



Children's Mental Health Matters!

Facts for Educators Family Involvement in School-Based Mental Health

Definition

Educators who understand that families generally are the ones most knowledgeable about their own children will be more likely to find a returned respect and spirit of collaboration with families. Educators who consult with families regarding concerns they may have about a child's mental health will benefit from family input and mutual collaboration. Teachers and other school personnel who are more informed about both family involvement in schools and children's mental health will be more likely to have success in teaching children with mental health needs. It has been established that children have greater academic success when families are involved in schools. Children with mental health disabilities certainly have the same, if not a greater need for their families and educators to work together. Educators who can approach families in a non-judgmental and cooperative spirit are more likely to have success in working with the child with mental health needs.

Why Do We Care?

- ☞ Children have more school success when families are involved in their education
- ☞ Positive family and staff interaction help to achieve overall positive school climate
- ☞ Schools with strong family involvement see greater student achievement
- ☞ School staff and families who work collaboratively for a student will be more likely to have student cooperation

What Can We Do About It?

- ☞ Educate yourself about mental health diagnoses in children and adolescents
- ☞ Work in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation with families to insure success for every child in school
- ☞ Adopt positive and effective communication strategies with all families

- ☞ Refer children to a mental health professional in your school if you have concerns
- ☞ Contact families with concerns about their child
- ☞ Refer families to support and advocacy groups if the family requests that you do so

Resources/links

Center for the Advancement of Mental Health Practices In Schools. College of Education, University of Missouri Excellent website for involving families in schools. Tips For involving Parents <http://education.missouri.edu>

Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health — a grassroots coalition of family and advocacy organizations dedicated to: Improving services for children with mental health needs and their families and building a network of information and support for families across Maryland. www.mdcoalition.org, 410-730-8267, Toll Free 1-888-607-3637

Mental Health Association of Maryland — Since 1915, the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) has been a leader in progressive programs resulting in more effective treatment, improved outcomes for individuals, increased research and greater public understanding of the needs of children and adults living with mental illness. <http://www.mhamd.org/>, 410-235-1178, Toll Free 1-800-572-MHAM (6426)

NAMI Maryland — an advocacy organization for family and friends of people with serious mental illness, and people who have a mental illness. <http://md.nami.org/> 410-863-0470, Toll Free Helpline 1-800-467-0075

Facts for Educators

Family Involvement in School-Based Mental Health Continued

Learning Disabilities Association of Maryland – promotes awareness and provides support to maximize the quality of life for individuals and families affected by learning and other disabilities.

www.ldamd.org

CHADD/Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder Maryland Chapters – is the nation's leading non-profit organization serving individuals with AD/HD and their families.

Local chapters are in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, Howard, and Montgomery Counties.

<http://www.chadd-mc.org/>

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Facts for Families provides concise and up-to-date information on issues that affect children, teenagers and their families.

http://aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/facts_for_families

National Mental Health Information Center, SAMHSA Health Information Network. This network provides information on a multitude of topics.

<http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/>

References

Partnering with families in expanded school mental health programs. Lowie, J. A., Lever, N. A., Ambrose, M. G., Tager, S. B., & Hill, S. (2003). In M. D. Weist, S. W.

Handbook of School Mental Health: Advancing Practice and Research, Evans, N. A. Lever (Eds.) pp. 135-147. Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers: New York, NY.

**Adapted from Resources found on:
www.schoolmentalhealth.org March 2009**