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ABSTRACT
          Some models for collaboration among families, schools, law
enforcement, and social agencies, which promote gang awareness and prevention
of gang involvement at the elementary and middle school levels, are described
in this research review. The studies were grouped into three categories:
background information, prevention strategies, and intervention strategies.
Statistics regarding gang involvement and the sociology of gangs are covered
first. Ways in which communities can break the cycle of violence through
early and middle childhood prevention are discussed and includes antiviolence
curricula (e.g., Drug Abuse Resistance Education) and intervention
strategies, such as dress codes, mentor programs, after-school activities,
and collaborative community programs. Numerous examples of where these
programs have been tried are presented. Based on the findings, eight steps
for preventing gang involvement are offered. They include the following:
collaboration and education among school, family, and community; love and
respect for all children; individualized instruction for students; life
skills curricula for students; preventive measures in early childhood;
mentoring and monitoring for middle grade children; zero tolerance for
bullying, intimidation, and violence. Contains approximately 65 references.
(RJM)

Running head: SYNTHESIS OF RESEARCH ON COLLABORATION

A Synthesis of Research on Home, School, and Community Collaboration

to Keep Children From Joining Gangs

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Abstract

The purpose of this synthesis of research was to examine models for collaboration between families, schools, law enforcement, and social agencies to promote gang awareness and prevention of gang involvement at the elementary and middle school levels. Literature and research from the fields of education, criminal justice, and social services were examined and discussed. Research was examined in three categories: background information, prevention strategies, and intervention strategies. Recommendations for effective home, school, and community programs were made based upon the available research and evaluations.

A SYNTHESIS OF RESEARCH ON HOME, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY
COLLABORATION TO KEEP CHILDREN FROM JOINING GANGS

One of the goals of America 2000 (U. S. Department of Education, 1991) was that America's schools will be safe, disciplined, drug-free places by the year 2000. This goal reflects the sad fact that more and more children are surrounded by violence in their neighborhoods and schools (Kotlowitz, 1991). This violence has increased with the phenomenal growth of youth gangs. Trump (1993) wrote that students in schools with gangs are twice as likely to report fear of being victims of violence.

In violence-torn neighborhoods and schools, children have increasingly become armed with guns. Stephens (1994) wrote:

> Reading, writing, and retaliation have become common themes on many of the nation's campuses. Far two often, this retaliation involves the ducking of bullets or other serious violent situations. Students are willing to risk bringing a weapon to school for protection, to show off, or to intimidate others. Fistfights are being replaced by gunfights. Fire drills are being replaced by crisis, bullet, and drive-by shooting drills (p. 29).

Review of the Literature

Gangs have been defined as a group of three or more individuals who meet together to do criminal acts (Spergel, 1989). Rodriguez (1990) wrote, "Gangs are not alien powers. They begin as unstructured groupings, our children, who desire the same as any young person. Respect. A sense of belonging. Protection . . . Gangs flourish when there's a lack of social recreation, decent education, and employment" (p. 250).

Violence in neighborhoods has been compounded by poverty and the breakdown of the family. A recent article in the Chattanooga Times (Carter, Smith, & Curriden, 1996) illustrated the devastation violence had on the original 92 children who were in the 1984 kindergarten class of Calvin Donaldson Elementary School. They were surveyed in their senior year of high school in 1996. Only one child in five graduated on schedule. One-half of the children had dropped out of school. Twenty-eight percent had failed a year. One in four children had been cited in juvenile

court. Three children had served time in a state corrections facility. Most of the boys had been seduced by gangs, drugs, and violence. Of the original 29 boys, 16 had dropped out of school. Only 5 of 29 boys graduated with their class. Two of the boys were HIV positive.

The students in this survey reported that gangs seduced them to make money and provided them a sense of belonging. The students reported that one-half of the black homes in their neighborhoods have no male figures. They perceived the breakdown of their families as the number one cause of juvenile delinquency and violence.

Females often join gangs for safety reasons. In a study of female gang members by Molidor (1996), the common threads in the lives of violent female offenders were dysfunctional families, domestic violence, divorce in the family, remarriage with unsuccessful blending of families, and physical or sexual abuse. Burke (1991) wrote that female gang members cling out of fear and loneliness to males who use them as sex objects and use them to hold drugs.

Vigil (1988) wrote that young people who turn to gangs often have a weak self-identity and feel alienated. The William Gladden Foundation (1992) reported that a sense of powerlessness, which leads to frustration, anger, and a need for support contributes to gang involvement. That report also cited turf battles for drug territories and recruitment to expand power as contributing factors to the growth of gangs.

Bodinger-de Uriate (1993) wrote of the importance feeling respected has as a deterrent for joining gangs. The author noted that gangs tend to develop along racial or ethnic lines among youth who feel powerless and alienated. Ninety percent of gang members are male. Most have distinctive styles of dress, show loyalty to their neighborhoods, and develop specific illegal activities and patterns of behavior. Such activities gain them the respect of the gang.

Statistics on Gangs

The statistics on gang involvement are alarming. Knox (1994) estimated that at least 200,000 Americans belong to gangs. When you add these to the offenders who never get prosecuted, the estimate increases to 1/2 million. With the increase in gang activity has come an increase in homicides. Wolff, Rutten, & Bayers (1992) wrote that homicide is the second leading

cause of death in 11- to 18-year-olds in the United States. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (1995) reported that the homicide rate for the past 20 years was 7.8 per 100,000. The United States Department of Health and Human Services (1990) has set a goal to reduce homicides in our country to no more than 7.2 per 100,00 inhabitants by the year 2000.

The Sociology of Gangs

The fact that there is a common need in childhood to develop friendships may help explain the formation of gangs. Bachar, et.al. (1997) described such friendships as "chumships" (p. 209). The authors wrote that children who develop positive chumships are better adjusted than those who do not, since chumships can serve as a buffer against distress in children's family lives. With the erosion of the family, gangs offer friendship and "a moral vision that allows . . . youths the opportunity to resurrect and celebrate the shared meanings lost through the erosion of traditionalism" (Schmitz and Christopher, 1997, p. 411).

Gangs and street children are a worldwide phenomenon. Roux (1996) wrote that the street has become the "heritage of millions of children, even before they are tainted by drugs, prostitution, abuse, crime, and many other socioeducational problems. Much can and has to be done to protect the child's right to a dignified life" (p. 970). Young and French (1997) noted the potential for violent behavior is greater in societies with role confusion and a loss of societal norms. Their study described the effect of such role confusion and loss of behavioral norms on the lives of Native American children.

Gaustad (1991) distinguished among the characteristics of ethnic groups who join gangs. African American gangs tend to stay in their own communities. The Bloods and Crips, however, have many ethnic groups involved and have spread nationwide. They tend to wear distinguishing colors more than other gangs. Bodinger-de-Uriate (1993) wrote that Asian gangs will often travel hundreds of miles, whereas most other gangs tend to confine their activities to a defined territory.

The spread of gangs to rural areas in recent years has been facilitated by the changing demographics of our nation caused by people moving from urban to suburban and rural areas, by increased immigration, and by rampant poverty. Hodgkins (1990) wrote that 40% of the nation's

poor are school-aged youth. The House Select Committee (1989) stated that by the year 2010, one in three Americans will be Hispanic and that by 2040, the majority of American youth will be people of color. With these changes in population, it is expected that low wages will increase poverty and that poverty may breed more violence and gang involvement.

Breaking the Cycle of Violence Through Early and Middle Childhood Prevention

Children suffer long-lasting side effects from witnessing or experiencing violence (Rynoos, 1985). Some of the forms of violence described by MacDougall (1993) were youth/youth gang violence, violence against teachers, bullying, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. Witnessing television violence might also be added (National Cable Television Association, 1996). Children suffering from violence often have trouble relating to adults and need responsible adult role models desperately (Garbarino & Schott, 1990).

As a result of the current prevalence of violence in our society, many researchers have offered suggestions for breaking the cycle of violence through early childhood prevention strategies. Wallach (1996) used Erikson's stages as a basis for bringing children through a nonviolent childhood. The author wrote that infants need proper bonding with an adult caretaker to develop trust, a safe space for physical activity, a supportive community where they can reach out to people beyond their families, and the development of social skills necessary to achieve in school.

McMillan & Reed (1994) described promoting resiliency in children as a preventive strategy for helping students avoid a violent future. They found that students who are most resilient have a temperament that encourages positive responses from others, high intrinsic motivation, and internal locus of control, and clear, realistic goals. Such students are optimistic about the future. They do not blame others for their fates and do not believe the school neighborhood, or family are critical to their success or failure. They learn to use time wisely and are engaged in school or extracurricular activities. They learn to help others. Their parents are better educated than non-resilient children's. They have a close bond with one caregiver and have at least one teacher who takes a personal interest in their welfare. This last characteristic has profound implications for

educators. The authors recommended that school personnel develop instruction strategies to teach interpersonal skills, stress high academic achievement, develop confidence, and nurture self-esteem. They also suggested that it is imperative to get children involved in extracurricular activities and that teachers become more caring and sensitive to the needs of children.

In a study by Taylor-Dunlop and Norton (1997), at-risk students reported caring and uncaring people who influenced their lives. The students described caring teachers who had been attentive, had shown respect to them, had been good listeners, and had been willing to give help and classroom assistance. The students reported such teachers to have a positive influence upon their lives.

Building skills of cooperation in young children has also been recommended as an antidote to violence. Kohn (1986, 1990, 1991) and Wallach (1996) have written extensively about creating caring environments to nurture resilience and cooperation. Paley (1992) described methods to get kindergarten children to work successfully as a group, not excluding any child. Cooperative learning has been found to an important tool for building positive group interactions and pro-social behaviors in elementary children (Schaps, 1990; Slavin, 1996). Such skills are necessary to promote resistance to joining gangs and other anti-social behaviors.

Middle school children need to experience a continuation of the nurturing most commonly reserved for children in elementary schools. Manning (1992) recommended building positive social interactions through developmentally appropriate middle level schools where subject matter is integrated and where a multiple intelligences approach to learning and assessment are used. The author stated that these methods are beneficial in helping children avoid the negative cycle of behavior common to middle school children.

Antiviolence Curricula

Toepfer (1996) wrote that some of the most effective methods of preventing gangs and violence in schools are classes on human development, sex education, drug education, and parenting education. He also recommended after-school activities, individualizing the pace of

progress in instruction, cooperative district-wide planning, and more alternative school facilities to accommodate violent youthful offenders who are released after serving their sentences.

Project D.A.R.E. (Drug Awareness and Resistance Education) and G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) are two commonly-used preventive programs that are used in elementary and middle schools to prevent violence. The G.R.E.A.T. program was designed by the Phoenix, Arizona, Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. These programs are conducted by law enforcement officers have been evaluated with mixed results for success. DuPhuoc & Richard (1996) believed these programs may be inadequate because of the scale and complexity of the gang problem in the United Stated and internationally. Winfree and Winfree (1996) argued that G.R.E.A.T. has strong pedagogical content and a strong conceptual base which is tied to social learning and self-control theories and on two mainstream criminological theories. Palumbo and Ferguson (1996) found only a small effect of Project G.R.E.A.T. on children, but stated that the program will probably continue because of its political symbolism.

In Richmond, Virginia, a program called RIPP (Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways) and SCIDDLE, a problem-solving model (stop, calm down, identify the problem and your feelings about it, decide among your options, do it, look back, and evaluate) has shown positive results (Meyer & Northup (1997). RIPP participants had significantly less injuries related to violence requiring medical treatment, more positive self esteem, more peer mediation, and fewer discipline policy violations than students who did not participate.

Gaustad (1991) reported on a successful antiviolence curricula for elementary and middle grades in several cities. In Seattle, Washington, the schools have instituted a program called Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum to help build empathy and teach impulse control and anger management in the lower elementary grades. In the eighth grade, problem solving is added to the curriculum. They also reported on a successful program in Boston, Massachusetts called Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents, which is similar to the program being used in Seattle. Another program based on conflict resolution has been used in San Francisco which has been successful in establishing a more peaceful environment in the schools.

In New York City, a program called RCCP (Resolving Conflict Creatively) has encouraged open discussion of violence-related issues in a supportive atmosphere through curriculum support. Lantieri (1995) reported the strength of the program to be its professional training of parents and teachers and its student-led mediation process.

In a joint study by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory and Tennessee Education Association (1993), several examples of antiviolence programs in elementary, middle school, and high school were discussed. The most successful were based on conflict resolution and included teacher training and parent involvement. Williams (1991) stated the goal of conflict resolution is to help students learn to control their anger before violence occurs.

The Fort Smith, Arkansas Parent Teachers Association (PTA) instituted an antiviolence campaign in the 1994-95 school year. The city of 70,000 had emerging gangs and developed a program called RESPECT, which was based on conflict resolution skills. The Parent Teacher Association council members worked closely with the local police department to develop a gang prevention video for use by 27 local parent-teacher organizations. They wrote a book entitled RESPECT and sent it home to all their students. Lawton (1991) wrote that such comprehensive efforts of schools, community groups, and local agencies are more effective than schools working on problems alone, especially when funding of projects is an issue.

In a survey of principals in the Mississippi delta (Enger & Howerton, 1996), 96.6% of principals felt their schools needed violence prevention programs, and 97.1% believed their teachers needed them. The highest incidence of gang violence was in the middle schools. Similar surveys might be conducted in other geographical areas to determine the perception of the need for programs to prevent violence throughout the country and throughout the world.

In Chicago and Los Angeles, Spergel (1989) found such gang prevention curricula changed attitudes toward gangs but did not necessarily change gang behaviors. It seems important, therefore, that programs to prevent gang involvement need to begin as early as possible before children get involved in them. It also seems important that such programs be properly evaluated for their effectiveness. McFarland (1995) wrote that corporate methods of research and program

evaluation often interfere with the proper evaluation of school curricula. It would seem that more appropriate methods of program evaluation should be used.

Intervention Strategies

Walker and Sylwester (1991) found the best predictor of adolescent criminal behavior is early school antisocial behavior in early childhood. Such antisocial behavior usually arises from exposure to neglect, violence, and other traumatic events. The authors urged schools to set up home/school behavioral intervention programs, careful monitoring of behavior, parent training programs, incentive programs in the home to encourage a positive attitude toward school, daily communication with parents, programs to develop personal, academic, and social skills to at-risk children, and the use of peer and teacher mentors.

Play therapy has been found to be an effective intervention strategy for young children, and talk therapy has been shown to be effective with older children. Terr (1981) wrote of the posttraumatic stress disorder that often results in children exposed to violence. He noted that such children need extensive play therapy to act out their traumas; whereas, adults work through psychological trauma by talking, young children work through it by play.

Molidor (1996) recommended that schools develop programs to promote positive groups and focus prevention efforts on young children. The author recommended that intervention be a community-wide effort, with the social worker playing a key role in providing parent training and outreach to help the community, and law enforcement officers helping increase community awareness about the availability of weapons and how they are distributed.

In a study based on social learning theory, Winfree (1994) highlighted the importance of drying up the source of recruitment into gangs. The author found that reducing gangs may reduce crime as well as limit pro-gang attitudes of nongang members and that educating children about the negative social consequences of gang involvement, such as trouble with parents and law enforcement officials, may make gangs less appealing.

Toepfer (1996) recommended a new agenda for middle school violence intervention based on the following steps:

1. Do not be concerned with labeling students; instead define educational goals which aim to humanely alter behavior.

2. Emphasize the protective custody of young adolescents.

3. Develop curricula which develop affective, moral, ethical, and citizenship skills.

4. Remove violent offenders from society.

5. Assist middle school youth in raising their aspirations for the future.

The author wrote that once children cross the legal lines and become violent felons or hard-core gang members, strong intervention strategies need to be taken in schools and communities. In that study, 70% of youthful offenders convicted of two or more violent felonies were released after serving less than 20% of their time. Such offenders often need to be separated from the general population of students and put into highly structured alternative schools because of their violent behavior.

Hill and Van Horn (1995) wrote of an effective reading program based on a social constructivist perspective that was used in a juvenile detention center to engage small groups of incarcerated youth in reading and participating in literature discussion groups. The adults leading the program used strong leadership based on modeling, facilitation of group processes, and fostering peer leadership. Through the use of socially relevant literature, these literature groups became a way to help students explore their own minds, hearts, feelings. Such programs should be encouraged classrooms with children who have been touched by violence.

In a two-year study of Ohio gangs, Bryant (1989) reported stories of gang members whose lives were turned around because of criminal justice officers who mentored them. The author reported that responses to youth gangs must include all segments of the community if any long-lasting decrease in gang activity are to be found.

Another effective technique to discourage gang violence is through reverse peer pressure a to get young people involved in fighting violence. Lozada (1996) wrote about Barrios Unidos, an

organization which has space at the District of Columbia's Office of Latino Affairs. The organization publishes a monthly newsletter with an antiviolence theme and has been effective in discouraging gang membership.

Lima, Ohio schools and community agencies developed strategies to fight gang violence which included the following steps (Green and Miller, 1996):

1. School-based intervention training for all high school employees was instigated.

2. Intelligence links between schools and law enforcement were established.

3. Tougher truancy policies were developed.

4. A graffiti ordinance was passed.

5. A working relationship between several gang members was established to determine how employment, volunteer service, and extracurricular activities affect gang involvement.

6. The Ohio Department of Health began a program called Reach Back, which sent at-risk students to a special program at Bowling Green University to promote the development of resilience and nonviolent attitudes.

7. A community education program was instigated which made literature on gangs available to the community.

8. The G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) curriculum was taught in the schools.

Atkinson (in Huff, 1996) reported on the collaborative efforts of many community agencies in Aurora, Colorado, to combat gang violence. First, a law was passed holding parents responsible for their children's crimes if they showed no concern for the children's gang activities. The Rotary Club donated video surveillance equipment and portable phones for the Gang Intervention Unit of the police. The local military installation donated night vision equipment to the police. Videotapes called "Aurora Colors" and "Aurora Colors II" were developed and shown to community groups. A packet of gang-related information was distributed to 3,000 agencies or communities free of charge. Committees were formed to study, develop strategies, and update the community on

legislation, law enforcement efforts, prosecution of gang-related crimes, and education efforts to combat gang violence. The efforts of the community have received mixed reviews. Although their gangs continue grow in numbers, subjective measures reveal that many children who might have been enticed to join gangs have not done so because of the efforts of their families and community agencies to dissuade them.

In South Bend, Indiana (Jordan,1994) the high schools instigated a program called This is My Neighborhood--No Shooting Allowed. A teen think tank, high school theatrical production, mock jury, art display, and photography exhibit resulted from open classroom discussions based on structured lesson plans and videos about the negative influences of violence and gangs. The program opened discourse, and the students reported feeling freer to talk about issues such as guns being brought to school.

In other studies (Bennett, 1994; Juarez, 1996) special clubs held after school, community volunteers to serve as mentors for at-risk youth, and a no-failure policy were found to be beneficial in helping students become less likely to participate in gang activities. Peer counseling, support groups, conflict resolution, a school climate where all feel valued, education for all staff members, and special programs for parents on dealing with gangs have been recommended. In addition, monitoring the activities of gang members in the community and monitoring visitors to schools has been shown to be a necessity. Educating students about the negative effects of gangs and violence and allowing participation in student discussion groups were also found beneficial.

Dress codes have received mixed reviews as an intervention strategy to prevent further gang activity in schools. Thelson (1996) advised administrators who plan to instigate such policies to avoid trampling on a student's right of expression, which is guaranteed by the first amendment of the United States Constitution. Such dress codes, when carefully drafted to emphasize the reduction of distraction and controlling the learning environment, have been permitted by the courts. Other authors (Clay and Aquida, 1994) have criticized dress codes as an overreaction to a fad of wearing gang attire. Burke (1991) wrote of the more serious side of wearing clothing that mimics gang attire:

They do not feel safe alone in our society. So they resort to the purchased security of a certain jacket and run with others who feel similarly ostracized from school, friends who lead friends far from the security that a good education might provide. (p. 12)

Gang mediation or peer mediation have been used effectively to promote communication between gang members and adults in authority in schools and communities. Sanchez and Anderson (1990) wrote, "The magic of the mediation process was communication. . ." (p. 60). For many children, the voluntary mediation process is the first time they have ever perceived adults in authority have listened to them. Tabish and Orell (1996) described two kinds of gang mediation used in middle schools: individual, used between two gang members, and formal, which is used between two or more rival gangs.

In a discussion of the legal issues related to school violence, James (1995) urged schools to work collaboratively with juvenile justice workers, develop sound practices of classroom management, and develop sound school safety programs. Greenbaum, et.al (1989) wrote that such policies often are not developed because administrators feel that violent acts such as bullying, fights, and intimidation are just a normal part of growing up. What such administrators need to realize, the authors emphasized, is that such acts are crimes and should not be tolerated in the school.

The common themes of safe schools discussed by MacDougall (1993) were dealing openly with issues, peer intervention, the need for clearer goals, and the strength of community collaboration. Four agendas to promote school and community collaboration were summarized by Toepfer (1996):

1. Identify changes needed in the school to help children deal with family problems, violence, and poverty.

2. Identify community outreach services needed.

3. Collaborate with other community agencies.

4. Develop a plan for influencing state and national policies affecting issues in violence and gangs.

Implications

Based on the findings in this synthesis of the literature, the following eight steps for preventing gang involvement have been made:

1. Schools, homes, law enforcement, and other community agencies must collaborate to find ways to prevent gang involvement in individual communities. The communities studied were found to have effective gang prevention and/or intervention programs where collaboration existed and where a where there was a consensus of goals between homes, schools, law enforcement, and community task forces.

2. Preventing involvement in gangs requires education for the entire community. The most effective programs had elements of parent education, gang awareness training for educators, antiviolence curricula in schools, specialized training on gangs for law enforcement professionals, and community-wide educational meetings where educational materials were developed and distributed.

3. Children who are treated with love and respect in the home, school, and community are not as likely to join gangs as those who feel on the fringes of society. Giving all children adequate care and treatment, educating them humanely, and engaging them in community activities in a positive way is the most helpful things communities can do.

4. Individualizing instruction and allowing continuous progress toward educational goals will allow children to stay engaged in learning and keep them dropping out of school. Staying involved in school and achieving academically is a great deterrent for joining gangs.

5. Use curricula based on building emotional intelligence, personal skills, conflict resolution, and developing multiple intelligences. These life skills build the resilience in children that is necessary to avoid involvement in gangs.

6. Start preventive measures in early childhood. Resilience and resistance to gangs must be fostered at an early age through effective parenting, specific curricula in schools, and positive involvement in the community.

7.   Children in the middle grades of school need to be mentored and monitored, both in the home and at school. The loss of an attachment to one caring adult in the school environment and the home environment was reported in the research to be a contributing factor to the alienation young adolescents feel from their parents and from school.

8.   Take out all the stops when intervening with gang-related problems in the school and community. Have clear-cut policies and procedures that show zero tolerance toward bullying, intimidation, illegal activities, and violence.

When all efforts at prevention and intervention fail, get violent gang members out of the mainstream of the school and society. Research has indicated that once children become hard-core gang members, a kind of psychopathic behavior is perpetuated. When children get to that level of gang involvement, placement in a strict alternative school and/or incarceration is recommended.

Keep a positive attitude about this problem. Gang task forces involving leaders from the community working together have been found to be very productive in creating successful programs to fit the needs of individual communities. Communities that take a proactive stance about gangs can make a real difference in the quality of the lives of children.

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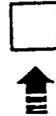The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

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