



JPA

Juvenile Protective Association



The Whole Truth And Nothing But The Truth

News Item: “[A] 14-year-old was hit in the back and was taken to Comer Children’s Hospital in critical condition. The 13-year-old was grazed in the arm and was taken to St. Bernard Hospital in good condition. The 2-year-old was unharmed, police said.” 12/28/16

In my role here at JPA, I force myself to read through news reports of shootings in Chicago. Why? Because so many of the children we see in individual counseling talk to us about a close friend or relative who has been shot. Sadly, some of the children we treat have been victims of shootings. Keeping up with the news helps me plan for the resources we need to address their needs.

It’s never easy reading through the news but this particular sentence stood out: “The 2-year-old was unharmed.” That is not true. The toddler wasn’t shot but no one who works with children would say the child was unharmed – even lay people know that seeing your siblings shot in front of you is harmful.

While we don’t know exactly how the harm may manifest itself in the future, we can imagine. This terrifying event took place in front of a child largely unable to verbalize the experience, let alone make sense of it. Years from now how he reacts to stressful situations may be triggered by what he saw and experienced that night. If his wounds are not cared for now, one day we may find him lashing out at another innocent victim.

We cannot afford to become inured to the violence in our city or complacent about how it is reported. We must report the facts as they are: Three children were harmed in that shooting: Two suffered physical harm, and all of them suffered emotional damage. Emotional and social wounds can be as serious and long lasting as physical trauma – let’s start dealing with the whole truth.

Karen G. Foley
Presidents & CEO

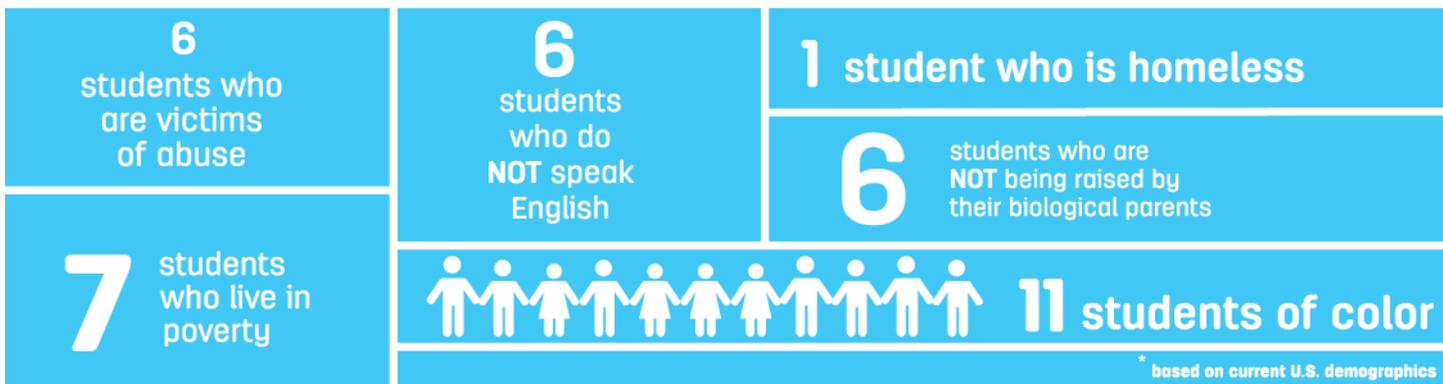


JPA’s New Connect Program — Supporting the Adults Who Work with Kids

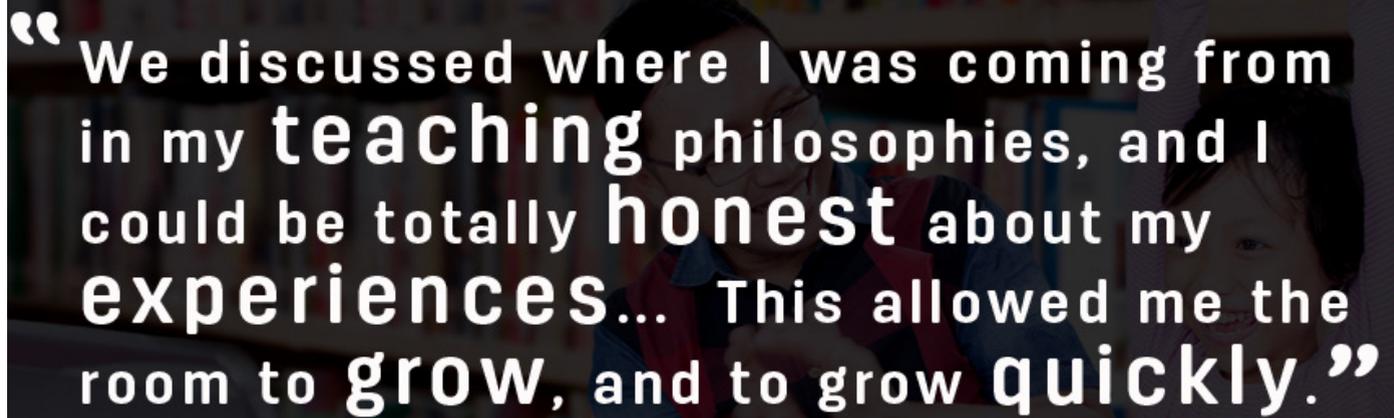
Helping children who are struggling with gun violence in their neighborhoods and other forms of trauma requires adults build trauma-informed skills and interventions. JPA’s Connect program supports the adults who care for kids.

You’ve seen the headlines—Chicago’s children are surrounded with violence. But that’s just the tip of the iceberg—Chicago children must also contend with many other traumatic and adverse experiences such as poverty, homelessness, addiction, abuse, neglect and more. Trauma can be understood as an experience that exceeds our resources for coping and whose effect can impact our lives long after a traumatic event(s). The needs these children bring into the classroom are complex.

A TYPICAL CLASS OF **30** INCLUDES*:



While JPA responds with a variety of therapeutic and social-emotional services, many children can be helped by the devoted adults already in their lives. Meet Connect, JPA’s professional development and consultation program for educators and other adults who work with children. Connect is about opening up new perspectives on children’s social-emotional needs. The program includes multiple formats: professional development workshops, individual or group consultation sessions, classroom observations, training and materials. The result is that adults are able to address not just behavioral symptoms but the underlying causes that interfere with learning, functioning and feeling well.



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One Teacher’s Connect Experience

Cheryl Young is a second-grade teacher at LEARN Campbell, an elementary school in Chicago’s Garfield Park neighborhood. Ms. Young had already been putting extra effort into her work when she learned that JPA was bringing Connect to her school. “I wanted as much support as I could get!” she says. “At first I was hesitant to have an outsider come in, but once I began to work with JPA, it was clear that I could ask as many questions as I wanted and that Michele was there to listen and to not judge... We discussed where I was coming from in my teaching philosophies, and I could be totally honest about my experiences with my students. This allowed me the room to grow, and to grow quickly.”

“This kind of growth is not easy,” Ms. Lansing says. “It can be very challenging to reflect on educating children whose needs go so far beyond the academic—deep into the heart of social-emotional learning. Teachers have to be open to a paradigm shift, to being challenged to adjust some aspects of their teaching philosophies.”

Ms. Young described the benefits she has experienced and how she no longer has to raise her voice in class. “I have a voice at the end of my week, which is priceless. And I work with students according to their unique needs. I’ve learned different discipline philosophies. Knowing I have Connect is the most reassuring part of my day...[Michele] helps me learn lasting skills to engage my kids more, to keep my tone of voice low and be positive with my kids. I now give my kids five positives for every negative. JPA has literally changed my teaching philosophy for the better!”

Principals, deans and teachers who have used Connect report that the program has:

- Helped reduce teacher burnout and turnover
- Helped educators employ calm and supportive responses to children with behavior problems, including new de-escalation techniques
- Strengthened educators’ ability to be firm and clear with children without being harsh
- Provided positive, enjoyable relational intervention strategies for children needing special attention
- Enhanced use of developmentally-oriented play to promote social-emotional learning
- Made teacher-parent interactions more constructive by promoting positive, non-blaming attitudes toward parents

It’s true that far too many kids face tough circumstances in their young lives. But they do better when the adults know how to help. Connect enables adults to build trusting and positive relationships with children in the classroom, the playground, and at home. That’s good news for kids — and for the grown-ups.



Social workers meet with JPA Therapist: (from left to right) Jenna Silver LCSW, Stephanie Indianer, Brianna Glossett, Jessie Johnson, Michele Lansing LCSW

On Teaching the Whole Child

The non-profit organization Distinctive Schools (**DS**) provides support, supervision, and professional development opportunities for four Chicago International Charter Schools (**CICS**). They are committed to addressing “both academic and social-emotional needs in order to educate the ‘whole child.’” As a result, they are always working to find the best partners in the quest to provide high quality support for their students.

When Mike McCarthy came on board at DS in 2015, he decided to look for providers to help improve the schools’ mental health services. He knew that many of their students needed help in order to address substantive challenges and do well in school. At the time, JPA was already working well with CICS–Bucktown; they suggested he contact JPA to explore ways of expanding their offerings. Our Connect program turned out to be just what he was looking for.

Mike had JPA come and tour the four CICS campuses, where JPA staff saw firsthand the needs and issues facing their students. With four new social workers, he was eager to provide them with experienced supervision and professional development opportunities. He quickly realized that JPA fit the bill. Distinctive Schools signed on with Connect to provide those opportunities, and Mike says they’ve been very happy with the results.

Speaking of their experience with Connect, Mike says Michele Lansing, Connect’s director, provides a “very careful, very supportive, very strong clinical perspective and helps our team think in new ways, look through new lenses, and see kids in new ways. She’s fantastic with the social workers and with me as a consulting ear.”

The schools’ social workers feel the same way. They meet at JPA’s Halsted Street offices once a week and “keep that time sacred,” he says. It’s been a truly “appropriate investment” for them. JPA’s social workers are “really embedded in the schools,” which helps them live up to their goals of reaching the “whole child.” In fact, given JPA’s own emphasis on seeing every child in context, Mike says the two organizations are aligned “incredibly well.” His enthusiasm is evident even over the phone. The partnership between Distinctive Schools and JPA is “everything we could have asked for.” A quick look at the faces of their social workers will tell you he’s right.

For information on how your school can partner with JPA as part of Connect, contact Michele Lansing at mlansing@jpachicago.org.



Helping teachers and children develop their social and emotional competencies pays big dividends – and developing social-emotional competency should be an education priority as early as Kindergarten (see chart below). During the 2011-2012 school year, the US Department of Education counted 130,000 expulsions and roughly 7 million suspensions among 49 million K-12 students – one for every seven children in school. And recent estimates suggest there are a quarter-million instances of corporal punishment in US schools every year. A recent Stanford University study showed that training teachers to have more empathy towards students reduced school suspensions by more than

For every one-point INCREASE in social competence in kindergarten, he/she is:

- **Twice** as likely to attain a college degree in early adulthood
- **54%** more likely to earn a high school diploma
- **46%** more likely to have a full-time job at the age of 25.

American Journal of Public Health, July 2015

For every one-point DECREASE in social competence in kindergarten, he/she is:

- **64%** higher chance of spending time in juvenile detention
- **67%** higher chance of being arrested by early adulthood
- **52%** higher rate of recent binge drinking
- **82%** higher rate of recent marijuana use
- **82%** higher chance of being in or on a waiting list for public housing

50%. According to Tony Wagner, Expert in Residence at the Harvard Innovation Lab, empathy is an essential skill that helps students become innovators. So, in this issue, we offer four tips to help you build your own social-emotional skills and those of the children you teach!

What: Share your classroom frustrations, thoughts, ideas, and feelings towards your students. Seek mentors and understanding peers so you can be sure to get good feedback and suggestions.

Why: No one is exempt from having mixed feelings, or feeling upset or frustrated about working with students. But remember, the research is on your side – learning new techniques to build empathy means you are doing a better job of fulfilling your role as a teacher and taking care of yourself as well.

What: Remember that when students don't perform up to certain standards or expectations, they may not have developed the necessary skills yet. Consider the context from which each student comes and adapt as needed.

Why: In the same way chronically hungry kids find it difficult to learn, so do kids who are chronically hurting. When kids suffer from trauma, they often struggle with impulse control, they may lack the ability to concentrate and often find it difficult to make good decisions. So, in the same way we offer hungry kids a snack, try offering them an emotional "snack" – a kind word, a calming voice, a moment for them to refocus. That may help the child get back on track.

What: Take time for self-care: go to the movies, read a book, close your eyes and imagine a serene place, plan a monthly teacher's group, work out, take a nap; whatever allows you to most feel like you have invested in yourself.

Why: You are educating children whose needs often go beyond academic training. An old adage rings true here: "Before you can fill the gas tank of others, you must first have a reservoir of your own."

What: Many students may hear few compliments or positive reinforcements in their day-to-day lives. They arrive to class expecting negative comments or even punishment. As Ms. Young says, try to give five positives for every negative. Look for the good things students do and reinforce that behavior.

Why: Small compliments and genuine delight in students' achievements can inspire them to do even better. Remember, knowing is easy, learning is hard. Everyone needs a champion during difficult times.

IN MEMORIAM
DAVID WIERCINSKI
1956 – 2016



As JPA was putting the final touches on a retirement party to honor David Wiercinski's 20 years of distinguished service as its Chief Development Officer, we learned from his family that David died of natural causes over the holidays. Those who knew David understand how much he valued his family, the White Sox and JPA. One of the things David was looking forward to in retirement was spending more time with his family and supporting the drum corps his late father had started years ago. David was also looking forward to writing a book and traveling. He even spoke of trying to enter the TV program *The Amazing Race*. All of us at JPA will remember him fondly and strive to live up to his high standards and passion for serving vulnerable youth.



NOTES and NEWS

January 2017:

- 1 **JPA Associate Board's 4th Annual Casino Night** is just weeks away. The fun starts at 7:00 pm on February 11th at the Chicago Cultural Center. Make sure to purchase your ticket for one of Chicago's hottest events and feel good as you "Play for JPA!"
- 2 Many thanks to everyone who came to the Associate Board's first Happy Hour of the year on January 12th at **Joy District**. The Associate Board offers an opportunity for young professionals to network and meet others who are as passionate about social justice and creating opportunities for vulnerable kids to lead better lives. For more information about how to join, please contact Katy at Khinsdale@jpachicago.org.
- 3 Students from **KIPP Ascend** serenaded JPA's Board of Directors at their annual meeting on December 15th playing festive holiday tunes. The young musicians ranged in age from 3rd to 8th grade. The string ensemble was led by Ms. Sarah Dupuis. What a great way to ring in the holiday!
- 4 **Mike McCarthy**, the Executive Director of Specialized Services at **Distinctive Schools**, presented to the Board of Directors his team's work bringing social emotional development to elementary and middle school students. As part of his presentation, he outlined how forming a partnership with JPA has leveraged the talents of their social workers. To learn more, read about **JPA's Connect Program**.

