

CASASTART
STRIVING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE REWARDING TOMORROWS

In comparison to students who did not receive CASASTART, research by the Urban Institute shows that CASASTART youth were:

- More likely to be promoted to the next grade
- More likely to have relationships with positive peers
- Less likely to respond to negative peer pressure
- Approximately 20 percent less likely to use drugs
- Approximately 60 percent less likely to sell drugs
- Approximately 20 percent less likely to commit violent acts

In Denver, specific site outcomes included:

- An average GPA increase for students of .75 of a grade during the first semester in program
- The Denver Police Department, a CASASTART partner, reported fewer service calls from a CASASTART school and report it is as a result of CASASTART's influence

What youth are saying about CASASTART as printed in the CASA 2002 Annual Report

- *"CASASTART helped me a lot. When I first got into it, I struggled and got into trouble. After a while they got to know me. It gave me confidence to know I could do whatever I put my mind to."*

CASASTART as an effective program

- CASASTART has been designated as an Exemplary program by the US Dept of Education's Expert Panel on Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools. It is one of nine applications chosen out of 132 submitted.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, and the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention have both designated CASASTARTsm a Model Program.
- The U.S. Surgeon General's Office and the *Blueprint Project* at the University of Colorado's Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence have called the Promising Program.
- The Western Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies, located at the University of Nevada (one of five regional technical assistance centers funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention) has also designated CASASTART as a Promising Program.

**For more information about CASASTART in Colorado,
please call Jill Adams at 303-837-8466 ext. 120**



CASASTARTsm

1. Program Description

CASASTARTsm - (Striving Together to Achieve Rewarding Tomorrows) is a community-based, school-centered substance abuse and violence prevention program developed by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University. It is aimed at high-risk eight-to-13-year-olds and their families, and the neighborhoods in which they live. CASASTARTsm brings together key stakeholders in community schools, law enforcement agencies, social service and health agencies, and uses intensive case management to work with the youth.

The CASASTARTsm collaboration aims to:

- Prevent substance abuse;
- Prevent delinquency;
- Improve school performance and attendance;
- Develop collaborative working relationships between the service agencies, schools and law enforcement in order to meet the needs of the youth and their families;
- Improve communication between CASASTARTsm youth and their families and cultivate the involvement of families with schools and social service agencies;
- Reduce drug sales and related crime in the community.

2. Proven Results:

CASASTARTsm children are *less* likely to:

- Use gateway and stronger drugs,
- Be involved in drug trafficking,
- Commit violent offenses,
- And be negatively influenced by peers or to associate with delinquent peers.

CASASTARTsm children are found *more* likely to:

- Be promoted to the next grade in school.

3. Intervention:

- Selective
- Indicated

4. Benefits

CASASTARTsm children have improved attachment to positive individuals and institutions, decreased bonds to deviant norms and groups and increased opportunities to achieve positive goals. As a result, the children are significantly less likely to use gateway drugs, less likely to be involved in drug selling and are more likely to be promoted to the next grade. Also, the children have lower levels of violent

offenses, higher levels of positive peer influence, lower levels of association with delinquent peers and experience less peer pressure.

5. Target Population

Children between eight to thirteen years of age who display at least four risk factors like those shown in the broad categories below, are eligible for the program.

- School risk: academic performance, behavior problems, truancy
- Family risk: family violence, a family member involved with gangs or with a criminal conviction within five years, drug use and/or sales, extreme poverty
- Personal risk: youth with a history of known or suspected drug use or sales, past arrest or involvement with delinquent acts, gang membership, a serious emotional disturbance, weapons possessions, pregnancy or parenthood, being the victim of child maltreatment, dangerous neighborhood

6. How it Works

CASASTARTsm employs a positive youth development framework and uses intensive case managers to provide and coordinate services to counteract the various factors that make children vulnerable to substance abuse and juvenile delinquency. Bi-weekly case conferences, and quarterly administrative and advisory council meetings ensure that all partners are up to date on the program and individual case status.

Each case manager serves 15 children and their families. Case managers directly provide, or through appropriate referral, coordinate, a comprehensive menu of services. Each site develops its own approach to designing and delivering the services consistent with local culture and practice. All of the children receive all of the services, except juvenile justice services if they are not in trouble with the law. The service categories are:

- Social support
- Family services
- Education
- After-School and summer activities
- Mentoring
- Community policing/enhanced enforcement
- Juvenile justice intervention
- Incentives

7. Implementation Essentials

Each CASASTARTsm program is managed locally in deference to local culture and setting, but they

share a basic set of characteristics with each other. To build a successful CASASTARTsm program, these essential steps must be taken:

Phase I - Initial Steps: 1) Conduct a community assessment. 2) Identify a leader/lead agency. 3) Identify potential partners. 4) Identify Advisory Council members. 5) Set realistic goals.

Phase II – Implementation: 1) Develop interagency agreements or memoranda of understanding. 2) Engage additional partners as needed. 3) Establish and honor confidentiality agreements. 4) Begin service delivery. 5) Begin CASASTARTsm meetings.

In addition to part-time clerical support the program needs:

- Project Manager - part time
- Case Managers - full time (15 children per case manager)
- The active participation of designated school and law enforcement personnel

Timeline

Program planning and start-up, including relationship building, developing financial support and developing healthy partnerships, take between six to eight months. The next phase involves hiring and beginning the delivery of direct services to youth and families. Training and technical assistance takes place throughout the first year of program implementation.

The number of case managers and local prevailing wages drives costs approximately \$3,000 per year per child and family. CASA staff provides training and technical assistance for new CASASTARTsm sites at a cost of approximately \$3,600 per day. CASA staff provide training in core program areas in the first few months of program implementation and several days of on-site and telephone technical assistance in the remainder of the first year of program operation. In addition, new sites are made part of an active national CASASTARTsm network and are invited to participate on bi-monthly conference calls, annual conferences and regularly receive literature and CASA reports and information.

8. Target Areas

Protective Factors

Individual

- Relationships with significant positive adults
- Engaging in positive free time activities
- Bonding to school

Peer

- Association with peers engaged in positive behavior /activities
- Less influenced by peers

Family

- Engagement in positive family activities
- Improved communications between parents and children

School

- Improved school attendance, behavior and performance
- Improved relationship between parents and schools

Community

- Reduced drug sales and crime
- Improved relationship between police and the CASASTARTsm youth/families
- Improved relationships among CASASTARTsm partner agencies

Risk Factors

Individual

- Economically disadvantaged
- History of known or suspected drug use or sales
- Past arrest or involvement with delinquent acts
- Gang membership
- Serious emotional disturbance
- Pregnancy or parenthood
- Being the victim of child maltreatment

School

- Academic performance and school behavior problems
- Truancy

Family

- History of family violence
- History of child abuse or neglect
- Family member with a criminal conviction within five years
- Drug use and sales

Community

- Residence in communities with few opportunities for positive free time activities
- High crime area
- Poverty

9. Program Background

CASA began the program, then known as Children at Risk, in 1992 with funding provided by three constituent agencies of the U.S. Department of Justice and several national foundations. CASA tested the model in Austin, Bridgeport, Memphis, Newark, Savannah and Seattle from 1992-1995.

In 1996, The Ford Foundation gave CASA a three-year grant to replicate the model in five new sites and to provide training, technical assistance and oversight to communities interested in using the model. The program became known as CASASTARTsm during this time.

In 1998, CASA began the development of the next phase of CASASTARTsm expanding it to seventeen additional sites in cities across the nation; and it continues to grow.

10. Evaluation Design

The Urban Institute, under contract to CASA and the National Institute of Justice, conducted a rigorous impact analysis of the program. This effort included a qualitative study based on ethnographic methodology and analysis; an outcome evaluation involving both longitudinal random assignment and quasi-experimental design; and a management information system (MIS) designed specifically for collecting data at the sites.

The evaluation was performed in five cities: Austin, TX; Bridgeport, CT; Memphis, TN; Seattle, WA; and Savannah, GA between 1992-1994. For this evaluation, eligible students in particular schools in the target neighborhoods were randomly assigned either to the program (338 students) or a control group (333 students). Data from 203 students from neighborhoods that did not offer the program were used as additional comparison group.

11. Outcomes

Compared to the matched control group, children in the program reported significantly

- Less drug use
- Less drug selling
- Fewer violent offenses
- Lower levels of association with delinquent peers
- Less peer pressure
- Promotion to the next grade more frequently than control group youth

Program Developer Lawrence F. Murray, CSW

Lawrence Murray has been a human service professional since 1972, concentrating on issues that relate to children, families, community safety, and comprehensive service integration. Mr. Murray is a Fellow at The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University, having joined the organization in March 1996. His primary duty is the continuing development of CASASTARTsm. In addition to CASASTARTsm he has created several model programs over the years that have won recognition from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the U.S. Department of Human Services and the National Association of Counties.

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University is the only national organization that brings together under one roof all the professional disciplines needed to study and combat all types of substance abuse as they affect all aspects of society. CASA's missions are to: inform Americans of the economic and social costs of substance abuse and its impact on their lives; assess what works in prevention, treatment and law enforcement; encourage every individual and institution to take responsibility to combat substance abuse and addiction; provide those on the front lines with the tools they need to succeed; and remove the stigma of substance abuse and replace shame and despair with hope.

13. Contact Information

For more information on CASASTARTsm, please contact:

Lawrence F. Murray, CSW

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University

633 Third Avenue

19th Floor

New York, NY 10017

Phone: (212) 841-5200 E-mail: lmurray@casacolumbia.org

14. Recognition

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration named CASASTARTsm a Model Program in April 2002. The U.S. Department of Education's Expert Panel on Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools designated CASASTART as an Exemplary Program in January 2001. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention designated CASASTARTsm as a Model Program in May 2003. In addition, the U.S. Surgeon General's Office and the Blueprints Project named CASASTARTsm a Promising violence prevention model.