Section 9:
The Challenges Ahead

9. THE CHALLENGES AHEAD ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬

This section will highlight several key challenges that need to be addressed to fully meet the needs of students with behavioural difficulties. Many of the issues are beginning to be addressed and must continue to be a focus if schools are to develop a comprehensive strategy for dealing with behavioural challenges. The areas to be discussed include:

- Staff professional development

- Early intervention

- Prevention issues

- Next steps

Staff Training

A key component of any effort to address behavioural difficulties in a school division, school, or classroom is the development of an effective staff training plan. At first glance, it would seem to be a straightforward task, but in reality it contains a variety of hurdles. The difficulties of providing a meaningful staff training plan for dealing with behavioural issues include:
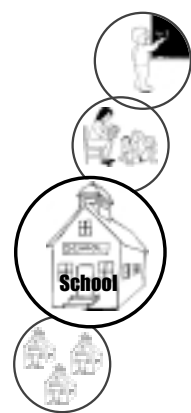
- The need for training will vary depending on the group receiving the training. For example, first-year teachers will require something different than experienced teachers; principals will require a different type of training than classroom teachers. Schools with high staff turnover may require more frequent training.

- The type of training will vary depending on the role of the staff. For example, bus drivers will require different training than paraprofessionals; counsellors will require different training than classroom teachers.

- The training must be appropriate for different competency levels, e.g., exposure, mastery, maintenance, training others (resource teachers must be able to train paraprofessionals).

- Professional development needs to move beyond the one-day training model to a more intensive, focused model with planned follow-up.

- Implementation is the key to successful professional development.

Process for Developing a Training Plan

In the development of an appropriate training plan, a number of steps should be followed.

1. Form a committee to develop and conduct a needs assessment, survey, or scan. The survey ought to focus on the needs of various staff groupings. These surveys may be conducted at different levels (e.g., division, school) or within specific staffing groups (e.g., resource teachers).

2. Based on the scan, identify the types of training that are required. A matrix could be developed that matches the type of training to the individuals in the division who will receive the training. An example of this type of matrix is included at the end of the section.

3. Based on the data collected from the matrix, prioritize the needs at the different levels (i.e., division, school, classroom) in order to plan the delivery of the training sessions.

4. Some training sessions will require that training be delivered to a team of staff members, e.g., a school's crisis team or a team for a medically fragile student. On occasion, training should involve other agencies in a multi-system approach, e.g., multi-system behavioural planning.

5. At the school level, finalize and incorporate the professional development plans into the school plan for the year. If several schools identify the same type of training, they may want to pool resources to implement the training and plan cooperatively to deliver the formal sessions.

6. Examine ways to incorporate key types of training into an ongoing development process. This in-depth training is often referred to as study groups, project teams, action research, or learning communities.

7. Every year or two, conduct new scans or surveys to review the progress that has been made on the initial goals and to develop new priorities.

Conduct a follow-up survey to determine progress and new priorities

Form a planning team

Determine areas for in-depth study

Professional Development Planning Process

Coduct a needs survey or scan of all staff

Incorporate training plan into the school plan

Develop a matrix to determine needs of different staff groups

Evaluate the matrix to establish priorities

Possible Professional Development Topics Related to Behaviour Challenges

Classroom interventions

- Discipline with dignity
- Positive classroom environment
- Dealing effectively with learning difficulties
- Differentiated instruction, adaptations, modifications
- Classroom interventions and strategies for behavioural difficulties

School-wide interventions

- Positive school climate
- Critical incident training
- Positive behavioural support
- Social skills training
- Conflict resolution and mediation
- Early behavioural intervention programs
- Peer-tutoring and peer-helping program
- Developing codes of conduct
- Bullying prevention and intervention
- Gang awareness and prevention programs
- Alcohol and drug abuse prevention
- Life-space crisis intervention
- Continuum of supports and services
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCI)
- Working Effectively with Violent and Aggressive Students (WEVAS)
- Dealing with harassment

Individual behaviour planning

- Functional behavioural assessments
- Individual Education Planning (IEP)
- Behavioural intervention plans
- Multi-system 24-hour plans
- Interagency planning

Parent interventions

- Working with parents
- Parenting programs
- Family-School-Community partnerships

Professional Development Resources

Schools should ensure that staff members have access to current information resources on students with behavioural difficulties. This area should receive a high priority in the school, and professional development funds should be allocated for the following:

Professional resources

See Appendix A for a listing of resources related to behavioural difficulties.

Journals and newsletters

There are many journals that address issues related to behavioural challenges. Some of the journals include:

- *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions* (Pro-Ed, Inc.)
- *Reclaiming Children and Youth: Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Problems* (Pro-Ed, Inc.)
- *Teaching Exceptional Children* (Council of Exceptional Children)
- *Focus on Exceptional Children* (Love Publishing Co.)
- *Behavioral Disorders* (Council for Children with Behaviour Disorders)
- *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders* (Pro-Ed, Inc.)
- *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* (Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behaviour, Indiana University)
- *Education and Treatment of Children* (Family Services of Western Pennsylvania)
- *Preventing School Failure* (Heldref Publications)
- *Journal of Behavioral Education* (Plenun Press)
- *Journal of Staff Development* (Pro-Ed, Inc.)
- *Developmental Disabilities Bulletin* (Developmental Disabilities Centre, University of Alberta)

> For additional information on learning communities and the staff development process, please see:
>
> Sparks, Dennis, and Stephanie Hirsh. *A New Vision for Staff Development*, 1997.
>
> The Journal of the National Staff Development Council. *Journal of Staff Development*. The website for this organization is found at www.nsdc.org

Staff access to the Internet

See Appendix A for a listing of Internet sites on behavioural challenges.

Professional development workshops and training

There are many training programs offered on a variety of topics related to behavioural difficulties. Attendance at these workshops is important, and a variety of ways of releasing teachers needs to be explored.

Early Intervention Programming

Many communities have begun to offer particular early years programs to ensure that all children have an excellent start in life. These programs address the key stages in a child's development — from conception, through the prenatal period and birth, and through the pre-school years, day care, and entry into Kindergarten. This time period is critical to the development of the young child (McCain and Mustard, 1999). These programs have been established to ensure healthy pregnancies, appropriate early intervention programming, and awareness of a young child's needs.

Community Action Program for Children

Health Canada's Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) provides long-term funding to assist community groups in establishing and delivering services that respond to the health and social development needs of children from birth to six years of age. The programs must meet the following six design principles:

- Put children first
- Strengthen and support families
- Be equitable and accessible
- Be built on partnerships
- Be community-based
- Be flexible

BabyFirst Program

This program provides information and support to parents who face the many challenges of caring for a new baby. Home visitors assist parents in learning to care for their child from age 0–3. BabyFirst is available through the Regional Health Authorities.

Early Start

This program is offered through child-care centres and family day-care homes to help parents deal with the challenge of lively young children. Early childhood educators assist parents in developing their parenting skills and the health and well-being of the whole family.

Aboriginal Headstart

This Federal program provides funding to support preschool programming for Aboriginal children. The programs focus on culture and language, education, health promotion, nutrition, social support programs, and parental involvement. An example of a recipient of this program is the Andrew Street Family Centre, Winnipeg, MB. The local Aboriginal community that receives the grant must be involved in the planning, development, operation, and evaluation of the program.

Parent-child centres

A number of communities have initiated parent-child centres (family resource centres) to assist families in raising their young children. An example of such a centre is the Wolseley Family Place, Winnipeg, MB. The centres offer programming and services that foster the development of healthy moms, healthy babies, and healthy families.

Early Intervention at the School Level

Early intervention is necessary for those students who show early evidence of academic or behavioural problems during the first or second year of school. Children with challenging behaviour also require early intervention to prevent the development of secondary behaviours or characteristics. A number of suggestions for the development of early intervention programs follow below:

- Schools should develop contacts with day cares, parent-child centres, the Child Development Clinic, Children's Special Services, specialized treatment facilities and special agencies that act as feeder sites or service providers. The purpose of the contact is to determine the needs of the students who will require extra supports upon entrance to school. Many of the students with challenging behaviour will have already been identified in their pre-school programs.

> Two of the tools that can be used at this early age include:
>
> Statistics Canada. *Early Development Instrument: A Population Measure for Communities* (Formerly Readiness to Learn Measure), 1999.
>
> Walker H.M., H. Severen, and E. Feil. *First Step to Success — Behavioral Screening Tool*, 1992.

- Schools should arrange to meet the parents of the students with challenging behaviour in order to develop a collaborative approach to dealing with the child and to learn as much about the child as possible. Formal interviews may be a part of this process.

- Many schools have developed Kindergarten Early Identification Programs (KEIP). Programs will vary from school to school, but typically involve hearing and vision screening, readiness for reading, gross motor skills, and basic skills. The program is organized by the school's resource teacher in collaboration with the school's Kindergarten teacher. Various tools are used in the assessment that is conducted by the Kindergarten teacher, volunteers, resource teachers, and clinicians.

  Students identified through the KEIP program may be referred to specialized programs or services, depending upon the seriousness of the behaviour or learning concerns identified. An example of such a program is Reading Recovery™; examples of such services are those provided by speech-language pathologists and resource teachers.

- Schools should consider utilizing screening instruments that examine the student's readiness to learn and current behavioural functioning level.

Early Behavioural Intervention Programs

1. First Step to Success

First Step to Success is an early intervention program designed to address the needs of Kindergarten students identified as at-risk for developing or having non-compliant, disruptive, and aggressive behaviour. The program utilizes trained counsellors, Kindergarten teachers, support personnel, and parents working together over a three-month period to improve the child's behaviour.

The program involves three main components:

- Kindergarten-wide screening: First Step to Success utilizes a multi-gated process for identifying students suitable for the program. The process includes: teacher nomination, a standardized rating scale, and direct observation of students in the classroom and on the playground.

- The classroom-based CLASS curriculum: During the CLASS portion of the program, the counsellor or support personnel work cooperatively with the Kindergarten teacher. The selected student is taught appropriate replacement behaviours and rewarded for using these behaviours appropriately and consistently. Each evening, the child's parents receive feedback on his or her progress. After five days, the teacher takes on the responsibility of implementing the CLASS modules and the counsellor begins to work with parents on the HomeBase program.

- HomeBase: HomeBase involves families in the intervention process. After Day 10 of the CLASS Module, the counsellor begins to work with the parents. During the HomeBase phase, the counsellor meets with the parents for approximately 45 minutes per week for six weeks. Parents are taught to enhance their child's adjustment and success in school. At the conclusion of the program, the data is collected again to determine the results of the program.

For Additional Information, please contact:
First Step to Success
The Institute on Violence and Destructive Behaviour
1265 University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon

2. Families and Schools Together (FAST)

The Families and Schools Together program is an early prevention program and parent empowerment program, the goal of which is to increase the likelihood of the child being more successful in the home, at school, and in the community.

FAST begins by creating a culturally representative team that is based on collaboration between parents and professionals from the local school and two community based agencies. The team is trained to provide the program to a multi-family group over an eight week time block. Each session consists of a meal hosted by a family, a family sing-along, structured communication exercises, a family feelings identification exercise, parent support group, children's time, one-to-one time between child and parent, winning as a family unit, and a closing ritual. Each activity is fun, but designed to achieve a specific outcome. After the initial training of eight weeks, families continue to meet once a month on an informal basis with parental leadership.

FAST is designed to improve children's behaviours in conduct, socialization, and attention. It is also designed to improve family functioning, cohesion, and communication. The program has also helped reduce social isolation and assisted in improving parental involvement with the school.

For additional information, please contact:
Family Centre of Winnipeg
401 - 393 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 3H6
(204) 947-1401

Prevention

"All individuals need to feel accepted, valued, and safe."

An ongoing challenge is the continued development of prevention programs. Prevention programs can contribute to reducing the number of students who exhibit behavioural challenges. This planning resource has addressed several prevention programs and techniques that schools can adopt in order to reduce the number of students with behavioural challenges. Other prevention initiatives might include:

• Increasing opportunities for recreational activities for students during weekends, after school, and in the evenings (e.g., Police athletic clubs, summer camps, after-school programs, sports and art clubs).

• Developing partnerships to address safety in schools (e.g., Manitoba Safe Schools Council, Winnipeg Gang Coalition).

• Developing prevention materials and activities for use in schools and communities (e.g., Manitoba's Violence Prevention Manual, bullyproofing resources, Fair Play manuals for community clubs).

• Continuing the development of treatment facilities for individuals with severe behaviours. (See Appendix B)

• Continuing to ensure key issues are addressed with students (e.g., Police presentations in schools, drug/alcohol prevention presentations [Addictions Foundation of Manitoba], gang coalition presentations).

Next Steps

This planning resource has provided a number of systems, processes, strategies, and interventions that are required to address the needs of students with challenging behaviours. After reviewing the document, school staff should take the time to review the following issues that have been raised.

- What school-wide systems are in place to address students with behavioural challenges? What processes are in place to assist teachers in identifying and programming for students with behavioural difficulties?

- How will the information in this document be shared with staff? What type of professional development session would best meet the needs of the staff? Is a study group needed to examine the document and determine ways in which the school can implement the suggestions? What suggestions from the document can be used immediately? In the future? How can the staff keep current on best practices related to students with behavioural difficulties?

- How is the school currently dealing with special needs students? What processes or systems could be strengthened to meet the needs of all learners? What strategies and interventions require additional attention at the classroom or school level?

- How is the school currently working with parents, the community, and other government agencies? What connections already exist with other government or community agencies? What can be done to further involve parents and the community with the school? How can the school, parents, and community successfully collaborate to assist children with behavioural challenges?

From Challenges to Possibilities has attempted to provide educators with the foundation required for successful planning at the divisional school, classroom, and individual levels. It is important to remember school is only one part of a child's life. The role of family, community, and other supporting agencies plays an integral part in the provision of an appropriate education for all children. Our ability to work together in assisting all the children in Manitoba to achieve their personal best is essential.

Section 9 Support Materials

- Sample Professional Development Matrix

Sample Professional Development Matrix

	Basic Principles	Philosophy	School Planning	Crisis Response	Class Planning	Classroom Management	Individual Planning	Education Strategies	Behaviour Management Strategies	Crisis Response (school level)	Resource Advisor
Department											
Board											
Superintendant											
Principal											
Teacher											
Paraprofessional (in class support as required)											
On site supports											
• environmental											
• counsellor											
• resource teacher											
Divisional Supports											
Parents											
Students											

Legend

	Level of Expertise Required
Ⓣ	Train Others, Lead Role
t	Training to Implement
p	Participate
o	Awareness Only