

P.L. 2019, CHAPTER 115, *approved May 10, 2019*
Assembly, No. 4500

1 AN ACT concerning arts programs for youth at risk of juvenile
2 delinquency and supplementing P.L.1966, c.214 (C.52:16A-25 et
3 seq.).
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5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*
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8 1. a. The New Jersey State Council on the Arts shall publish
9 on its website and disseminate to any organization in this State that
10 expresses to the council an intent to develop or expand an arts
11 program for youth at risk of juvenile delinquency a guide
12 containing best practices for such programs. Under the best
13 practices guidelines, programs should:

14 (1) recognize that art is a vehicle that can be used to engage
15 youth in activities that will increase their self-esteem;

16 (2) provide for collaborative effort among the artist, social
17 service provider, teacher, agency staff, youth, and family, as
18 appropriate, in delivery of the program;

19 (3) recognize and involve the families of the youth and the
20 communities in which the youth live;

21 (4) include age-appropriate curriculum;

22 (5) emphasize dynamic teaching tactics, such as hands-on
23 learning, apprentice relationships, and the use of technology;

24 (6) to the extent possible, culminate in a public performance or
25 exhibition with a focus on building participants' self-esteem
26 through public recognition;

27 (7) during the planning stage, address program goals, site
28 selection, population, the development of relationships among team
29 members, the methods for youth involvement in planning,
30 curriculum design, transportation, safety, incentives, behavioral
31 requirements, program growth, the balance between arts program
32 and other program objectives, the balance between process and
33 product, student recognition of achievements, and the involvement
34 of families, communities, and volunteers;

35 (8) incorporate an evaluation system early into the program;

36 (9) train teams, collaboratively, that work with youth in team
37 building, communication skills, and organizational skills;

38 (10) train teams in effective methods for working with youth
39 from special populations, including in behavior management,
40 adolescent psychology, and familiarization with the juvenile justice
41 system;

42 (11) train teams in designing a curriculum or involving a
43 trained curriculum specialist;

1 (12) adopt training that is practical, addresses issues identified
2 by team members, incorporates advice from a variety of trainers
3 with expertise in relevant issue areas, provides opportunities for
4 team members to share in successes and failures and engage in peer
5 training, and integrates specialized training into ongoing training
6 sessions whenever possible;

7 (13) require program staff to clearly define program goals and
8 intended outcomes in evaluating an arts program, and to monitor
9 and document program implementation and the service-delivery
10 process;

11 (14) utilize “process evaluations,” which examine program
12 implementation and service delivery, to describe and refine a
13 program, measuring the impact on youth and identifying ways to
14 improve a program;

15 (15) employ journals, portfolios, surveys, and artist
16 observations as evaluation measures to determine the effects of arts
17 programs on at-risk youth, incorporating those measures into
18 program activities when possible;

19 (16) document program-specific factors, such as staff ratios,
20 hours of contact, and duration of contact, in process evaluations;

21 (17) account for the impact of individual, family, and
22 community factors on program effectiveness; and

23 (18) incorporate activities that recognize individual efforts and
24 provide opportunities for youth to learn new skills, which activities
25 are designed to reduce the influence of risk factors associated with
26 adolescent problem behaviors, such as low neighborhood
27 attachment, lack of commitment to school, alienation and
28 rebelliousness, and friends who engage in problem behavior.

29 The council shall make periodic revisions to the guide as
30 necessary.

31 b. The council shall provide technical and consultative
32 assistance to any State agency or local government unit requesting
33 such assistance to implement a program adopting the elements
34 listed in subsection a. of this section. The council shall, upon
35 completion or revision, deliver, by electronic or other means, the
36 guide to the Juvenile Justice Commission and the Division of Child
37 Protection and Permanency in the Department of Children and
38 Families.

39 As used in this subsection, “State agency” means any agency in
40 the Executive branch of State government, including, but not
41 limited to, any department, board, bureau, commission, division,
42 office, council, or instrumentality thereof, or independent agency,
43 public authority or public benefit corporation, and any State college
44 or public institution of higher education. “Local government unit”
45 means a county, municipality, board of education, or county college
46 as defined in section 2 of P.L.1982, c.189 (C.18A:64A-25.2).

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48 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

This bill directs the New Jersey State Council on the Arts to create, update, and disseminate a guide containing the “best practices” for arts programs for youth at risk of juvenile delinquency. The bill lists several elements that comprise best practices, based upon a report issued by the YouthARTS Development Project entitled, “YouthARTS Handbook: Arts Programs for Youth at Risk.”

The bill further requires the council to provide technical and consultative assistance to any State agency, State college or public institution of higher education, county, municipality, board of education, or county college that requests the assistance of the council in implementing a program following the best practices. The council is also to send a copy of the guide to the Juvenile Justice Commission and the Division of Child Protection and Permanency in the Department of Children and Families.

Directs NJ State Council on Arts to create and disseminate best practices guide for at-risk youth arts programs; requires council to assist government entities creating programs that adopt best practices.