

(9/11/24) This continuing education resource is from the national
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

Featured

>Should schools treat kids as kids?

Also for discussion:

>School support shows positive outcomes

And, as always:

>Links to a few other resources relevant to continuing education

**This Community of Practice Practitioner is designed
for a screen bigger than an Iphone.**

For discussion and interchange:

>Should schools treat kids as kids?

Excerpted below are comments from an August Newsweek article entitled: *Treat Kids as Kids: A Modern Approach to Ensuring Safe Communities*, by Liz Ryan, Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

“...most young people outgrow delinquent behavior over time. This emphasizes the importance of intervention and support rather than punitive measures. We need to double down on what works with young people, focusing on an evidence-based approach rooted in research and community collaboration....

By addressing both risk factors and protective factors that influence a young person's likelihood of engaging in violence, communities can create environments that promote positive development and reinforce law-abiding behavior.

Two key factors that promote positive behaviors are support and opportunity. It is imperative that we strengthen the network of support for youth, both for those who engage in delinquent or criminal behavior and those whose circumstances put them at risk. And then we must provide opportunities for them to grow and succeed. We need to connect youth to caring adults and prosocial activities, such as mentoring and after-school programs, and strengthen their connection to school. The goal is to create protective environments that reduce youth exposure to community-level risks and create pathways to a brighter future....

The Continuum of Care for Youth and Communities framework—based on established models in the healthcare and social services fields—provides a range of services that reflect the science of adolescent development and are designed to meet the needs of at-risk youth. It establishes a holistic approach spanning prevention, intervention, treatment, and reentry strategies, rather than traditionally siloed view of youth justice services....

Treat kids as kids—that's our mantra.... We must support the wellbeing of America's youth and broaden their opportunities for a better future....”

Center Comments:

Let's take the above discussion a few steps forward.

Let's include more than picking up the pieces after kids get into trouble.

Most schools already are committing to some form of a continuum of care by adopting/adapting a multi-tiered support system framework (e.g., MTSS). This type of framework includes a focus on promoting healthy development, preventing problems, responding quickly when problems arise, as well as facilitating access to specialized services when needed.

Schools can work with communities to build on that framework to develop *a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports*. *

In keeping with developmental, educational, and public health perspectives, such a system encompasses efforts to enable academic, social, emotional, and physical development by addressing behavior, learning, and emotional problems. And the intent at all times is to use the least intrusive, disruptive, and restrictive forms of intervention *necessary* when responding to problems and accommodating diversity.

*See:

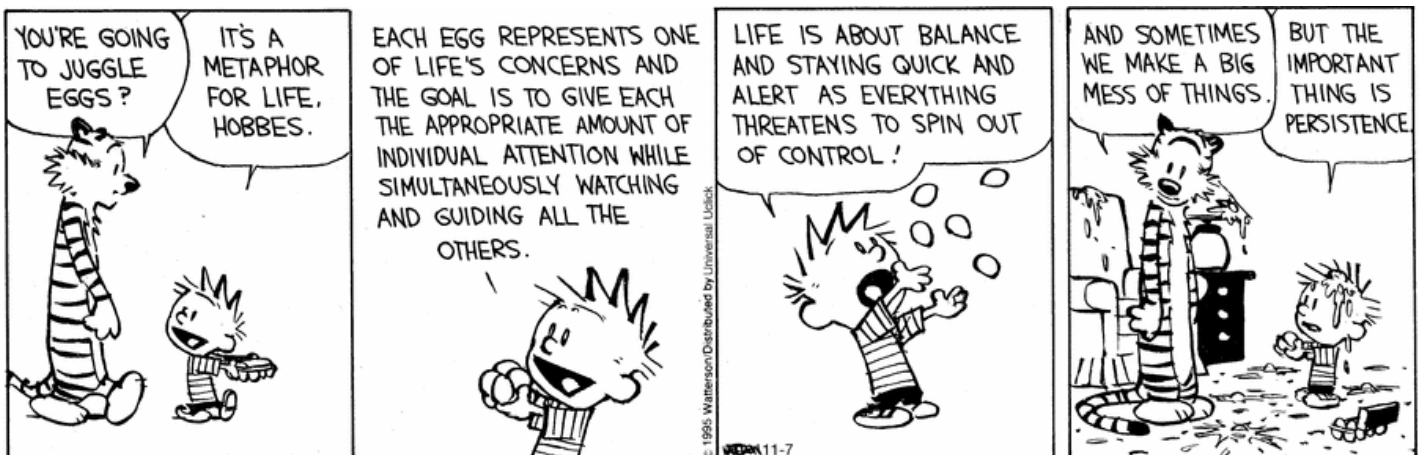
- >[*Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions*](#)
- >[*Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Starting the Process*](#)

Also, see the following Center Quick Finds for resources on:

- >[*Juvenile Justice*](#)
- >[*Prevention for students "at risk"*](#)
- >[*Resilience/protective factors*](#)
- >[*Social Determinants of Health, Mental Health, and Academic Achievements*](#)
- >[*Mentoring*](#)

Is this topic being discussed in your locale?

Please let us know so we can share the info widely. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu



School Support Shows Positive Outcomes

From: *Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data: Summary & Trends Report: 2013–2023*

“...Schools play a large role in youths’ lives and development. Partnering with and supporting schools has the potential to reach large numbers of young people with strategies that can make a positive impact. Schools can provide education, connections, and environments that lessen the impact of negative life events and promote health and well-being....

Schools have been working hard to support students’ mental health. CDC developed an action guide with strategies schools can use to improve mental health. These six strategies include increasing students’ mental health literacy; promoting mindfulness; promoting social, emotional, and behavioral learning; enhancing connectedness; providing psychosocial skills training and cognitive behavioral interventions; and supporting staff well-being....

The benefits of school connectedness are strong and long-lasting. When young people feel connected at school, that feeling of belonging protects them from poor mental health, suicidal thoughts and behaviors, substance use, violence, and sexual risk behaviors. Schools can help more students feel connected in many ways:

- >Schools can provide professional development to educators on classroom management and inclusivity, have student-led inclusive clubs, identify safe spaces and safe people, and enforce anti-harassment policies.
- >Schools can also increase connectedness by putting relationship building programs in place that help strengthen connections between students, families, and school communities.

Nationally, many resources have been dedicated to supporting youth, especially their behavioral and mental health. We are starting to see early signs of improvement, but there is still more work to do to make sure young people have the tools, skills, knowledge, and support they need....”

Center Comments: Good schools not only teach well; they also prevent and help address learning, behavior, and emotional problems.* Everyone agrees that schools should ensure a positive school climate. Less agreement exists, however, about what this means and how to accomplish it. This is especially so when the call is for developing a safe and supportive environment that also is nurturing and caring and that provides all students with an equal opportunity to succeed. Equity concerns are heightened when schools are viewed using the lens of how they interface with students who are struggling academically, acting out, and experiencing conflictual relationships with school staff and peers. And concerns are exacerbated in schools where teachers are confronted with teaching conditions and classroom dynamics that are beyond one individual’s ability to cope effectively.

Collaborative efforts in classrooms require a symbolic opening of doors. When teachers go into their classroom and shut the door, they are deprived of essential support and learning opportunities. Too often, negative classroom dynamics and the isolation from colleagues lead to feelings of alienation and "burn out." And, students are cut off from a variety of resources and experiences that can enhance learning and prevent problems.

*See *Schools as Caring, Learning Communities*

Also, see the following Center Quick Finds for resources on:

- >*Classroom climate*
- >*Enhancing Classroom Climate for All Students*

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

- >Recommendations for Creating K-16 Pathways for All Students
- >Districts' Pandemic Recovery Efforts as COVID-Relief Aid Expires
- >Needs of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
- >Extended foster care and homelessness: Assessing the impact of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act on rates of homelessness among youth
- >The Effectiveness of Preventative Interventions to Reduce Mental Health Problems in at-risk Children and Young People
- >Preventing Substance Use Among Young Adults with Disabilities
- >Teens are losing interest in school, and say they hear about college 'a lot'
- >WestEd Experts Shed Light on Five Common Myths About Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports
- >MTSS: Strengths and Weaknesses
- >Rethinking MTSS to Better Address Barriers to Learning
- >Navigating Stress and Trauma With Knowledge: Expert Insights on Professional Learning Modules for Supporting Children and Youth
- >Breaking the “Egg-Crate” Model of Schooling
- >Teaching for Total Participation

A Few Upcoming Webinars

For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's Links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts

- 9/12 How can we disagree better?
- 9/12 Evaluation and eligibility: special education
- 9/19 Teacher compensation reforms
- 9/19 The IEP: special education series
- 9/19 Empowering grassroots mentoring
- 9/25 Compassion fatigue and burnout
- 9/25 The critical role of interpreters in special education meetings
- 9/25 Keeping talented teachers
- 9/26 Organizational culture
- 9/26 Mental health and special education
- 10/17 Wellness and resilience
- 10/23 Addressing challenging behaviors
- 10/24 Effective communication with the IEP team

Webinar recording: *Unpacking the Impacts of Structural Racism on Youth*

For more webinars, go to the our Center's links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

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 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

Schools committed to the success of all children must be redesigned so that teachers, student support staff, and others at the school can help students as early as is feasible when they become aware of a behavior, emotional, learning, and/or physical problem. Such a redesign can minimize the impact of such problems and appropriately stem the tide of referrals for out of class specialized assistance (e.g., mental health services) and special education.

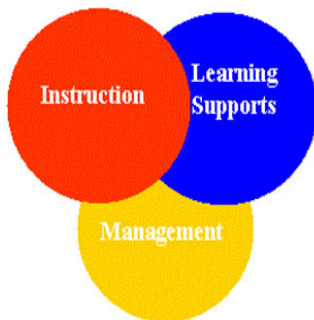
Through the ***National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports***, our Center emphasizes the opportunity to start now to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students.

If you are aware of efforts underway to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching, please share with us.

And if anyone is thinking about increasing the capacity of a district or school with respect to developing a *unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports*, we have many resources to help in moving forward. For example, see our recent guides:

- > ***Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions***
- > ***Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Starting the Process***

Send all info and requests to ltaylor@ucla.edu



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.

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

For new sign-ups – email Ltaylor@ucla.edu

**Also send resource ideas, requests, comments,
and experiences for sharing.**

THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF THE PRACTITIONER

Who Are We? Recently renamed the Center for MH in Schools and Student/Learning Supports, our national Center was established in 1995 under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project (which was established in 1986). We are part of the Department of Psychology at UCLA. The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor.