

(1/24/24) This continuing education resource is from the national
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

Featured

>Addressing the social determinants of chronic absenteeism

>Classrooms that address absenteeism

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

For discussion and interchange:

>Addressing the social determinants of chronic absenteeism

When it comes to what to do about chronic absenteeism, schools face a range of problems.

One example is that instruction can be a bad match for some students. This may be because a student lacks readiness with respect to motivation and capabilities and the instruction isn't flexible enough to meet them where they are at. It may be because of conditions at a school. In such cases, students soon become discouraged and frustrated and don't want to come to school.

A related problem involves negative attitudes (beliefs, biases, negative stereotypes) on the parts of students, school staff, parents, and the general public (e.g., think about those who hold a "deficit model" about students of color, immigrants, those living in poverty; think about students and families who have developed negative attitudes about teachers and schools).

And then there are *social determinants*. As stated in the following article:

"Social determinants of health are defined by the World Health Organization as "conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life". This broad definition spans multiple domains and includes factors such as economic stability, living conditions, education, social support systems, and access to health care..."

From: ***Associations Between Social Determinants of Health, Chronic Absence From School, and Teacher Ratings of Parents' Engagement in Early Education***

"Early childhood is of particular importance when considering the implications of social determinants as it is a sensitive and critical period for growth and development.... This study focuses on kindergarten because it is the first point at which children are required by law to participate in formal education. Early childhood education presents a unique opportunity for interventions for a number of reasons.

- >First, as considerable time is spent in school beginning in early childhood, the school environment comprises a major component of the social determinants for young children.
- >Second, establishing positive relationships and experiences early in a child's education is associated with success in later years
- >Third, children are largely dependent on their caregivers at this age, and therefore caregivers are inextricably involved in a child's educational experience. This provides an opportunity to establish positive relationships between teachers and families....

Positive school experiences can serve as a protective factor for children from low-income families. However, mounting evidence has also demonstrated the importance of the home-school relationship. Parent engagement has consistently been associated with improved student outcomes....

Although consensus exists regarding the importance of parent engagement, there is significant variation in how it is defined and executed. Three broad domains of parent engagement have typically been identified including:

- >school-based engagement (e.g., volunteering in the classroom, attending meetings, or serving on committees),

- >home-based engagement (e.g., reading to the child or promoting the importance of education),
- >parent–teacher communication (e.g., phone, text, email, written notes, or in-person contact)...

Parents with lower income or less education may value their role in home-based learning, while viewing school-based activities as the role of the teacher. Families of lower SES may also perceive power differentials which reduce both the quantity and quality of teacher–parent interaction. Parents who have a lower education level may not feel comfortable discussing academic matters with teachers or may avoid the classroom setting and/or conferencing. Additionally, single parents and those working multiple jobs or shift work may have less flexibility in their work schedules and therefore more difficulty attending scheduled school-based activities

While parents from low-income backgrounds may place great value on their child's learning, their ability to engage in the specific activities which are expected by schools are more likely to be affected by daily crises related to lack of resources compared to families with higher incomes. Children growing up with multiple material hardships are also at greater risk for health problems related to low-resource conditions such as poor nutrition, overcrowded living situations

In this sample, 28% of the children had missed more than 10% of school days in kindergarten. These rates are concerning, as chronic absence in early childhood education is linked with poorer academic outcomes....

However, this finding also points to avenues of intervention. Specifically, the role of student support staff as caregivers and patient/student advocates holds potential to mitigate power differentials and foster open discussion regarding families' strengths and barriers to engaging in their children's education....”

As a Carnegie Task Force on Education has stressed: ***School systems are not responsible for meeting every need of their students. But when the need directly affects learning, the school must meet the challenge.***

We stress that meeting the challenge involves addressing barriers to learning and teaching in the classroom and school-wide.

For more on this, here are links to two Center Quick Finds:

- >[*Social Determinants of Health, Mental Health, and Academic Achievements*](#)
- >[*Attendance*](#)

And here are a few relevant Center documents:

- >[*School Attendance Problems: Are Current Policies & Practices Going in the Right Direction?*](#)
- >[*Parent/Home Involvement and Engagement in Schools*](#)
- >[*Children and poverty*](#)
- >[*About addressing poverty: what's the school's role?*](#)

For discussion and interchange:

>[*Classrooms that address absenteeism*](#)

Key to addressing absenteeism *in classrooms* is a positive teacher-student working relationship and personalized instruction, as well as special assistance (e.g., student/learning supports) when the need arises. These practices all contribute to enhancing equity of opportunity for positive student outcomes. They reduce learning, behavior, and emotional problems, and they facilitate emergence of a positive climate in the classroom (e.g., a climate where students feel welcome, supported, nurtured, respected, liked, connected to others, and that contributes to feelings of competence).

From: ***Teacher Support as a Protective Factor? The Role of Teacher Support for Reducing Disproportionality in Problematic Behavior at School***

“...Some aspects of students’ social background may put them at risk of poor outcomes: numerous studies have shown that students from poor and minority families or students who experience specific adversities as parental divorce report misbehaving in school more often, more often skip classes and are more likely to drop-out... problematic behavior among at-risk youth is a key-factor in (educational) inequalities. It is therefore essential to identify protective factors that can prevent problematic behavior among disadvantaged students and in this way foster equality of opportunity.

Support from teachers is often seen as a factor that may protect disadvantaged students against problematic behavior and poor educational outcomes... Teachers can build positive relations with at-risk children and encourage positive behavior, reducing the impact of background disadvantage... Teachers can prevent and reduce problematic behavior among students via a teaching style that supports feelings of competency, relatedness and autonomy. Both academic and social support from teachers can contribute to this. Academic support means that students feel encouraged by their teachers and that teachers ensure learning activities match students’ ability by providing them with the appropriate information, guidance or help they need to learn...

Given that disadvantaged students have a higher risk of problematic behavior, academic support can fulfil a particularly important role in preventing adverse outcomes for these students. ...Teachers are not solely responsible for supporting disadvantaged youth. Disproportionality in problematic behavior results from larger societal inequalities which translate into differences in resources and support available to children and adolescents at home. Teachers might reduce the impact of such inequalities for students’ development due to the central place school has in students’ life. In this light, schools could implement programs that help teachers and others in schools to enhance their relationship with students and support their needs for competency, relatedness and autonomy. Moreover, strengthening interconnections between school, families and their broader social environment could be effective in reducing educational inequalities .”

For more on this, see the following Center resources

- >***Improving Working Relationships Inside the Classroom***
- >***Personalizing Learning and Addressing Barriers to Learning***
- >***Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide***
- >***Schools as Caring, Learning Communities***

Also see the Center’s Quick Finds – for example, see

- >***Classroom Climate/Culture and School Climate/Culture and Environments that Support Learning***
- >***Resilience/Protective Factors***



Promoting Resilience and Emotional Health for Children, Youth, & Families with Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)

Positive childhood experiences (PCEs) refer to the everyday interactions, activities, and relationships that contribute to a child's overall well-being and emotional health. This fact sheet offers culturally appropriate and trauma-informed strategies that promote PCEs and increase the emotional resilience of children, youth, and families.

5 Key PCEs



THIS IS A
SAFE
SPACE

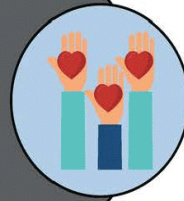
1. Safe & Supportive Environments

Fostering PCEs Through Safe and Supportive Environments: The creation of safe, inclusive, and nurturing physical and social environments is crucial to promote positive childhood experiences.

2. Strong & Caring Relationships

Responsive Caregiving: Encourage caregivers to respond to children's needs promptly and sensitively, promoting a sense of security and trust.

Peer Friendships: Encourage positive peer interactions that foster friendship, empathy, and social support, leading to increased resilience.



3. Play & Recreation

Unstructured Play: Encourage unstructured play by allowing children to explore their interests, engage their imagination, and develop problem-solving skills.

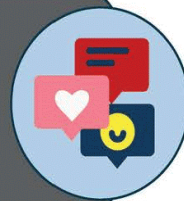
Culturally Relevant Activities: Incorporate culturally relevant play and recreational activities that honor cultural traditions, customs, and values.



4. Emotional Support & Communication

Active Listening: Teach caregivers and professionals to actively listen to children's thoughts, concerns, and emotions, promoting a supportive and non-judgmental environment.

Emotional Expression: Encourage children to express and manage their emotions in healthy ways, providing them with effective coping strategies.



5. Opportunities for Learning & Growth

Education & Skill Development: Ensure access to quality education, including early childhood education and extracurricular activities that foster personal growth and development.

Cultural Education: Incorporate cultural education into school curriculum, promoting pride in one's heritage and intercultural understanding.



>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

Protective Factors for Antisocial Behavior in Youth

A Bridge to Graduation: Post-Secondary Effects of an Alternative Pathway for Students Who Fail High School Exit Exams.

Income inequality is associated with heightened test anxiety and lower academic achievement

The Unintended Consequences of Test-Based Remediation

Racial Academic Achievement Gaps

Establishing Trusting Relationships to Transform School Systems

Students Helping Students: School-Based Peer Support Programs Enhance Student Well-Being

Social Media and Adolescent Health

How to Support a Friend With Mental Health Challenges

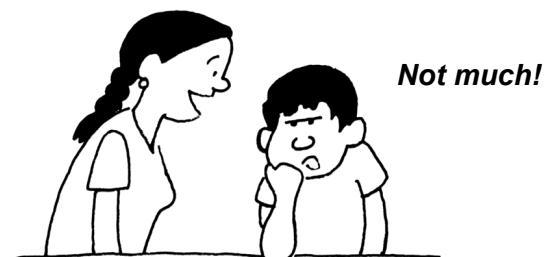
Gun Violence: The Impact on Society

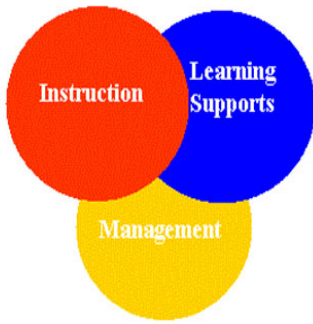
A Few Upcoming Webinars

For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's Links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts – <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

- 1/24 School community partnerships
- 1/24 Transforming family-school partnerships
- 1/25 Community resilience
- 1/30 Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility
- 1/30 Anxiety and stress
- 2/6 Co-teaching
- 2/7 Preventing depression
- 2/13 Basic Requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act
- 2/14 Planning an IEP Team Meeting When Your Child has MH Challenges
- 2/14 Providing targeted support
- 2/15 Wellness & Resilience
- 2/22 Solving Disproportionality
- 2/26 Multicultural orientation to therapy
- 2/28 Eating disorders

I hear that you missed school today.





For information about the

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

go to <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights, transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to promoting whole child development, advancing social justice and enhancing learning and a positive school climate.

Take steps to understand why a student is chronically absent; then determine whether the school's student/learning support system is designed to address the problem.

To Listserv Participants

- Please share this resource with others. (Everyone has a stake in the future of public education and this is a critical time for action.)
- Let us know your views about the topics shared and about what's going on to improve how schools address barriers to learning & teaching and reengage disconnected students and families. (We can share the info with the over 130,000 on our listserv.)
- For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu
- Looking for information? (We usually can help.)
- Have a suggestion for improving our efforts? (We welcome your feedback.)

We look forward to hearing from you!

Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!

For new sign-ups – Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Also send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences for sharing.

We post a broad range of issues and responses to on our website and on Facebook.

Access on the Center's home page – <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>