

Strategies for Effective Parent Involvement

**The Visible Child Conference
Minneapolis, MN**

October 29th, 2008

Goals for Session

- **Overview of Risk/Protective Factors**
- **Identify Barriers to Parent Involvement**
- **Keys to Breaking Barriers to Parent Involvement**
- **Identify Parent Recruitment Strategies**
- **Identify Parent Involvement Strategies**
- **Identify Parent Retention Strategies**

**The Ruin of a Nation
Begins in the Home**

Ghanaian Proverb

Parent Involvement

Programs designed with strong parent involvement produce students who perform better than otherwise identical programs that do not involve parents as thoroughly, or that do not involve them at all.

-Anne T. Henderson

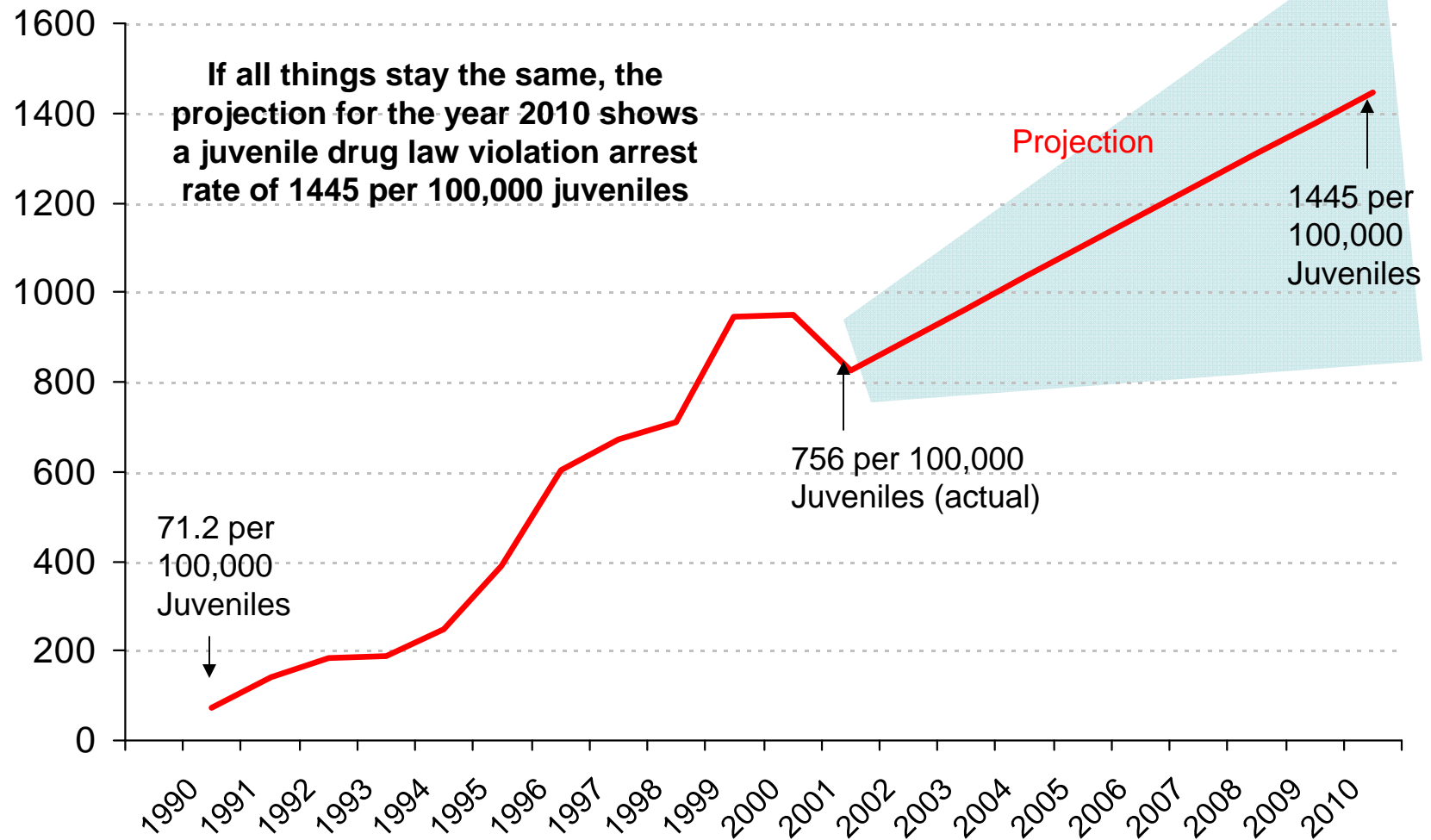
Activity



Risk Factors

- **Family poverty**
- **Lack of educational opportunities for the children**
- **A parent who abuses drugs**
- **Lack of involvement in child's education**
- **Poor Parenting skills**
- **Negative environmental influences**

Science challenges current course



Data Source: Wyoming Division of Criminal Investigation
Uniform Crime Reports.
Rates are per 100,000 juveniles ages 10 to 17.

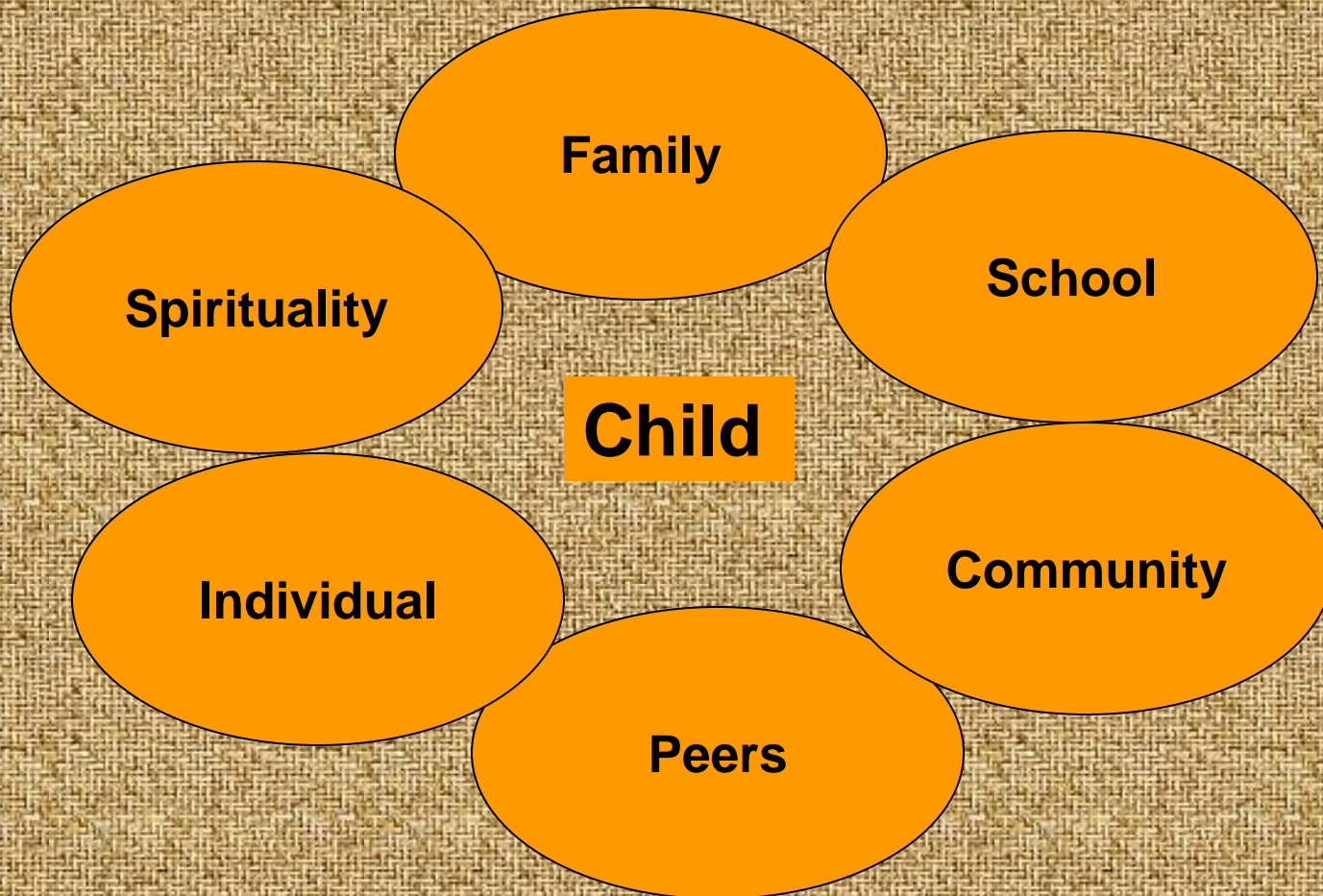
Protective Factors

- **Strong bond between children and parents**
- **Parental involvement in child's life**
- **Clear limits and consistent enforcement of discipline**
- **Rewards and recognition of positive behavior**
- **Parents modeling positive/appropriate behavior**
- **Clear consistent communication**

Protective Factors

- **Intuitive, cognitive and reasoning skills**
- **A sense of independence**
- **Social development**
- **Basic learning skills**
- **Conflict resolution with peers and family**

Prevention Domains



Parent Education

A vehicle for providing parents with knowledge, skills and information about child-rearing and/or life skills which should increase the parent's ability to effectively parent their children.



Tell me, and I'll forget.

Show me, and I may not remember.

Involve me, and I'll understand.

Native American Saying

Activity

*"A wise parent knows
when to look for help."*

Overheard on a New York bus

Barriers to Parent Involvement

- **Parents do not have enough time**
- **Parents feel they have nothing to contribute**
- **Parents don't understand; don't know the system; they don't know how to be involved**
- **Lack of child care**
- **Parents feel intimidated**
- **They may not understand the long range impact of being involved**

Barriers to Parent Involvement

- **Parents are not available during the time functions are scheduled**
- **Language and cultural differences**
- **Lack of transportation**
- **Parents don't feel welcome**
- **Parents previous experience with school systems or programs**

Parental Development

Parental Awareness Measure

Level I:

- “Me First” ...*focus is on parent's needs*

Level II:

- “Follow the Rules” ...*focus on traditions*

Level III:

- “We are Individuals” ...*focus on child's needs*

Level IV:

- “Living and Growing Together” ...*focus on balancing child's and parent's needs*

Keys to Breaking Barriers to Parent Involvement

- **Transportation**
- **Valued participation**
- **Parents feel welcome and included**
- **Leadership identifies parent involvement as an important component**
- **Support services and resources available to address parents issues and concerns**
- **Information is presented in a variety of methods to impact different learning styles**
- **Treat parents as equal partners**

Keys to Breaking Barriers to Parent Involvement

- **Flexible meeting schedules to accommodate parents**
- **Small and simple contributions are acknowledged**
- **Parents clearly understand how they can contribute**
- **Program/ Education System is parent friendly, parents understand how they can contribute**
- **Child care is included**
- **Language barriers are addressed**
- **Be aware and sensitive to cultural differences**

Communicating Effectively

Effective communication is created intentionally

Effective communication with parents is:

- **Personal**
 - One-to-one
 - One-to-many
- **Two-way**
- **Frequent – advertising rule is 5 – 7 contacts**
- **Multi-channel...print, e-mail, website, signs, newsletters, phone calls...**

Parent Recruitment Strategies

- **Send out postcards with simple announcements about upcoming events**
- **Send out greeting cards each holiday with a flyer about your program**
- **Go to schools and ask to speak at the School's Parent Teacher Organization meetings**
- **Offer food/incentives at initial meetings**



Parent Recruitment Strategies

- **Use Bulletin Boards**
- **Send out Press Releases/PSA**
- **Word of mouth**
- **Speak at churches, seminars, conferences**
- **Attend local community meetings and events**
- **Appear on community cable programs**
- **Write articles in community newspapers**



Parent Recruitment Strategies

- **Develop a program newsletter**
- **“Copy Cat”**
- **Develop poster/flyer**
- **Do a survey**
- **Help out with community events**
- **Hold an Open House**
- **Create a sticker w/ program info**
- **Create a logo of program**
- **Have parents recruit other parents**



Areas of Parent Involvement

- **Home-Program communications**
- **Parents as supporters**
- **Parents as learners**
- **Parents as teachers**
- **Parents as advisors, decision makers, and advocates**

Parental Involvement Strategies

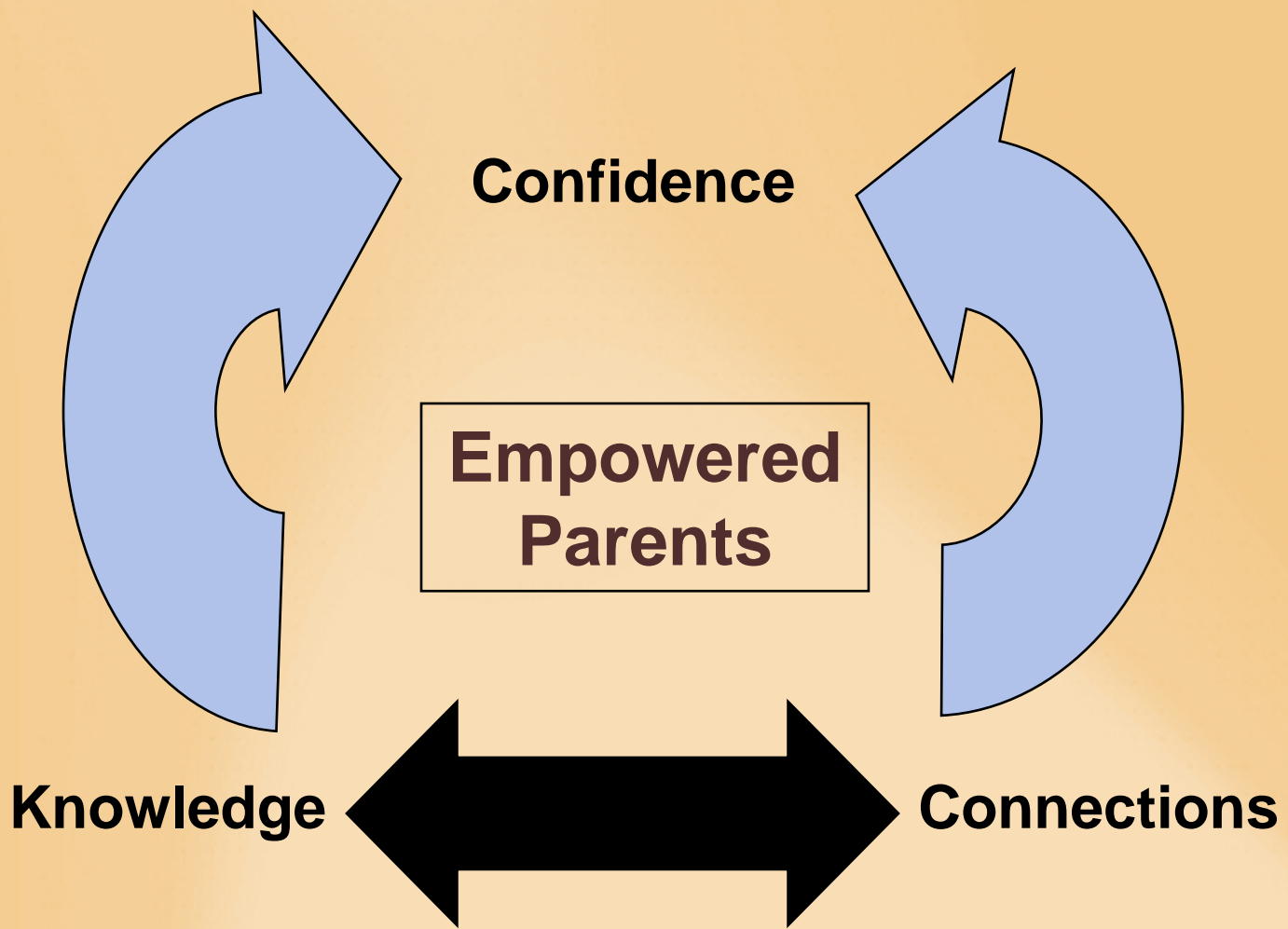
- **Families should be encouraged to develop their own knowledge and skills**
- **Communication is the foundation of effective partnerships**
- **Schools/Programs can reach out through community groups**

Parent Retention Strategies

- **Provide transportation to and from site**
- **Provide meals/snacks as often as possible**
- **Program should be located in a safe and neutral location**
- **Programs should be close/easily accessible**
- **Staff must be sensitive, well trained and caring professionals**

Parent Retention Strategies

- Offer parent support/respice opportunities
- Do site visits to parents homes as often as allowed
- Offer personal recognition (certificates, luncheons, verbal) as often as possible
- Offer program “bucks” for involvement
- Engage parents in the design of the program



Facilitator Delivery Methods

- Stories
- Lectures
- Mini Lectures
- Discussion
- Appropriate Humor
- Visual Tools
- Affirmations & Quotes
- Cartoons
- Active Activities
- Case Studies
- Forward Thinking
- Artistic Activities
- Participants Mini - Presentations

Setting up your Environment



Your Group setting makes a difference in how effectively your groups run

- Seating in rows or circular sends a different message
- If possible view the group space ahead of time
- Bring decorating items with you if necessary

Parent Involvement Books for Professionals

- Hornby, Garry. ***Improving Parental Involvement***. Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc.
- ***National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs***. National PTA, <http://www.nesonline.com>
- ***Partnering With Parents : 29 Easy Programs to Involve Parents in the Early Learning Process***. Gryphon House
- ***Enhancing Parent Involvement: Staff Development Training For Building Family Partnerships***. National Head Start Association
- ***Engaging Parents***. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, The guide focuses on creating a common vision for parent involvement. To order a copy, call 1-866-763-6481 (toll-free)

Parent Involvement Books for Professionals

- Campbell, Deborah and Glen F. Palm. ***Group Parent Education: Promoting Parent Learning and Support***. Sage Publications
- ***Communicating with Parents***. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,
- Hiatt-Michael, Diana, Editor. ***Promising Practices in Family Involvement in Schools*** (Family, School, Community, Partnership Issues, V. 1). Information Age Publishing Inc
- Walker, Horatio and Nancy Barra. ***Together!: Parental Involvement Program to Engage and Involve Hispanic Parents in School - a Training Guide for School Staff***. Intercultural Center for Research in Education, n.d. INCRE has developed a training kit for teachers and parent liaisons to engage and involve Hispanic parents in schools

Virtually every issue that we deal with, be it education... be it human services, gang problems or drugs, we find STRONG FAMILIES the ultimate solution.

~ Van Goethe

Questions & Final Comments



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