

202-2 Truancy: Prevention and Intervention Agenda

Introductions and Expectations

Definition and Statistics

Correlates of Truancy

Prevention and Intervention Strategies for
Children/Adolescents, Families and Schools

Model Truancy Prevention Programs

Action Planning

Wrap-Up and Evaluation

Learning Objectives

- ◆ Define the term of truancy and be familiar with current national and state statistics on truancy rates
- ◆ Identify the factors that place a child at risk for truancy
- ◆ Implement prevention and intervention strategies in relation to working with families
- ◆ Implement prevention and intervention strategies in relation to working with children and adolescents
- ◆ Implement prevention, intervention and collaborative strategies with schools and community organizations
- ◆ Implement a action plan based on the learning from the workshop



Definition of Truancy

Required Attendance

- Children ages 8 to 17
- Exception: Age 16, regularly employed when school is in session, holds an employment certificate

Definition

- Three or more days in a row without a valid excuse

Notice

- Written notice of attendance violation
- Not required to send further notice
- Filing a truancy petition
- Hearing scheduled

Definition of Truancy (continued)

Possible Outcomes

- **Parent -summary offense, \$300 fine court costs, or parenting class, or community service If doesn't comply, 5 days in jail**
- **Parents may not be convicted of a summary offense if they took reasonable steps to get child to school (not clearly defined)**
- **Child - \$300 fine, alternative ed, community service, suspension of driver's license for 90 days (1st offense) or 6 months for additional truancy convictions**

Definition of Truancy (continued)

Possible Outcomes (Continued)

- **Child (under age 16) - chance to apply for a driver's license is suspended for 90 days (1st offense) or 6 months for additional truancy convictions**
- **Habitually truant children can be referred to Children & Youth and adjudicated as a dependent child**

Truancy Increases Risk For:

- **Dropping out of school**
- **Drug abuse**
- **Gang activity**
- **Delinquency**
- **Unemployment**
- **Emotional problems**
- **Incarceration**
- **Poverty in adulthood**

Correlates of Truancy

Children/Adolescents

- Marginalized
- Learning Problems
- Being Bullied
- School Phobia
- Depression

Correlates of Truancy (continued)

Families

- Parentification of Child
- Family Views Regarding Education
- Parents' Educational Experience
- Domestic Violence
- Drug or Alcohol Abuse
- History of Anxiety Disorders
- History of Depression
- Lack of Parental Authority

Correlates of Truancy (continued)

Schools

- Marginalizing Students
- Large Faculty/Student Ratios
- Lack of Mentoring Programs
- Lack of Connections to Students
 - With Diverse Cultural/Learning Styles
- Inconsistent/Inadequate Procedures
 - To Respond to Absenteeism

Correlates of Truancy (continued)

Communities

- Law Enforcement (District Justices, Police)
 - Undermine School Efforts, Do Not Provide Daytime “Sweeps” of Students Who Are On the Streets During School Hours
- Businesses Lack Awareness of Impact of Truancy on Crime & Workforce Costs and Refuse To Support Schools

Strategies for Prevention and Intervention with Children/Adolescents

Marginalization and Learning Problems

- **School collaboration and advocacy**

Being Bullied

- **Assess extent/intensity of bullying**
- **Assure that adults will protect**
- **Ensure that social skills are taught**
- **Ensure that monitoring occurs**
- **Don't blame the victim**

School Phobia

- **Explore family history of anxiety**
- **Explore child's history of anxiety**
- **Refer for mental health treatment**

Depression and/or D & A Issues

- **Refer for mental health or D & A treatment**

Explore incentives for carrot/stick approach

Strategies for Prevention and Intervention with Families

Explore and Address Parentification Issues

- Resources for child care issues
- Resources for language barriers

Explore Views Regarding Education

- Balance cultural beliefs with child's needs
- Help parents differentiate their experiences from child's experiences

Refer for Mental Health, D & A Spousal Abuse Intervention

Address Lack of Authority Skills

- Parent's experience with respect
- Firm voice tone, body language
- Two choices within outside structure
- Create carrot/stick home/school collaboration



Strategies for Prevention and Intervention with Schools

Marginalization and Learning Problems

- ❑ School collaboration and advocacy
- ❑ Advocacy group (PEN)

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

- ❑ Check school policy
- ❑ Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Center for Schools and Communities)
- ❑ Tap guidance resources for teaching social skills
- ❑ Encourage parent(s) to use chain of command
- ❑ Remind schools regarding lawsuits

Explore Incentives for Carrot/Stick Approach and Procedures for Truancy

Explore Availability of Mentor, SAP, IST

Strategies for Prevention and Intervention with Communities

Systemic Approaches

- Communication with police to encourage use of daytime “sweeps”
- Communication with district justices to encourage support of schools that file a truancy petition
- Education and involvement of business leaders to provide resources for support programs and to become involved in community-wide truancy prevention and intervention efforts

Model Programs

- ▶ **Involve Parents**
 - ▶ Include intensive monitoring, counseling, and other family-strengthening services
 - ▶ Create family-friendly schools
 - ▶ Parent liaison between school and families
- ▶ **Firm Sanctions for Students**
 - ▶ Zero tolerance truancy policies
 - ▶ Sanctions linked to driver's license
 - ▶ Daytime curfews during school hours
 - ▶ Student fails the semester
 - ▶ Court ordered counseling
 - ▶ Alternative education
- ▶ **Meaningful Incentives for Parents**
 - ▶ Court ordered parent education
 - ▶ Court ordered sanctions regarding public assistance

Elements of Model Truancy Prevention and Intervention Programs

▶ Prevention Programs in Schools

- ▶ Tutoring programs
- ▶ Increased safety measures
- ▶ Drug prevention initiatives
- ▶ Career academies
- ▶ School-to-work opportunities
- ▶ Use of software to track truancy
- ▶ Community service programs
- ▶ Involve businesses in community service opportunities that lead to jobs

▶ Involve Local Law Enforcement

- ▶ Police sweeps
- ▶ Availability of community-run temporary detention centers where police can drop off students after a sweep

Elements of Model Truancy Prevention and Intervention Programs

▶ Effectiveness of Model Programs

- ▶ Milwaukee, Wisconsin (64% still in school after 30 days; 33% reduction in daytime burglary; 29% reduction in aggravated battery)
- ▶ New Haven, Connecticut (targets middle school students through truancy court)
- ▶ Atlantic County, New Jersey (84% had no recurrence of truancy over a one year period of time)

Resource for More Information: www.ed.gov/gov/pubs/truancy