




# **FAMILY RESOURCE PROTOCOL**

CAJE's work with day schools has historically taken place through the medium of professional development, convening and networking education leaders, as well as implementing programs and initiatives on behalf of the entire school community. As the agency that interacts with and supports Miami-funded day schools, CAJE feels that there is a gap in our community in addressing what happens to students who are expelled or counseled out of a school and how we, as a community, can support these students in need.

That gap became abundantly clear when a father called our offices after his 10-year-old son had been home for several weeks following his expulsion from one of Miami's funded day schools. The father was desperately seeking assistance in finding another day school for his son that he could afford and naturally, did not feel comfortable turning to the school that had expelled his son for advice.

Although Audrey Maman, CAJE's Associate Director for School Markets, stayed on the phone with the father for 45 minutes trying to provide him with alternate solutions for his son, the situation was very complex, and tragically, not long after the call, the 10-year-old son, Aaron, allegedly took his own life.

This Family Resource Protocol described below was created to help address this situation so that no other child will "fall through the cracks" in the future after being expelled from a school.





## **WHAT IS THE GAP IN OUR COMMUNITY?**

Currently, the Miami day school community does not have systematic protocols to address what happens to students who are expelled or counseled out of a school with clear steps as to how we support students once this occurs. CAJE recognizes that individual schools may have systems in place, but as a community, we are looking to work together.

Moreover, once a child is expelled or counseled out of school, the school in question is most often no longer in touch with the family of the expelled child or the family may be angry at the school and find themselves without any resource to turn to for help in navigating next steps for their child. Thus, the family, and more specifically the child that has been expelled or counseled out, remain in limbo since there is currently no entity that can assist them in finding answers to their needs regarding school choice, financial issues, and emotional concerns.

CAJE met with the principal of the school the student in question had attended. The school had already been in talks with Jewish Community Services (JCS) and Jewish Adoption and Family Care Options (JAFCO) to put something in place to avoid such tragedies in the future, but unfortunately, due to lack of funds, nothing ever materialized.

CAJE and the principal of that school worked together, along with CAJE's coalition of Miami Admission Directors (CMAD) and our Principals and Administrators Council (PAC), to craft a comprehensive plan of action to bridge the identified gap.



## **THE FAMILY RESOURCE PROTOCOL IS A MULTI-PHASE ONGOING PROCESS:**

- **External Phase** – When a child is expelled, counseled out, or withdraws from a school, the administrators from the school will give the parents an information sheet containing all the community resources available to them (which includes JCS and JAFCO) as well as information to contact CAJE’s Associate Director of School Markets, Audrey Maman ([audreymaman@caje-miami.org](mailto:audreymaman@caje-miami.org)) should they have any questions/concerns regarding next steps. Administrators will also alert CAJE when a child has been expelled or counseled out from their school.
- **Internal Phase Part I** – Our schools have agreed to follow what we are calling, with the permission of the family, Aaron’s Rule. Aaron’s Rule states that if a child has been absent from school for a minimum of 3 days during which the school has not been able to get in contact with the family, it is the responsibility of the school to send an administrator/teacher to the home. If the administrator/teacher suspects anything, they have to report it to their supervisor who will, in turn, report to CAJE and JCS and/or to JAFCO depending on the issue.



## **THE FAMILY RESOURCE PROTOCOL CONTINUED**

- **Internal Phase Part II – JAFCO’s Clinical Supervisor Jessica Califf and Clinical Team Leader Shea Pucci have started scheduling one-hour presentations with our funded schools on the subject of Trauma-Informed Care for Educators. The presentation covers the various types of abuse, the symptoms and signs to look out for, the potential effects of abuse, and outlines the various approaches an educator can take when faced with these types of situations.**
  - **Internal Phase Part III – Creating a group made up of the counselors and psychologists from the ten Federation-funded schools. The primary goal of this network is to allow the counselors/psychologists to safely and confidentially share situations happening in their respective schools and receive advice and suggestions from their peers. Shea Pucci from JAFCO sits in on these meetings and offers recommendations for resources. Based on the conversations and recommendations from this network, CAJE may seek to provide additional professional development opportunities to assist teachers and administrators in addressing these types of issues.**
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