

Schools Operating Safely (SOS) – Child Behavior Management Policy

Ten Alternatives to Use of Chemical and Structural Restraints in School Settings

Problem

Managing child behavior in school settings poses potential injury risk, to both staff and students, resulting in increased use of questionable practices. In the past decade, schools have witnessed an unprecedented rise in the medication of children, use of seclusion rooms, and the need of physical restraint. To protect children with behavior problems and their staff, it is imperative that schools take proactive measures by establishing effective child behavior interventions and policies.

Rationale

20 years ago children played outside, walked or road their bikes to school, and watched 1-2 hours television per day. Today elementary-aged children are exposed to an average of 8 hours per day of combined technologies, resulting in an epidemic of physical, mental, social and academic disorders (*Zone'in Fact Sheet* www.zonein.ca). As children connect more and more to technology, they are disconnecting from humanity at an alarming rate, with a 2007 study showing 14.3% of Canadian children are diagnosed with a mental illness (Waddell C). Managing child aggression in schools, largely as a result of escalating exposure to media violence in homes (Anderson C. 2008), has put both students and staff at risk for significant injuries.

Policy

The following **ten evidenced based interventions** should be implemented by schools for a one year period, prior to any behavioral diagnosis, medication, or use of seclusion rooms or restraints.

Procedure

Attached “Schools Operating Safely (SOS) - Policy and Procedures” form can be used by school administrations as a guideline to determine proactive interventions to manage escalating child behaviors, thereby reducing risk of injury to students and staff. Possible funding for SOS equipment can be obtained through applications to technology production corporations.

Evaluation

Implementation of the “Schools Operating Safely” policy will not only reduce risk of injury to students and staff, but also will serve to improve student’s physical, mental, social and academic performance. Therefore, school measurement of the following outcomes are suggested, following an initial baseline data gathering period: attention and learning ability, printing output speed, obesity, developmental delay, behavior, office referrals, school fights, suspensions and grades.

Research

Alphabetical - <http://www.zoneinworkshops.com/research/foundation-series-workshops-2/>

Topic Fact Sheet - <http://www.zoneinworkshops.com/fact-sheet/zonein-fact-sheet/>

Schools Operating Safely (SOS) - Policy and Procedures	Equipment Required	Projected Date
1. No Restraints		
No behavior diagnosis, medication, use of seclusion or restraints for one year period (P. Breggin 2009). <i>Consider introduction of this policy at your next staff meeting or student Individual Education Plan.</i>		
2. Limit Technology		
No technology use during breaks or recess (G. Small 2008). <i>All children should be outside, restricting ALL hand held devices e.g. cell phones, iPods, electronic games.</i>		
3. Physical Exercise		
45 minutes per day cardiovascular exercise (J. Ratey 2009). <i>Add treadmills, exercise bikes, stationary weight sets, mini trampolines, wobble boards, and chin-up bars to classrooms, gym or hallways.</i>		
4. Access Nature		
20 minutes per day access to “green space” (A. Faber-Taylor 2005). <i>Nature is attention-restorative, so teach one subject per day outdoors, create “green space” by planting trees, grass, gardens, shrubs.</i>		
5. Take Breaks		
Unrestricted Zone’in Tools and Techniques breaks - “fresh air”, bathroom, standing desk (C. Rowan 2005). <i>Establish Zone’in Stations in every classroom with designated rules and procedures.</i>		
6. Organize Activities		
Physical Education instructors for organized recess and gym activities (A. Pelligrini 2005). <i>Designate one teacher for planning organized gym activities before/after school, recess and lunch time inter-murals, sports coaching etc.</i>		
7. Improve Playgrounds		
Access to “sensational” playgrounds – vestibular, tactile, proprioceptive input (J. Ayers 1979). <i>Minimize injury risk and maximize attaining critical factors for child growth and academic success through use of equipment that is suspended and promotes “heavy work”.</i>		
8. Teach Printing		
45 minutes per day printing instruction (S. Graham 2008). <i>Use consistent printing strategy instruction and evaluation for 4-5 ten minute periods per day. Every child has the right to learn to print.</i>		
9. Build Attachment		
Build respectful student-teacher connection and attachment (A. Montagu 1972). <i>Children with difficult behaviors often have difficult families, necessitating forming healthy connections with teachers, support staff, and older students. Eye contact, empathetic listening, and appropriate touch build attachment.</i>		
10. Educate Parents		
Parent education - limit combined technology use to 1-2 hours per day (AAP 2004). <i>Hold yearly school-based Balanced Technology Management interventions offering student and parent information; take family “technology usage histories” at parent-teacher meetings.</i>		