

Research Highlights

Topic: Positive Behavior Support

Markey, U., Markey, D.J., Quant, B., Santelli, B., Turnbull, A. (2002). Operation positive change: PBS in an urban context. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions* 4(4), 218-230.

BOTTOM LINE

Ursula and D.J. Markey, African American parents of two sons with disabilities and Pyramid Parent Training Community Parent Resource Center (PPT) Co-Directors, have developed Operation Positive Change (OPC), a training curriculum and train-the-trainer model which provides positive behavior support (PBS) best practices to parents in New Orleans, Louisiana. After providing a rationale for family support in urban communities, this article includes the Markey's family story of raising their son with autism and describes the OPC program components—workshops, roundtables, support groups, best practices luncheons, leadership development, one-to-one assistance, and training of trainers.

KEY FINDINGS

- Urban communities face many challenges including pervasive poverty, lack of access to research for families, and the mentality of control of students in urban schools.
- Ursula and D.J. Markey describe their experiences as African American parents raising their two sons with disabilities and finding PBS as incredibly valuable resource for their sons and for themselves.
- OPC has seven components including workshops, roundtables, support groups, best practices luncheons, leadership development, one-to-one assistance, and training of trainers.

KEY FINDINGS

cont.

- Workshops on PBS are regularly scheduled in community settings once a month on Saturdays, September through May each year. A small stipend for childcare and transportation is provided. At least two facilitators are present throughout the workshops which focus on research-based implementation of PBS.
 - ◆ OPC provides adapted and simplified data collection forms and time during workshops to practice using them. Data collection helps parents look at their child's behavior in a different way and puts parents in a better position to be heard by professionals.
- Functional assessments help parents place behaviors in context and identify their communicative function.
- Roundtables are small groups offered in addition to workshops where 7 to 10 parents share a meal and talk over topics of their concerns. Staff is present to address questions and help parents identify next steps.
- Support groups enable parents to informally meet to give and receive emotional support, exchange ideas, and get information. OPC provides the meeting space, refreshments, and materials.
- Best practices luncheons are open to community organizations and individuals to address topics in a series and then to become involved in a work group to set goals and plan activities related to the topic.
- Leadership development is provided through training on topics including: negotiation, communication skills, team building, conflict resolution, anger management, and strategic planning.
- One-to-one assistance to parents is provided during meetings with school personnel by accompanying them to IEP meetings, juvenile justice hearings, mediation conferences, and school disciplinary conferences. Staff will meet with parents individually before IEP meetings to plan what parents would like to have included in the IEP, review data collection, and help them think about how to use it during the IEP. Staff reminds parents to keep the focus on the positive rather than negative during the meetings.
- The train-the-trainer program involves the development of a comprehensive manual that will enable other programs to implement the OPC training on PBS.
- Parents who have received support through OPC report highly positive outcomes.

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PUBLICATIONS

Fujiura, G.T., & Yamaki, K. (2000). Trends in demography of childhood poverty and disability. *Exceptional Children*, 66, 187-199.

Lucyshyn, J.M., Dunlap, G., & Albin, R.W. (2002). Families and positive behavior support: Addressing problem behavior in problem contexts. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

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Santelli, B., Markey, U., Johnson, A., Turnbull, H.R., & Turnbull, A.P. (2001, March/April). The evolution of an unlikely partnership between researchers and culturally diverse families; Lessons learned. Baltimore, MD: *TASH Newsletter*, p. XX.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. (2001). *Mental health: Culture, race, and ethnicity: A supplement to mental health: A report of the Surgeon General*. Washington, DC: Author.

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