

Juveniles at Risk
1991

LOCAL STUDY REACHES CONCENSUS FOR ACTION ON JUVENILES AT RISK

Appleton League's local study for this year, "Juveniles at Risk", culminated in February with unit meetings that addressed five questions (as published in the February "Bulletin") designed to provide a basis for concensus and future action. The lively discussions that ensued provided input to the committee for the following position statements that have been approved by the board and are presented for adoption by the membership at the annual meeting in April :

1. Support stronger coordination of services for juveniles at risk.
 - > Interagency coordination and work toward mutual goals across all Fox Cities area communities.
 - Database of services at a clearinghouse,
 - New programs register through this organization
 - Involve and empower youth,
 - Networking facilitator,
 - Newsletter to disseminate information and share success stories,
 - Community-wide school calendar coordination through the data base site.
 - > Encourage leaders to break down barriers to serving youth.

2. Support programs offered by schools, city and county governments, law enforcement, and the library that are low-cost and involve youth in decision making. Ideas would include the following:
 - > Youth center modelled on YouthGo,
 - > Tutors at the libraries
 - Peers, college students, adults
 - Library runs the literacy program,
 - > Community service planned and implemented by youth,
 - > Annual summit to publicize sevicess and programs,
 - > Keep school libraries open at night and weekends.

3. Support youth work programs that
 - > Involve a mentoring relationship,
 - > Provide money for employment of low-income students,
 - > modify the current Chamber program to reduce the cost and allow students to continue their high school experience.

4. Support government provision of alcohol and drug programs for youth.
 - > Local programs
 - Less costly
 - More efficient
 - Provide education
 - Involve parents
 - Provide a significant adult in each child's life.
 - > Government funding.

5. Support programs for less severe crimes that are designed to divert youthful offenders from the formal system such as:
 - > Volunteer coordinator for schools
 - Link community resources
 - Direct resources to individual students
 - > Those that emphasize efforts to provide funding of preventive services,
 - > Diversionary programs
 - In-school suspension
 - Alternative school as early as the 5th grade,
 - > Those that provide faster consequences,
 - > Programs that get adults involved in one-on-one relationships with youth,
 - > Healthy, non-traditional extra-curricular school activities that encourage teens to be busy and join (e.g. dancing, cooking, in-line skating),
 - > Programs that keep youth at home or home-like environments rather than in institutions whenever feasible using "check-in" times and places to monitor activities.

July 7
1991

EARLY INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN AT RISK

LWVUS POSITIONS THAT SUPPORT CHILDREN AT RISK

The new national position on Early Intervention for Children at Risk joins a host of national, state and local League positions that back up League action in support of policies and programs that promote the well being, development and safety of all children. As you plan your League's action campaigns in your state and community, broaden your options by knowing and using national, state and local League positions.

This is an outline of LWVUS positions that apply to policies for children at risk. See *Impact on Issues* (Pub. #386, \$5.00) for more information.

PREMATURE BIRTHS AND LOW BIRTH WEIGHT

Early Intervention for Children at Risk

The League supports policies and programs that promote quality health care, including nutrition and prenatal care.

Health Care

A basic level of quality health care should include prenatal care.

Meeting Basic Human Needs

The League believes that access to health care includes maternal and child health care.

BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS

Health Care

Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality health care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs.

Meeting Basic Human Needs

To prevent or reduce poverty, the League supports policies and programs designed to decrease teen pregnancy. Access to health care should include sex education programs. Supportive services for participation in income assistance programs should include family planning services.

Basic care includes health promotion and education and reproductive health.

Early Intervention for Children at Risk

Support policies and programs that promote the well being, development and safety of all children.

These policies and programs should include teen pregnancy prevention.

Public Policy on Reproductive Choices

Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

POOR HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Meeting Basic Human Needs

Benefit levels in Income Assistance programs should be sufficient to provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing and shelter. In-kind assistance, such as food stamps, should be continued. The League believes that access to health care includes preventive care, primary care and nutrition programs.

Early Intervention for Children at Risk

The League supports quality health care including nutrition and prenatal care to promote the well-being, full development and safety of children.

Health Care

A basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all U.S. residents. This includes prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care, acute care, long-term care and mental health care. Dental, vision and hearing care also are important, but lower in priority.

The ability of a patient to pay for services should not be a consideration in the allocation of health care resources.

POOR HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS AND DISTRESSED NEIGHBORHOODS

Meeting Basic Human Needs

The League supports programs and policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family. The federal government bears primary responsibility for achieving national housing goals which should assure sufficient decent housing for citizens at all income levels and compensate for any inadequacy by providing housing for citizens whose housing needs are not being met. Government at all levels must make available sufficient funds for housing-assistance programs.

Violence Prevention

The League supports violence prevention programs in all communities.

Urban Policy

Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

The League believes that it is in the national interest to promote the well-being of America's cities. The League is committed to an urban environment beneficial to life.

Equality of Opportunity

Opportunities for purchase or renting of homes and for borrowing money for housing should not be restricted because of discriminatory reasons such as race, color, sex, religion or national origin. Federal programs should include provisions to guarantee equal opportunity for access to housing.

CHILD CARE AND PREPARATION FOR SCHOOL

Early Intervention for Children at Risk

The League supports policies and programs that include developmental services, emphasizing children ages 0-3 and early childhood education.

Child Care

Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

Equality of Opportunity

~~The League supports child care centers for preschool children to give parents the opportunity for employment.~~ It supports enhanced educational opportunity through compensatory programs for disadvantaged groups beginning at the preschool level.

FAMILIES IN STRESS/ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Meeting Basic Human Needs

The League believes that access to health care includes mental health care as well as access to substance abuse programs. Supportive services that should be available for participants in income assistance programs should include counseling. If government programs require recipients of income assistance to engage in work-related programs, primary care-givers should be exempt.

Early Intervention for Children at Risk

The League supports policies and programs to prevent child abuse and neglect, family support services and violence prevention.

Violence Prevention

Support violence prevention programs in all communities.

The League supports violence prevention programs in all communities and action to support:

- *public and private development and coordination of programs that emphasize the primary prevention of violence.

- *the active role of government and social institutions in preventing violent behavior.

- *the allocation of public monies in government programs to prevent violence.

POVERTY

Equality of Opportunity

Support equal access to education, employment and housing.

The federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity to all persons in the U.S., regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. Because education is the key to good jobs, the League supports programs to increase the education and training of disadvantaged persons. Programs to provide equality of opportunity for education and employment should assist people to become self-supporting, contributing members of society.

Meeting Basic Human Needs

Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

Persons with inadequate income, those unable to work and those for whom no jobs are available have a right to an income or services sufficient to meet their basic needs for food, shelter and access to health care. The federal government should set minimum uniform standards and guidelines for social welfare programs and have primary responsibility for funding food, housing and health care programs and providing income assistance while state and local governments and the private sector have a secondary role.

The League supports programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty such as opportunities for education and job training, child care, transportation and ensuring that noncustodial parents help support their children.

Consensus Questions for Juveniles at Risk

**Should the League support stronger coordination of services for juveniles at risk?
How can we encourage cooperation between agencies?**

What programs should/might be offered by the following;

- Schools
- City Government
- County government
- law enforcement agencies
- the library

Should League support youth work programs (assuming they are monitored sufficiently to prevent problems in School)?

Should League support government provision of alcohol and drug programs for youth?

Does League want to support programs designed to divert youthful offenders from the formal court system such as probation, restitution, mentoring? What kinds might be the most effective?

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
JUVENILES AT RISK COMMITTEE
UNIT MEETINGS
CONSENSUS QUESTIONS**

- 1) Should the League advocate early intervention programs?
 - a) Pre-prenatal care
 - i) pregnancy prevention
 - ii) drugs/alcohol prevention
 - iii) general education in child development
 - iv) multi-generational issues
 - b) Prenatal care
 - c) Home adjustment and "birth to one year" education
 - d) Programs in the "one to seven year" category
- 2) What mentoring programs should be developed for juveniles identified as "at risk" for early pregnancy?
- 3) Should support be provided to provisional child care workers, as defined under the Wisconsin Works program, to ensure that early developmental activities occur?
- 4) What programs should/might be offered by the following:
 - a) Schools
 - b) City government
 - c) County government
 - d) County extension
 - e) Law enforcement
 - f) Courts
 - g) Other