



FOCUS ON SUSPENSION – A RESOURCE FOR SCHOOLS

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"Traditional discipline techniques may no longer be sufficient for managing behavior in today's schools," says this informative resource manual. We are reminding our readers of this comprehensive resource developed by the Ministry of Education, Special Programs branch. With new volunteers joining PACs and DPAC we are making sure you are aware of this resource.

Focus on Suspension: A Resource for Schools emphasizes the importance of a positive, healthy school climate and effective classroom management in preventing situations that may result in suspension. It is intended to assist schools in developing strategies that focus on alternatives to out-of-school suspension. These days suspension, a traditional and commonly used disciplinary measure, may no longer be the only effective measure for dealing with problem behavior. *Focus on Suspension: A Resource for Schools* points to changes in family and community structure and the changing nature of behavior problems in children and youth today that make suspension less effective than it was in the past.

This manual provides various alternatives for schools dealing with problem behavior and has seven chapters covering the following topics:

- Legal issues around suspension
- Suspension who and why?
- Considering alternatives to suspension and effective follow up after suspension
- School wide interventions
- Classroom strategies

- Examples of promising practices to reduce school suspensions
- Resources

The manual also talks about how working to develop a positive, healthy school climate in tandem with effective classroom management can prevent situations that reduce the need for suspension. It also suggests that in creating a safer healthier school environment, *"school staff should not underestimate the power of involving parents."* While suspension meets the needs of the school system to free the classroom of an excessively disruptive student and to create an identifiable consequence for misbehavior it actually isn't very effective in meeting the needs of the student.

Parents have always recognized that suspension doesn't work for kids. This resource emphasizes the value of fair and due process. Along with outlining the role of communication, hearings and appeals, parents will be better able to understand the processes accepted around suspension and the many unintended outcomes of this as a discipline strategy. *Focus on Suspension: A Resource for Schools* addresses the need for all involved school and community service providers to work together to coordinate intervention that will support students. By pointing to the value of formal assessment by outside professionals and an increased acceptance and use of integrated services this manual offers positive directions for parents and schools.

Focus on Suspension: A Resource for Schools is available through the Resource Section of www.bccpac.bc.ca. PDF versions may be printed directly from the Ministry of Education website http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/resourcedocs/suspension_resource.pdf.

