



INDEPENDENT
EDUCATIONAL
CONSULTANTS
ASSOCIATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 23, 2014

Support for Families with Violent and Oppositional Teens is Critical

Fairfax, VA – Over the weekend, the *New York Times* published an article focused on teens who act out violently against parents, siblings and themselves. The story ([*Seeing Sons' Violent Potential, but Finding Little Help or Hope*](#)) told the story of a family and their struggle with local care and residential treatment programs.

The author, Benedict Carey, accurately noted the difficulties in securing funding from insurance companies and local school districts as well as the absence of good information about the success of such long-term residential options. With hundreds of such programs, offering a wide range of services and specializations, it is difficult for a parent to know what options would work best for his or her own child. The answer may lie with experts in residential care. [Independent Educational Consultants](#) (IECs) are trained experts who possess comprehensive, firsthand knowledge of placement options. Many IECs specialize in crisis intervention, and have extensive experience advising families with children who have emotional and behavioral difficulties.

“Long and short term placements, from medical models to intensive therapy and wilderness programs can be an excellent alternative for families with at-risk children, teenagers, and young adults,” said Mark Sklarow, chief executive officer of the Independent Educational Consultants Association. “But every program is different. It’s crucial to find the proper placement for each individual child. IECs emphasize the importance of individual assessment and careful, well-informed placement.”

IECA members regularly visit schools and programs across the country (spending about 20% of their time on the road) to evaluate and monitor program success and quality, including meeting with program staff and observing staff-student interactions. This expertise is used to advise families on the most suitable placement for the child. IECA members are objective and maintain an impartial view of each placement option; they accept no placement fee from schools or programs. This means their only obligation is to the client and family, and not to programs looking to fill beds. Issues such as drug use, attachment disorder, promiscuity, aggression, and defiance can create a barrage of overwhelming and stressful emotions in a family. As parents look for answers, most are not aware of what options are available. Given the immediate need often associated with these situations, families in crisis can be especially vulnerable to an improper placement.

“IECA educational consultants advise parents on all facets of their child’s or young adult’s care,” said Sklarow. “This collaborative and confidential assistance can bring long-awaited solutions to families. IECs are thorough in their assessment and evaluative processes, conducting extensive interviews of family members, school personnel, and other key referring professionals.”

In many cases, testing may be done to determine specific learning and behavioral patterns. Teens who are “acting out” can appear very similar, although the underlying roots of the behavior can be quite different. After placement, the IEC follows up with the child to monitor progress. IECA members often work as part of a treatment team in conjunction with therapists and can also serve as supports for parents.

About IECA

IECA was founded in 1976 as a nonprofit, professional association of established independent educational consultants. IECA member independent educational consultants are professionals who assist students and families with educational decision-making. Their educational backgrounds, specialized training, campus visitations, and professional experience equip them to help students choose schools, colleges, or programs that meet their individual needs and goals. Membership in the Association requires an appropriate master’s degree or comparable training and a minimum of three years of experience in the profession, as well as meeting IECA’s professional standards and subscribing to its [Principles of Good Practice](#). Members continually update their knowledge and maintain skills through IECA-sponsored meetings, workshops, training programs, webinars, and information exchanges with colleges, schools, programs and other IECs.

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