



PRACTICAL PARENTING PARTNERSHIPS
Working Together for Our Children

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**PRACTICAL PARENTING PARTNERSHIPS:
A PRIMARY PREVENTION PROGRAM**

by Janet Shepard, Director

When PPP was created in 1992 our logo said Practical Parenting Partnerships: A Primary Prevention Program. Over time we have moved away from describing ourselves as a primary prevention program. The time has come for us to reemphasize prevention in our work and we encourage you to adopt the same attitude.

Supporting parents in their role as parents, providing parenting education and family support services are all primary prevention strategies. The National Parenting Education Network (NPE) [core principles](#), for instance, were written with primary prevention in mind. The guidance team who drafted these principles spoke often about child abuse prevention specifically and those discussions are evident upon reviewing these principles. The principles along with the PPP assumptions can provide a foundation for thinking about how strengthening relationships with families is a primary prevention strategy. It will also point to improved outcomes for children as a result of improved relationships with families.

In honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month, this issue of the newsletter is devoted to prevention strategies and goals as they relate to your work with school age students and their families and the communities in which they live, study and work.

Certainly this is not to suggest we should move away from three tiered models of intervention for there are many children and families for whom prevention efforts were not in place and we must continue to intervene and treat. Failure to place an emphasis on prevention, however, means we will forever be in treatment mode. As the quote by Frederick Douglas on this year's Go Blue t-shirts says, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

For additional reading, you may wish to visit the [Prevention Institute](#) website or download [Pathways to Child Abuse Prevention](#). We have heard speakers from both organizations and they have excellent information.

PPP CENTER UPDATE

by Janet Shepard, Director

April finds the PPP staff busy with child abuse prevention activities. We hope you are planning local activities as well. PPP is a member of the Missouri Prevention Partners and is pleased to share with you their [new brochure](#).

Thirty in thirty was the goal set by Stewards of Children facilitators in Missouri for the number of training sessions during the month of April. Janet and other trained facilitators will be presenting Stewards of Children: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention all around the state this month. We hope you will consider joining us for one of these important workshops. You will find the list of locations and other details [here](#).

Please keep PPP in mind as you plan for summer and back to school staff development. If you and several of your colleagues are looking for university credit, we can set up any of our trainings and workshops with credit available from two of our state universities. Give [Janet](#) an e-mail or a call to talk about ideas. A PPP sponsored family workshop in a community location such as a neighborhood park could be a good way to stay in touch with students and their families during the summer. [Shelly](#) can help you plan by phone or can help you lead your event.

April 21 is Administrative Professionals Day. PPP salutes all school office staff for the important role they play in welcoming parents to your school! We also send our thanks on this day and every day to Donna who answers the PPP phone now and to Patty who manages our newsletter, web and publication distribution.

GRANTS

by Janet Shepard, Director

Dollar General has released the RFP for their back to [school literacy grants](#). Applications for the \$5000 grants are due May 21, 2010 with winners to be announced in August. Perhaps making the family resource library a part of the school library or making the library available to families outside of school hours could be proposed.

WORKING ON THE WEB

by Janet Shepard, Director

In addition to becoming a member of the [Practical Parenting Partnerships](#) group on Facebook, we hope you will also join our partners. The [Missouri PIRC](#) page posts updates about educational best practices and more. PPP along with Parentlink, LIFT-MO, and the Parents As Teachers National Center is a partner in the MO- PIRC. PIRC is an acronym for Parent Information and Resource Center and is a program of the US Department of Education.

You will also find the two largest nationally affiliated parent – teacher organizations listed as [PTO Today](#) and [National PTA](#). Many local chapters have facebook pages, too. Check to see if yours does.

Our prevention partners also have a strong presence on Facebook. Our program partner and fiscal agent, [Missouri KidsFirst](#) has a general page and also maintains a page specifically for [Go Blue to End Child Abuse](#) Day observed the third Friday in April in our state. Another prevention partner is the [Missouri's Children's Trust Fund](#).

If you have other suggestions for group or fan pages, please post the suggestion on our PPP group page. Please also invite you colleagues to join us. You can do easily by going to the PPP facebook page and clicking on *Invite Others to Join* which is just below the umbrella logo, This will bring up our list of friends and you can click on the ones you wish to send an invitation too.

Those of you on LinkedIn and who have qualified as a certified PPP facilitator, can request to join the group and have the PPP Certified Facilitator logo included on your profile. Missouri Coordination School Health Coalition now has a regularly posted health and wellness blog . You can [sign up](#) on the website to receive an e-mail when the new blog has been posted.

Home Visiting

by Janet Shepard, Director

Home visiting can be a prevention strategy at the primary, secondary or tertiary levels. The type of prevention will depend on the purpose of the visit, the target audience and the topics addressed during the visit.

A home visit to every home prior to the start of the new school year is an example of a primary prevention strategy. The purpose is to meet the child and their parents and to learn a little about their home and neighborhood. The visit looks the same for all families and topics are very general. The home visitors are not looking for problems or offering solutions on these visits.

Visits scheduled with families who move into the attendance area during the school year are probably secondary prevention visits. They are general in nature and similar to the general back to school visits, but they also take into consideration that it is hard for students and families to enter a new school and community and that the students may be even be at risk because of the change. Again a problem has not really been identified, but there is the potential for a problem to occur based on the circumstances.

Home visits made by a social worker, tutor, or nurse from the school are probably tertiary in nature. This means a problem has been identified and actions are being taken to intervene so the problem or situation does not worsen. A Title I tutor for instance who offers in home tutoring to third grades who are reading below grade level is trying to prevent the child from being retained in the third grade and to help them read at grade level or above.

PPP's resource materials for home visitors also have different purposes. Some are very general in nature while others can be used in vulnerable situations and still others will be most useful in problem solving visits. If you have staff trained in PPP home visiting, but have not completed your set of resource notebooks. You can order them using this [form](#). If you do not have trained staff but would like to do visits of any kind, give us a call and we will gladly schedule training for you.

SITE NEWS

By Gotsch Elementary

On the evening of Friday, March 5, more than 450 Gotsch students and their families came to Gotsch Intermediate School's Family Math Night. The evening was coordinated by teachers Sheri Hogland and Mary White along with the help of Shelly Lock from the Practical Parenting Partnership (PPP) organization. This year is the third year that PPP has helped coordinate a night for families and children to interact with one another. Several classroom teachers also presented information about multiplication, division, and Study Island in classrooms. Science Fair Projects and the Book Fair were also popular attractions for guests.



The evening began at 5:30 with a line that stretched from the



gymnasium around the sidewalk toward the soccer field in the back of school. The weather was a little chilly, but families braved the chill and were able to visit while they waited in line to sign in. Upon entering the gymnasium, students and their families roamed through the gymnasium and visited various stations. Gotsch faculty and staff members facilitated activities at each station. Stations included a number walk, math trivia, manipulatives and literature, and a graphing station. The evening was made possible through funding from Title I grant money and from other federal grant money. Guests were treated to pizza from Happy Joe's Pizza Parlor and salad from The Pasta House, two local favorites.

It is our plan to continue to host an evening each school year in which families can interact with their children and one another. Many thanks go to the Gotsch faculty and staff who worked so hard at making the evening run smoothly! Likewise, many thanks to the students and families who took the time to spend an evening with us!

KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION

by Janet Shepard, Director

As noted under upcoming events, April 11-17th is the Week of the Young Child as promoted by AEYC. One of the sub-themes for this year's observation is *Prevent the Achievement Gap: We Know How*. Getting children and their families off to a great start in kindergarten is certainly one way to narrow the achievement gap.

No doubt many of you are busy this month with screening, round-up and other transition to kindergarten activities. Some of you have probably already completed these events and others will schedule events throughout the spring and summer. You may find the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) position paper on [school readiness](#) useful as you plan upcoming transition events or evaluate those already held. Preparing for a smooth transition into school and encouraging parent engagement early on with all parents is an important primary prevention strategy.

PPP can help you prepare or revise your kindergarten transition plan. Our one-day training is available for \$100 per person. Let us know if you are interested. One or two college credits are available for an additional charge.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT – THE MOST EFFECTIVE PREVENTION METHOD

by Shelly Lock, Program Development Coordinator

Family involvement programs in schools are a research proven way to improve student success and prevent the likelihood of academic failure. Family involvement programs and activities in schools and communities help focus children on healthy behaviors and reduce their engagement in risky behaviors. The family's role in encouraging educational success and good citizenship is powerful. Family members typically provide the first behavior role modeling for children, which has a tremendous effect on the behaviors that those children engage in. Research shows us that children often repeat the behaviors that their parents have modeled. Our challenge is to encourage good modeling and to break the cycles when necessary. Providing prevention and intervention to strengthen the role of the family is a valuable service schools can provide to students and families. Schools might offer the following support to parents/families:

- Family resource centers
- Family discussion groups
- Family activity nights
- Parent liaisons
- Home visits
- Open communication and information between home and school
- Attendance monitoring and contacts
- Parent education programs
- Written/phone/e-mail communications
- Homework hotlines
- School web page with support information and community services
- Community health and services fair

Schools can also provide prevention and intervention strategies directly to students. The following services provide support to students and some might include parents and families:

- Peer support programs
- Mentoring (provided by community volunteers)
- Before and after school programs
- Drug, sex, violence, and bullying education programs
- Project graduation programs
- Drop out prevention programs
- Alternative school programs
- Social and extracurricular activities
- Conflict resolution programs

A strong partnership between home and school is the basis for prevention of risky behaviors that can lead to academic challenges and other struggles for children. Schools might consider whether they are doing all they can to implement prevention strategies and programs that educate students and parents and lead to student academic success and good citizenship.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **April** Child Abuse Prevention Month sponsored by [Prevent Child Abuse America](#) and [Missouri KidsFirst](#)
- Friday, April 16 **Go Blue Day**
- [Week of the Young Child](#) April 11-17
- April 21, 2010 Administrative Professionals Day
- Children's Mental Health Awareness Week May 2-8
- [PTA Teacher Appreciation](#) Week May 2-8

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PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

by Shelly Lock, Program Development Coordinator

We want our children to do well in school but sometimes the extra motivation for student success comes when we are hit by the news that our child is struggling. "He's not keeping up with the class." "She is not reading on her grade level." "Retention may be best for your child." These words give a wake up call! Suddenly we scramble to get extra services for our child, pay more attention to homework, tests, and grades. It is important when faced with these challenges to kick in gear and do everything we can to give the child the best chance possible to close the gap and achieve success.

However, many of the same strategies we use when alarmed would provide a greater advantage for the child when done as a prevention measure before he falls behind. Prevention approaches that help keep a child achieving at his or her greatest potential include:

- Daily conversation with your child about her school day - Discuss how she feels she is doing. Children usually have a sense of how well they are doing in school.
- Regular communication with your child's teacher - When teachers and parents stay in contact, there are no sudden surprises about lack of progress.
- Familiarity with how your child is doing based on the many assessment forms your child's teacher uses - These assessments may include anecdotal records, classroom grades, portfolios, checklists, standardized tests, and more. It is helpful for parents to see more than report card grades.
- Follow through at home to support the school day - Provide a quiet time and place for homework and make it a priority. Go through backpacks of younger students, look through papers that are brought home, and discuss how they did on the test they had that day.
- Extended learning at home - Parents can build on the lessons learned in school and give these lessons real life meaning. The key is staying informed of what is being taught through teacher newsletters, work sent home and conversations with children.
- Extra services to supplement their regular education - tutoring by a teacher, community volunteer, or high school student can provide extra reinforcement in areas where necessary as well as enrichment. Schools often have a list of tutors available, some with a fee and some without.
- Staying informed about school procedures and laws regarding testing for possible special services (Special Education, Title I, Gifted Programs...), Missouri Reading and Retention Law, No Child Left Behind and more. Parents can contact the school, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, or Practical Parenting Partnerships for information on these issues.

www.dese.mo.gov www.pppctr.org

Schools offer many opportunities for parents to stay connected. Your child's school may offer open houses, parent-teacher conferences, family nights, parent workshops, volunteer opportunities, newsletters, a school web page, an open door policy for school visits, and more. All of these build a stronger relationship between home and school which is the best prevention strategy of all!