



## 2009 NDTAC National Conference

### Session Notes

<b>Session Title</b>	<b>Providing Appropriate Services and Instruction to Youth in Secure Care</b>
<b>Presenters</b>	Joseph Gagnon, Paula Maccini, and David Houchins
<b>Date and Time</b>	Tuesday, June 23, 10:45–12 p.m.

#### SUMMARY

This session consisted of three presentations, the first by Joseph Gagnon, the second by Paula Maccini, and the third by David Houchins. The sessions focused on providing appropriate instruction to youth in secure care. Below are summary notes for each of these presentations.

#### **Joseph Gagnon**

Education is critical to successfully reintegrating incarcerated youth back into society. When thinking about appropriate instruction for youth in secure care, it is critical to consider the big picture, including curriculum attributes and youth characteristics. Current education policies dictate that educators provide all students with a comparable general education. This has affected the way in which instruction is provided. For example, the No Child Left Behind Act emphasizes that youth in secure care earn their high school diploma. While earning a high school diploma is ideal, other opportunities also should be made available to youth in secure care, including vocational programs, GED testing and preparation, and education services that address youth’s unique needs (e.g., psychiatric needs, physical health, and past experiences). Based on an extensive literature review of instructional strategies, the Juvenile Justice Guideposts initiative highlights what youth in secure care need to be successfully transitioned back into the community. Examples include school-based preparatory experiences, career preparation and work-based experiences, youth development and leadership, systems-connecting activities, and family supports and involvement.

#### **Paula Maccini**

A national study featured in the *Journal of Correctional Education* examined validated practices that are currently being used in juvenile correctional facilities. Based on this research, several instructional practices are recommended when teaching math to youth in a secure care setting. Such practices include providing explicit instruction with scaffolding support (e.g., cumulative review of content), expanding teaching strategies (e.g., using pneumatic representations and memory strategies), graduating instruction (i.e., starting with concrete descriptions and adding pictorial representations later), integrating real-world activities that use technology (e.g., computer-assisted instruction), and making instructional adaptations (e.g., explaining the importance of studying the subject and of prompt and reasonable responses). (See the [presentation](#) for references to helpful, related resources for each recommended instructional practice.)

#### **David Houchins**

A recent study from Georgia State University examined the literacy skills of youth in facilities and found that 70 percent of students were operating at a first- to third-grade reading level. Because literacy skills are critical for daily life, youth in secure care must be provided with appropriate reading and literacy instruction. In short-term facilities, educators should implement a number of strategies when providing reading and literacy instruction, including providing as much individualized instruction as possible; using teacher observations about students to determine which literacy skills each student needs; using

research-based practices, most of which currently come from studies on elementary schools; striving for high-quality homogeneous grouping; using curriculum-based measures to assess and record student progress; maintaining the fidelity of instruction as strategies are implemented; and making continuous quality improvements. Additionally, the Institute of Education Sciences recommends several effective classroom and intervention practices that can improve adolescent literacy, including providing explicit vocabulary instruction and making intensive individualized interventions – that can be provided by qualified specialists – available for struggling readers.

## **Q&A / Comments**

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*There were no questions or comments for this session. If you have a question pertaining to the session or the topics discussed, please contact NDTAC at [NDTAC@air.org](mailto:NDTAC@air.org).*

## **Relevant Resources**

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### **Juvenile Justice Guideposts**

### **Youth With Disabilities in Juvenile Corrections: A National Survey**

#### **Defining Literacy**

- Institute of Education Sciences: [Literacy Behind Bars: Results From the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy Prison Survey](#)
- University of Oregon, Big Ideas in Beginning Reading: [Phonemic awareness, decoding, accuracy and fluency, vocabulary, comprehension](#)

#### **Literacy and Reading Resources**

- Institute of Education Sciences: [Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices](#)
- University of Oregon: [DIBELS Data System](#)
- [AIMSweb Progress Monitoring and RTI System](#)
- [The Florida Center for Reading Research](#)
- Institute of Education Sciences: [What Works Clearinghouse](#)
- [Intervention Central](#)