

A Checklist for an Effective Parent-School Partnership

One way to start improving your school's parent-school partnerships is by assessing present practices, says Joyce Epstein at Johns Hopkins University. The following questions can help you evaluate how well your school is reaching out to parents.

- Which partnership practices are currently working well at each grade level?
- Which partnership practices should be improved or added in each grade?
- How do you want your school's family involvement practices to look three years from now?
- Which present practices should change and which should continue?
- Which families are you reaching and which are hard to reach?
- What can be better done to communicate with the latter?
- What costs are associated with the improvements you want?
- How will you evaluate the results of your efforts?
- What opportunities will you arrange for teachers, parents, and students to share information on successful practices in order to strengthen their own efforts?

Source: www.projectappleseed.org

What works at Mattie Rhodes?

A best practice is a technique or methodology that, through experience and research, has proven to reliably lead to a desired result. A commitment to using the best practices in any field is a commitment to using all the knowledge and technology at one's disposal to ensure success. The following models are currently being used at Mattie Rhodes.

PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies)

A comprehensive program for promoting emotional and social competencies and reducing aggression and acting-out behaviors in elementary-school-aged children, while simultaneously enhancing the educational process in the classroom. This innovative curriculum for kindergarten through sixth grade (ages 5 to 12) is used by educators and counselors as a multiyear, prevention model.

In clinical trials, the use of the PATHS curriculum significantly increased children's ability to: understand social problems, recognize emotions, maintain self-control, tolerate frustration and develop effective conflict resolution strategies. For more information: <http://modelprograms.samsha.gov>

Padres Activos de Hoy (Active Parenting Today)

This program provides parents with skills that will help them develop cooperation, responsibility and self-esteem in their children. They also learn positive discipline techniques.

Parents who attend Active Parenting groups are taught to use effective communication skills, such as listening and responding to feelings, and to lecture and criticize less. Using effective skills results in more effective parent-child interaction. Parents are also taught to use intervention strategies that are motivating and supportive, such as encouragement techniques and logical consequences, rather than punishment. Improved interactions, including using different intervention strategies to deal with misbehavior, often lead to positive changes in the child's or teen's behavior.

For more information: www.activeparenting.com



Our mission

Mattie Rhodes Center strengthens Kansas City children, families and community by providing social services, mental health counseling and art experiences in a bilingual, culturally sensitive environment.

Nuestra misión

Fortalecer a los niños, las familias y a la comunidad de la Ciudad al ofrecerle servicios sociales, salud mental y conserjería y experiencias dentro del arte en un ambiente bilingüe y culturalmente apropiado.

COMMENTS:

Mattie Rhodes Center
1740 Jefferson Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64108
816-471-2536

jfierro@mattierhodes.org
Attn: John Fierro
Director of Development

Previous issues of Insights

Visit our website
www.mattierhodes.org

Topics:

Education
Substance Abuse
Youth Development

Insights Into La familia

A quarterly publication of the Mattie Rhodes Center

JULY 2005, VOLUME 2, ISSUE NO. 3

Insights Into La Familia is a quarterly publication of the Mattie Rhodes Center. Its purpose is to provide business, government, philanthropic, and community leaders with an understanding of the values, attitudes, and experiences of Hispanic families, adults, and children – and help them appreciate the severe economic, educational, cultural, and linguistic barriers confronting the Hispanic population. Each issue will profile a client of the program, offer important demographic information and data, and offer suggestions about how to better work with Hispanics in Kansas City, Missouri.

CONTRIBUTORS:

JENNIFER VALADEZ

DAVID STADLER

GAYLE ERIKSON-LANEY

Youth development is seen as an integral part of the continuum of service that Mattie Rhodes Center offers to the community. Currently, MRC programming is centered on visual arts, life skills, community service and academic enrichment. To ensure success within these areas, case management and counseling are provided.

“Youth are vital members in our families and community who have unique developmental, social and cultural needs that must be addressed in a specialized manner through youth development activities,” said Gayle Erikson-Laney, clinical director. “Youth in our community are the future; therefore MRC is committed to providing and expanding culturally competent youth development programs.”

In addition to impacting the individual and the family, MRC attempts to impact change within the greater community by holding advisory groups and site council meetings.

Over the last four years, MRC has developed, implemented and evaluated two school-based models working with the Local Investment Commission, the Kansas City Health Department and the principals at Northeast Middle and High Schools, Garcia Elementary and McCoy Elementary. The purpose of these projects was to examine what strategies were needed to gain and sustain major improvements for Latino children within an increasingly changing social environment. As recent as the 2003-2004 academic year, Hispanic students made up 15.5 % of the total Kansas City, Mo. School District enrollment. The following strategies and recommendations have resulted from our work:

- Opportunities should be in place for parents to attain valuable parenting skills, as well as to have a sense of community among one another.
- Diversity of faculty and administrators in schools should be reflective of the student community.
- Assess your target population and determine which best practice models are culturally appropriate for your needs. Resources are available on the web at:
 - <http://modelprograms.samsha.gov>
 - <http://www.ed.gov>
 - <http://www.activeparentig.com>

In response to these findings, MRC will begin to develop a youth development initiative for advancing the interests of Latino children, youth, families and communities. According to David Stadler, director of quality and compliance, we will “undertake short-term efforts to systematically build a constituency for children, youth and families that will support and sustain positive advances for children over the long term.”

“In our G.L.O.B.E. program, we will continue to build upon the youth outcomes that have been set in place. And, as we conclude the Esperanza program, we are looking to develop a tool kit that will provide school administrators with usable information, ideas and tips on outreach to diverse student populations,” said Stadler. “It is our hope that other schools will look to our work and utilize our models for youth development.”



Youth Development Outcomes

All Mattie Rhodes youth development programs function under a philosophy constructed by YouthNet. It includes a series Youth Development Outcomes, which are the knowledge, skills, behavior and personal attributes young people need to be healthy and succeed.* Program staff are trained in this curriculum in order to serve students effectively.

According to these outcomes, young people demonstrate a positive identity when they have a sense of personal well-being and a sense of connection and commitment to others. Additionally, they are able to demonstrate ability when they gain knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare them for adulthood. These outcomes are Aspects of Identity and Areas of Ability.*

The principles outlined in the outcomes set the groundwork for cultivation of youth into strong, responsible leaders in society. A prime example is that of a recent student-lead initiative to improve the Northeast community.

What is Youth Development?

A youth development program is one that is based upon a youth development philosophy. Youth development is an approach - a way of understanding and thinking about youth that serves to guide action. This approach seeks to promote the overall development of young people by emphasizing and building upon their assets. It is NOT any program that targets youth.

A youth development approach believes that preventing problem behaviors in our young people is not enough. A young person who attends school, obeys laws, avoids drugs and postpones parenthood is not necessarily equipped to meet the difficult demands of adulthood. Hence the youth development adage that problem free is not fully prepared.

*www.kcyouthnet.org

AREAS OF ABILITY*	
Physical Health	The ability and motivation to act in ways that best ensure current and future physical health for self and others.
Mental Health	The ability and motivation to respond affirmatively to and cope with positive and adverse situations, to reflect on one's emotions and surroundings and to engage in leisure and fun.
Intellectual Ability	The ability and motivation to learn in school and in other settings, to gain the basic knowledge needed to graduate high school, to use critical thinking, to be creative, to use problem solving and expressive skills and to conduct independent study.
Employability	The ability and motivation to gain the functional and organizational skills necessary for employment, including an understanding of careers and options and the steps necessary to reach goals.
Civic & Social Ability	The ability and motivation to work collaboratively with others for the larger good and to sustain caring friendships and relationships with others.
Cultural Ability	The ability and motivation to respect and affirmatively respond to differences among groups and individuals of diverse backgrounds, interests and traditions.

ASPECTS OF IDENTITY*	
Safety & Structure	A perception that one is safe in the world and that daily events are somewhat predictable.
Self-Worth	A perception that one is a "good person" who contributes to self and others.
Mastery & Future	A perception that one is "making it" and will succeed in the future.
Belonging & Membership	A perception that one values and is valued by others in the family and community.
Responsibility & Autonomy	A perception that one has some control over daily events and is accountable for one's actions and for the consequences of others.
Spirituality & Self-Awareness	A perception that one is unique and is intimately attached to extended families, cultural groups, communities, higher deities and/or principles.

*Source: www.kcyouthnet.org

The Cost of Youth Violence

The direct financial costs, paid for by the system, the community and the taxpayer are as follows:

- The average court cost to process one young offender \$ 2,000
- The annual open custody cost for one young offender \$ 4,500
- The annual closed custody cost of one young offender \$80,000

These costs do not take into account the massive indirect costs:

- Policing
- Legal aid, counseling and probation
- The financial costs to the victim and the community

OR, the hidden costs of victimization:

- Victims and their families are left traumatized, frustrated and cynical towards the judicial system
- The long term health care costs related to the physical and emotional health of traumatized victims

*www.pactprogram.ca

The assumed cost of providing after-school programming is \$1500 per child, per year. (source: "Costs and Benefits of After-School Programs", Kauffman Foundation)

Did you know?

■ Among Missouri students grades 9-12, more than one in five girls and more than one in ten boys indicated that they had seriously considered attempting suicide during the previous year. Of these, 7.3% indicated they had actually attempted suicide one or more times during that time period (9.8% of girls – almost one in ten – and 4.8% of boys). ("Depression in Kansas City, 2003)

■ It is estimated that one in eight adolescents suffers from depression. ("Depression in Kansas City, 2003)

■ Among Kansas students grades 9-12, 17.8% indicated that they had ever seriously considered attempting suicide. Of these, 6.1% indicated that they actually had attempted suicide one or more times in the previous year. ("Depression in Kansas City, 2003)