

CHAPTER 115

AN ACT concerning arts programs for youth at risk of juvenile delinquency and supplementing P.L.1966, c.214 (C.52:16A-25 et seq.).

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.52:16A-26.10 Distribution of best practice guidelines by New Jersey State Council on the Arts to develop, expand an arts program for youth at risk of juvenile delinquency.

1. a. The New Jersey State Council on the Arts shall publish on its website and disseminate to any organization in this State that expresses to the council an intent to develop or expand an arts program for youth at risk of juvenile delinquency a guide containing best practices for such programs. Under the best practices guidelines, programs should:

(1) recognize that art is a vehicle that can be used to engage youth in activities that will increase their self-esteem;

(2) provide for collaborative effort among the artist, social service provider, teacher, agency staff, youth, and family, as appropriate, in delivery of the program;

(3) recognize and involve the families of the youth and the communities in which the youth live;

(4) include age-appropriate curriculum;

(5) emphasize dynamic teaching tactics, such as hands-on learning, apprentice relationships, and the use of technology;

(6) to the extent possible, culminate in a public performance or exhibition with a focus on building participants' self-esteem through public recognition;

(7) during the planning stage, address program goals, site selection, population, the development of relationships among team members, the methods for youth involvement in planning, curriculum design, transportation, safety, incentives, behavioral requirements, program growth, the balance between arts program and other program objectives, the balance between process and product, student recognition of achievements, and the involvement of families, communities, and volunteers;

(8) incorporate an evaluation system early into the program;

(9) train teams, collaboratively, that work with youth in team building, communication skills, and organizational skills;

(10) train teams in effective methods for working with youth from special populations, including in behavior management, adolescent psychology, and familiarization with the juvenile justice system;

(11) train teams in designing a curriculum or involving a trained curriculum specialist;

(12) adopt training that is practical, addresses issues identified by team members, incorporates advice from a variety of trainers with expertise in relevant issue areas, provides opportunities for team members to share in successes and failures and engage in peer training, and integrates specialized training into ongoing training sessions whenever possible;

(13) require program staff to clearly define program goals and intended outcomes in evaluating an arts program, and to monitor and document program implementation and the service-delivery process;

(14) utilize "process evaluations," which examine program implementation and service delivery, to describe and refine a program, measuring the impact on youth and identifying ways to improve a program;

(15) employ journals, portfolios, surveys, and artist observations as evaluation measures to determine the effects of arts programs on at-risk youth, incorporating those measures into program activities when possible;

(16) document program-specific factors, such as staff ratios, hours of contact, and duration of contact, in process evaluations;

(17) account for the impact of individual, family, and community factors on program effectiveness; and

(18) incorporate activities that recognize individual efforts and provide opportunities for youth to learn new skills, which activities are designed to reduce the influence of risk factors associated with adolescent problem behaviors, such as low neighborhood attachment, lack of commitment to school, alienation and rebelliousness, and friends who engage in problem behavior.

The council shall make periodic revisions to the guide as necessary.

b. The council shall provide technical and consultative assistance to any State agency or local government unit requesting such assistance to implement a program adopting the elements listed in subsection a. of this section. The council shall, upon completion or revision, deliver, by electronic or other means, the guide to the Juvenile Justice Commission and the Division of Child Protection and Permanency in the Department of Children and Families.

As used in this subsection, “State agency” means any agency in the Executive branch of State government, including, but not limited to, any department, board, bureau, commission, division, office, council, or instrumentality thereof, or independent agency, public authority or public benefit corporation, and any State college or public institution of higher education. “Local government unit” means a county, municipality, board of education, or county college as defined in section 2 of P.L.1982, c.189 (C.18A:64A-25.2).

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved May 10, 2019.