



INDEPENDENT
EDUCATIONAL
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ASSOCIATION

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Finding the Proper Placement for Troubled Teens is Crucial to Success *IECA Stresses the Need for Individualized Attention and Placement*

Fairfax, VA – Earlier today, the *New York Times* published an article on the dangers of therapeutic programs ([Students Recall Special Schools Run Like Jails](#)). [Independent Educational Consultants](#) (IECs) are trained experts who possess comprehensive, first-hand knowledge of placement options. Many IECs specialize in crisis intervention, and have extensive experience advising families with children who have emotional and behavioral difficulties.

“Intervention and wilderness programs can be an excellent alternative for families with at-risk teenagers,” said Mark Sklarow, chief executive officer of the Independent Educational Consultants Association. “But programs vary, and the key to a successful outcome is finding the proper placement for each individual child. IECs stress the need for individual assessment and careful, well-informed placement.”

IECA members regularly visit schools and programs across the country and internationally (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.

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, at-risk teenagers can be especially vulnerable to an improper placement.

“IECA educational consultants advise parents on all facets of their child’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. IECA member consultants spend about 20% of their time on the road, visiting therapeutic programs and other educational institutions.

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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