement. For more on practices and strategies to achieve successful interagency communication and collaboration, readers can refer to the NDTAC Practice Guide "Improving Educational Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems Through Interagency Communication and Collaboration" (http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/nd/docs/NDTAC_PracticeGuide_InteragencyCommunication_2011.pdf).

Education Across Multiple Settings

Students involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems receive educational services in a wide range of settings, from traditional nonrestrictive community-based public and private schools to highly restrictive residential detention and correctional facilities. Regardless of setting, these youth are generally considered "at-risk" students. To meet the unique needs of this at-risk population, all educators should provide individually tailored academic and behavioral support services. To do so, educators and administrators across all educational settings need to be prepared with a comprehensive and coherent set of proven practices for serving at-risk students.

This guide provides practices and strategies that are suitable for implementation across five categories of educational settings in which youth may be placed. Each is described below.

Community-Based Traditional and Alternative Schools

At-risk students can receive educational services in such community-based nonrestrictive settings as public or private schools. These could be charter or alternative schools or ones that encompass a broad-based student population, such as community high schools. The placement may be within or outside of the student's neighborhood or home school district.

In most residential and moderately restrictive school settings, educators understand that all of their students are at risk. However, when students involved with the child welfare and/or juvenile justice system enter into community schools, especially large comprehensive middle and high schools, teachers may not fully understand the needs of this student group and may have limited experience working with these youth. Thus all community schools need to be prepared to address these students' challenges and to help them succeed. It is important for community schools to assimilate at-risk students into the school culture as quickly as possible while acknowledging the unique challenges they face (Dynarski, et al., 2008).

Day Treatment Centers

In many ways, day treatment centers (DTCs), whether for youth in foster care or the juvenile justice system, are very similar to many alternative schools. Although alternative schools may have a focus on students who experience discipline problems or serve gifted students, DTCs, as the name implies, typically operate to serve students with mental and/or behavioral health needs that are not easily met by traditional community schools. Students may attend DTCs for various lengths of time to address both acute and chronic needs and may do so voluntarily or under order of a juvenile or family court. While treatment in DTCs is focused on

helping students overcome challenges and return to their regular community school, the emphasis on treatment, especially an overemphasis, can pose a challenge to fostering educational success for students in these settings. Time in a DTC, while beneficial to the youth's mental well-being, can disrupt their normal educational progress and separates them from their friends and peer groups. It also places them in an environment with other troubled youth, which can have strong adverse effects. Additionally, youth who have attended DTCs may face the stigma of having a mental health need and teasing or bullying from peers once they return to a community school.

Group Homes

Although most youth residing in groups homes receive their education in community-based schools, some attend schools on the grounds of the home. Group homes may be private residences designed or converted to serve as a nonsecure home for unrelated youth who share common needs and characteristics. Although attention to group homes typically focuses on youth in need of foster care, youth in the juvenile justice system may also reside in group homes at some point during their involvement. The educational needs of youth in group homes are not altogether different from those of at-risk students in traditional community schools. However, providers should consider the fact that such youth are isolated from peer groups and family members and other caring adults in determining how best to address academic, behavioral, and social needs.

Residential Treatment Centers

Residential treatment centers represent the next level of restrictiveness for placements where students receive educational services. Residential treatment centers (RTCs) are live-in care facilities providing therapy for substance abuse, mental illness, or other behavioral issues. Youth in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems may live in an RTC at some point, again voluntarily or by court order; but these facilities are not reserved for only those youth populations. For example, a facility may include youth who need a 24-hour residential program to address their special education needs.

Within RTCs, youth receive a wide range of programs and services in many different types of settings, from self-contained facilities with secure units to campus-based facilities, community-based apartments, and large group "cottages" or "camps." The youth, and sometimes their families, within these placements typically receive a mix of services: counseling, education, recreation, primary care, behavioral health therapy, nutrition, daily living experiences, independent living skills, reunification services, and aftercare services (Child Welfare League of America, 1991). Like DTCs, "residential treatment programs are traditionally organized around a medical model and are intended to be short in

duration and high in intensity of treatment, with the goal that youth quickly move to a lower (and less expensive) level of care" (Lee & Barth, 2009).

Like youth educated within group homes, students in RTCs face the same circumstances of receiving education in or around the same environment in which they live. This isolates them not only from their established friends and peer groups but also from their family members and neighbors. There is also some concern that being surrounded only by those in need of mental/behavioral health treatment may negatively impact the overall well-being and academic success of youth in RTCs. RTCs are typically small settings with minimal education staff, and so ensuring the quality of instruction and the adherence with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) required by students eligible for special education services and other education plans is critical. Also greatly important is ensuring some level of connectedness between youth and their family members, other caring adults, and pro-social peers while they reside in an RTC.

Detention and Correctional Facilities

A final setting where system-involved youth may receive educational services is in a detention or correctional setting. Youth in these residential secure-care placements typically have higher rates of school suspension and/or expulsion than non-system involved peers (Sedlak & Bruce, 2010), are more likely to have literacy and numeracy skills below grade level than their age-equivalent peers, and are three times more likely to have educational disabilities when compared to non-system involved youth (Leone & Weinberg, 2010).

Detention usually refers to placement in a secure facility under delinquent or criminal court authority at some point between the time of intake and referral to court ("pre-dispositional"), and following case disposition, or "sentencing" (post-dispositional). The reasons for post-dispositional detention generally include awaiting subsequent placement, short-term sentencing to detention, or being a danger to self or others (OJJDP, n.d.).

Because detention is typically a short-term stay—on average 14 days, though it may be much longer for some youth—it is usually not possible to "plug" youth into a prescribed curriculum that is especially designed for him/her. Instead, it is advisable to have a short-term curriculum designed to address major/core skill areas found in the public school curriculum. The general overarching purposes of educational programming in detention are to screen for educational disabilities, gather data to inform future educational planning, and to re-engage the youth in the educational process.

Corrections usually refers to larger scale secure care facilities to which youth who have been adjudicated delinquent are committed for periods generally ranging from a few months to several years. Often juvenile correctional facilities are funded and/or operated by State juvenile justice agencies and tend to have a more robust array of services as compared to detention facilities, mainly due to the length of stay.

For youth who find themselves in correctional facilities, educational services usually accompany other rehabilitative practices and typically include academic instruction, vocational/career technical training, and/or social skills training. Many facilities offer a full continuum of academic services, including traditional course work that leads to a General Education Development (GED) or high school diploma, and the ability to earn postsecondary credits. Career technical courses are often also available based on current labor trends in the area. The curriculum typically follows a "State-established" career technical course outline and should not be implemented solely for the purpose of "doing the work of the facility." Efforts are usually made to ensure that all content, activities, and coursework completed in a correctional school setting is aligned with State and/or district school guidelines to ensure the greater likelihood of work completed while confined will transfer to the youth's next educational placement.

Academic and Behavioral Support Services in Practice

To address the unique needs of youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems across these many educational settings, educators and administrators need to ensure that they are using sound academic and behavioral support practices. Five overall practices, each with specific strategies for implementation, are discussed below. Although most of the practices and strategies are applicable for students across settings, the implementation should be adjusted to fit each setting and may be more difficult in some settings than others. Additionally, all educational settings need to ensure high levels of accountability, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure that each facility and classroom is implementing sound practices consistently and equitably while continuously working to improve their practices and programs.

Table 1 presents the landscape of strategies aligned with each of the five practices:

- Collect and use data to identify needs and develop learning plans

- Implement procedures to ensure smooth transitions

- Address gaps in academic skills and accelerate learning

- Instruct students in ways that engage them in learning

- Address behavioral and social needs to promote education success

Following the table, each practice is introduced and explained and its strategies described in detail.

Table 1. Practices and Strategies

Practices				
Practice 1. Collect and Use Data To Identify Needs and Develop Learning Plans	**Practice 2. Implement Procedures To Ensure Smooth Transitions**	**Practice 3. Address Gaps in Academic Skills and Accelerate Learning**	**Practice 4. Instruct Students in Ways That Engage Them in Learning**	**Practice 5. Address Behavioral and Social Needs To Promote Educational Success**
1. Provide a systematic process for using data to identify needs, screen for indicators of larger issues, monitor outcomes, and make educational decisions. 2. Develop and maintain personalized learning plans (PLPs). 3. Share information across all stakeholders to facilitate students' success and well-being.	1. Include transition activities in student PLPs. 2. Establish formal mechanisms for the exchange of educational data and records. 3. Prioritize and allocate funds for transition supports and programs. 4. Conduct ongoing monitoring and continuous quality improvement of transition efforts.	1. Base instruction on functional and curriculum-based evaluation of student needs. 2. Provide tiered academic intervention programs. 3. Use explicit scaffolded instruction.	1. Personalize the learning environment and instructional content. 2. Build conditions and opportunities that demonstrate to students their success. 3. Provide engaging, interactive, and hands-on learning opportunities. 4. Engage youth in educational decision making.	1. Manage student behavior with positive rather than punitive approaches. 2. Engage the family to gain greater insight into youth's behavioral needs. 3. Create a structured learning environment. 4. Align behavior management approaches across settings and domains.

(Row label, vertical: **Strategies***)*

Practice 1: Collect and Use Data To Identify Student Needs and Develop Learning Plans

With advances in technology, the use of data to make educational decisions is an expectation in all educational settings. However, the reality is that using data systematically and coherently takes considerable skill and understanding. Further, educators in various educational settings may collect different kinds of data and there may be obstacles to the efficient and timely transfer of data between settings (Leone & Weinberg, 2010). For example, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act's (FERPA's) mandate of the confidentiality of juvenile education records is aimed at protecting children from unauthorized disclosure of education records and is often cited as the reason one placement cannot transfer student records to the next. However, FERPA does allow for flexibility and many jurisdictions are successfully sharing records without violating confidentiality.

For at-risk students in any school setting, examining student performance data and other relevant information needs to be the foundational practice that undergirds all programming decisions. Schools can examine both academic and nonacademic information and tailor practice and programming to student needs identified in these data.

Further, systems should use progress monitoring to evaluate students' academic and behavioral progress and determine if their methods are working or if change is needed. The implementation of the remaining four overarching Practices is predicated on the thoughtful use of data to make educational decisions (Dynarski, et al., 2008; Hamilton, et al., 2009). All educational settings should establish a systematic process for using data, develop personalized learning plans, focus on specific and measurable outcomes, and actively share data across settings.

Strategy 1: Provide a systematic process for using data to identify, screen, monitor, and make educational decisions

Although essential for teaching, student records with academic and nonacademic data are often delayed for weeks after a student is placed in a new educational setting (Leone & Weinberg, 2010). At the very least, each educational setting should designate at least one individual, if not a multi-person team or unit, who can take a proactive approach to obtain and, as necessary, pass on student records. In some locales, an education or transition liaison or team is appointed to serve to facilitate communications and the process of sharing data and records. Another approach is to create or modify online and other electronic data systems to increase data access across agencies and settings. Regardless of the steps taken, it is important to have a systematic process in place

for communication and coordination among the juvenile justice, child welfare, and education systems and other community child-serving agencies to transfer student records efficiently and effectively as possible.

In the absence of and to supplement student records, it is important to have academic and behavioral screening assessments in place for English language arts, mathematics, and mental health needs to determine if students have major gaps in foundational academic and social skills and/or possible educational disabilities. Students cannot be placed in appropriate courses or receive appropriate services and supports without at least some basic screening and assessment. Further, the data need to be available in easily digestible formats, such as tables, charts, and graphs. Also, data should not always be presented in isolation. While at times educators can look at a specific academic assessment score and gain some information about a student, looking at scores on many different assessments or on the same outcomes over time can give a much better sense of a student's performance and areas to address.

As part of monitoring student growth, educators need to identify leading academic and behavioral performance indicators that serve as "barometers" of student progress. Leading indicators that most readily identify whether a student is on track to achieve positive school outcomes include school attendance, course grades, credit accumulation, disciplinary referrals, and the like.

Schools across settings should begin data gathering to inform short- and long-term educational planning as soon as it is feasible following a student's entry into the setting, regardless of where the youth came from or may be heading.

Strategy 2: Develop and maintain personal learning plans

Once student records and other formal and informal data are obtained, teachers and other school personnel, such as guidance counselors and transition coordinators, need to monitor and systematically assess student progress and create plans based on that data for the student's success. As a way of doing this, some schools implement personal learning plans (PLPs) for students.

To be effective, a PLP needs to include appropriate academic and nonacademic data, notes from meetings, goals, course credits accumulated, and any interventions in place along with any realized outcomes of the interventions. For PLPs to successfully meet the needs of youth, they must be based on current, accurate information about the youth's educational competencies and skills, including the possibilities of educational and other disabilities (see the sidebar). Although school records can help to inform staff about needs for interventions, remediation, and/or specialized programs,

Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) for Students with Disabilities

Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are one example of a PLP and are required by Federal law for all students identified in need of special education services. An IEP is the legal document that defines a child's special education plan, including the disability under which the child qualifies for special education services, the services the school will provide, the child's yearly goals and objectives, and any accommodations that must be made to assist in learning (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004).

504 Plans spell out the modifications and accommodations needed for students with "physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities" to ensure that such students are not excluded from participating in federally-funded programs or activities, including elementary, secondary or post-secondary schooling. 504 Plans are mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act and cover individuals with physical impairments, illnesses or injuries, communicable diseases, chronic conditions like asthma, allergies and diabetes, and learning and attention problems.

school administrative staff should be prepared and trained to screen for educational disabilities. It is important in developing PLPs to engage the students and family members (and/or other caring adults) so they can inform and set goals for the student's future. In an effort to help youth involved with the juvenile justice and child welfare systems either keep up with or catch up to their peers, the educational plan should also include provisions for helping youth develop study and learning skills. Regardless of the type of plan or what it includes, it is important that schools have use PLPs to prepare youth (and staff) for ongoing student progress.

PLPs take time to implement and to keep up to date, especially if students are highly mobile across settings. Personnel may have difficulty determining who should enter information in the plan, who should be responsible for its accuracy, and where the plan should be housed. Therefore, it is valuable to establish a systematic process for implementing PLPs across agencies and settings. This process can include defining objectives, identifying the target student audience, determining what information will be documented in the plans, identifying who will update the plans, and deciding how and with whom the plans will be used. As students get older and progress in education level, they can take more ownership of their plan and use it to set their own future goals. To help students with this, it is important for schools and systems to create tools and templates for completing the plan, setting goals, and conducting conferences (Hamilton, et al., 2009).

Strategy 3: Share information across all stakeholders to facilitate students' success and well being

Systems should adopt and embrace a culture of openness and willingness to share academic, behavioral, and other relevant information among school staff, mental health and medical professionals, security personnel and other discipline-related staff, case managers, and any others playing an active role in the education and care of a youth involved with the juvenile justice or child welfare system. The importance of sharing information among staff cannot be underestimated when it comes to supporting the youth's academic success, safety, and overall well-being. Agencies and settings can both formally exchange information about a youth via established reports or daily logs and informally by verbally reporting concerns or special instructions to appropriate individuals. For example, if a youth has mental health or medical concerns that may affect learning and/or behavior and requires medication, it is important for school staff to be aware of the side effects of medication while the youth is in the school setting. Adherence to privacy and respect for confidentiality of course must be maintained, and it is possible for systems to do so while transcending traditional barriers to data and information sharing. Formal mechanisms for data and information sharing are discussed in Practice 2, Strategy 2, and even more information can be found in the NDTAC "Practice Guide: Improving Educational Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems Through Interagency Communication and Collaboration" (http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/nd/docs/NDTAC_PracticeGuide_InteragencyCommunication_2011.pdf).

Practice 2: Implement Procedures To Ensure Smooth Transitions

At-risk students, especially those in foster care and/or juvenile justice systems, can experience significant mobility in their home school placements, which greatly affects how well they do when moving from one educational setting to another (Leone & Weinberg, 2010). There may be barriers to enrollment, such as when a youth leaves one school and wants to enter another—they may not be officially removed from the first school's roster—or when a youth faces reluctance or pushback from a community school upon returning from a secure-care or treatment placement. Not only do these barriers deprive the student of an education, but they can also result in truancy, which may generate referrals to the courts. Also complicating transition for at-risk students is that they may not be placed in the appropriate classes at a new school or placement, causing them to potentially repeat or miss required content and possibly fall further behind in credit accumulation. Lastly, it is often difficult for adolescents to engage with a new school's social dynamics, classroom environments,

and extracurricular activities, and harder for them to make new friends (Dynarski, et al., 2008). These challenges point to the need to plan for transition early on, establish formal mechanisms for sharing information between placements, funding transition activities, and continuously monitoring and evaluating success.

Strategy 1: Include transition activities in student PLPs

Given known barriers to successful transition, all educational settings that receive at-risk students need to have transition supports and activities in place for both departing and arriving students. One logical step is to include transition activities in students' PLPs. School and facility staff should consider the following strategies for transition activities (Parrish, Poland, Arellanes, Ernandes, & Viloria, 2011):

- Establish opportunities for staff across school levels and across educational setting, as well as youth and family members, to meet and jointly plan transition activities

- Provide an "orientation" to prepare students to enter subsequent placements/settings

- Implement specific strategies to engage the students in school activities

- Review data on entering students if available for class placement

Specific components educators and related professionals should consider for transition elements within PLPs, especially if the youth is in residential placement, are to: (1) identify the youth's strengths upon which they might draw from to address and overcome risk factors; (2) identify the youth's risk factors that may impact transitioning from his/her current school setting to the next; (3) provide statements or goals as to how the youth's risk factors will be addressed; (4) identify action-oriented activities/processes that school staff, youth, and the family can initiate; and (5) establish a timeline and assessment process for the activities.

To implement successful transitions across educational settings, it is important to bring together representatives from the departing and receiving schools, the youth, and the family with stakeholders from community organizations, social services, and other agencies that serve at-risk students to plan activities that will help the youth navigate the transition successfully (Leone & Weinberg, 2010). To do so, communities could establish interagency workgroups, charge existing workgroups, or employ educational liaisons or advocates, all of which could potentially be funded by Title I, Part D, and/or other Federal, State, local, and/or private dollars.

Strategy 2: Establish formal mechanisms for the exchange of educational data and records

Throughout any transition process, the efficient transfer of student records is vital to a youth's academic success because it allows continuity of learning and the provision of support services. It is important for school systems and their child-serving partners to establish formal mechanisms for the timely and complete transfer of pertinent educational data and records for system-involved youth, especially those youth who are transitioning from residential placement. Although these records should be individualized, the pertinent information that should be in **all** records includes date(s) of enrollment, date(s) of termination of educational services, IEP and/or 504 Plans as necessary, any applicable academic, behavioral, and health screenings and assessments, State accountability test results, and transcript(s) of academic progress and achievement. Formal transfer mechanisms may take the form of memoranda of understanding or agreement; written State, district, or agency policy; or even State and/or local legislation requiring schools to release a youth's education records within a short timeframe regardless of fines or established standards of student behavior.

NDTAC recommends that schools consider five basic components for information and record sharing and incorporate them into formal agreements: (1) schools/facilities should ensure accurate, complete, useful, timely, and confidential records are maintained and transferred to subsequent placements; (2) agencies should have a good understanding of applicable Federal, State, and local laws governing the transfer and sharing of youth records as well as general policies regarding privacy and confidentiality; (3) agencies should collaborate and communicate with each other and all other relevant stakeholders; (4) family members should be engaged, especially when record transfer is difficult; and (5) States and localities should develop and use integrated electronic data systems.

Strategy 3: Prioritize and allocate funds for transition supports and programs

An important factor in the schools' and facilities' success in transitioning students is prioritizing transition activities and allocating funds that support a wide range of services and supports. If value is not placed on the importance of transition and that value backed up by specific budgetary allocations, adequate attention will not be paid to helping students move from one placement to the next. In addition to State and local dollars, Federal funds such as Title I, Part D, funds can (and, for State Agency programs, must) be used to support transition services for systems-involved youth, especially those reentering the community from residential placement.

Many districts, schools, and facilities allocate funds to employ a transition coordinator, who is responsible for helping plan and coordinate transition activities for all students. Although this is certainly valuable, it may not be sufficient to meet all students' transitional needs. Thus it is important for schools and facilities to have the flexibility and sufficient funds to explore and implement multiple transition strategies and activities, from the development of student portfolios, to furloughs and school visits, to transportation arrangements to and from the new school setting. All of these activities require resources, and, without money in the budget to pay for them, it is unlikely they will be implemented to the extent necessary to ensure success.

Strategy 4: Conduct ongoing monitoring and continuous quality improvement of transition efforts

To help to promote positive youth outcomes for youth transitioning between educational settings, systems should establish a continuous quality improvement plan that minimally includes a prescribed cycle of onsite monitoring of educational settings, the development of tools to be used during monitoring, and corrective action plans as needed. Systems should evaluate their efforts transitioning youth between placements by tracking requests for and receipt of educational records, determining if information-sharing agreements are being honored, and preparing and/or integrating comprehensive, individualized transition plans. Systems should also conduct pre-transition activities that prepare youth and school or facility staff, reduce the delay in enrollment, ensure proper class placement and support service provision, and collect and analyze student achievement and outcome data.

Practice 3: Address Gaps in Academic Skills and Accelerate Learning

Poor academic performance and gaps in academic foundational skills such as reading, writing, and numeracy is a clear indication of being "at risk," which in turn leads to the likelihood of continued and progressively worsening academic failure (McDonald, 2002). This can then lead to disengagement from school and often to justice system involvement. At-risk students are often placed in a wide variety of "remediation" classes or assigned to computer-assisted instructional interventions; however, these programs may not meet all at-risk students' needs. Slavin and Madden (1999) found that remediation may help at-risk students from falling further behind but that the overall effects are limited to the early grades. Regardless of educational setting, systems should use an intentional approach to identifying students' academic weaknesses and gaps. Strategies that can be used in a wide range of educational settings include functional and curriculum-based evaluations of students' needs, tiered intervention programs, a focus on study skills and stimulating content, and explicit instruction.

Strategy 1: Base instruction on a functional and curriculum-based evaluation of students' needs

As noted under Practice 1, assessing students' needs and conducting an evaluation of their academic growth are foundational to providing appropriate interventions. Regardless of educational setting, school personnel need assessments and tools to identify students' needs. To meet these needs, schools and facilities can use pre-post assessments, which can measure academic progress from beginning to end or at any valid point of completion of a program of instruction. These assessments may be based on a specific curriculum, or they can be more general standardized assessments across multiple academic areas. As an alternative, school personnel could use a general literacy or mathematics assessment to determine students' foundational knowledge. For example, a running record or an oral reading inventory is easily administered in a variety of settings. These types of literacy assessments can quickly provide a baseline in fluency, phonics skills, and comprehension. Once a student's academic skill development is identified, this information can be incorporated into the PLP (Kamil, et al., 2008).

NDTAC's "A Brief Guide to Selecting and Using Pre–Post Assessments" (http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/nd/docs/guide_prepost.pdf) (2006) outlines several basic principles for electing and administering pre-post assessments[1]:

- Ensure assessment is designed to be used as a pre-post test.

- Verify assessment is appropriate for the student given age, skill levels, background, etc.

- Check that the assessment measures what needs to be measured.

- Consider using assessments that are commonly administered in other programs, the State, or local schools.

- Establish consistent assessment conditions for all students (e.g., amount of time specified for the assessment, testing rooms free from distractions).

Further, to the extent possible, systems should incorporate the curriculum followed in the community school when the student is temporarily placed in a different educational setting. For short-term placements such as a detention center, the facility school personnel may need to communicate with the community school regarding appropriate curriculum and schoolwork assignments.

Strategy 2: Provide tiered academic intervention programs

To best meet the needs of at-risk students, academic interventions need to be designed for small-group and individual instruction and should be structured to provide tailored support based on data that reveal individual student gaps. By using data as discussed in Practice 1, teachers are better equipped to identify gaps that at-risk students have in foundational skills in English language arts and in math (Dynarski, et al., 2008).

At-risk students are often behind grade level in required credits and their risk of dropping out increases the further behind they fall. As part of a tiered intervention program, it is critically important to provide options to accelerate learning to fill gaps and to accumulate credits (Dynarski, et al., 2008). A tiered intervention program can be modeled after Response to Intervention (RtI), a multilevel intervention/prevention system grounded in data-based decision making that uses screening and progress monitoring assessments embedded in a multi-level prevention system intended to improve student outcomes (See Figure 1). Instructional interventions include three levels of intensity. In RtI, the first level is the general education classroom; the second level is of moderate intensity usually in a small-group instructional setting; and the third level is intensive one-on-one instruction for those students who are not able to make academic progress with the second level of interventions (National Center on Response to Intervention, n.d.).

Figure 1. Response to Intervention (RtI)

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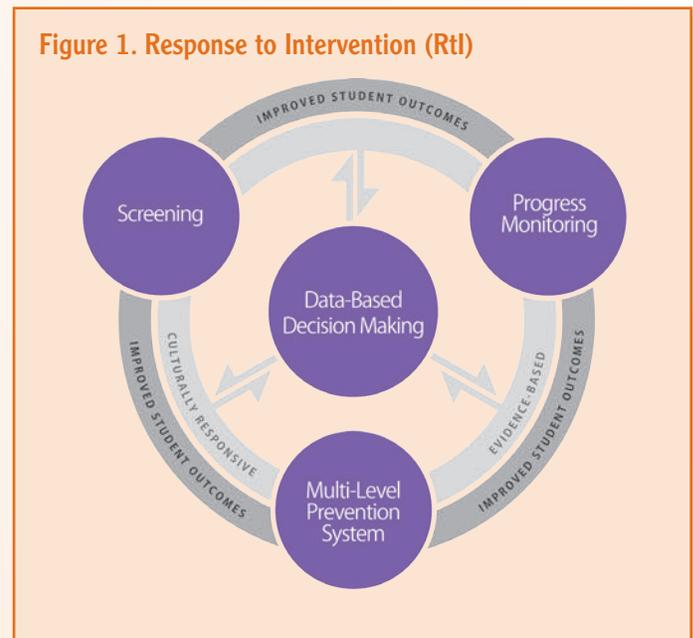
[1] This guide was designed specifically for neglect and delinquent institutions and programs and so principles may vary from those most appropriate in other school settings (e.g., community public school).

Tiered academic interventions also need to provide opportunities for credit recovery, as at-risk students are often credit deficient. Although students need to pass the basic courses in English language arts and mathematics and score at the proficient level on State assessments, they should also be afforded opportunities to engage in a variety of learning opportunities aimed at recovering credits, such as project-based learning units, summer school, and online or blended (combination of online and classroom-based) learning.

Regardless of the specific interventions used, educators need to ensure that each is implemented with fidelity to a standard model and evaluated against that model. Also, systems should implement interventions with consideration for the cultural and linguistic norms of the students and families they serve. Not doing so risks undermining the expected benefit of interventions. Lastly, any intervention should recognize and accentuate student strengths rather than focus solely on areas in need of improvement.

Strategy 3: Use explicit scaffolded instruction

Teachers in all educational settings can maximize students' academic growth through explicit instruction, which is a systematic approach to teaching academic skills. Explicit instruction is an approach that can be used in varied educational settings and with varied instructional materials tailored to students' needs (Archer & Hughes, 2011). Explicit instruction includes a series of supports or scaffolds that guide students through the learning process.

When instruction is scaffolded, teachers strategically select the content and then they break it down into manageable instructional units based on students' ability to make sense of the content. Students could have varying ability to learn the content relative to their working memory, attention, and prior knowledge. Once the content has been selected and broken into manageable learning units, teachers provide clear descriptions and demonstrations (modeling) of the skill followed by supported practice and timely feedback. See Figure 2 for a further breakdown of scaffolded instruction according to 16 characteristics. Once students master each unit of content, they can engage in independent practice and performance. In this way, scaffolded instruction allows teachers to break down and teach skills that otherwise might be too difficult for the students to grasp through an instructional approach with less guidance than explicit instruction provides.

By using explicit instruction, teachers can optimize time on task, provide time for more content coverage, give students opportunities to learn in varied groupings and experience higher levels of success, and help students learn the "what" as well as the "how" and the "when and where" (Ellis & Worthington, 1994). For example, students learn the parts of a persuasive essay, how to write a persuasive essay, and when to modify the essay for a particular audience (Archer & Hughes, 2011).

Figure 2. 16 Elements of Explicit Instruction

1. Focus instruction on critical content.

2. Sequence skills logically.

3. Teach in small segments.

4. Design organized and focused lessons.

5. State lesson goals and expectations.

6. Review prior knowledge and skills.

7. Provide step-by-step demonstrations.

8. Use clear language.

9. Provide a range of examples and non-examples.

10. Provide guided practice.

11. Provide varied opportunities for student-teacher interactions.

12. Check for understanding frequently.

13. Provide immediate feedback.

14. Maintain a brisk instructional pace.

15. Help students organize knowledge.

16. Provide multiple opportunities for students to practice over time that addresses previously taught and newly acquired skills.

(Archer & Hughes, 2011)

Practice 4: Instruct Students in Ways that Engage Them in Learning

All students need to be engaged in interesting and challenging learning experiences that go beyond basic academic skill development. For students who have experienced repeated academic failure, a variety of services and supports are critically important to engage them in learning rather than participate in a watered-down curriculum and rote learning of basic skills (Ogle, 1997). Regardless of students' academic growth, educators and administrators need to set high expectations, integrate students into heterogeneous groups, and offer opportunities for accelerated learning. This can be enhanced by personalizing the learning environment, building conditions for learning that ensure success, providing opportunities for the students' to make decisions about their learning, and allowing for cooperative and peer learning.

Strategy 1: Personalize the learning environment and instructional content

At-risk students often face social, emotional, personal, and/or family barriers to school success. These, challenges may include the exact barriers that placed the student at risk in the first place. As a result of these barriers, these students may have gaps in skills for coping and interacting productively with peers and adults. Thus, it is important

for schools to create a personalized learning environment to better prepare these students academically, socially, and emotionally for school success. A personalized learning environment can create a sense of belonging and community for students and is especially beneficial for at-risk students. This type of school climate helps teachers and students get to know one another (Dynarski, et al., 2008). A personalized learning environment includes both structural strategies such as small group instruction, advisories, and/or small learning communities. Advisories may range in their goals and structure but are generally an established small-group time set aside regularly (ranging from daily to weekly) in which students have regular opportunities to build meaningful teacher-student relationships. Well-structured advisories have a set of activities and direct instructional sessions often focused on college and career readiness, study skills, and time management, for example (Conley, 2010).

There are additional interpersonal strategies that can foster a personalized learning environment, such as providing mentors or adult advocates for at-risk students, offering specialized classes in social and emotional skills, and building healthy teacher-student interpersonal relationships (Downey, 2008; Dynarski, et al., 2008). Research indicates that at-risk students can overcome significant barriers to academic success if they have at least one teacher who believes in them and serves as a supportive role model. At-risk students need teachers who value them as individuals with unique abilities, interests, strengths, and support their personal achievements (Reis, Colbert, & Hebert, 2005).

Adult advocates can establish important ongoing relationship with students and serve as role models. Advocates can model respectful behaviors and communication strategies and offer guidance, stability, and assistance in setting goals and avoiding risky behaviors. Every student, especially at-risk students, needs to have at least one adult in the school who knows him or her well, including his/her interests, personal challenges and successes, and goals. Students want to know that the teachers and administrators are interested in them beyond their grades and test scores (Reis, et al., 2005). It is important that adult volunteers are committed to the advocate role, receive training, and believe in the ability for all students to succeed (Dynarski, et al., 2008). Community resources, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, Rotary Clubs, or the YMCA, can be especially helpful in finding volunteer mentors. When assigning mentors or advocates to at-risk students, it is helpful to consider how the mentors match with the student's interests, experiences, or culture. More on mentoring programs specifically for youth who are incarcerated can be found in NDTAC's "The Mentoring Toolkit: Resources for Developing Programs for Incarcerated Youth" (http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/nd/resources/spotlight/spotlight200609c.asp).

At-risk students, especially those leaving secure and other residential facilities, may be entering new educational settings that are quite large. Regardless of size, however, schools need to seek every potential avenue to provide a personalized learning environment. All schools need to develop structures that support personalizing the day-to-day school experience, which might include an advisory period, small learning communities, and/or schools within schools (Dynarski, et al., 2008).

Strategy 2: Build conditions and opportunities that demonstrate to students their success

Because at-risk students are often marginalized in community schools and do not seem to "fit in," teachers need to give them opportunities to participate in class activities to make them feel like part of the "group" and to help them experience success (Page, 2007). It is important for educators and administrators to emphasize effort and success and to build self-esteem by focusing on personal achievements and strengths (Downey, 2008). For at-risk students to begin to feel they are capable of learning and meeting academic goals, teachers need to adjust classroom grading and marking procedures to give these students a chance to experience success. When teachers give all students the same test after the same exposure to the content and use the same scoring procedures, many at-risk students will not show success or even progress. It is important to remember that while all students need to meet the same instructional standards, they do not all need to demonstrate it exactly the same way, at the same time, or with the same materials, tests, and assignments (Page, 2007).

As such, teachers, with support from administrators and others, need to differentiate instruction and assessment. Assessments that show incremental improvement can be useful in helping at-risk students perceive themselves as successful. For example, the assessment can be broken into smaller, shorter parts so that teachers can give more frequent, diagnostic assessments; students could be given the opportunity to retake the assessment to show their learning; and/or grades could be assigned for interim steps in the learning process (Page, 2007). Further, if the textbook is too difficult, teachers can provide alternative reading materials that address the same concepts but at a level the students can read and understand. It is also helpful to directly teach core concepts and vocabulary before teaching the content in the text. Preteaching or reteaching in small groups can support at-risk students' progress toward mastering the standards.

Strategy 3: Provide engaging, interactive, and hands-on learning opportunities

Many students learn best by interacting with content and/or tasks in some way rather than passively receiving information. In this way, learning is more meaningful.

Students can work with a partner, in small groups, or with tutors. Increasingly, schools are using online textbooks that provide "read aloud" options, interactive glossaries, and video supplements that may improve engagement for youth, particularly those who may have difficulty reading. These types of learning opportunities provide students time for practicing and using new content. Projects that focus on giving students autonomy and choice can foster personal goals and a sense of pride in accomplishments. Further, at-risk students can benefit from working together in heterogeneous groups (Downey, 2008).

For at-risk students across educational settings, teachers and education support staff need to use a variety of interactive approaches, such as project-based (thematic) units, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and reciprocal teaching. In reciprocal teaching, students work in small groups to summarize, question, clarify, and predict while reading a text (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). Think-Pair-Share is one useful interactive instruction strategy. Instead of one teacher talking about concepts or new ideas to a class of 30 students, you have 15 students talking and 15 students actively engaged in listening and getting ready to provide feedback. In this way, all students are speaking, thinking, listening, and participating (Page, 2007). This strategy and other similar ones, like cooperative learning, are useful for reviewing for tests or for practicing skills like spelling or math facts. They also free up the teacher to work with those students who need additional time and attention. However, teachers need to adequately prepare students for such assignments and develop a systematic way for students to form and work in pairs or small groups, with clear expectations and anticipated outcomes.

Regardless of the strategy, instruction should be relevant to youth, including use of current events, newsworthy content, general literacy, numeracy, and language arts instruction and materials should be age appropriate. Good instructional materials to consider are newspapers, magazines, and multimedia and technology tools as well as the school or facility library. Instruction and instructional materials should also be developmentally appropriate and include instruction beyond core academics on such areas like the legal system and restorative justice. In all educational settings, it is important to remember that at-risk students need to be engaged actively in learning. They can create worksheets, tests, review guides, visual displays, or written text to engage with the content. When students are engaged in the learning and studying process, they are less likely to disrupt the classroom. Although misbehavior can be self-defeating, at-risk students often opt to disrupt classes rather than show their lack of understanding. Teachers can plan lessons independently or with colleagues but to be effective, the lesson delivery must involve all the students and gain their attention (Page, 2007).

Peer tutoring and cooperative learning are additional ways to engage youth in learning and will provide them opportunities for developing appropriate social interaction. Peer tutoring is especially effective for youth who are reading below fifth grade level and need intense reading remediation. Allowing students with a GED or high school diploma to act as tutors encourages role modeling and allows the teacher more one-on-one time with students.

Strategy 4: Engage youth in educational decision making

Engaging students in their own educational decision making begins with soliciting their feedback on their educational experiences and goals. This can be accomplished formally or informally and helps to inform action steps toward promoting overall school success. Feedback should be supplemented by school records, including assessments and evaluations, and past learning plans (especially IEPs and 504 Plans). More complete information will better allow school staff to initiate frank discussion with youth about educational strengths and weaknesses, as well as to begin the process of establishing achievable, realistic goals that can be incorporated into a long-range care plan for meeting the educational and vocational needs of the youth. Having family members or other caring adults take an active role in the process by supplying educational and related information for the creation of an educational plan ensures a greater degree of accountability, accuracy, and quite possibly success. For example, many system-involved youth have a strong desire to "catch up" academically with their peers and have expressed this desire to educational staff. In an effort to help youth involved with the juvenile justice and child welfare systems either keep or catch up with their peers, the educational plan may include provisions for building the youth's study and comprehension skills through a study skills course designed to provide intervention and remediation.

Practice 5: Address Behavioral and Social Needs To Promote Educational Success

An important practice for school teachers and administrators to consider when addressing the academic needs of youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems is the provision of services and supports that address behavioral and social needs. Given the risk factors for systems-involved youth, which may include adverse childhood experiences (trauma), higher prevalence of emotional and behavioral disorders and learning disabilities when compared to non-systems-involved peers, and gaps in skill acquisition and learning due to numerous transitions, classroom-based supports and services become a critical component of a successful educational experience across all learning settings. Although there are a host of behavior and social skill-focused supports and services needed for these at-risk students, this section

of the guide covers four that can be implemented by the classroom teacher without additional personnel or assistance. The strategies support the conditions for learning most often discussed in the research:

1. Safety. Learners must be, and feel, safe. Safety involves emotional as well as physical safety—for example, being safe from sarcasm and ridicule.

2. Engagement and Challenge. Youth need to be actively engaged in learning endeavors that are relevant to them and that enable them to develop the skills and capacities to reach positive life goals. (Osher, Sidana and Kelly, 2008)

3. Support. Learners must feel connected to teachers and the learning setting, must have access to appropriate support, and must be aware of and know how to access the support.

4. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). Learners need to learn to manage their emotions and relationships positively and be surrounded by peers who also have socially responsible behavior.

Strategy 1: Manage student behaviors with positive rather than punitive approaches

There is a strong research base indicating that being at risk is frequently demonstrated through poor academic and social skills. This lack of skills can lead to "not fitting in" with the school culture and disengaging from school, resulting in misconduct in school (McDonald, 2002). As such, at-risk students may overreact to a classroom comment or an interaction with a peer and/or teacher that is perceived as demanding. Often, due to students' lack of academic skills, they resort to defensive behaviors such as clowning, disrespect, passive aggression, anger, violence, disruption, defiance, apathy, and an uncooperative attitude (Page, 2008). To counteract this type of behavior, teachers need to minimize their focus on negative behaviors and instead recognize and reward positive student behaviors, provide opportunities for choices, and keep students in the classroom, unless the safety of others is a concern, instead of in the office or suspended or expelled out of school.

Teachers may choose to ignore minor classroom disruptions and respond in a manner that does not call increased attention to the student. Unfortunately, teachers, ancillary school staff, and security and other discipline-related staff members may escalate the disruptive behavior by drawing undue attention to the student or responding to the behavior too frequently or intensely without employing positive reengagement efforts during the disciplinary process. Managing student behaviors with a positive approach includes giving students purpose and responsibility for behaviors and

maintaining a clear structure for expectations and feedback to them (Downey, 2008). Students can be encouraged to identify the problem or behavior and work out a solution or another way of responding or resolving the problem.

Strategy 2: Engage the family to gain greater insight into youth's behavioral needs

Evidence suggests that promoting the family's involvement in their child's education improves overall outcomes for the young person (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Reaching out to family members or other supportive adults in a youth's life sends a strong message to all involved in the young person's education that educational achievement is critical to fostering positive life outcomes and that the family's engagement is valued. Also, the information that a family member or other responsible adult can share with educational professionals may be invaluable, as no one knows the young person's behavioral and social histories like those closest to them do and their perspective is valuable to long-range planning. Establishing contacts with a youth's family, including extended and foster family members to determine details about the services and supports that were provided to the youth prior to his or her placement in a new school setting, including detention or the secure care settings, is important (Bolson, Quinn, & Nelson, 2004, pg. 12).

The first contact by each educational placement should include a conversation to engage the family members or other responsible adults, and to discuss how their child's educational needs will be met in the new school setting. Any permissions for educational and behavioral records should be obtained. Additionally, schools and facilities can ask family members and responsible adults to provide any records that they might have at home that may include transcripts, behavioral records, individual behavior plans, and special education records (Bolson, Quinn, & Nelson, 2004). Additional strategies for engaging families and caretakers in the lives of youth in the juvenile justice system can be found in NDTAC's "A Family Guide to Getting Involved With Correctional Education" (http://www.neglected-delinquent. org/nd/resources/spotlight/familyGuide2008.asp) and "Working With Families of Children in the Juvenile Justice and Corrections Systems: A Guide for Education Program Leaders, Principals, and Building Administrators" (http:// www.neglected-delinquent.org/nd/resources/spotlight/ spotlight200611a.asp).

Strategy 3: Create a structured learning environment

Highly structured learning environments may be the best setting for at-risk students to achieve academically and behaviorally. The particular components discussed under this strategy include: organizing the time (schedule) and space (classroom/school), establishing clear rules, rituals, and

routines, establishing data-based criteria for meeting goals, and effective classroom management styles.

Effectively structured school days and classrooms that enhance the teaching-learning process are those that make it easier for the teacher and support staff to manage programming in ways that provide consistency for students. Students, especially those at risk, often cannot predict what will happen in their world each day; however, in highly structured learning environments, they can rely on a strict schedule to bring order to their school day (Fecser, 2003). The classroom space itself should be organized by function as well as time (e.g., there is an area in the classroom for group instruction, an area for individual instruction, and an area for games and recreational time) (2003). For example, it is helpful to designate a specific location to collect and turn in assignments and/or a quiet zone for reading instruction. Structure helps to minimize the need for the adult to constantly remind students of expectations, which may positively impact a youth's behavior in the classroom (2003).

Establishing clear rules, rituals, and routines is closely related to setting clear schedules and structured classroom environments conducive to learning and is mutually beneficial for students and teachers. Effective teachers in any educational setting purposefully establish individually prescribed routines for their at risk students. Rules, rituals, and routines may add to a sense of safety and predictability in the classroom. Rules should be positively stated as desired behaviors and reviewed several times daily and consistently enforced, especially when a new student transitions into the school/facility or class. Establishing rituals and routines will more readily lead to good work and behavioral habits and often can reduce confusion and argumentative behavior when a crisis or disruption occurs in the school or classroom (Fecser, 2003).

Establishing data-based criteria for meeting educational goals, such as a points and levels system, that is not punitive in nature "helps students know each day what the expectations are for their individual as well as the classroom's progress and how well they are meeting them" (Fecser, 2003, p. 110). If students earn points or are otherwise rewarded for academic progress, good behavior, and active class participation, time should be spent during the final minutes of the class or school day recognizing those accomplishments and setting expectations for the next day or time the youth is in the class.

Finally, teachers, counselors, and school administrators should apply behavior management principles in a student-focused, personalized fashion. When addressing significant behavioral concerns, behavioral and possibly social goals should be formalized in the student's PLP and supported by an individualized behavior management plan. Research has shown that "educational staff members' management style and student response to the management style is largely based on trust between child and adult" (Fecser, 2003, p. 110). Always sending the message to students that their feelings and emotional well-being are important is an important way to build a safe, predictable and positive setting for young people to learn (2003).

Strategy 4: Align behavior management practices across settings and locations

Addressing the behavioral needs of youth within systems must be thoughtfully considered and consistently dealt with across all educational settings, from public high schools to correctional facilities, and locations, from classrooms to living units. Approaches should be flexible so as to be applicable to all students in all situations. For example, a tiered behavioral intervention approach like Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) addresses the majority of the student population's behavioral needs while providing for subsequent levels of intervention for higher-need youth, such as those who have emotional and/or mental health concerns and those youth who are struggling adjusting to placement or confinement. Interventions should also be structured enough to be easily replicable, though tailored, and followed by all students and multiple sector staff (e.g., education, counseling, security/discipline). Too great a discrepancy in approach between placements will likely make it more difficult for youth to acclimate and conform following transitions, thus potentially leading to increased behavior problems and regression in academic and social skill development.

The same consistency should hold true across the locations within each school building and treatment, detention, or correctional facility. Behavioral management approaches strictly enforced in the classroom but ignored or under-used in non-academic settings like recreational areas and dormitories fail to achieve full effectiveness and undermine a setting's commitment to managing behavior. Thus, the implementation of a common, or at least complementary, behavior management approach across agencies and settings can contribute to student success. Particularly in secure-care and treatment facilities, for youth and staff to grasp the importance of education, success in the classroom should be considered a major component of the facility's behavior management system. The youth's progression through the facility's level system, for example, which should equate to an earning of privileges, should be heavily dependent upon his or her school participation and performance. School attendance, social behavior and educational work practices are three areas in which a youth might receive points that impact his or her overall level. A strong behavior management program may support youth in elevating his/her level of engagement in educational endeavors while in residential placement and better prepare him or her for re-entry into a traditional community school setting.

Conclusion

Youth involved with the juvenile justice and child welfare systems too often experience more barriers than supports for their academic success. These youth present unique challenges to educators, regardless of placement or setting, in meeting their academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs. To help these youth break the cycle of negative educational experience, States and localities should embrace a supportive educational system that provides individualized academic and behavioral services. Doing so requires collecting and sharing academic, behavioral, and other relevant data and using those data to design personalized learning plans aimed at fostering success. Due to the high mobility of system-involved youth, child-serving agencies need to implement procedures that ensure smooth transitions from one placement to the next with little to no disruption in educational services and academic progress. Within educational environments, educators and support staff need to address gaps in students' academic skills and accelerate students' learning. Educators need to employ instructional techniques that engage students in the learning process and empower youth to succeed. Finally,

schools cannot ignore the behavioral, social, and emotional challenges youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems face that greatly affect their academic performance and must employ practices that help students overcome those challenges. This guide provides systems with concrete practices and implementation strategies to create such a supportive educational system for all students, but with particular focus on this unique at-risk population. NDTAC hopes administrators and practitioners across the juvenile justice, child welfare, education, and mental health fields will use this guide to examine current practices and make the changes necessary to fully support systems-involved youth academically and behaviorally. The Center also hopes State Title I, Part D, administrators will use this guide to promote sound and creative uses of Part D funds to supplement educational services that readily lend themselves to such levels of student support. By taking an individualized approach to addressing the academic and behavioral needs of students involved with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, regardless of the setting, schools offer greater opportunities for success for these students and take one big step toward fostering better outcomes for this under supported population.

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Resources and Examples

This appendix provides resources and examples of the practices and strategies described in the guide. The first section includes examples and resources that exemplify all of the major practices. This is followed by sections for each of the major practices with examples and resources for each. The examples and resources embody many or all of the strategies under each practice, and, while items are organized by practice, many are exemplary of more than one practice. As the guide asserts, it is important to consider implementing the practices and strategies in concert to form a coherent and comprehensive program.

Applicable to All Practices

Web sites

Doing What Works
http://dww.ed.gov
This site was designed by the U.S. Department of Education to translate evidence-based practices into tools, multimedia products, and other resources to address school improvement and improve academic achievement for all students. Many of the sites, topics, and resources are geared to educators who work with at-risk students (e.g., dropout prevention).

School Turnaround Learning Community
http://schoolturnaroundsupport.org
While its initial purpose was to be a resource center for States and districts that have School Improvement Grant funding, this U.S. Department of Education site has expanded to providing support through Webinars and a resource library for school improvement and for improvement of academic and behavior outcomes.

Schools and Facilities

Foxfire Schools (Zanesville, OH)
http://www.foxfireschools.com/foxfire/site/default.asp
This dropout recovery district serves neglected, delinquent, and at-risk youth from the Maysville School District and surrounding counties. The district has one middle school and one high school and provides a variety of options for credit recovery and focuses on wraparound embedded services.

Western Hills University High School (Cincinnati, OH)
http://uhs-wh.cps-k12.org
This small high school features learning communities, academic supports, and data use. Almost all of the school's students are at risk.

Sleepy Hollow High School (Sleepy Hollow, NY)
http://www.tufsd.org/shhs/index.html
This is a small suburban high school serving an at-risk population, with special emphasis on teen parenting and nonpunitive approaches to behavior management.

Practice 1: Collect and Use Data To Identify Student Needs and Develop Plans

Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago
http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/content/index.php
This research organization focuses on research and school improvement in Chicago. The consortium's work and research has contributed significantly to understanding on-track and off-track indicators for freshmen.

Student Records Request Letter (Louisiana)
http://bit.ly/I9MluY (PDF)
A letter similar to this from the State of Louisiana is automatically generated within 24 hours of a youth being admitted to the reception unit at all State-operated secure care facilities. The information requested includes the student's cumulative records, individual evaluations, Individualized Education Program, birth certificate, Social Security card/number, immunization records, units of credits earned, and any other pertinent information. This letter also notifies the local school system that the youth is engaged in educational services.

State Statute for Student Records Transfer (Louisiana)
http://legis.la.gov/lss/lss.asp?doc=79759
The 2001 Louisiana legislative session passed Senate Bill No. 118 (R.S. 17:112) that forbids local school districts from "holding" juvenile justice-involved youth's educational records for such reasons as owing the school lunch money, not returning library books, or not paying extracurricular activity fees. It also specifies a time period by which all records are to be sent to the State agency.

Information Sharing Legislation (Louisiana)
Louisiana also enacted legislation, among other collaborative efforts, to facilitate interagency information sharing:

  a. Act 1225 of the 2003 Louisiana Legislative Regular Session (pages 10–13, chapter 14). Interagency Agreements for Information Sharing Concerning Juveniles
  http://www.legis.state.la.us/leg_docs/03RS/CVT10/OUT/0000KTKP.pdf (PDF)

  b. Article 543 of Louisiana's Children's Cabinet, Interagency information sharing; interagency agreements
  http://www.legis.state.la.us/lss/newWin.asp?doc=321979

Individualized Learning Plan (Louisiana)
http://bit.ly/JCXckc (PDF)
Louisiana's Individual Learning Plan (ILP) was developed prior to 2003 and is automated and user-friendly. A task force of facility school administrators and teachers helped develop the plan to be comprehensive yet not overly

burdensome on teachers and school staff to initiate and update. The automated system also generates facility and systemwide educational reports to support data-driven decisionmaking in the schools.

Individualized Learning Plan (Maryland)
http://bit.ly/IfIBYU (PDF)
Created by the Maryland State Department of Education and piloted by the State's Juvenile Services Education Centers, the ILP is a student-centered program of education learning that specifically focuses on students' individual strengths and needs. The ILP is a plan of action that personalizes and customizes learning goals and interventions based on individual diagnostic assessments. It is designed to help students plan for the future through knowledge acquisition, skill development, and the adoption of productive social behaviors and attitudes.

Medication Feedback Form
http://bit.ly/IinBSv (PDF)
This sample medication feedback form provides education staff with relevant information on side effects and effectiveness of psychotropic medications prescribed to youth in care. The psychiatrist submits the form to the school office on the first date of use of the medication. The form is then distributed to each of the youth's classroom teachers, and, for a period of 7–10 days, the teachers identify effectiveness and side effects of the medication through the lenses of the educational setting.

Aldine Independent School District (Houston, TX)
http://www.aldine.k12.tx.us/
This large urban district has a long history of school improvement and excellence. It serves a large minority and English language learner student population. One of the key areas of focus for Aldine is districtwide use of data. The district has established protocols for data use at the district, school, and individual student levels, which allows all staff to make decisions based on both academic and non-academic data.

Charleston Crossover Youth Practice Model Site (South Carolina)
http://cjjr.georgetown.edu/pm/cypm.html
Across all Center for Juvenile Justice's Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) sites, the model encourages creating or utilizing existing Family Team Meetings or Team Decision Making Meetings. These meetings should when a youth becomes formally involved in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems and when any significant event in the life of such a youth occurs. This includes changes in placement and school settings. The model encourages educators and school personnel to be among those involved in the meetings.

The Charleston CYPM Implementation team meets monthly basis to plan services and supports for all youth that "crossed

over" from one system to the other (juvenile justice and child welfare) during the previous month. Prior to the meetings, a list of all the youth to be discussed is submitted to all attending partners, including education staff. At the meetings, the designated liaison from Charleston County Public Schools provides an education profile for all the youth reviewed to ensure that the larger team has relevant education information. The liaison also takes back to the local school any juvenile justice or child welfare agency-related information important to the local school. For more information on the Charleston CYPM site, contact the Director of the Department of Juvenile Justice, Ashley Standafor, at astand@scdjj.net.

Practice 2: Implement Procedures To Ensure Smooth Transitions

Sample Transition Plan Template (Louisiana)
http://bit.ly/Jl6waj (PDF)
The sample transition plan from the Louisiana Department of Juvenile Justice covers in a comprehensive manner all elements that might be addressed in a youth's reentry planning. Education is a separate section but complements the other sections, and the open-ended format enables ease of coordination across disciplines.

Sample Intake Form With Educational Interview (Louisiana)
http://bit.ly/I5kD80 (PDF)
In Louisiana, upon a youth's entry into a secure care facility, while he or she is still in the orientation phase of placement, an educational staff member meets with the youth and explains the educational offerings. The staff member gathers pertinent educational information through an interview process. This initial summary of educational strengths and weaknesses helps to begin the process of appropriate educational placement and screening efforts.

Transition Coordinator Job Description (Louisiana)
http://bit.ly/Ik76aE (PDF)
This job description outlines the basic qualifications and responsibilities for a juvenile justice facility Transition Coordinator.

Education Advocate Job Description (Washington)
http://www.k12.wa.us/InstitutionalEd/pubdocs/EA_Manual.pdf#page=57
This job description outlines the qualifications and responsibilities for Washington State's Education Advocates. They assist juveniles previously incarcerated in county detention centers or juvenile institutions to successfully transition back to community schools, vocational training, college, GED programs, or jobs.

Educational and Transitional Planner Position Description and Budget (New York)
http://bit.ly/I4OXip (PDF)
This sample budget from an N or D facility includes a line item for a School Liaison-Educational and Transitional Planner and outlines the basic responsibilities of the position.

"Models for Change Information Sharing Toolkit: Accelerating Progress Toward a More Rational, Fair, Effective and Developmentally Appropriate Juvenile Justice System"
http://www.tribalreentry.org/sites/tribalreentry.org/files/Juvenile%20Justice%20Information%20Sharing%20Toolkit.pdf (PDF)
This toolkit, from the MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change Initiative, highlights best practices in information sharing and the importance of formalized practices for exchanging information. It provides sample tools and protocols, including sample consent forms, sample interagency memorandums of understanding (MOU) and a suggested template for an MOU.

Balcom Learning Center (Paragould, AR)
http://childrenshomes.org/index.php/Contact/Balcom-Learning-Center/
Balcom is a residential facility program focused on providing the skills youth need to transition back to high school and/or to go on to college or vocational training.

The Education Transition Center, Harris County Juvenile Probation Department (Houston, TX)
http://www.co.harris.tx.us/hcjpd/default.asp
This Education Transition Center offers supplemental education services and facilitates a youth's successful transition back to the community.

Los Angeles Crossover Youth Practice Model Site (California)
http://cjjr.georgetown.edu/pm/cypm.html
The Los Angeles CYPM site has established a specific unit within its participating detention center for youth that have crossed over from child welfare to juvenile justice. These youth are paired with an education mentor/tutor that works with them throughout their time in both systems. The goal is to have someone that bonds with the youth, is going to be stable in their lives, and is able to work with them on their education challenges. This level of consistency enables the mentor/tutor to build relationships with educators and serve as advocate for the youth. For more information on this and other CYPM sites, contact Macon Stewart at the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at mcb75@georgetown.edu.

Practice 3: Address Gaps in Academic Skills and Accelerate Learning

Section of ILP/PLP Focused on Addressing Academic Gaps (Louisiana)
http://bit.ly/JCXckc (PDF)
A couple sections of the Louisiana ILP focus on addressing gaps in academic skills and accelerating learning: pretest scores, posttest scores, strengths and areas for growth (pages ILP-1 and ILP-2 R, M, LA, and V). These sections are updated and assessed each grading period or upon re-administration of the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE).

Transition LEARN Center (Cochise, AZ)
http://cochise.az.gov/cochise_adult_probation.aspx?id=1620&ekmensel=c580fa7b_146_332_1620_4
Cochise County's LEARN Center opened in 1993 and consists of 14 computerized student workstations, individual learning plans based on a battery of assessments, and one-on-one tutoring. Programs include Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, and General Education Development (GED) preparation.

Hastings Youth Academy (Hastings, FL)
Hastings Youth Academy (HYA) is a school operated on the grounds of a moderate-risk, secure juvenile justice facility, the Hastings Comprehensive Mental Health Treatment Facility. Education at HYA includes three major programs to address the mental health needs of youth involved in the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. Also, the St. Johns County School Board provides onsite educational services, including high school and GED courses. Explicit instruction is being implemented at HYA to address the reading and literacy needs of youth who are confined. HYA is participating in a national study called "Literacy Instruction Based on Evidence through Research for Adjudicated Teens to Excel" ("Project Liberate"), which is examining implementation of explicit instruction in correctional education settings. The results of the study are expected to be released in summer 2013. For more information on HYA, please contact principal Anthony Vivian at timothy.vivian@us.g4s.com.

Success Academy at the Ghazvini Learning Center (Tallahassee, FL)
http://www.glc.leon.k12.fl.us/default.aspx
Success Academy serves students transitioning from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice who are behind in earning credits. The academy also serves grade-level students who are looking to accelerate their studies. The goal for students is to get 1½ year's worth of credit (9 credits) in a 1-year period.

Practice 4: Instruct Students in Ways That Engage Them in Learning

Section of ILP/PLP Focused on Academic Accommodations and Modifications
http://bit.ly/JCXckc (PDF)

There is a section within Louisiana's ILP that suggests that youth engaged in educational services in juvenile justice facilities may need accommodations and or modifications to maximize educational outcomes (pages ILP-2R, ILP-2M, ILP-2LA, and ILP-2V).

Section of ILP/PLP Where Youth Approves and Commits to Plan
http://bit.ly/JCXckc (PDF)

Also included in the Louisiana ILP is a section for the student to initial and approve the plan's provisions (top of page 1 of ILP-1). During the ILP meeting, teachers ask for the student's commitment to address the educational benchmarks in the ILP while in placement. The ILP/PLP is finalized only after the youth has participated in development and approval of the plan.

Youth Co-Development and Approval of and Commitment to ILP (Maryland)
http://bit.ly/I9MKxz (PDF)

Students in Maryland's Juvenile Services Education Centers coauthor their ILPs. As part of development, students are asked to express their personal interests, educational goals, and desired social and emotional adjustment. Once the student completes the ILP, the student must sign and date it, stating that he or she understands the content and commits to working on the prescribed goals.

Vocational Education Program, Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, Houston, TX
http://www.co.harris.tx.us/hcjpd/default.asp

This program gives students the opportunity to take part in one of three vocations and to receive instruction in GED.

Practice 5: Address Behavioral and Social Needs To Promote Educational Success

Behavior Management Program (Louisiana)
http://bit.ly/ILnoac (PDF)

The systemwide Louisiana Model (LAMOD) behavior management program operating in Louisiana's secure care facilities is based on the foundation that youth who enter the system must advance through stages of development if their behaviors are going to change. Each stage requires a different level of support from staff members and peers. The management program acknowledges four stages of development many youth must navigate to benefit from programming and addresses the clear relationships among expectations, incentives, staff interaction, responsibility, and stage progression.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in Juvenile Justice Settings
http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/nd/resources/spotlight/spotlight200601b.asp

This site describes the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports programs implemented in two juvenile justice settings, highlighting how the program was implemented, how it works, and what the results have been at each of the facilities.

Juvenile Justice Facility Toolkit for Family Engagement
The toolkit is coming soon from NDTAC.

Positive Education Program's Day Treatment Centers (Cleveland, OH)
http://www.pepcleve.org/dtc.aspx

The Positive Education Program (PEP) Day Treatment Centers serve school-age children and youth who have been diagnosed with an emotional disturbance in an integrated educational and mental health environment. These centers serve as both the school and the therapeutic treatment center for these children and youth. The centers employ the Re-Education ("Re-ED") philosophy, which provides the framework that creates a therapeutic environment in which (a) there are expectancies for normal healthy behavior, (b) competence is stressed, and (c) energy is focused on identifying and building strengths to promote positive growth (http://www.re-ed.org/aboutus/principlesofreed.html).

Behavioral strategies and positive interventions and supports provide predictability, structure, and consistency for students. Individual and group meetings, lessons, and activities are used to teach new ways of perceiving, thinking, feeling, and behaving. Individualized programming builds functional skills and academic competence that promote cognitive and social-emotional growth and development.

South Arkansas Youth Services (SAYS) (Magnolia, AR)
http://www.saysyouth.org/

SAYS provides services to address social/emotional issues, family involvement, and academic, and behavior issues. The program combines a day services program, an emergency shelter, outreach, and residential services.

Centennial School of Lehigh University's College of Education (Bethlehem, PA)
http://www.lehigh.edu/~insch/

The Centennial School provides educational services to students ages 6 through 21 with emotional disturbances and autism with educational disabilities. The school provides special adaptations and modifications to general education curriculum, speech and language services, physical education and adapted physical education, transition services, and vocational training.

Miami-Dade Crossover Youth Practice Model Site (Florida)
http://cjjr.georgetown.edu/pm/cypm.html
The CYPM supports a holistic approach to working with youth, including identification and assessment of risk for delinquent behaviors. Implementation of CYPM in Miami-Dade, FL, has allowed for reshaping of the role of law enforcement in the schools, including law enforcement personnel aiding teachers in assessing for and reviewing students' risk factors for delinquency (based on a minor incident) and developing a plan for intervention that precedes the need for an arrest. For more information on this and other CYPM sites, contact Macon Stewart at the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at mcb75@georgetown.edu.

Acknowledgments

www.neglected-delinquent.org

The National Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center
for the Education of Children and Youth Who are Neglected, Delinquent or At-Risk

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April 2012
Improving educational
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