

TRUANCY AND ASSESSMENT SERVICE CENTERS LSU - OFFICE OF SOCIAL SERVICE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (LSU-OSSRD)



TRUANCY ASSESSMENT AND SERVICE CENTERS (TASC)

TASC programs operate in 17 Judicial Districts throughout the State of Louisiana. The purpose of TASC is to provide for early identification and assessment of truant children and the prompt delivery of coordinated interventions to prevent continued unauthorized school absences. Research confirms a strong correlation between early truancy, continued academic and behavioral problems in school, eventual school dropout and delinquent behavior development. Teen pregnancy and adolescent substance abuse are also more likely to occur when children are unsuccessful in school.

TASC is a tool that can be utilized to interrupt this cycle and reduce the negative effects of the truant behavior pattern. Several important characteristics are associated with effective truancy intervention including:

- Early identification of truant children and appropriate assessment
- Rapid, coordinated, targeted service response to identified needs
- Consistent, timely monitoring and revising of service plans
- Attention to family environmental factors affecting the child
- Appropriate use of the Family in Need of Services (FINS) process including sanctions to ensure parental cooperation and behavioral change.

The TASC programs are intended to identify, assess and intervene with children in grades K-5. Many school settings encompass grades K-6, and where this is the case, 6th grade students are included in the local target population, because including them in such cases is more natural than excluding them from the referral population.

According to KidsCount 2004, Louisiana's composite rank is 49th in the nation. The TASC program's long-term outcomes could reduce many of the risk factors for children living in Louisiana and thereby improve Louisiana's overall ranking throughout the country.

The TASC staff is empowered to do "whatever works" to get the children to attend school regularly, whether that be aiding them in getting school uniforms, coordinating assessments, providing treatment for the child, to providing the parents with treatment. The Office of Social Service Research & Development within the School of Social Work developed the program, worked on fund development, implemented the program, and is now legislatively mandated to monitor and evaluate the TASC initiative. For further information:

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