



CENTER FOR ADOLESCENT
RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

Moving Youth Toward Success

Classroom-Based Interventions Manual

2014

The *Center for Adolescent Research in Schools* Classroom-Based Interventions Manual

Acknowledgements

The CARS Classroom-Based Interventions Manual was developed by several CARS project staff. Lead developers include Talida State, Lee Kern, Reesha Adamson, & Tim Lewis. Special thanks to the developers of the Check & Connect intervention for generously sharing their materials. Readers are strongly encouraged to purchase the Check & Connect manual and training materials to support their implementation.

These materials have been developed to assist school personnel in their efforts to improve support for students with emotional/behavioral disabilities and those at high risk. Downloading single personal copies is permissible; however, photocopying multiple copies of these materials for sale is forbidden without expressed written permission by the *Center for Adolescent Research in Schools*. To obtain a personal copy of this and related manuals and materials, visit www.ies-cars.org.

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INTRODUCTION

This manual contains classroom-based interventions developed by the *Center for Adolescent Research in the Schools*, through a federal grant awarded by the Institutes for Education Science, U.S. Department of Education. The classroom supports were one component of a multi-intervention treatment package designed for high school special and general education students with social, emotional, and behavioral problems. The interventions, building on existing evidence-based practices, were developed, piloted and implemented with a large sample of diverse students across 5 states. This manual was developed for CARS research facilitators to assist educators with implementation. It has been reformatted to serve as a stand alone manual, while retaining the essential elements of each intervention strategy. While collecting implementation fidelity checks are often not a component of typical school intervention implementation, we encourage the user to include this and all recommended steps to insure optimal outcomes with students. The forms, tools, and examples are not meant to be exhaustive; rather they are designed to provide a step-by-step implementation strategy.

Within our approach, we enrolled all of our study students into Check & Connect, which allowed us to monitor student progress as well as provide a data-decision framework to identify classrooms at the first signs of student risk. Once classrooms were identified in which student's met risk criteria (e.g., office referrals, missing assignments, truancy, failing grades) a simple assessment process followed which consists of interviews and observations (all contained in this manual).

The chart below provides a list of the possible recommended classroom-based interventions designed to increase student engagement with school through mentoring relationships, positive interactions with teachers, and active engagement with the curriculum. In addition, student competence and academic independence are enhanced by teaching organizational strategies and study skills.

School-Based Interventions

Check & Connect
Classroom Interventions
Routines
Expectations and Positive Student-Teacher Interactions
De-Escalation Strategies
Opportunities to Respond
Accommodations
Organizational Strategies
Study Skills Strategies

The remainder of this manual is organized around the above listed strategies, including decision rules on which interventions should be priorities, associated materials and examples, as well as simple directions for implementation followed by fidelity check forms.

Check & Connect

Intervention Description

Check & Connect (Anderson, Christenson, Sinclair, Lehr, 2004; Evelo, Sinclair, Hurley, Christenson, Thurlow, 1996) is a procedure developed for high-risk urban students at the secondary level that utilizes a monitoring system with two components:

Check: The purpose of this component is to systematically assess the extent to which students are engaged in school.

Connect: The purpose of this component is to respond on a regular basis to students' educational needs according to their type and level of risk for disengagement from school. Students showing high-risk behaviors receive additional intensive interventions.

All student participants will be paired with an adult mentor in their school who will monitor their progress across several behavioral and academic areas and meet with the student to problem-solve risk. More information on Check & Connect, as well as the Check & Connect manual (Christenson et al., 2008) can be obtained at <http://ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect>.

Rationale for Intervention

A systematic and efficient process to monitor students in a mentoring relationship provides a way to connect disengaged students with immediate interventions and an essential link to the student's educational performance. Studies have demonstrated the closeness and quality of relationships between staff and students involved in the systematic Check & Connect procedure has led to increased attendance, homework completion and interest in school for students with learning disabilities and emotional and behavioral disorders.

Definitions of Indicators and Criteria for High Risk

The Check & Connect mentoring program focuses on alterable indicators of disengagement which can be addressed through problem-solving with students during regular check-in meetings, and by collaborating with families and other school personnel (e.g., teachers,

disciplinary staff). The table below outlines and defines risk areas and the monthly criteria for risk.

Indicator	Definition	Criteria for Risk (per month)
Tardiness	Late either for school or for class.	Five or more
Skipping	Missing selected class periods within a day without an excused reason.	Three or more
Absenteeism	Full day excused or unexcused absence.	Four or more
Behavior Referrals	Student is sent to administrative or resource staff for inappropriate behavior.	Four or more
Detention	A consequence for inappropriate behavior for which the student “owes” time either before or after school. The student is often required to perform some custodial function on the school grounds, to complete school work, or at least to sit quietly.	Four or more
In-School Suspension	A consequence for inappropriate behavior for which the student spends the school day(s) in a separate area or classroom of the school building.	Two or more
Out-of-School Suspension	A consequence for inappropriate behavior for which the student spends a defined number of school days at home. The student is not allowed on school property for the suspension period.	Two or more days suspended per month
Failing Classes	Receiving a grade of F or D in any class. CARS Check & Connect will focus on grades in core academic classes (e.g., English, math, social studies, and science).	One or more F and/or two or more D’s per grading period
Behind in Credits	Failing to earn enough credits to be on track to graduate in four or five years.	Earning less than 80% of the possible credits per grading period
Missing Assignments	Failing to submit assignments on time in core academic classes (e.g., English, math, social studies, and science).	Submitting assignments an average of 90% below

Check & Connect Manual (Christenson et al., 2008).

Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the mentor is very important in effective implementation. Potential mentors include teachers, paraprofessionals, and/or other staff. Mentor caseloads can range from one to

three students. Mentors should plan to spend at least one half hour to an hour per week per child to obtain data related to risk and to meet individually with the student for at least 10 min once per week.

When selecting mentors to implement Check & Connect, the following characteristics should be considered (Christenson et al., 2008):

- The willingness to persist with students, despite their behavior and decision-making;
- A personal belief that all students, particularly those with high-risk, have abilities and strengths;
- A willingness to cooperate and collaborate with families, school staff, and CARS staff;
- Advocacy skills, including the ability to negotiate, compromise, and confront conflict;
- Organizational and case management skills;
- A willingness to be a mentor.

Check & Connect Mentor Binder

Each mentor should receive a Check & Connect Mentor Binder to keep student monitoring sheets organized and facilitate data collection. The following elements should be included in the Check & Connect Mentor Binder:

- *Calendar*
- *Check & Connect Mentor Procedures*
- *Check & Connect Monitoring Sheets*
- *Check & Connect Problem Solving Sheets*
- *Check & Connect Intervention Flowcharts*
- *Student Information Sheet*
- *Complete Student Schedule*
- *Sample WILBUR Problem Solving Steps*

Mentors may wish to include other resources and documents in the binder (e.g., bus schedules, community resource contact lists, teacher/parent communication log) to facilitate intervention implementation and documentation.

Implementation Procedures

For School-Based Mentors (see *Check & Connect Mentor Procedures*):

1. Attend Check & Connect training session(s)
2. Make student and parent initial contacts
3. Document student progress using the *Check & Connect Monitoring Sheet*. Use only the weekly summary column if student data are available online through a school-wide data system
4. Use criteria listed in the section Procedures for Measuring Outcomes to determine which variables score as “High Risk” for the month. **NOTE: Mentors do not need to wait until the end of the month before implementing intervention(s).**
5. Give students regular feedback about their overall progress and in relation to specific risk factors during regularly scheduled meetings. Review monitoring sheet with student so he or she can have a concrete, visual representation of their progress. Meetings should be at least 10 min to allow for conversation about Check & Connect progress as well as any other concerns a student may have.
6. Problem-solve with students about indicators of risk. Guide students through problems using a cognitively oriented problem-solving five-step plan like the procedure outlined below:

<p>Five-Step Problem Solving</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Stop! Think about the problem.2. What are some choices?3. Choose one.4. Do it.5. How did it work?

7. Refer to Intensive Connection Strategies (see intervention flowcharts) for interventions that can be administered for students showing high risk in relation to any of the risk factors being monitored.

8. Document the focus of Check & Connect meetings and any intensive intervention strategies related to risk areas on the reverse of the *Check & Connect Monitoring Sheet*.
9. Both the mentor and student should initial the comments section of the *Check & Connect Monitoring Sheet*.
10. Confirm the next Check & Connect meeting date, time, and place.

Selecting Interventions for Risk Areas

There are two levels of intervention in Check & Connect: Basic and Intensive. The weekly check-in meetings between students and mentors are considered a Basic intervention approach. The Basic level of intervention uses minimal resources to keep students connected to school and provides an excellent opportunity for mentors to praise students for improvements or continued success.

For students who demonstrate high risk behaviors (e.g., skipping classes, failing grades) according to the risk areas, Intensive interventions are required. Mentors should review the *Intensive Connections Strategies Guide* to identify possible interventions based on student risk area. Check & Connect intervention flowcharts are also available to mentors as a quick reference for identifying strategies. Furthermore, mentors should select intensive interventions that are acceptable and feasible given knowledge of the student's situation, resources available to the school, and other contextual variables. The intervention flowcharts provide an easy guide to selecting interventions matched to the problem.

Procedures for Measuring Outcomes

The mentor will document student progress using the *Check & Connect Monitoring Sheet*. Patterns in student risk can be assessed by examining the summary boxes of "high risk for the month" over time. Treatment integrity data can be collected by using the *Check & Connect Treatment Integrity* form and collecting final products (i.e., collect the monthly *Check & Connect Monitoring Sheet*).

Core Components: 1. Record progress for all risk areas as indicated.
 2. Schedule a set time to meet with the student weekly.
 3. Meet for at least 10 – 15 minutes.
 4. Connect and problem-solve high risk areas.

Record focus of meeting each week. Provide positive feedback for improvements or continued success. Problem-solve for risk areas. Initial at the close of the meeting and confirm next check-in date.		Mentor Initials	Student Initials
Week of			
Week of			
Week of			
Week of			
Week of			

CHECK & CONNECT MONITORING SUMMARY SHEET

Mentor: _____ Student: _____

School: _____ Date of Summary: _____

Month Summarized: _____

Monthly Summary

Number of days with tardies: _____ Total number of tardies: _____

Number of days with with skipped periods: _____ Total number of skips: _____

Number of days absent: _____ Total number of behavioral referrals: _____

Detention (number of days): _____ In-School Suspension (number of days): _____

Out of School Suspension (number of days): _____

	D or F		10% or more missing assignments:		Behavioral Problems?
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
English:	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Math:	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Social Studies:	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Science:	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Other:	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Check & Connect Mentor Procedures

Check & Connect Manual (Christenson et al., 2008).

Overview:

<i>Purpose</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance student engagement with school and learning• Promote student competence• Provide persistent support for academic and behavioral standards and expectations
<i>Essential Features</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A mentor who keeps education salient for students• Systematic monitoring of risk indicators (Check)• Timely and individualized intervention (Connect)• Enhanced collaboration among teachers to promote student success
<i>Mentor Roles and Responsibilities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The willingness to persist with students, despite their behavior and decision-making;• A personal belief that all students, particularly those with high-risk, have abilities and strengths;• A willingness to cooperate and collaborate with families, school staff, and CARS staff;• Advocacy skills, including the ability to negotiate, compromise, and confront conflict;• A willingness to be a mentor throughout the academic year.
<i>Materials Needed</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check & Connect Mentor Binder• Student Contact Information (e.g., home address, parent/guardian telephone numbers)• Student Schedule (if electronic copy not available, provide teacher with copy of student schedule collected by facilitator at the beginning of the year)

Implementation Procedures:

Check Procedures and the *Check & Connect Monitoring Sheet*

Preparation

- Create a tab for each student on your caseload.
- Obtain student schedules and insert in the binder. Be sure to record the teacher's name for each class.
- Collect any information that will inform your interactions with the student, his/her teachers, and his/her family (e.g., IEP date, special education case manager, family supports, phone numbers).
- Schedule a time to meet regularly with the student. Consider a non-academic period (e.g., study hall, homeroom) or a time where you will have 10 – 15 minutes of uninterrupted time to connect with the student.

Introduce Yourself

- Call parents/guardians to introduce yourself or send letter home (see sample).
 - “Hi, my name is _____. I work at _____ (name of high school) as _____ (job title). I will be working with _____ (student's name) this school year to help him/her stay more connected with school and be more successful in school. This mentoring program encourages students to learn problem-solving strategies, complete their school work, and enjoy better relationships with their teachers.
 - I will meet with _____ (student's name) individually once a week at school. In our meetings, we will discuss attendance and academic progress. For areas of concern, I will problem-solve with your child and teachers.
 - For your reference, here is my contact information:

Phone number _____ Email address _____”

See Completed Example on the next page.