

Day 2

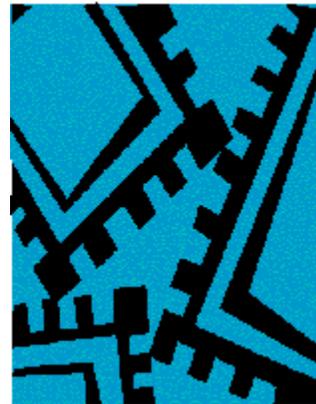
Prevention: The Importance of School Connectedness

“Truancy prevention does not need to be a separate program. Truancy is a risk factor for students who are disengaged from the experience of success and connection at school. We are not going to get to the meat of the matter [at the court level] because it is about school climate and success.”

- Kaki Dimock, At-Risk Youth Programs Manager, Juvenile Services Division, King County Superior Court, Seattle, Wash.

How Connection Helps

Schools can be a place where students feel safe and connected or one where they dread walking in the front doors. Schools cannot address all the issues and problems that some students bring along with them, but studies show that schools can play a major role in how students feel about attending. Some educators and researchers refer to this process as school connectedness. When students feel cared for by teachers and others and feel like they are part of the school, they are less likely to engage in risky behavior, such as using drugs, engaging in violence, or starting sexual activity at an earlier age.



Is it a priority of your school to promote a sense of connectedness among students?

Yes

No

[Current Results](#)

[Free Web Polls](#)

Findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) indicate that students must experience the following to feel connected to their schools:

- ◆ High academic expectations and rigor coupled with support for learning
- ◆ Positive relationships with adults at school

◆ Physical and emotional safety

The Add Health study has also shown that increased school connectedness helps to promote the following benefits among students:

◆ Educational motivation

◆ Classroom engagement

◆ Improved school attendance

Click [here](#) for a set of ten strategies for improving student attendance.

According to Robert Blum, M.D., Ph.D., professor and director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Adolescent Health and Development and the Add Health study:

"What goes on in the classroom is key to keeping kids from becoming disenchanted with school. It doesn't matter whether you have 20 or 30 kids in a class. It doesn't matter whether the teacher has a graduate degree. What matters is the environment that a student enters when he walks through the classroom door."



In addition, school connectedness works best when the environment is in synch with the students' developmental needs, according to Clea McNeely, assistant professor, Division of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health, University of Minnesota. For middle school and high school students, those needs include “steadily increasing opportunities for autonomy, opportunities to demonstrate competence, caring and support from adults, developmentally appropriate supervision, and acceptance by peers,” McNeely wrote.

Click [here](#) for effective strategies to promote students' connection to school.

Similarly, researchers J. David Hawkins, Richard Catalano, and colleagues at the University of Washington in Seattle have developed the Social Development Strategy, which provides a theoretical foundation for prevention based on risk and protective factors. The strategy emphasizes two key protective factors: bonding to prosocial family, school, and peers and clear standards or norms for behavior. The strategy focuses on three processes that promote these protective factors: (1) opportunities for involvement in productive roles, (2) developing skills to be successfully involved in these roles, and (3) consistent systems of recognition and reinforcement for prosocial involvement. Research has indicated that these factors protect against the development of conduct problems, school misbehavior, truancy, and drug abuse.

Click [here](#) for more information about the Social Development Strategy.

Much of this research and these findings can be applied to helping students become engaged in school and less likely to have attendance problems that can lead to chronic truancy and eventually dropping out. Russell W. Rumberger, a professor of education at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has spent much of his career studying the factors that led to students dropping out. Rumberger and others suggest that dropping out of school is the final stage in a cumulative process of disengagement or withdrawal from school.

“ . . . It is the area of school processes that many people believe holds the most promise for understanding and improving school performance. Several studies found academic and social climate -- as measured by school attendance rates, students taking advanced courses, and student perceptions of a fair discipline policy -- predict school dropout rates, even after controlling for the background characteristics of students as well as the resources and structural characteristics of schools.”

- Russell W. Rumberger, *Why Students Drop Out of School and What Can Be Done*

Typically, there are two dimensions to engagement: engagement in learning and engagement in the social dimensions of school. Students may withdraw from school because they stop doing their homework, or are falling behind, or because they have poor relationships with their peers or teachers. Because student disengagement from school is a long-term process, it can also be influenced by

students' experiences early on in school. In other words, if students have positive experiences in school, especially in elementary school, they are less likely to disengage and eventually drop out.

Promising Results at the Central Park East Secondary School

The Central Park East Secondary School in New York City serves public school students who are mostly from low-income families and have a history of average or below-average academic achievement. There is no selection criteria to attend the school, which offers a rigorous and creative education. Classes average 20 students and periods are two hours long, allowing teachers and students to delve deeply into their subjects. In addition to college preparatory courses, the school offers apprenticeships in career interests of students. To graduate, students must present seven academic projects over two years and defend them before a committee of students, teachers, and other adults.

School staff have worked to involve parents and community members with the school. Students also must spend one morning a week in community service jobs. Results are promising. Students have high attendance rates and few incidences of violence. Only 5 percent of the students drop out and more than 90 percent go on to college. According to the school's co-director, four practices support its success: (1) Articulating and maintaining a clear vision and mission that staff carries out; (2) Setting goals that further that mission; (3) Allocating resources to keep class sizes small; and (4) Providing for ongoing professional development.

Some of what all this research comes down to is this: Does a child feel his or her absence is noticed at school? If students start missing school and feel that no one at the school is concerned about whether or not they come, they are less likely to be motivated to keep coming.



"What truant kids tell us is that they expect to be held accountable for attendance, but they want support for engaging or re-connecting with school. Schools often give inappropriate consequences like suspending kids for truancy that push the kids out of school."

- Ken Seeley, principal investigator for the federally funded Truancy Reduction Demonstration Program

Developing an Effective Truancy Prevention Program

Researchers have found many common elements among approaches that successfully keep students attending and engaged in school. They have also found some tactics that do not work.

STRATEGY 1: *Create a climate that encourages students to become connected to their schools.*

Students are more likely to become engaged in their studies if the school offers a challenging, creative curriculum and a climate that allows them to play a role in decision-making that is developmentally appropriate. Having a safe school where students do not fear bullying also helps attendance.

***The Consistency Management & Cooperative Discipline Program*®**

The Consistency Management & Cooperative Discipline Program®, developed by H. Jerome Freiberg at the University of Houston, is designed to help students prepare for success, achieve self-discipline, and develop responsibility. "Participating schools emphasize prevention, rather than intervention, shared responsibilities between teachers and students, value-based discipline, increased communication with parents and effective instruction," according to the program's Web site. Students of all ages work with their teachers to develop rules for their classroom. Students are also given jobs for about 50 tasks that teachers usually take upon themselves, some of which may address issues that students are struggling with. A student who has missed a lot of school may be put in charge of attendance monitoring, for example. Student responsibility includes knowing what to do when the teacher is not present, solving disputes, preventing problems, working in groups, and applying and interviewing for classroom jobs. The program is used in 217 schools with approximately 170,000 students.

"There is a segment of the population of kids who don't go to school because they are not successful and the climate is negative," Freiberg said. "What our program does is gives kids opportunities they never had. The kids take care of the classroom. Kids come up with projects to improve the climate of the school. They might want to keep it clean by making sure the cafeteria is more like a restaurant and not a zoo. In one case, an adjudicated kid taught class for 90 minutes. He had not been allowed to go to his grandmother's funeral who had raised him. But when a substitute teacher didn't show up in his classroom, he had the students write an essay about what it's like to be in the classroom without an adult."

 **STRATEGY 2: *Establish firm and consistent sanctions for truancy.***

Truancy has become such a serious problem that some cities and states have enacted laws allowing police to issue citations to either the parent/guardian of a truant student or to the student him/herself, resulting in either fines or even jail time for the parent/guardian or suspension of the student's license to drive. For example, the Florida State Attorney's office has arrested parents in very serious truancy cases -- including parents who contribute to their children's poor attendance and/or have failed to respond to numerous intervention efforts -- as part of the Jacksonville United Against Truancy program.

Click [here](#) for a document that summarizes state attendance laws and the penalties that parents/guardians will experience for noncompliance. Please note that this document is not entirely current since some state laws have changed since it was drafted. When you are ready to return to this event, please click on your Internet browser's "back" button or hit the "backspace" button on your keyboard.

Students and parents need to know a school's attendance policies and the sanctions for not following them. The first day of school, schools should send home letters informing parents that officials take attendance seriously. To reinforce this message, schools can print information about their attendance policy on school lunch flyers, make announcements at open house events, and discuss the policy at parent-teacher conferences. Schools can also post attendance milestones on their community bulletin boards that list the percentage of students who attend each day or week.

At Curie High School in Chicago, the principal and his staff said that most attendance problems can be addressed by creating an orderly school environment, monitoring students, and quickly following up on problems. Once students realize that behaviors such as cutting class and not coming to school are not taken lightly, only a few chronically truant students who need more sustained intervention remain.

School resource officers (SROs) can have a significant impact in this area:

“School resource officers can help set a school standard for attendance and accountability by walking into the school office and seeing who is not there and know the kids who are in that group,” said Ken Seeley, who is also the president and chief executive officer of the Colorado Foundation for Families and Children. “If the school resource officer takes it as part of their work, then that becomes an effective way of communicating to kids that someone is watching.”

SROs can also show kids that someone cares about their presence.

“If they heard from people that ‘we want you to be here every day,’ if they had the message from school, ‘we missed you,’ that could make a difference to those kids,” Seeley said. “There is indifference for many of these kids and that kind of indifference pushes kids out.”

STRATEGY 3: *Involve the community in plans to address truancy.*

Community partners can do much to reinforce a school district's policy on regular attendance. Some communities have erected billboards around town or aired public service announcements that emphasize the importance of attendance. In Seattle, the Juvenile Services Division at King County Superior Court has put up posters on the back of buses where students, including those skipping school, are likely to sit. The message talks about the consequences of dropping out of school, citing such facts as high school dropouts earn half the income as high school graduates. Businesses near schools can be enlisted by asking them not to serve students during school hours and by giving them phone numbers for local truancy centers where police take students found out of school during school hours.

Click [here](#) for a sample community service radio announcement.

Some communities have also set daytime curfews to ensure that students are in school. Students found violating the curfew are often taken to truancy centers, rather than court, where staff learn more about them and connect them with community or school services.

In the Sacramento City Unified School District, the Child Welfare and Attendance Office made communication about the attendance laws a high priority. The district services families from many different ethnic and language groups, and schools had no standardized method for attendance accounting. The district launched a media campaign containing a report on the district's average daily attendance and the amount of funding lost each year in attendance revenue. The goal was to have every school in the district use the same attendance policies and to have every family understand attendance laws. In addition, the district agreed to return a portion of the earned average daily attendance funds to each school for the contracting of outreach workers and purchasing of computers to track attendance. A year later, the district attendance rate was the highest it had been in ten years.

 **STRATEGY 4: *Have a system in place to notify parents when their child is truant.***

Schools must have a way to quickly notify parents that their child is absent from school. Many schools have used computer-generated calls to homes. But students know how to intercept those calls, so experts recommend truant officers call parents at work in the morning rather than at night at the home.

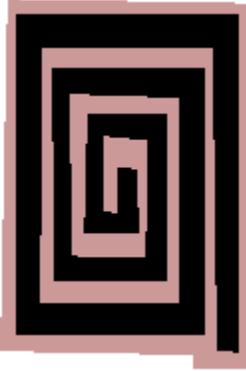
Click [here](#) for an overview of one district's process for notifying parents/guardians about their children's truant behavior that was submitted by a coordinator.

At Gage Park High School in Chicago, many students come from poor families with unstable living situations. To help ensure it can reach an adult, the school requests up to six phone numbers for close relatives, friends, and neighbors. Unanticipated events like family moves and disconnected phones have rarely interfered with the school's ability to follow through with home contacts.

 **STRATEGY 5: *Establish discipline policies that bring students back into schools.***

Schools should develop discipline policies that do not unnecessarily remove students from class, according to the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Out-of-school suspensions and even in-school suspensions can mean that a student falls further behind in work and is even less motivated to start attending. In addition, according to Ken Seeley, it is counterproductive to punish a student for missing school by telling him or her to stay away from school. Many schools have set up after-school suspensions or Saturday

suspensions that discipline students but also allow them to begin catching up with their school work. Seeley further suggests that schools replace grading policies that assign Fs for non-attendance with policies that call for students to receive an "incomplete" and make up missed work.



Experts also suggest that schools conduct ongoing curriculum reviews to encourage courses that are relevant to all students, and to develop alternative methods of earning academic credit, such as independent study. Some schools have policies that if students miss a certain number of classes, they automatically receive an F. Those policies simply push students to leave school for good, Seeley said. Even if a school gives a student an incomplete instead, he or she has a chance to make up the work and still graduate or move to the next grade.

Researchers in the Add Health project found that school connectedness is lower in schools with harsher discipline policies, such as those that impose out-of-school suspension or even expulsion for a first-time offense. Robert Blum cautioned that it is not clear from the data whether harsh discipline policies make students feel less connected to school or whether some other factor is causing the correlations.

"Still," Blum noted, "this finding may be relevant to the debate on zero-tolerance policies, which are intended to make schools safer. We found that students in schools with those types of discipline policies actually report feeling less safe at school than do students in schools with more moderate policies."

Policies that retain students in their grade, rather than allowing them to go to the next level, have also been shown to increase the potential that students will drop out of school.

STRATEGY 6: Include parents in plans to address truancy.

Parents are one of the most important factors in determining whether their child will attend school regularly. Parents communicate their values about school. If they had a negative school experience, they may be suspicious of school officials who are calling about their absent child. Schools will have more success if they enlist parents as their allies in helping children get the education they need.



Schools need to find ways to communicate to parents about the positive

qualities of their children. Parents, especially those of middle schoolers, often need help to deal with their suddenly distant and sometimes hostile child. While elementary schools often have many programs for parents, far fewer are available at the secondary level. Schools can win parents' loyalty by providing them with tools to help navigate the adolescent years, such as a parent guide that includes information on parenting classes as well as resources to help the parent in job skill training, social services, and tips on helping students with homework.

"Parents of adolescents are much needier than parents of younger kids and we do almost nothing for them," Seeley said. "There is no support out there. Parents feel this rejection from their children in adolescence. That's a normal part of adolescence. When kids are getting in trouble parents have no place to go to for support."

In addition, family festivals, notes from the principals and teachers, and parent-teacher luncheons can strengthen the bond between parents and their children's schools and help parents feel like they are important partners in education.

Click [here](#) for some ways to increase parent and community involvement in your school.



STRATEGY 7: Establish programs at school that meet the unique needs of each student.

These programs could include school breakfast and lunch programs, mentorship efforts through community and faith-based groups, and after-school programs and sports. Some programs also offer children at risk of truancy a chance to develop skills, such as programs where they mentor younger children and get paid for it.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is designed to increase the self-esteem and school success of at-risk middle and high school students by placing them in positions of responsibility as tutors. Tutors are paid \$5 a day for their work, reinforcing the worth of the students' time and efforts. The tutors are limited-English proficient students at risk of dropping out of school.

STRATEGY 8: *Include students in plans to address truancy and ask for their input.*

Youth in San Francisco have trained truancy officers. In one community when a youth curfew was being set, the youth were involved in the process. They set the parameters of the policy and then educated their peers about the curfew, why it was set, and the consequences of failing to comply with the curfew.

Click [here](#) for a document on youth involvement in prevention programming from Advocates for Youth. When you are ready to return to this event, please click on your internet browser's 'back' button or hit the 'backspace' button on your keyboard.

Looking Ahead

Just as the causes and consequences of truancy are multifaceted, so too are the strategies for preventing truant behavior among youth. Steps must be taken at various levels and across multiple contexts to promote attendance at school and prevent both truancy as well as the problems that contribute to truancy among students. Now that we have reviewed some ways for schools and communities to prevent truant behavior, we will go on tomorrow to discuss how to intervene with students who have begun to engage in truant behavior.



Click [here](#) to print today's materials in PDF format.



Discussion Questions

Please think about the questions below and share your responses, comments, and/or any questions about today's material in the [Discussion Area](#) .

What strategies seem to effectively promote students' feelings of

connectedness to school in your district? How can your school(s) improve in this area?

- ❖ What kind of attendance laws/policies are currently on the books in your schools, districts, and states? If you are not familiar with current attendance policies, please take some time today to review relevant school policies, county regulations, and state education codes. Please make sure to look at other sources beyond the summary of state attendance laws provided in today's materials.
- ❖ How does your school/district inform students and parents about expectations around attendance? How are parents notified when students are absent from school?

This completes today's work.

Please visit the [Discussion Area](#) to share your responses to the discussion questions!

Truancy programs mentioned in Day 2 materials:

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program
<http://www.idra.org/ccvyp/default.htm>

Consistency Management & Cooperative Discipline Program®
<http://www.coe.uh.edu/cmcd/default.cfm>

Jacksonville United Against Truancy
<http://www.coj.net/Departments/State+Attorneys+Office+/Jacksonville+United+Against+Truancy/default.htm>

Sacramento City Unified School District: Truancy Reduction and Dropout Prevention Program
http://www.scusd.edu/sfss/standards_of_behavior/trdp_4.htm

References for Day 2 materials:

Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. (2000). *An introductory packet on dropout prevention*. Los Angeles, CA: Author.

Classroom Management, Not Class Size or Teacher Experience Linked to Lesser Teen Alienation from School. (April 11, 2002). News Release from the University of Minnesota.

Consistency Management & Cooperative Discipline Web site: <http://www.coe.uh.edu/cmcd>.

Dimock, K. (April 2004). Personal communication.

Freiberg, H. J. (April 2004). Personal communication.

Habits hard to break: A new look at truancy in Chicago's public schools. (1997). Chicago: University of Chicago, School of Social Service Administration.

Ingersoll, S. & LeBoeuf, D. (February 1997). Reaching out to youth out of the education mainstream. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Available on-line at: <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles/163928.pdf>.

Join Together Online. (January 1998). *Keeping kids in school*. Boston: Author. Available on-line at: <http://www.jointogether.org/sa/resources/database/reader/0,1884,256722,00.html>.

McNeely, C. A., Nonnemaker, J. M., & Blum, R. W. (2002). Promoting school connectedness: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. *Journal of School Health*, 72, 138-146.

Mogulescu, S. & Segal, H. (2002). *Approaches to truancy prevention*. New York: Vera Institute of Justice.

Rumberger, R. W. (January 13, 2001). *Why Students Drop Out of School and What Can Be Done*. Paper prepared for the Conference, "Drop Outs in America: How Severe is the Problem? What Do We Know about Intervention and Prevention?" at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office. (2000). *School attendance improvement handbook*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.

Seeley, K. (April 2004). Personal communication.

Social Development Research Group Web site: <http://depts.washington.edu/sdrg/>.

Wingspread Declaration on Student Connections to School. (June 13-15, 2003). A declaration based upon a review of research and in-depth discussions among an interdisciplinary group of leaders in education convened at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, WI.



10 Things a School Can Do To Improve Attendance

- 1. Make students and parents/guardians feel welcome.** Make a point to say hello to every parent/guardian or student you see in the halls and outside. Make it your business to know their names.
- 2. Create an environment that enables students to feel successful in something, no matter how small it may seem.** Award academic and attendance “letters,” as you do for athletics.
- 3. When students are absent, immediately talk to their parents/guardians -- not their answering machines.** Make a personal phone call in the evening, or call parents/guardians at work during the day.
- 4. When students are absent, immediately talk with them about why they were gone. Let them know you are aware, and that you care that they are at school.**
- 5. Forge a relationship with local businesses where youth may congregate when truant, and encourage them to keep students in school during school hours.** Create a poster that states, “We support youth in school and will not serve anyone under 16 during school hours.”
- 6. Forge a relationship with local law enforcement. Make them your allies in showing the community, families, and students that school is the place to be.** Empower community police officers to return youth to school.
- 7. Don't provide the temptation for youth to be truant.** Close your campuses during breaks and lunch.
- 8. Empower and expect classroom teachers to take action when they think a student may be truant.** Ask teachers to make calls to absent youth or families in the afternoons or evenings.
- 9. Reward and recognize good attendance, not just perfect attendance.** Post large signs giving the daily attendance for the day. Reward individuals, classes, and the school for increased attendance.
- 10. Make your school a place where kids feel safe and respected.** Adopt a character education program that is planned and implemented by students.

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From:

National Center for School Engagement Web site: <http://www.truancy prevention.org/>.

Wingspread Declaration on Student Connections to School

These recommendations are based on a detailed review of research and in-depth discussions among an interdisciplinary group of leaders in education convened June 13-15 at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisc. Based on current research evidence, the most effective strategies for increasing the likelihood that students will be connected to school include the following:

- ◆ Implementing high standards and expectations, and providing academic support to all students
- ◆ Applying fair and consistent disciplinary policies that are collectively agreed upon and fairly enforced
- ◆ Creating trusting relationships among students, teachers, staff, administrators, and families
- ◆ Hiring and supporting capable teachers skilled in content, teaching techniques, and classroom management to meet each learner's needs
- ◆ Fostering high parent/family expectations for school performance and school completion
- ◆ Ensuring that every student feels close to at least one supportive adult at school

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Social Development Strategy

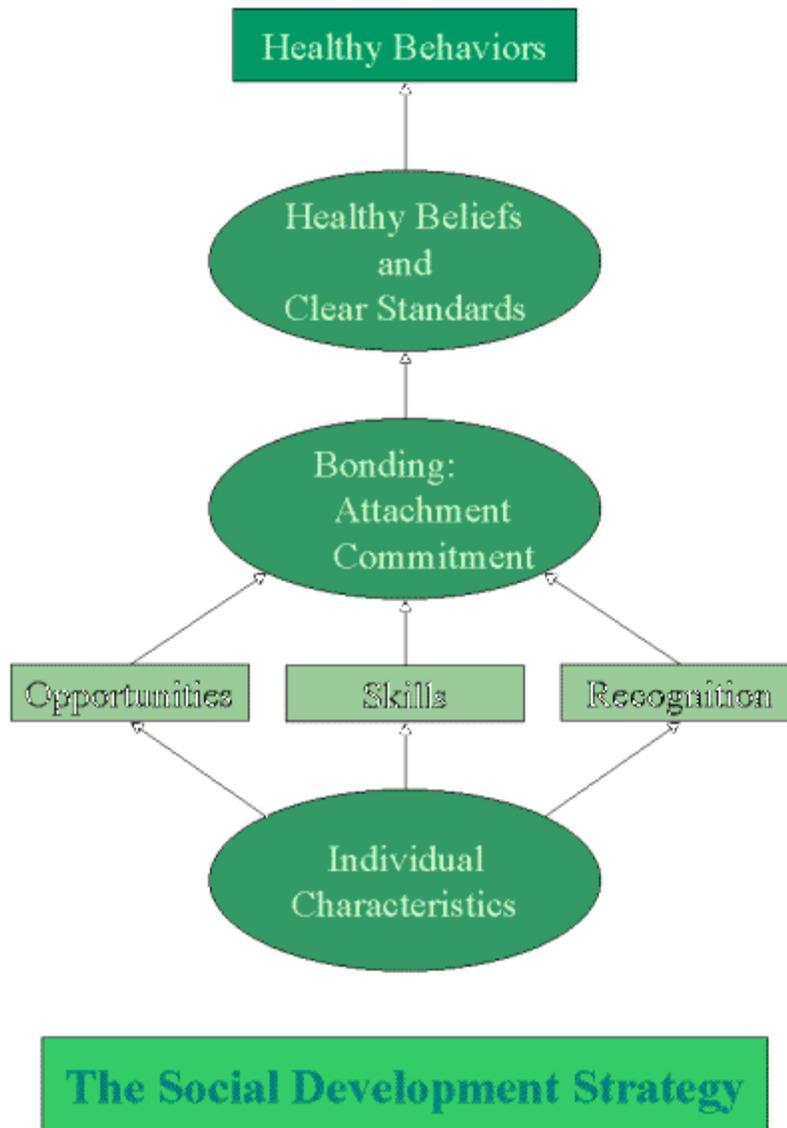
Just as public health researchers have identified smoking and a diet high in fat as risk factors for heart disease, the Social Development Research Group (SDRG) at the University of Washington's School of Social Work in Seattle has identified a set of risk factors for adolescent health and behavior problems. SDRG research has shown that certain conditions in children's community, school, family, and peer environments, as well as physiological and personality traits of the children themselves, are common risk factors for problems such as drug abuse, delinquency, teenage pregnancy, and school failure.

SDRG has also identified protective factors and protective processes that prevent people who are exposed to risk from developing health and behavior problems. Protective factors reduce one's risk for later problems by buffering the effects of exposure to risk factors. SDRG's Social Development Strategy emphasizes two key protective factors: bonding to prosocial family, school, and peers, and clear standards or norms for behavior. The strategy identifies three processes that promote these protective factors: opportunities for involvement in productive prosocial roles, skills to be successfully involved in these roles, and consistent systems of recognition and reinforcement for prosocial involvement. These factors protect against the development of conduct problems, school misbehavior, truancy, and drug abuse.

Knowledge of risk and protective factors guides SDRG theory and the development and testing of prevention and treatment interventions. SDRG research programs seek to influence risk factors in groups as diverse as elementary school children, urban teenagers, children of addicts, and cocaine abusers.

SDRG interventions are designed to strengthen the bonds of attachment, commitment, and belief that tie young children to families, schools, and community groups through providing them with opportunities for active involvement, the skills to participate successfully, and rewards or recognition for their efforts. When bonds are strong and families, schools, and communities express clear norms against unwanted behaviors like interpersonal violence or drug abuse, problems are less likely to occur.

The model below illustrates the Social Development Strategy (please visit the actual Web site referenced below for a clearer version of this model):



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From:

The Social Development Research Group Web site: <http://depts.washington.edu/sdrg/page2.html>.

Sample Community Service Radio Announcement

- FACT:** Every child has a right to an education.
- FACT:** California law requires that children from six to 18 years of age attend school regularly.
- FACT:** One of ten grade school children is absent on any given day. Is your child in school today?
- FACT:** Daylight juvenile crime is decreased by 50 percent when a concerted community effort keeps children in school.
- FACT:** Children who are absent two or more days each school month achieve 25 percent less than their fellow students.
- FACT:** Truancy causes school revenue loss that weakens your child's school program.
- FACT:** Ninety percent of serious juvenile offenders begin as truants. Aren't you glad your child is in school today?

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From:

Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office. (2000). *School attendance improvement handbook*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education (p. 19).

Granite School District's Attendance Program

Submitted By: Tifny Iacona
Granite School District
Salt Lake City, UT 84115

The following information about the Granite School District's Attendance Program was compiled on February 13, 2004:

Elementary

- ◆ 651 first truancy notification letters sent to parents
- ◆ 60 second truancy notification letters sent to parents
(10.5% of the same parents received a second truancy notification)
- ◆ 61.54% of students improved their attendance after parents attended mandatory pre-court hearing

Junior High

- ◆ 1563 first truancy notification letters sent to parents and students
- ◆ 395 second truancy notification letters sent to parents and students
(25% of the same parents and students received a second truancy notification)
- ◆ 60.23% of students improved their attendance after attending mandatory pre-court hearing.

High School

- ◆ 868 first truancy notification letters sent to parents and students (10th grade)
- ◆ 253 second truancy notification letters sent to parents & students
(29% of the same parents and students received a second truancy notification)
- ◆ 39.10% of students improved their attendance after attending mandatory pre-court hearing

Click [here](#) for a PowerPoint presentation of the Granite School District's Attendance Program, including a detailed overview of its process for notifying parents/legal guardians about truant behavior among students.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the Granite School District's Attendance Program. When you are ready to return to this event, please click on your Internet browser's

"back" button or hit the "backspace" button on your keyboard.

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Promoting Parent and Community Involvement

The following Keys to Success were compiled and written by the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education. They are based on information from actual school programs.

- ❖ **Assess family's needs and interests about ways of working with the schools.**
- ❖ **Set clear and measurable objectives based on parent/guardian and community input to help foster a sense of cooperation and communication among families, communities, and schools.**
- ❖ **Hire and train a parent/family liaison to directly contact parents/guardians and coordinate family activities.** The liaison should be bilingual as needed and sensitive to the needs of family and the community, including the non-English speaking community.
- ❖ **Develop multiple outreach mechanisms to inform families, businesses, and the community about family involvement policies and programs through newsletters, slide shows, videotapes, and local newspapers.**
- ❖ **Recognize the importance of a community's historic, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural resources in generating interest in family involvement.**
- ❖ **Use creative forms of communication between educators and families that are personal, goal-oriented, and make optimal use of new communication technologies.**
- ❖ **Mobilize parents/families as volunteers in the school assisting with instructional tasks, meal service, and administrative office functions.** Family members might also act as invited classroom speakers and volunteer tutors.
- ❖ **Provide staff development for teachers and administrators to enable them to work effectively with families and with each other as partners in the educational process.**
- ❖ **Ensure access to information about nutrition, healthcare, services for individuals with disabilities, and support provided by schools or community agencies.**
- ❖ **Schedule programs and activities flexibly to reach diverse family groups.**
- ❖ **Evaluate the effectiveness of family involvement programs and activities on a regular basis.**

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National Center for School Engagement Web site: <http://www.truancy prevention.org/>.