

Nurtured Heart Approach - Results

The Nurtured Heart Approach began in 1992, as a therapeutic intervention for treating intense and difficult children in family therapy. In the past decade, it has evolved to become the primary approach in an estimated 10,000 classrooms and schools across in the United States, South America, in the United Kingdom, Belgium, Israel, Germany, South Africa, and Australia. It is also used as the foundational approach for thousands of therapists as well as residential treatment programs and therapeutic foster care programs across the country. Illinois and Washington State are among the first locations to adopt the approach in district wide applications and in their foster care programs. The Nurtured Heart Approach Association has begun the process to become federally recognized as an evidence based program. Some of the data is summarized below.

Why use it in your school?

- 1) Select schools in the New York City School District implemented NHA in conjunction with PBIS in 2007. Using both methods together they found that the need for Special Education in distressed schools fell from 15% to less than 5% in two years.
- 2) Smith Elementary, California implemented the approach in 2008. After 1 year, they showed a 32% reduction in school suspensions, 83% decrease in administrative/parent conferences. The severity of infractions decreased significantly and overall infractions decreased by 39%. Classroom disruptions decreased by 68% and bus misconduct decreased by 83%. Truancy conferences decreased by 83%.
- 3) Champaign Unified School District, Jefferson Middle School, Champaign, Illinois. The approach was implemented in 2007. Overall reading scores (ISAT) improved 4.6 points and math improved 1.7 points in a 1 year time frame. In 2007, there were 125 discipline referrals for behavioral misconduct. In the 2008 school year, there were only 21.
- 4) Tolson Elementary School, Tucson, AZ: NHA was implemented school wide in 1999. They had 8x the district average of school suspensions. Special education utilization was 15%. In 2006, special education utilization dropped to 1%. Teacher attrition rates dropped from 50% to 1% saving the district thousands in training and hiring costs. There have been 0 cases of bullying, and 0 children referred to outside mental health agencies for mental health screening. Additionally, utilization of gifted and talented programs increased from 1% to over 15%. Only one child has been suspended twice in ten years. Prior to NHA implementation there were 36 suspensions. Special education costs have dropped dramatically as utilization in that area decreased from 15% to 1%
- 5) Focus on Youth Therapeutic Foster Care Program, Cincinnati, Ohio: After one year of implementation, they showed 12.5% decrease in disrupted placements for 2006. In 2005, they were at 17.5% disruption rate and in 2006 they were at 6%. Additionally, therapeutic foster care programs in New Jersey, California, and Washington State are showing equally stunning results. The Drenk Center in NJ went from years of 20+% of broken placements to a current steady rate of 0% since 2008.

What do Nurtured Heart Approach Classrooms Look like?

- Increased teaching time
- Teachers have a unique influence on children
- Students develop better social skills
- Students demonstrate increased coping skills
- Results are almost immediate
- Children are more motivated to be successful academically
- Students collaboratively support on another to make good choices and use good judgment
- Students have a greater sense of empowerment and personal responsibility

What should school administrators expect to see?

- A positive shift in school culture.
- Teachers who are able to recognize their powerful influence.
- Schools become the center of the community.
- Students demonstrate better social skills and are better prepared for the norms of society.
- Test scores improve as a result of children developing inner wealth.
- Discipline referrals decrease significantly.
- Attendance increases significantly
- Teacher sick days decrease significantly
- Parental involvement increases as parents witness their children thriving.
- Parents report better flow of communication between parents & teachers.
- Teacher retention improves.
- Fewer children are referred for special education or to the mental health agencies.
- Children begin to generalize skills to other areas of their lives and to classes where this approach is not being used.
- There is significant decrease in crime rates around NHA schools.
- Children who are “seen” in greatness, “act out” greatness.

