



What's New For Schools

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY, INC.
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School Suspension

By Mara Carlin, BS

What are the consequences for a student who is thought to be under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs (ATOD) in your school?

Far too often, the answer to that question is that the student receives out of school suspension (OSS). When a student is assigned an OSS, their instructional time is being interrupted and the student usually does not find constructive activities to do during the hours which they normally would be in school. Sometimes, they even engage in the very same behavior that he/she was suspended for in the first place.



In school suspension (ISS), may be another option. ISS is an in-house program to which a student may be assigned in lieu of an out of school suspension. It is designed to counteract some of the negative effects of OSS, like missing school time, not receiving academic

help, or not receiving counseling services.

When a student is assigned to an ISS, they can still accomplish school work assigned by their teachers and even get help from an adult that will insure completion of this work.

According to the Office of Educational Research and Improvement and Cotton's *School Wide and Classroom Discipline*, ISS can help reduce the daytime juvenile crime rate which has been correlated with OSS.

Students can still be taken out of the normal

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classroom setting, which is an effective form of punishment, while remaining in a school setting.

ISS is broken down into three models. The first is the Punitive Model, which focuses on behavior change and helps the student assume responsibility for their behavior.



The next model is the Discussion Format. This creates a dialogue with the students and the staff and helps to improve self-esteem, problem-solving skills, and encourage appropriate behavior.

The last model is called the Academic Model. This model assumes that behavior disruption is based on academic failure and tries to improve basic skills.

When implementing an ISS program, research suggests that the following five

important questions be considered:

1. What do schools hope to accomplish through the implementation of ISS?
2. How will ISS affect the students academically, their discipline, and the school climate?
3. What are the academic effects of at-risk students who will be in the program?
4. What conditions are necessary to have the program run effectively?
5. What are the skills needed by the staff?

After answering these questions, you and your faculty can develop an ISS program that works best for your school.

According to *Developing An In School Suspension Program In Elementary School As An Alternative to Homebound Suspension*, by Jerry Guindon, effective ISS programs include all of the following components:

- Adequate resources and funding
- Adequate environment
- Continuous monitoring by ISS teacher, counselor, and social worker
- ISS are only used for up to 10 days
- Students should be referred for serious infractions
- A consistent referral process
- Consistent counseling
- Evaluation component
- A supportive principal
- Academic work that is constantly provided
- Immediate parent involvement.

If you would like more information about the differences between ISS and OSS, please visit the following web site: <http://www.middleweb.com/INCASEiss.html>.

NCADD of Middlesex County, Inc. is a private, non-profit community-based health organization serving Middlesex County. Our mission is to promote the health and well-being of individuals and communities of Middlesex County through the reduction or elimination of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use problems.

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Meet The Educator - Dena Charbonneau

By Jennifer Smith, MPH, CPS

Starting with this issue of What's New For Schools, we would like to introduce you to the Educators who work at NCADD of Middlesex County, Inc. These individuals dedicate their professional careers to deliver prevention programs to all members of the community. From kindergartners through our older adult population. Many of you may have seen these educators walking the halls of your schools, delivering curriculum or presenting to your colleagues. So take a moment while we introduce you to this month's featured educator.

Dena Charbonneau has been a Prevention Educator at NCADD since 2001. She is a Licensed Social Worker, as well as a Certified School Social Worker and a Certified Prevention Specialist. She received her Masters of Social Work Degree from Rutgers University in 2001.

In addition to her educational background, Dena has worked and volunteered at



various social service agencies such as the American Red Cross, Woodbridge Developmental Center, and the Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources (formerly

known as the Bergen County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence).

Dena has always enjoyed working with youth, and she is pleased that NCADD gives her this opportunity. Accordingly, one of her main duties is presenting the *Footprints*

for Life™ program—a primary prevention program for second and third grade students—to school districts throughout Middlesex County.

Over the past seven years, Dena's roles have evolved. Her other duties include: coordinating professional development trainings and conferences; representing NCADD as a member of the State Coalition of Disabilities and Addiction; assisting in grant writing; and providing information and referral services to families, individuals, and professionals on NCADD's Information and Referral Helpline.

Dena lives in East Windsor with her husband Eric and their three year-old son, George. Eric is a Production Editor at John Wiley & Sons Publishing in Hoboken, NJ. In her spare time, Dena enjoys reading, taking photographs, and traveling. She and her family enjoy vacationing in Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Canada.



Footprints for Life™ is a research-based primary prevention program that builds assets and teaches important life skills to students in grades two and three. Through the

use of puppets and stories that feature “real life” situations experienced by a children's soccer team, the program offers many opportunities for students to practice the new skills they have learned in a fun and non-threatening way.

The goal of *Footprints for Life™* is to help young children build a strong foundation of life skills rooted in key social competencies. The social competencies that *Footprints* addresses are planning and decision-making practice, interpersonal skills, cultural competence, peer pressure, and peaceful conflict resolution — assets identified as promoting positive attitudes and behaviors.

Footprints for Life™ is a six-week program taught during a regular classroom period for approximately 40 minutes each week. Weekly homework assignments and educational sheets not only reinforce the lessons between classes, but also involve parents in their child's learning experience.

A Look at PATHWAYS: Carteret High School's School-Based Youth Services Program



Over two years ago, the Carteret Public Schools partnered with NCADD to create PATHWAYS, Carteret's School-Based Youth Services Program. PATHWAYS is a safe, structured environment within the school designed to address the social and health needs of the students, ensuring that they are better able to graduate, become employable or continue their education, and lead physically and mentally healthy, drug-free lives. PATHWAYS is open before, during, and after school, including two evenings per week. The program offers special programming that is scheduled on designated weekends, and a full summer program is available. Most services are free of charge and open to all Carteret High School students and their families. Here is a sampling of programs offered at PATHWAYS:

- **P.A.L.S. (Partnering, Achieving, Leading, Supporting):** A Commitment to Community Service. P.A.L.S. is a recreational program developed to provide the students of Carteret High School an opportunity to positively impact their social environment. There are three major components to the program, which include peer-to-peer tutoring services, in-school based community service and offsite community services, such as Habitat for Humanity, walking for a cause and volunteering at a children's hospital.
- **Girl Talk** is a motivational support group for high school females. Designed to empower, encourage, and educate, Girl Talk provides a safe place for teens to voice their opinions.
- **REBEL (Reaching Everyone By Exposing Lies)** is a state-wide youth led anti-tobacco

advocacy movement. There are REBEL chapters in middle schools, high schools, and colleges throughout New Jersey. Each group advocates fighting against the tobacco industry's marketing tactics and against the tobacco executives who target teens to buy their products. Come find out more about the lies Big Tobacco spreads to try and manipulate the people they consider "replacement smokers".

- **Homework Club:** As a response to student requests for help with their academics, PATHWAYS started a homework club in mid-December 2007. The purpose of the club is to provide students with an atmosphere that is conducive to focusing on their studies, while allowing students to interact with one another in an effort to complete their assignments. Reports by students indicate this program worked well in the middle school and PATHWAYS aspires to expand those benefits to the students of Carteret High School.
- **Connections** is a new support group for pregnant students. The group will discuss fears and concerns about being pregnant and becoming a mom while going to high school. Members are going to share ideas about coping with pregnancy in the face of all kinds of problems associated with high school. In addition, good nutrition, parenting skills and the need to attend pre-natal visits and taking vitamins are going to be discussed.
- **Choices** is an all male support group focusing primarily on anger management and making choices. The program facilitator uses the discipline of martial arts as a construct for teaching the students respect, self care, and control.
- **Phenomenal Women** was created to address the specific issues that arise for young ladies as they face numerous challenges. Discussing issues such as stress, communication, time management, coping skills, and conflict resolution, members benefit from a problem solving perspective through which they develop confidence in their ability to handle situations effectively.

