



COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Community Connection has been our "core" program since Rainbow Days, Inc. was founded in 1982 and began providing educational support groups and other supportive services for children and families. Since 1982, 65,000 children and youth have participated in a *Curriculum-Based Support Group (CBSG®)* through Rainbow Days in the Dallas area. Rainbow Days' *Curriculum-Based Support Groups* are for children, youth and parents who are concerned about the risks of growing up in today's world. Our purpose is to teach them the skills they need to succeed and stay drug free.

The Need

Children living in high-risk situations are the least likely to possess essential coping and social skills or the emotional and social support necessary to overcome traumatic stress and succeed in spite of adversity. High-risk situations adversely impact everything children need to be successful, including: their sense of security, education, and overall emotional well-being. Today, one in four children lives in poverty. 75.6% of all public school students in Dallas County qualify for free or reduced price meals at school. One in five children and adolescents is affected by an emotional disturbance or alcohol/drug addiction; and violence is increasing.

Substance use is one of the most powerful predictors for future behavioral health problems, including delinquency and interpersonal violence. The earlier the substance use/experimentation begins, the higher the risks for future problems. Children whose adverse childhood experiences overwhelm their ability to cope are more likely to use substances as a coping substitute.

Our Solution

The *CBSG® Program* provides a research-based, interactive, multi-cultural curriculum. Lesson content and intent are essentially the same across all age groupings, but discussions and experiential activities – which are the foundation for each lesson – are targeted to specific ages/developmental levels, and adapted to address the unique needs of different implementation settings.

The *support group* modality sets the *CBSG® Program* apart from other preventive interventions and provides several additional protective factors, including: small group numbers; more time for discussion and skills practice; the emotional and social safety of a highly structured and supportive process, including group rules and confidentiality; opportunities for bonding; less stress; and the emotional support of a caring, trained group facilitator.

Goals

The Goals of Community Connection are to:

- **Protect the Children** - to interrupt and prevent the intergenerational cycle of family chemical dependency by helping children to build individual coping skills and personal resiliency (the capacity to withstand and overcome adversity and hardship).
- **Help Parents Protect Their Children** - to help parents build their parental coping skills, improve family bonds and restore personal resources, which in turn helps protect children from the risks they are unable to avoid.
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Outcomes

Children who complete a Rainbow Days Support Group show the following outcomes:

- Participants improve their understanding of what constitutes good character, including a decrease in rebelliousness and conduct problems and an improvement in their coping, life and social skills.
- Participants increase their understanding of and commitment to healthy choices including adopting a non-use attitude toward alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

The Curriculum

Through one of our award winning curricula, Rainbow Days' *CBSG® Program for Families*: for Children and Youth Ages 4-12 and 10-17, children meet in small groups with a trained facilitator in a child/youth-appropriate and confidential setting. All support group sessions include an opening activity, a guided discussion, one or more activities, reflection and a closing activity.

Kids' Connection - children ages 4 to 12

Youth Connection - adolescents ages 10 to 17

Parent Connection - Parent support groups are conducted at the same time as children's support groups, and provide guided group discussions for parents to share and explore solutions to parenting problems.

Session topics include Feelings, Handling Anger, Chemical Dependency, Dreams & Goal Setting, Making Healthy Choices, Friends and Resisting Negative Peer Pressure.

In a Rainbow Days Support Group, children will learn how to:

- Listen and communicate effectively
- Manage emotions - especially anger
- Practice self-control/self-management
- Be part of a team and practice teamwork
- Deal more effectively with change
- Choose friends wisely
- Make healthy choices and decisions
- Refuse negative peer pressure

Major Messages

Through the support groups, participants learn Rainbow Days' Major Messages. These messages help them become more autonomous, socially competent, interdependent, able to solve problems and hopeful about the future.

I AM likeable, capable, unique and valued.

I CAN treat others like I want to be treated.

I HAVE strengths, capabilities and people who care about me.

I WILL make healthy choices and be alcohol, tobacco and drug free.

I BELIEVE I have a purpose.



Drug Free Alternative Activities

Team Connection: Team Connection is a day where children in the community learn positive ways to express themselves through sports and team-oriented field events as well as celebrate being alcohol, tobacco and drug-free. Parents, community volunteers and recreation facility staff are invited to take part by assisting with event day activities and cheering the children on!

Leadership Connection: Leadership Connection develops leadership skills in at-risk youth that inspire, prepare, and motivate teens to strive for success in themselves, their school and community. The focus of Leadership Connection, a week-long summer day camp for middle and high school youth, is to define what a leader is and how leaders behave. Youth participate in this camp through activities designed to help them see their potential for success and how they can become leaders. Participants attending Leadership Connection have the opportunity to discover their own personal leadership capacity, the value of working in a team, and responsibility toward school and community by:

- learning they have the ability to achieve success and are responsible for their own actions, choices and consequences;
- recognizing the need for personal and academic goal-setting;
- building skills in the area of planning, decision making, and conflict management;
- encouraging a positive identity and the importance of the portrayal of personal image;
- understanding personality styles and developing team building knowledge and skills;
- recognizing and resisting negative peer pressure and understanding the value of healthy relationships;
- exploring career options and business opportunities for the future; and
- demonstrating skills they have learned at home, at school and in the community.

Art With a Heart: Art With A Heart matches children who are interested in exploring the arts with an adult mentor. The mentors and children engage in mini-projects to prepare for a final presentation of all works of art and/or live performances created during the Art With A Heart event.

Classroom Education

In addition to support groups and drug-free alternative activities, Rainbow Days also implements classroom prevention programs including an eight week program, ***Protecting You/Protecting Me*** and one time **Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) Presentations**.

Protecting You/Protecting Me (PY/PM) is a classroom-based alcohol use prevention curriculum for children in grades 1-5. *PY/PM* helps reach children before they have fully shaped their attitudes and opinions about alcohol use by youth and their role in preventing it. The curriculum focuses on the effects of alcohol on the developing brain during the first 21 years of life. The lessons cover a variety of life skills including media awareness, stress management, resistance strategies, decision making and communication. *Protecting You/Protecting Me (PY/PM)* is an evidence-based curriculum. A full review of the program can be found at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices at <http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=95>.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) Presentations are made throughout the year at various locations across the metroplex including schools, community centers, colleges and churches. These educational presentations are for children, adults, and families and influence the incidence and prevalence of ATOD use in the general population.



CURRICULUM-BASED SUPPORT GROUP (CBSG®) FOR FAMILIES

For families interested in participating in a Rainbow Day's support group in the evening there are opportunities in various community locations. Trained facilitators meet with children and youth over a 10-week period using either the *Kids' Connection* or *Youth Connection* curricula. In a confidential and supportive environment, children and youth discuss and practice a set of essential life skills including: skills to help them learn how to cope with difficult family situations, resist negative peer pressure, set and achieve goals, and refuse alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Parent Connection "life-skills support group" sessions are held at the same times and locations as the sessions for children and youth. Parents and other adult family members learn how to reinforce what their children and youth are learning in their sessions. Sessions promote family communication and bonding.

There is no cost for the program. All that is required is a commitment to participate in the full 10-week cycle. Please contact Leo Gutierrez (leog@rdikids.org) for information or to register. You may also call 214.887.0726. Feel free to help us spread the word about these groups!

Outcomes

Upon completion of Rainbow Days' *CBSG® Program* for Families, children and youth show the following outcomes:

- Participants improve their understanding of what constitutes good character, including a decrease in rebelliousness and conduct problems and an improvement in their coping, life and social skills.
- Participants increase their understanding of and commitment to healthy choices including adopting a non-use attitude toward alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Locations

Support groups and classroom education and presentations are conducted in various locations in Dallas, Rockwall, Denton & Collin counties with services concentrated in Dallas County. Services are provided in schools, including after-school programs, recreation centers, chemical dependency treatment centers, churches, and shelters for homeless families.



Current Program Sites

Schools:	
Adams Middle School	Grand Prairie ISD
Adelle Turner Elementary	Dallas ISD
Arlington Park Elementary	Dallas ISD
Benjamin Franklin Middle School	Dallas ISD
Bernice Chatman Freeman Elementary	CFBISD
Bird Education Center	Plano ISD
Casa View Elementary	Dallas ISD
Cigarroa Elementary	Dallas ISD
Ebby Halliday Elementary	Dallas ISD
Edward Cary Middle School	Dallas ISD
Eladio Martinez Learning Center	Dallas ISD
Fairmeadows Elementary	Duncanville ISD
Fannin Middle School	Grand Prairie ISD
Francisco Pancho Medrano Middle School	Dallas ISD
Hampton Preparatory	Uplift Education
Hobbs Williams Elementary	Grand Prairie ISD
JD Hall Learning Center	Lancaster ISD
KB Polk Elementary	Dallas ISD
Louise Wolff Kahn Elementary	Dallas ISD
Martha Turner Reilly	Dallas ISD
Martin Weiss Elementary	Dallas ISD
Mike Moseley Elementary	Grand Prairie ISD
Mount Auburn Elementary	Dallas ISD
Nancy Moseley Elementary	Dallas ISD
Pinkston High School	Dallas ISD
Rayburn Elementary	Grand Prairie ISD
Reagan Middle School	Grand Prairie ISD
Richardson High School	Richardson ISD
Sam Houston Elementary	Dallas ISD
Sheffield Intermediate	CFBISD
Summit Education Center	Duncanville ISD
TC Gooch Elementary	Dallas ISD
Thomas Marsh Middle School	Dallas ISD
William Cabell Elementary	Dallas ISD
Winnetka Elementary	Dallas ISD
Woodridge Elementary	DeSoto ISD
Community Centers:	
Salvation Army Oak Cliff	
Jubilee Park & Community Center	
Camp Fire USA at Valley Trail Apartments	
Recreation Centers:	
Cmarron Recreation Center	City of Irving
Exline Recreation Center	
Lancaster Recreation Center	
Residential Housing:	
Birchwood Apartments	
City Walk	



Participants Tell Us

"I've learned that sometimes you just have to get over it and grow up and make right decisions."
~ sophomore at Pinkston High School

"I've learned that drugs and alcohol are bad for you and they can also hurt you or your family. I don't have to do that stuff to be cool or to have fun" ~Sergio, age 11

"I love Rainbow Days! I have fun and learn new things each week" ~Brianna, age 6

School Personnel Tell Us

"This program is very beneficial. We are pleased to have the program on our campus and hope to have it again in the future." ~Counselor, Benjamin Franklin Middle School

"the sessions were well thought of and relevant to the student's lives. After school, some of the students would discuss the lessons with so much excitement. We thank you for taking time to come to our campus." ~ Counselor, Louise Wolff Kahn Elementary

"Wonderful program – making good choices – right decisions – getting along with peers – all have improved." ~ Counselor, Nancy Moseley Elementary

"The impact of your program is significant even in our alternative education setting." ~
Counselor, Bird Education Center

"The students regularly talk about something they learned. For middle school students to listen & remember is big." ~ Teacher, Marsh Middle School