

# Accessing Behavioral Health Supports in Schools



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Advocates for Children of New York  
Protecting every child's right to learn since 1971



# Today's Training

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Introduction



Overview



Supports for  
All Students



Problem  
Solving



Tips &  
Strategies



Supports for  
Students with  
Disabilities



# What is Advocates for Children (AFC)?

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AFC is an independent agency that protects the education rights of **all** NYC students

## Our Services:

- Helpline: **1-866-427-6033** (Mon-Thurs, 10am – 4pm)
- Guides and resources: [www.advocatesforchildren.org](http://www.advocatesforchildren.org)
- Workshops and trainings
- Free legal services to low-income families

# Social-Emotional and Behavioral Supports

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# Why is this important?

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# Our Current Climate



## *Surgeon General Warns of Youth Mental Health Crisis*

*For Some Teens, It's Been a Year of Anxiety and Trips to the E.R.*

During the pandemic, suicidal thinking is up. And families find that hospitals can't handle adolescents in crisis.

U.S. Surgeon General Issues Advisory on Youth Mental Health Crisis Further Exposed by COVID-19 Pandemic

Dec. 7, 2021

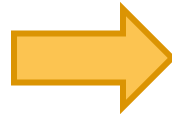
Dec. 7, 2021

## Opinion: More Than Ever, We Must Prioritize the Mental Health and Well-being of Children

By: Rachel Velcoff Hults, National Center for Youth Law and Dr. Steven Adelsheim, Stanford Psychiatry Center for Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing

NYC's mental health crisis spans far and wide with few answers in sight

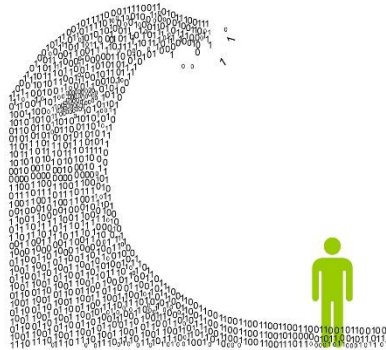
# Impact on Learning



Competition  
for energy and  
attention.



Less available to learn  
and potentially more  
behavior challenges.



# Parent's Rights



The school should NOT ask you to keep your child at home, ask you repeatedly to pick your child up from school early, or ask you to remain in the classroom with your child because of their behavior.

The school should NOT exclude your child from after school activities or field trips because of their behavior.

The school should NOT hold over your child.

The school should NOT repeatedly complain to you.

The school should NOT repeatedly suspend your child.

# Parent's Rights



The school should notify you if they use a physical or mechanical restraint on your child, or if a student is placed in a time-out room.

The school should NOT request School Safety Agent or police assistance to manage your child's behavioral or mental health issues or discipline your child

The school should NOT call 911 when your child has behavioral or mental health challenges in school unless it is a true emergency.

The school should NOT refer a student to virtual learning because of their behavior in the classroom.



## School-Based Supports

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At-risk  
counseling

Informal  
behavior  
interventions

Crisis  
De-escalation  
Plans

STH Community  
Coordinators,  
Single Shepherd

School-based  
Mental Health  
Services

For a list of mental health programs by school, go to

<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/health-and-wellness/mental-health>



# School-Based Mental Health Services



Central Crisis  
Response Team

STH staff can  
also support  
students in  
care!

School  
Response  
Teams

School MH  
Prevention &  
Intervention  
Program

Schools  
with Health  
& Hospitals  
MH Clinic  
Partnership  
/Mental  
Health  
Continuum

Community  
School  
Mental  
Health  
Program

School-  
Based  
Health  
Centers  
and Mental  
Health  
Clinics

For a list of programs, go to <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/health-and-wellness/mental-health>



# Finding Supports on School's Website

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Find a School - New York City De x

schoolsearch.schools.nyc

NYC Department of Education

Select Language

Powered by Google Translate

Home ▶ Find a School

## Find a School

Submit your feedback

School Name or Address

Grade: All

Borough: All

Search

Map Schools Filters

Each school has a DOE website that lists the specific mental health supports in each school:

Go to:  
[schoolsearch.schools.nyc](https://schoolsearch.schools.nyc)

Type in name of school or address and any information you have, then select "Search"



# Finding Supports on School's Website

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NYC Department of Education

Get Help Calendar Find a School Employees InfoHub TeachHub

Select Language Search...

Powered by Google Translate

Enrollment ▾ Learning ▾ School Life ▾ Get Involved ▾ Careers ▾ About Us ▾

Home ▾ Find a School ▾ P.S. 046 Arthur Tappan

## P.S. 046 Arthur Tappan

District

2987 Frederick Douglass Boulevard, Manhattan, NY 10039

212-360-1519

212-360-1610

School Website

Overview School Quality Reports

School Number: M046

Accessibility: No Accessibility

Grades: PK,0K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08,SE

2020-2021 Enrollment: 490

Geographic District: 05

Borough: Manhattan

School Contacts and Information ▾

Superintendent and District Contacts ▾

Mental Health and Wellness

Click on Mental Health and Wellness tab!





# Finding Supports on School's Website



## Superintendent and District Contacts



## Mental Health and Wellness

Ask your Parent Coordinator, School Social Worker, or School Counselor for more information about your school's mental health program.

### School-Based Mental Health Clinic

New York Presbyterian Hospital: [212-305-0924](tel:212-305-0924)

### Community School

Finnisha Hughes: [212-360-1519](tel:212-360-1519), [fnhughes@newyorkedge.org](mailto:fnhughes@newyorkedge.org)

### NYC Mental Health for All

[Mental Health for All](#) is a central hub where every New Yorker can connect to care and find mental health resources for themselves and their loved ones. No matter the age, ZIP code, ethnicity, or gender, we want every New Yorker to be able to live their best life.

### NYC Well Hotline

NYC Well offers free-confidential-24/7 support for problems like stress, depression, anxiety, and drug or alcohol use. NYC Well services include: counselors who will respond without judgment; connection to suicide prevention, crisis counseling and emotional support for you or someone you care about; and referrals to Mobile Crisis Teams for people experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Text and chat available in English, Spanish, and Chinese; for service in other languages please call number provided below.

Talk: 1-888-NYC-WELL (1-888-692-9355)

For Relay Service for Deaf/Hard of Hearing: Call [711](tel:711)

Text WELL to 65173

Chat: [nyc.gov/nyowell](https://nyc.gov/nyowell)

### Crisis Supports

[Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) : 1-800-273-TALK ([1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255))

[Crisis Text Line](#) : Text HOME to 741741

### Hite Site

[Hite Site](#) offers a citywide online search for mental health, social services, and healthcare agencies.



# The NYC Discipline Code

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Department of  
Education

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza



## Citywide Behavioral Expectations to Support Student Learning Grades K–5

including the K–12 Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities  
and the Discipline Code

**Effective September 2019**



Department of  
Education

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza



## Citywide Behavioral Expectations to Support Student Learning Grades 6–12

including the K–12 Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities  
and the Discipline Code

**Effective September 2019**



# DOE Embraces Progressive Discipline

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students “are better served by providing positive supports that teach students social, emotional, and behavioral skills...”

“provid[e] enhanced support to students with special needs or those suffering from trauma due to exposure to poverty or violence”

“overly punitive methods of discipline are not in the best interests of students”

NYC “will reduce the use of suspensions as a disciplinary tool”

**DOE’s  
Mission  
Statement**



# Restorative Justice

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## Restorative Justice

- An intervention that replaces punishment and focuses on repairing relationships

## Types of Restorative Practices

- Collaborative negotiation, circle process, peer mediation, conflict resolution, and formal restorative conferencing

## Why Advocate for it?

- Can improve a student's behavior
- Lowers incidence of repeated misbehavior
- Contributes to more positive school environment by fostering respect for one another



# Social-Emotional Learning Curriculum in Schools

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- Focus on building **community & resilience**
- All staff trained in Trauma Responsive Educational Practices (TREP)
- Activities vary based on age/grade
- Partnerships!
- Available at <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/safe-schools/resilient-kids-safer-schools>





# Questions?

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# Supports for Students with Disabilities

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# The Special Education Process

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Referral

Consent

Evaluation

IEP  
Development

Placement/  
Services



# Behavior Supports for Students with IEPs

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# IEP Supports and Services



Specific assistive technology

Equipment such as sensory items, weighted vest

Individualized behavior supports: paraprofessionals, Behavior Intervention Plan

Allow for time to consult with providers, teachers, paraprofessionals

Changes to types of services to needs (timing, frequency, etc.)

Regular check in's with social worker, guidance counselor, etc.

Discuss placement options depending on student's specific needs



# Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)

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## Function

- Why does the behavior occur?



## Behavior

- What behavior needs to change?



## Assessment

- When does the behavior occur? Where?
- How often? For how long?



# What goes in a BIP?

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## Data from FBA

Classroom  
observations

Reports

Interviews



## BIP

Prevent behavior  
from occurring

Manage the  
behavior

Measure progress

# DOE Path Pilot Program



For students at risk or with an emotional disability classification

Provides intensive behavioral and social-emotional supports for students

Districts 4, 9, 17, 27 (Kindergarten)

Recommendation made at Turning 5 IEP meeting

- Ask about this at your Turning 5 IEP meeting or email [pathprogram@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:pathprogram@schools.nyc.gov) for more information



## Programs for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

### Community Schools

- ASD Nest
- ASD Horizon
- D. 75 inclusion

### More restrictive

- District 75
- Non-public schools (NPS)

Go to <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/special-education/school-settings/specialized-programs> and select “Autism Spectrum Disorders Programs” for more info.



## Programs for Intellectual Disability (ID)



Community  
Schools

- Special class 12:1+1, 15:1 (HS)
- ACES program
- D. 75 inclusion

More  
restrictive

- District 75
- Non-public schools (NPS)

To apply to ACES, go to  
<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/special-education/school-settings/specialized-programs>.



# Programs for Emotional Disabilities (ED)

## In a Community School

- General education
- ICT
- Special class (12:1+1, 15:1)
- With or without FBA/BIP, 1:1 paraprofessional
- District 75 inclusion

## More restrictive settings

- District 75 (12:1+1, 8:1+1)
- Day treatment
- Day program
- Residential (RTC, RTF)

# Tips and Strategies

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# General Behavioral Management Tips

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Set clear, consistent, and reasonable expectations

Provide choices

Kids get bored - be flexible!

Take the path of least resistance and be kind to yourself

Validate your child and yourself

- Validation: communicating that thoughts, feelings, and behaviors **make sense** given your/your child's current circumstances
- **Validation does not mean agreement**



# Behavior Management Tools

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Use of a visual  
daily schedule

Cognitive breaks  
between tasks

Movement breaks

Verbal and visual  
cues for  
directions and  
staying on task

Use of a  
behavioral  
contract

Behavior chart –  
reward system for  
appropriate  
behavior

Consistent use of  
positive  
reinforcement

Daily teacher  
feedback to  
student and  
parent



# Common De-Escalating Strategies

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Stay Calm

Give a choice

Encourage the child to use a coping strategy

Show that you are listening

Validate the child's thoughts and feelings





# Strategies for Children with: Language Difficulties

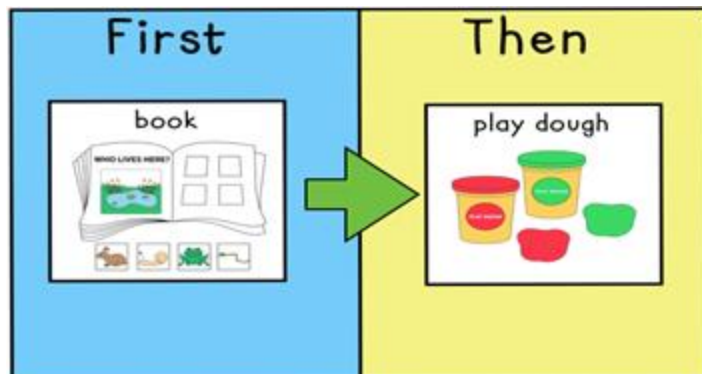
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Use a visual schedule

Use a timer or visual countdown system

Use First/Then statements

Offer choices in a visual format





# Strategies for Children with: Attentional Difficulties

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Create a Simple List of Instructions

Use Praise

Create a Reward System

Use Consequences Effectively

Establish Structure



© M. Cusley



# Strategies for Children with: Low Frustration Tolerance

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Complete tasks one at a time

Begin with less complex tasks with fewer components

Return to mastery or a task that the child can successfully complete

Offer choices

Provide scaffolding, encouragement, and praise





# Strategies for: Highly Active Children

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Movement/Motor breaks are key!

Use of fidgets that are small and silent

Set clear rules and expectations for behavior





# Strategies for: Children with Anxiety

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## Use coping and calming strategies

- Listening to music on headphones, deep breathing, or watching a preferred video clip
- Promote use of active positive coping strategies through modeling, co-participation and discussion

## Engage in exercise/physical activity

## Offer Choices



# Problem Solving

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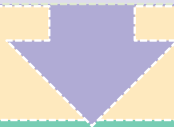


# Who Should I Reach Out to in the DOE?

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## Start with the School

Parent Coordinator, Principal, School Based Support Team (Psychologist)



## Superintendent's Office

Family Support Coordinator, Behavior Specialists, Directors of Student Services and Administrator of Special Education



## DOE Central – Office of Special Education

(718) 935-2007 or [specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov)

For school and superintendent information

visit: <https://sites.google.com/schools.nyc.gov/edudirectory/home>



# When to Call AFC

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Call  
AFC's  
Helpline:

- School will not recommend any new behavior supports
- School says it cannot consider any changes to an IEP or any additional supports (including equipment or services) until evaluations are conducted
- Your child is removed from class, suspended from school or otherwise disciplined
- If a school is calling 911 when a child's behavior is not a true emergency



# Questions?

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## Wrapping up: Reminders!

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- Fill out our survey!
- If you need help, ask! We are Open!
- Call Our Helpline: 866-427-6033
  - Toll free
  - Monday-Thursday
  - 10am-4pm
- Email Us: [Info@advocatesforchildren.org](mailto:Info@advocatesforchildren.org)

