

EDUCATING MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH WITH TRAUMA HISTORIES

Prepared by the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee
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How should one educate children with trauma?

Children with trauma histories can face more difficulties learning, forming relationships and succeeding in school. However, teachers cannot always easily identify traumatized children, which can make it difficult to provide extra attention if needed. Schools should strive to create a trauma-sensitive environment to benefit all children – those with trauma histories and those who learn alongside them.¹

A strategy for trauma-sensitive schools should include these guiding principles:

- Helping educators become aware of trauma symptoms and their effect on classroom learning and behavior;
- Spending less time on disciplining students and focusing more on teaching and learning;
- Using therapeutic and positive behavioral supports.²

Resources:

Massachusetts Advocates for Children, *Helping Traumatized Children Learn*, <http://www.massadvocates.org> (extensively discusses how schools can create a trauma sensitive learning environment)

To find out which schools have a trauma sensitive grant, visit:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/tss/grants.html> and
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/tss/schools.html>

¹ Massachusetts Advocates for Children: Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative, *Helping Traumatized Children Learn: A Report and Policy Agenda* 1 (2005), <http://traumasensitiveschools.org/>.

² Massachusetts Advocates for Children: Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative, *Helping Traumatized Children Learn: A Report and Policy Agenda* 6 (2005), <http://traumasensitiveschools.org/>.