

Students clean graffiti from  
a schoolyard fence



# Parent-to-Parent Guide

## *Restorative Justice in Chicago Public Schools*

*Stopping the School-to-Prison Pipeline*



**POWER-PAC**

Elementary Justice Campaign  
Updated December 2015

**A COFI PROJECT**



“The revolving door of punishment—suspensions, expulsions, arrests—puts our children on the streets, and on the road to gangs and prison. This is the crisis of the school-to-prison pipeline.”

—Lynn Morton, parent



“The big idea of *restorative justice* is that students can and should learn to understand why their misbehavior is wrong and be allowed the opportunity to ‘make it right’.”

—Nelida Torres, parent

“Too many parents get the message that their children are not welcome in schools, but it is really hard to find an alternative once your kid is out. Hold your ground. You can fight for their right to stay in school.”

—Gloria Harris, parent  
(grandmother of 21!)



Dear Friends,

For too many of our children, “school discipline” has meant getting suspended or expelled—starting as young as *kindergarten*—being arrested, *even in grade school*—and ending up on the streets or in jail—without an education.

We are Chicago Public School parents, from many different neighborhoods and backgrounds, raising kids of all ages. We work together in POWER-PAC, and built our “**Elementary Justice Campaign: Stopping the School-to-Prison Pipeline**” because we’ve felt at times that school discipline works against—not with—our children and families.

## A better approach to student discipline: *restorative justice* in Chicago Public Schools

Over the years, we successfully got “zero tolerance” stricken from the Student Code of Conduct and replaced with a philosophy of **restorative justice**. We then won changes to the code so that the 10-day maximum out-of-school suspension has been lowered to 5 days and suspensions for PreK-2nd grade and expulsion for students in PreK-5 is prohibited (except in extreme cases).

Now, schools, parents, and communities can organize school-based programs such as Peace Circles, Peer Juries, community service, and more as alternatives to suspension, expulsion or arrest.

**Restorative justice emphasizes teaching the student who misbehaved and offering that student a chance to “repair the harm” that he or she caused.**

We know from our own families that the chance to learn from mistakes—and fix the damage that has been done—is how we build trust and community. Restorative justice in schools teaches children to understand the impact of their behavior and take responsibility.

Parents have to be involved and take the initiative in local schools. But we also need to know our rights and understand the system! Part of this guide is sharing what we believe is important to know when your son or daughter is suspended, expelled, or otherwise punished in a way that you think is unfair or inappropriate.

Finally—we want to inspire parents across the city to work together to make sure that these new policies and practices are put into place. Let’s prevent misbehavior and resolve conflicts before violence or other bad things happen to more of our children.

Parents and grandparents working together helps build a new non-violent culture in our families, schools and communities. We’ve seen it happen, and we invite you to join us in our campaign to protect our children and see them ALL succeed!



**The Parents of POWER-PAC**

Parents Organized to Win, Educate and Renew—Policy Action Council  
Elementary Justice Campaign



## Parent-to-Parent > Elementary Justice Campaign

"My child never had problems with other teachers, but, in sixth grade, this teacher made him feel like he was a bad kid and that he never did anything right. He began to believe it. In that one year, he went from being a really good student to an angry, disruptive kid."

"My foster daughter was suspended for cursing in Spanish; she doesn't even speak Spanish."

"My niece was suspended from kindergarten for 5 days for fighting in the lunchroom."

"My son was suspended for looking out the window."

"My 7th grade daughter was suspended 3 times for talking during lunch—they threatened to expel her."

**"Restorative justice is about getting power back to a community... When people who caused harm have conversation with those who were harmed, it brings restoration and healing to the community."**

—Lynn Morton, parent



Southside Forum

### **Parents launched the Elementary Justice Campaign because zero tolerance punishments like suspensions, expulsions, and arrests aren't working.**

These punitive approaches are not making our schools any safer—they just discourage and criminalize our children—putting too many farther and farther behind.

"Although Chicago Public Schools decreased out-of-school suspensions in recent years, rates are still exorbitantly high and racial disparities in these rates are clear. One-third of black males received an out-of-school suspension last year, compared to 13 percent of Latino boys and 6 percent of white and Asian boys. And, the decline in out-of-school suspension rates has been accompanied by a doubling of in-school suspension rates among African American high school students."

—*Discipline Practices in Chicago Schools: Trends in the Use of Suspensions and Arrests*, March 2015. University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research

### **POWER-PAC: Parents working together across Chicago**

Our children attend Chicago Public Schools, and we came together in 2004—African-American and Latino parents and grandparents—around our shared experiences and concerns. Our schools had one of the highest suspension rates in the nation and racial disparities in the enforcement of discipline policies meant that our children were disproportionately affected by arrests, expulsions and suspensions!

We spoke with hundreds of families at forums across the city. We heard horror stories of what was happening to our young children. 37% of the parents we surveyed had a child suspended and more than 4 out of 5 families thought the suspension was not appropriate and not handled well.

We knew there had to be a better way, so we brought our concerns to public officials, juvenile justice advocates, lawyers, teachers, and policy people. We went in search of alternative approaches to school discipline and found some innovative ideas in Los Angeles and Minneapolis. And, we developed a set of recommendations for what needed to change in Chicago Public Schools.

### **There is a better way!**

We recommended the following changes in discipline policies in Chicago Public Schools. While we are still working together to achieve more, some of these recommendations are already becoming reality!



POWER-PAC leaders talked with hundreds of parents across Chicago.



## POWER-PAC's 2005 Recommendations

### 1 End out-of-school suspensions.

- Use out-of-school suspensions only as a last resort when a behavior is a serious threat to safety.

In 2014, won "last resort" language and prohibition on suspensions for 2nd grade and younger; also won reduction of maximum suspension time from 10 to 5 days!

Recess returned for all CPS elementary students in 2012!

### 2 Reinstate recess and breaks in the school day.

- Work to expand the school day to allow for recess and more breaks.
- Increase the time kids spend in physical education classes.
- Ban silent lunches and assure that lunchrooms are well monitored.

New wellness policies implemented in 2012.

Won district-wide in 2014!

Got commitment from CPS and growing number of programs annually, though parents would like to see more!

### 3 Implement prevention programs.

- Establish programs that bring restorative justice and violence prevention practices and skills into elementary and high schools.

### 4 Provide training on discipline policies.

- Develop a standard training and orientation program about discipline policies that is offered to parents, teachers and school administrators each school year.
- Always provide information to parents in a parent-friendly and straightforward format.

POWER-PAC created its RJ101 training for parents and offers it to hundreds of parents annually. CPS also provides training each summer.

POWER-PAC informed the Code of Conduct re-write back in 2007 and reviews the code annually for parent-friendliness and clarity.

### 5 Parents need to be involved in oversight and accountability.

- Include parents in setting and reviewing city-wide and school-based discipline policies.
- Require that schools provide monthly reports on the number of suspensions and other disciplinary actions—available to the public.
- Be transparent and public with all school discipline and arrest data.

Won agreement from CPS in 2014 to release data twice annually.

In 2014, won the creation of Chicago Collaborative on School Discipline with community and POWER-PAC parent reps.

### 6 Limit harm of police in schools.

- Shift funding from police in schools to restorative practices.
- Define and limit role of police in schools (emphasis on safety rather than discipline).
- Shift school climate from prison-like to being a healthy learning environment.

New recommendation added in 2013—current focus of campaign!



Parents can read about school discipline policies, including new restorative justice options, in the CPS Student Code of Conduct.

Since parents won changes in the Chicago Student Code of Conduct in 2007, the code now is based in a philosophy of **Restorative Justice**. According to CPS, “Restorative Justice is an approach to conflict that focuses on repairing harm and creating space for open communication, relationship building, healing and understanding....it is a way for those impacted by conflict to be a part of finding solutions that meet their needs and promote community safety and well-being. In a school setting, Restorative Justice Practices can help students develop the critical thinking and social skills they need to be successful throughout the school community.”

The CPS Code states, “*The use of Restorative Practices helps strengthen relationships among students and between students and staff; reduces behavioral disruptions, deescalates volatile situations, decreases suspensions and detentions; and supports students impacted by violence.*”

### Key steps of restorative justice

- Bring together all involved, including the offender and, if appropriate, the victim.
- Recognize that the student who committed the offense did harm to the school and community.
- Offer the student a chance to “repair the harm” caused. For example, if a student vandalizes the bathroom wall, then he or she should clean it off and repaint. Or if a student stole money, he or she should repay the victim.
- Find a way to welcome the student who did the harm back into the community—it does no one any good for the children to be out on the streets.
- Balance the needs of the community, the victim and the offender by involving the community in figuring out how to repair the damage done.



POWER-PAC meets with then CPS Board President, Michael Scott, to hammer out changes in the Student Code of Conduct, beginning back in 2006.

## Thanks to parent leadership, there are many new changes in the CPS Student Code of Conduct

### Restorative justice options instead of suspension or expulsion

Now, schools, parents, and communities have options to organize school-based restorative justice programs, such as Peace Circles, Peer Juries, community service, and more.

### Schools don't *have to* call police for minor offenses

Schools no longer are allowed to call the police unless it is in regard to actual “criminal acts.” For certain behaviors, the code allows the school to have the flexibility to call—or not call—police.

Too many schools are so short on resources that they fall back on calling the police to respond to behaviors that they *can* deal with internally.

### Common sense policies for our youngest students

Over the years, we have particularly wanted to protect our youngest children from being punished unfairly and being suspended from school! We won changes:

- Schools and teachers are now instructed to make individual decisions in responding to misbehavior by preschoolers and kindergartners. Suspension and expulsion rules in the Student Code of Conduct are not applicable to these little ones.
- If a school really thinks suspension or expulsion for a preschool or kindergarten student is called for, the school must get it approved by the Chief Area Officer—the supervisor of the School Principal.
- No suspensions are allowed for students all the way through 2nd grade, except in extreme circumstances when safety is at risk and even then, the school must get the approval of the Network Chief before proceeding.
- Children 6th grade and younger are not to be expelled. Again, in extreme cases schools must take the case to an outside authority.

### Group punishments are prohibited

The new Code of Conduct outlaws punishing a whole group of students for the actions of one or a few. For example, Silent Lunches are banned, where the entire class or student body is forbidden from talking during lunch.

**And maximum out-of-school suspensions have been reduced from 10 days to 5 days!**

The Elementary Justice Campaign aims to keep children safe and in school.





## School programs that use restorative justice

*Here are some restorative justice practices that can be part of school discipline:*

**Peace Circles** are a structured way for people to talk from the heart—and really listen to each other. Circles can help a group to get to the root of what is going on, build respect, and resolve conflicts. The use of peacemaking circles is based, in part, on circle rituals common to traditional Native American and African communities.

Circles can be facilitated by a trained parent, school staff person or community agency. They bring together the victim, the offender and other interested or affected community members to create a safe space to reach an understanding of the event, to find ways to heal for everyone involved, and to prevent future problems.

Usually, a healing plan incorporates commitments by the school, community, and family to work with and support the offender, along with the offender committing to work to make things right.

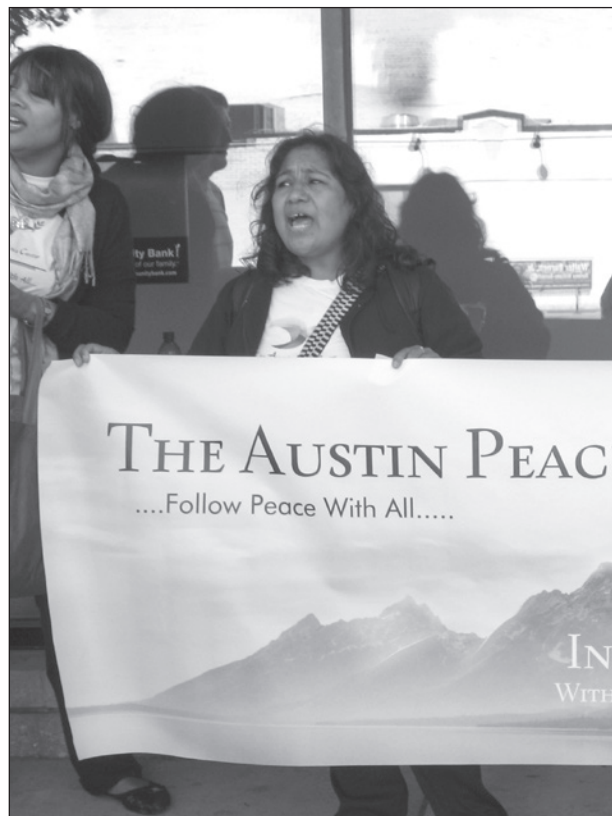
**Peer Juries** are a way for students to hold each other accountable and decide how to make things right. The students themselves are trained in restorative justice practice and serve as a jury for their peers.

Peer Juries most commonly are used with middle and high school students, although children as young as 5th grade have been part of peer juries to address misbehaviors in elementary schools.

The Peer Jury experience becomes a learning opportunity for both jury members and other students involved. Jury training and support within a school setting is usually provided by a faculty advisor or sometimes an outside community agency.

**Community Service** includes a range of volunteer or service activities that students can do to give back to the community and “pay back” for the harm caused. The activity can serve the school or the larger community.

Service can teach the children values of caring and help them feel that they are a contributing member of the community. The children on the front cover of this Guide provide an example of students cleaning graffiti off of the school yard wall as a way of serving their school community.



As parents and grandparents work together, families, schools and communities grow stronger.

**“When children are suspended or expelled, they often are put out on the streets—in more danger than whatever trouble they were into at school. Alternatives to suspension can be about teaching our children responsibility and de-escalating the trouble.”**

—Felipa Mena, parent

Peace circles create a safe space for conversation and healing within a school. Here Parent Peacemakers lead a peace circle with students.





Parents engage in a street theater skit to make the point that shifting dollars from policing in schools to restorative justice and other prevention programs is a good investment in students' long term educational success.

### Peace Circle: the sixth-graders and the teacher

At an elementary school on Chicago's west side, a group of sixth grade girls were acting up in class. They talked back to the teacher. They laughed and made faces while she was talking. The teacher was frustrated and could not believe how the girls were treating her. Despite numerous referrals for disciplinary action, the behavior kept up.

At one point, the girls got referred to the Peace Center where Peacemakers—parents trained as circle keepers—had a suggestion: “Why not hold a Peace Circle with the girls and teacher together?” The teacher agreed.

In the Peace Circle, the teacher told her story—how she grew up on the west side, too, and she talked deeply with the girls about what motivated her love of teaching. At the same time, the girls were able to calmly communicate their concerns about what was happening in the classroom. The teacher understood and agreed with some of their complaints. By the end of the session, the relationship between the girls and teacher was changed completely. They had built trust. They felt that they really knew each other and had learned to respect one another. And the problems in the classroom went away.

### Peace Circle: the high-school student and the security guard

At one southside Chicago high school that is using a restorative justice approach, a young man came in late to school one day and exchanged words with the security guard. He yelled, she hollered back, and it escalated from there. Soon, the principal heard the yelling and asked them to sit in a Peace Circle.

At first, the security guard refused, saying the student had threatened her. She thought he should be suspended or arrested for talking that way to her. But, after some convincing, both agreed to participate.

In the Peace Circle, it came out that this young man was having problems at home—his mother had been arrested and he was caring for his younger siblings. He was late to school because of all that he was dealing with at home. He was mad and frustrated with himself for letting it all overwhelm him. The security guard was angry too. She felt disrespected. But as she listened, she came to empathize with his situation. She even offered to spend time with the boy to help support him.

By the end of the Peace Circle, the two agreed to speak more respectfully to one another and to spend time together. The student was not suspended or arrested. Instead, he had found someone to listen to him and to be there for him. Both parties involved had learned a lesson about themselves and about each other.

## Educate yourself and know that you and your child have a right to:

- > Be notified if your child is in trouble at school
- > Answer the charges—your child must be allowed to tell his or her side of the story
- > Appeal the punishment. Be aware that a suspension will proceed even while your appeal is being reviewed. However, if the punishment is an expulsion referral, your child has the right to stay in school until a final decision is made, and you have the right to have an attorney at the expulsion hearing.

## If your child is in expulsion proceedings or if you need help appealing a suspension, you can contact:

The Educational Equity Project at the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
Phone: 312-888-4195

Stand Up for Each Other! (SUFEQ)  
Phone: 773-8000-EDU(338)  
[www.luc.edu/law/centers/childlaw/institutes/child\\_education/suspensionadvocacyproject/](http://www.luc.edu/law/centers/childlaw/institutes/child_education/suspensionadvocacyproject/)

## What do you do when—despite available restorative justice alternatives—your school still chooses a punishment like suspension or expulsion?

“When POWER-PAC conducted its forums, we found that in more than 2 out of 3 suspensions, parents had not been notified appropriately. Many times they heard about the suspension from their child, from another parent, or only learned of it after the fact.”

—POWER-PAC Forum Report

Find out who is in charge of discipline at your school. Sometimes there is a disciplinarian; sometimes it is the Assistant Principal. Make sure they followed the right steps as set in the Student Code of Conduct.

If you are still concerned, call the Parent Support Family & Community Engagement (FACE) Hotline at (773) 553-3223 or your Area Network Office (contact CPS, your school, or visit [www.CPS.edu/networks](http://www.CPS.edu/networks) to get the name and address).

## Remember! Once the school makes the decision about the punishment, or makes a referral for expulsion, you have a right to appeal:

- > If you do not agree with the decision.
- > If you think the school chose a consequence that is too harsh.
- > If you think the offense was not categorized correctly.
- > If you think the child was wrongly accused.

## How to appeal the decision

- > First, ask the Principal to review the discipline decision.
- > Second, if you are not satisfied with the Principal's response, write a letter requesting an appeal.

The letter should go to your Area Network Office to the Chief Area Officer, or if your child attends a charter, contract, or performance school, the letter goes to the Director of School Support of the Office of New Schools. These offices are responsible for investigating your concern. Put it in writing! A simple letter like this will work:

Mr. or Ms. Chief Area Officer  
Chicago Public Schools—Area Office  
(Contact CPS, your school or visit  
[www.CPS.edu/networks](http://www.CPS.edu/networks) to get the name  
and address of your Area Office.)

May 10, 2016

Dear Chief Area Officer,

My name is Mary Smith (your name) and I am writing to appeal the 5-day suspension (fill in the exact days of the suspension or note if it is an expulsion referral) given on April 1, 2016 (fill in the date) to my child, Joey Smith (put your child's name).

I don't agree with this consequence and am asking you to please review the disciplinary action taken. My reasons are: \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact me with your response. You can contact me at 1234 West Center Street, home phone 773-123-4567, cell phone 312-123-4567 or email address MaryS@gmail.com.  
(Fill in whatever contact information you'd like to include.)

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Mary Smith  
(print and sign your name)

# Elementary Justice Campaign timeline



**2003** Parents first connected around their concerns about exclusionary discipline.

**2004** POWER-PAC parent leaders presented their recommendations to the Chicago Public School Board.



**2005** Visiting other schools helped parent leaders see Restorative Justice in action. Here, POWER-PAC members traveled to Los Angeles, California to learn about their “Peace Games” and other RJ practices.

**2005** Then School Board President, Michael Scott, committed to support the parents around their goal to lessen the dependence on exclusionary discipline and agreed to fund parent-led research.

POWER-PAC held 3 community forums and traveled to Minneapolis and Los Angeles to learn about restorative justice and peacekeeping efforts in elementary schools there.

POWER-PAC leaders opened the first Parent Peace Center at Brunson Elementary School.

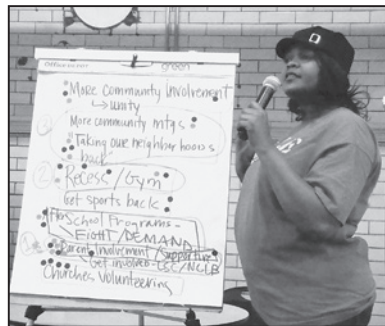
*Since then more than half a million dollars has supported parent-led restorative justice programs in schools.*

**2007** POWER-PAC won a major rewrite of the Chicago Student Code of Conduct to remove “Zero Tolerance” language and replace it with a philosophy of “restorative justice” with alternative options to using overly punitive discipline. Schools were no longer required to call police on students for minor infractions and preschool and kindergartners were excluded from out-of-school suspensions.

*Each year since this victory, the Code has been revamped to include more support for “restorative justice.”*

**2010** COFI published the first edition of this Parent-to-Parent Guide to Restorative Justice in the Chicago Public Schools and parents began to provide parent-to-parent training.

*Now, nearly 1000 parents have been trained on their rights, the practice and philosophy of restorative justice, and how to push for it in their local schools.*



**2010** At one of the first Parent-to-Parent trainings, parents brainstormed ways to bring RJ to every Chicago Public School.

**2012** POWER-PAC was appointed to the Council of State Government Justice Center’s Discipline Consensus project informing federal guidelines on school discipline released in 2014 by the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. The guideline aimed to reduce racial disparities in school discipline and encourage the use of positive discipline approaches.



**2012** A POWER-PAC leader testified in Washington, D.C. at a Congressional briefing on her work as a Peacemaker in Chicago schools.

**2014** POWER-PAC won more major changes in the Code of Conduct. Now, suspension may only be used as a “last resort” and the maximum a student can be suspended is 5 days, except in extreme circumstances (reduced from 10). Students in preschool through 2nd grade cannot be suspended and there is a ban on group punishment, including silent lunches, which were used to punish entire student bodies in some schools. Mandatory expulsions are eliminated for students in 5th grade and younger.

POWER-PAC and its partners also won the citywide release of discipline data to improve accountability and passed a similar law at the state level.

**2015** New Parent Peace Centers were opened in Chicago elementary schools and community sites across the city.

A new state law, SB100, was passed aimed at lessening the use of exclusionary discipline across Illinois!



**“For me, it’s personal. It’s a safety issue. Ten years ago, I had a student who was suspended get killed. I want you here because it’s hard to speak at children’s funerals.”**

—Tiffany Tillman, Melody Elementary School Principal

**“When we asked one young lady why she responded more respectfully to the Peacemakers than to other adults in her life, including the school staff, she said ‘The people at the Peace Center treat me like I’m a human.’”**

—Laurella Scaggs, parent and peacemaker at Brunson School



Peacemakers and POWER-PAC leaders, Laurella Scaggs, Felipa Mena and Catherine Jones

**“The Peace Center gives them a calm and peaceful place to express their feelings.”**

—Teacher at Nicholson Elementary School

### Parent Peace Centers transform schools

When POWER-PAC parents launched the Elementary Justice Campaign in 2005, Brunson Specialty School in Chicago’s Westside Austin community had had more than 300 out-of-school suspensions in one year—out of a school of 900 kindergarten through 5th graders.

Parents secured funding from the Cook County Juvenile Division of the State’s Attorney’s office for the first **Peace Center**, an afterschool program at Brunson to test a **restorative justice** approach.

The program proved successful beyond the parents’ dreams. An evaluation through an examination of grade reports, teacher check-ins, and attendance records found that 80% of the participating students showed improvements academically and the teachers reported significant changes in their behavior and attitude.



At a Parent Peace Center

### Expanding restorative justice

All staffed by trained parent peacemakers, the Peace Centers have expanded to sites across the city. The program has provided intensive restorative justice programming and conflict resolution skills to hundreds of students—in lieu of suspensions or punitive consequences. Dozens of parents have been trained as “peacemakers” and circle keepers. They facilitate weekly groups with students who are referred by teachers, parents or themselves—based on a concern about the student’s behavior or a belief that the student is at-risk of serious trouble at school or in the community. Peacemakers mentor the children who learn de-escalation and conflict resolution skills that can be utilized at home, at school, and on the streets.





Parents and grandparents are getting involved in so many ways! You, too, can make a difference. Participate in your local school and work with other parents and the school staff to make restorative justice come to life.

**“Restorative justice gives students opportunities to express themselves and to talk about why they did what they did, and to learn from it. We provide an alternative to suspension or detention and now the number of suspensions is on its way down. In the circles, the students get to know each other at a deeper level. Considering how many areas feed into our school now, it is so important that we build respect across different neighborhoods or backgrounds.”**

—Felipa Mena, parent and peacemaker

## Parent Peace Centers transform lives

The Wells High School Peace Center started in 2010, providing programming during the students’ lunch hours with peace circles led by trained parent peacemakers.

It was started by Felipa Mena who knows first hand what is at stake; her son was killed the prior summer—one of seven young men lost to street violence in just one night.



Peace Center facilitators and administrators all agree that when schools have Peace Centers and students are referred to them, there is a substantive shift away from the entrenched punitive discipline practices. The peace circle process helps students share their thoughts and emotions with the group while providing respectful guidelines for talking and listening. Learning to listen without responding or reacting is an important lesson for students and builds the habit of respectful listening.

An administrator at Wells High School told us that “from the very beginning of bringing in the Peace Center, we had less fights” and the attendance went up ten percent. He stated that kids learn to “get the hang of life” and to take their education seriously.

Peace Center Peer Coach and veteran Peacekeeper, Lynn Morton, shared that “hopefully very soon, restorative justice will be the go-to thing rather than the afterthought. That everybody in the school will have an automatic response that we’re going to try something else... that suspensions and expulsions are not the first choice but restorative justice will be the first choice.

—*Making Policy Come to Life* Report, Roosevelt University

**“Just this week, we worked with one young lady who was thinking about dropping out of high school. She really just needed someone to listen. When I was coming up, I didn’t have anyone listening to me. I am so happy that I can be there for these young people today.”**

— Ruby Murphy, parent and peacemaker

## Parent-to-Parent > Help make it happen!

**“Getting restorative justice adopted by Chicago Public Schools is a big success. Parents organized to change the rules on how schools discipline children, but parents also have to take things into their own hands and organize programs in local schools.”**

—Catherine Jones, parent



Catherine Jones and Governor Quinn

**Parents are the key to making restorative justice a reality in Chicago schools!**

### Parents have to work together to make restorative justice happen in Chicago schools!

*Regular everyday parents have made a difference! You can too!* Here are some things we’ve learned working together in POWER-PAC and in the Elementary Justice Campaign.

- 1 Educate yourself** and collect information about how restorative justice works. Look at the resources you have within reach and take trainings on restorative justice.
- 2 Talk with more parents** about your goal. Build a supportive team, or group of parents and grandparents, to accomplish this goal.
- 3 Identify your allies** at your school and in your community. Many teachers are interested in moving in this direction and many administrators know about restorative justice from trainings offered by CPS. Police can also be allies—they do not want to be called for every little thing at the school. Churches, community groups, business people, and many others may want to help to make a less violent and more peaceful environment in the school and community.
- 4 Bring your ideas** to the school administration and your Local School Council. You may want to offer to work with them to bring funds to the school to support this work.
- 5 Keep at it!** Remember, to really change the school culture will take time, everyone working together, and training to bring the circle-keeping, mediation, and conflict resolution skills to your school’s community. *Good luck!*



Celebrating the power of parents!



## > Dedication, acknowledgments, and resources for parents

*We dedicate this guide to the memory of the late Chicago Public School President Michael Scott who worked tirelessly by our side to see changes made in Chicago's school discipline code.*

We appreciate the great work and partnership of the advocacy groups listed below, and others including the Chicago Department of Families and Support Services, the Chicago Police Department, the Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Teachers Union, the Cook County Juvenile Court, the Cook County States Attorney's Juvenile Division, and VOYCE, a collaboration of youth organizing efforts.

**We are grateful to the many individuals and foundations who have been so generous in supporting our work.**

**Special thanks to the Steans Family Foundation for funding and supporting the creation of this guide and the development of workshops to help parents to take control of restorative change in their schools, and to the Annenberg Institute PASSAGES project for funding the updating of this guide.**

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### **Here are a few of many resources available in Chicago to parents and students:**

#### **Alternatives, Inc.**

4730 N. Sheridan Road  
Chicago, IL 60640  
Phone: 773-506-7474  
[www.alternativesyouth.org](http://www.alternativesyouth.org)  
Provides training on restorative justice and supports peer conferences in CPS high schools.

#### **Blocks Together**

3711 W. Chicago Ave  
Chicago, IL 60651  
Phone: 773-940-2319  
[www.btchicago.org](http://www.btchicago.org)  
Organizes youth and residents in West Humboldt Park to push for alternatives to punitive discipline in schools and to create community safety.

#### **Chicago Area Project**

55 E. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604  
Phone: 312-663-3574  
[www.chicagoareaproject.org](http://www.chicagoareaproject.org)  
Provide juvenile justice diversion program and consulting on restorative justice.

#### **Community Justice for Youth Institute**

2929 S. Wabash, Suite 203  
Chicago, IL 60616  
Phone: 312-842-5345  
<http://cjuryiorg.publishpath.com/>  
[www.communityjustice4youth.org](http://www.communityjustice4youth.org)  
Provides trainings on restorative justice, including Circle Keeper training, and runs Community Panels for Youth, a juvenile justice court diversion program.

#### **Equip for Equality - Legal Advocacy Program**

20 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 300  
Chicago, IL 60602  
Phone: (312) 341-0022  
Toll free (800) 537-2632  
TTY (800) 610-2779  
[www.equipforequality.org](http://www.equipforequality.org)  
Provides advocacy and information for students with special needs in expulsion cases.

#### **Northwestern School of Law Children and Family Justice Center**

Bluhm Legal Clinic  
357 E. Chicago Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60611  
Phone: 312-503-8576  
Fax: 312-503-0953  
[www.law.northwestern.edu/cfjc](http://www.law.northwestern.edu/cfjc)  
Provides advocacy and information for students in expulsion cases.

#### **Project NIA**

1530 W. Morse Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60626  
[www.project-nia.org](http://www.project-nia.org)  
Phone: 773-392-5165  
Supports a Peace Room at Gale Elementary and a community wellness center in Rogers Park. Provides restorative justice training and consulting.

### **... and many others!**

Editing: Kate Peyton  
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## Parents Organized to Win, Educate and Renew - Policy Action Council (POWER-PAC)

is a cross-cultural, citywide membership organization of low-income parents. Our mission is to build a strong voice for low-income, immigrant and working families by uniting parents across race and community around issues of importance to families.

We run Peace Centers at Chicago schools and provide parent-to-parent workshops on restorative justice. This is part of POWER-PAC's **Elementary Justice Campaign**, to change school discipline policies that have had such a negative impact, particularly on children of color.

We work on other issues, too. Our **Early Learning Campaign** aims to get more low-income children of color enrolled in quality early education and preschool. We work to break through the barriers that exist for too many families by addressing both policy and practical issues.



**Recess for All!** is our successful campaign to restore recess in Chicago elementary schools. Children are healthier, happier, better students when they have recess!



**POWER-PAC**  
Parents Organized to Win,  
Educate and Renew - Policy  
Action Council

A COFI Project

**Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI)**'s mission is to strengthen the power and voice of low-income and working families at all levels of civic life—from local institutions and communities to the city and state policy arenas.

Founded in 1995, COFI is driven by a deep commitment to social justice, and grounded in the time-tested principles, strategies, accomplishments, and approaches of community organizing. COFI's model of Family Focused Organizing provides intensive and systematic leadership development, and ongoing organizing expertise.

We organize low-income parents of color (mostly mothers and grandmothers) who, in turn, have built local and citywide organizations that are fighting for change around issues affecting families, and attracting attention nationally to their innovative policy solutions and organizing steps.

COFI helps to build family-supportive communities by developing parents' capacities to lead—to improve their lives, strengthen their families and better their communities.



**COFI**  
Community Organizing  
and Family Issues

1436 W. Randolph Street, 4th floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60607

312 226-5141

[www.cofionline.org](http://www.cofionline.org)