

# Primary Mental Health Project (PMHP)

Grades K-3 (with school adjustment problems)



*Early intervention program for students grades K-3 with emotional or behavioral problems:*

- *Trained child-associates (e.g., aides, college students) meet with children individually or in small groups once or twice a week.*
- *More individualized attention is provided in helping students improve learning and social skills.*

## Results



*As a result of PMHP, students have:*

- *Exhibited a reduction in acting out, shyness, and anxious behaviors,*
- *Improved learning and social skills, and*
- *Increased their frustration tolerances.*

## The Program

An early detection/prevention program, PMHP addresses emotional and behavioral problems (e.g., aggression and withdrawal) that interfere with effective learning. The program uses play and relationship techniques to resolve home and school difficulties.

Through carefully developed screening procedures, PMHP identifies students with early adjustment problems. These students receive prompt, effective helping services through an individualized program involving the school's mental health professionals, the child's parents, the classroom teacher, and/or other pertinent school professionals. Students are seen individually or in small groups once or twice a week for 30- to 60-minute sessions. A private place, preferably a separate room or a confidential area free from disturbance, is needed for this purpose.

Carefully selected, trained, nonprofessional child-associates (e.g., college students, aides), working under close professional supervision, increase the number of children who can be helped. Child-associates each work 15 to 20 hours a week, with a caseload of 12 to 18 children each. Participating schools should have at least two child associates.

## Professional Development

At least two persons (such as the principal and a mental health team and/or faculty representative) from the adopting district must attend a 2-day workshop in November in Rochester, New York.

## Costs & Funding Options

The standard workshop fee (\$140 per person) is waived for districts that purchase services from PMHP under the Sharing Success Programs network. Districts should budget for the salaries of the child-associates and substitute teachers so that classroom teachers can participate in three conferences to discuss the children's needs, behavior, and progress with teachers, child-associates, professionals and consultants. Possible funding sources for replication include ESEA Title VI.

Six options or combinations of options for training are available: 1) PMHP workshop - \$140 per person; 2) Program set-up consultation - \$2,000; 3) Program setup, consultation, and child-associate training - \$5,000; 4) Program setup, consultation, and program evaluation - \$5,000; and 5) Program setup, consultation, child-associate training, and program evaluation - \$8,000.

Materials include art and play materials such as doll houses, sand, human figures, etc. (approximately \$200-300); screening instruments (\$0.30 per child if unprocessed by the Children's Institute and \$0.80 per child if processed); and evaluation instruments (\$1.00/child).

## Learning Standards

Health, Physical Education and Home Economics: 2) acquire the knowledge and ability necessary to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment.

## Contact

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