

What is the Student Assistance Program?

In Pennsylvania, every middle and high school and some elementary schools have a Student Assistance Program (SAP). A SAP team, made up of school and community agency staff, is here to help you access school and community services.

Do You See Your Child Showing Any of These Behaviors?

- Withdrawing from family, friends and/or school
- Changing friends; no longer spends time with old friends
- Unexplained physical injuries
- Talking about suicide
- Depressed
- Defying authority, both at home and at school
- Acting aggressively
- Lying
- Needing money without an explanation
- Sudden drop in grades/Academic issues
- Experimenting with drugs or alcohol

Are You Concerned About Your Child's Reaction To:

- Recent death of a loved one
- Divorce of parents
- Family relocation
- A relationship problem
- Other traumatic event

If your child is having trouble in or out of school, we can help you. There may be times when you just don't know how to help your child. That's okay; someone else may know how to help. Don't feel embarrassed or uncomfortable about asking for help. When extra help is needed, knowing how and where to find help can be overwhelming.

How Does My Child Become Involved in the Program?

Your school's SAP team will help you find services and assistance within the school and, if needed, in the community. We do not diagnose, treat, or refer your child for treatment. Rather, we will provide you with information; you make the choices. Remember, you are part of our team. Our goal is to help your child succeed in school. Students come to the SAP team in different ways. Anyone can refer a student to the Student

Assistance Program. Some students are referred by teachers and other school personnel. Any school staff member, a student's friend or family member can let the SAP team know that they are worried about someone. The students themselves can even go directly to the SAP team to ask for help. However, the SAP team will not become involved unless we receive your permission.

What if Someone Has Already Referred My Child to the Program?

First, know that your child was referred because someone is concerned about observable changes they are seeing in your child. Perhaps a teacher or friend has noticed changes in behavior and habits that you may or may not have noticed at home. Your observations of your child at home are important.

The SAP team will request that you sign a permission form for your child to become involved in the program. Once you sign, the SAP team will begin to work with you and your child. If you feel you need more information before making a decision, please let your SAP team know. If you do not sign the permission form, the SAP team will not become involved. Participation is voluntary.

What Happens After I Give My Permission?

There are several steps that the team will take after you sign the permission form:

1. The SAP team will gather specific information about your child's performance in school from all school staff who have contact with your child. A SAP team member will also talk with you either in person or over the phone about your observations, your child's strengths, and your concerns.
2. Together, you and the SAP team will develop a plan of action to help your child achieve success in school. The plan might include services and activities in school and/or services from a community agency. If necessary, the SAP team will talk with you about services in the community and give you information on how to contact others who may be able to help.
3. The SAP team will continue to work with and support your child. They will stay in touch with you to talk about your child's progress and success in school. Your continued involvement is very important.