

Edition 05 – 2

Spring 2008

# Research Précis

## Best Practices: Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities

Creating a better tomorrow...

### Title: CASASTART

#### Overview:

CASASTART is a community substance, violence, and delinquency prevention program designed to provide primarily high-risk 8- to 13-year-old youths with safe neighborhoods and the support and services they need to become productive citizens.

*Target:* Youth ages 8-13

*Extent/Duration of Program:* The program does not have a set curriculum or duration. The model is intended to be flexible in its time frame, intensity, and availability.

#### Program Costs:

- The CASASTART does not provide a curriculum, so there are no material costs.
- Training involving key agencies, a newsletter, as well as on-site conference calls and an annual on-site conference, are available.

#### For further information, or to order:

CASA  
633 Third Avenue, 19th Floor  
New York, NY 10017-6706

Phone: 212-841-5200

E-mail: [info@casacolumbia.org](mailto:info@casacolumbia.org)

Web site: <http://www.casacolumbia.org>

*Principles/Approaches/Components:* CASASTART is based on the premise that a variety of school and community support systems can reduce youth risk factors and positively impact student behaviors, and that coordination of these services in a way that is tailored to local needs will address youth tendencies toward violence, substance abuse, and delinquency. The program components consist of community-enhanced policing and enhanced enforcement, case management, family services, criminal juvenile justice intervention, after-school and summer activities, education services (e.g., tutoring, homework), mentoring, and incentives. The program components are designed to accommodate students who meet risk criteria in one of three areas, including school risk (e.g., academic performance, truancy, etc.), family risk (e.g., violence, drug abuse, criminal conviction, etc.), or personal risk (e.g., mental illness, delinquency, gang membership, court supervision, etc.).

*Evidence-based Effectiveness:* The program's effectiveness has been evaluated in five cities since 1992. In studies utilizing experimental (treatment groups comprised of students who received services versus control groups comprised of students who did not) and quasi-experimental (treatment groups comprised of students who received services versus students who lived in and benefited from neighborhood program aspects), findings indicated that students who participated in the program experienced positive outcomes with regard to substance abuse and criminal behavior, and that these results were sustained at least one year after program interventions ended. Though participating students were more likely to be promoted to the next grade than non-participating peers, they did not otherwise exhibit similar improvements in educational outcomes such as improved attendance or higher grades.

### **Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) connections:**

E.i - Community-wide planning and organizing activities to reduce violence and illegal drug use, which may include gang activity prevention.

E.xii - Drug and violence prevention activities designed to reduce truancy.

E.xxii - Programs that respond to the needs of students who are faced with domestic violence or child abuse.

### **National Standards connections:**

*Grades K through 8*

Health Education Standard 3 – Students will demonstrate the ability to access valid information and products and services to enhance health.

Health Education Standard 7 – Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

*National Health Education Standards, Second Edition: Achieving Excellence. American Cancer Society, 2007.*

Counseling: Personal and Social Development Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

Counseling: Academic Development Standard A - The student will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.

*ASCA National Standards for Students. American School Counselor Association, 2004.*

### **Recognition and additional reports:**

The following organizations/institutions have recognized CASASTART. The organizations are in alphabetical order and the status of the recognition is in parentheses.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) (Promising Program)

Promising Practices Network (Proven/Promising Program)

SAMHSA (Model Program)

U.S. Department of Education (Exemplary Program)

U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Youth Violence (Promising Program)

**GENERAL NOTES:** The intent of the above synthesis and correlations is to assist teachers and school administrators dedicated to using best practices to reduce violence and substance abuse among students. To our knowledge, the information was current upon publication. However, details pertaining to status of program recognition, research and findings, costs, and contact information are subject to change.

Correlations to the Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) federally approved activities and to national education standards have been limited in depth ("standard" level only) and breadth (number of standards and subjects) due to the encompassing nature of many programs that typically qualify as model or exemplary. The correlations listed should not be viewed as exhaustive.

For information on other effective programs for promoting safe and drug-free schools and communities, visit [www.designedinstruction.com/learningleads/effective-sdfs-programs.html](http://www.designedinstruction.com/learningleads/effective-sdfs-programs.html)

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