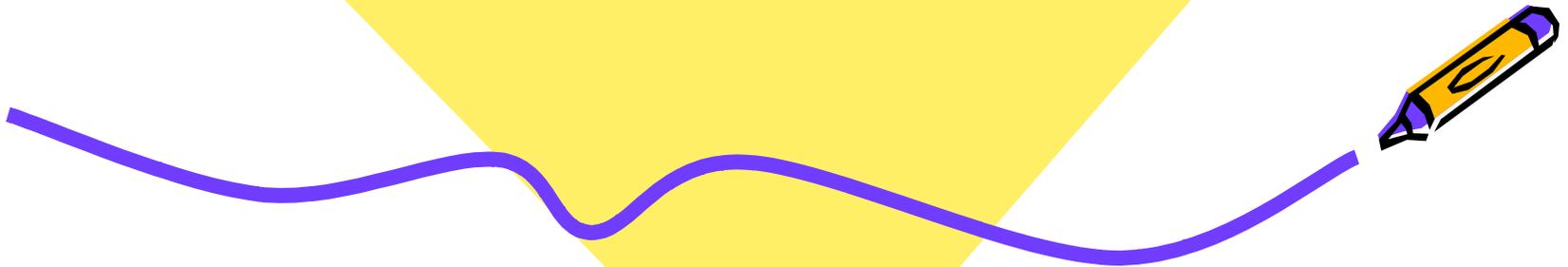
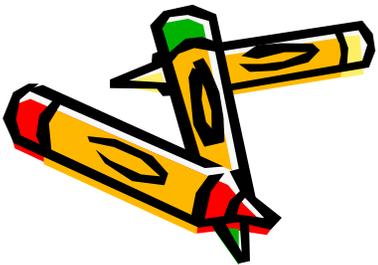


Indicator #3: Have you conducted assessments on common risk and stress factors faced by students (e.g., exposure to crime, violence, substance abuse?)



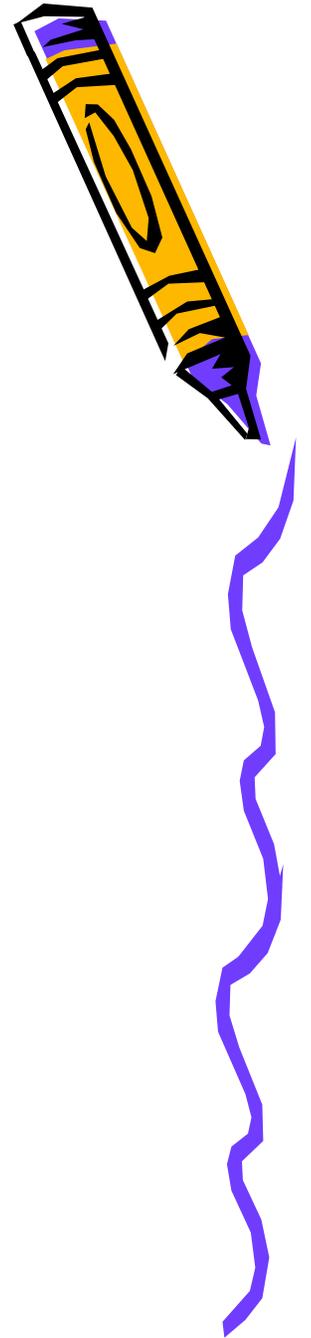
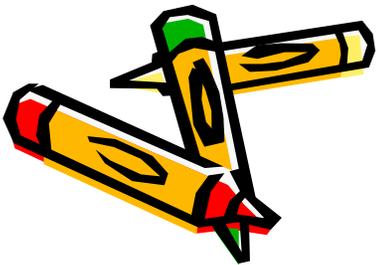
# Background

- Risk factors are biological factors or psychosocial experiences that negatively impact a child's mental health.
- Risk factors can occur on multiple levels: within the child, family, school, or community.
- Some research studies suggest that the presence of multiple risk factors has a multiplicative rather than additive effect (e.g., 3 individual risk factors and 3 family risk factors produces an overall risk level closer to 9 than to 6).



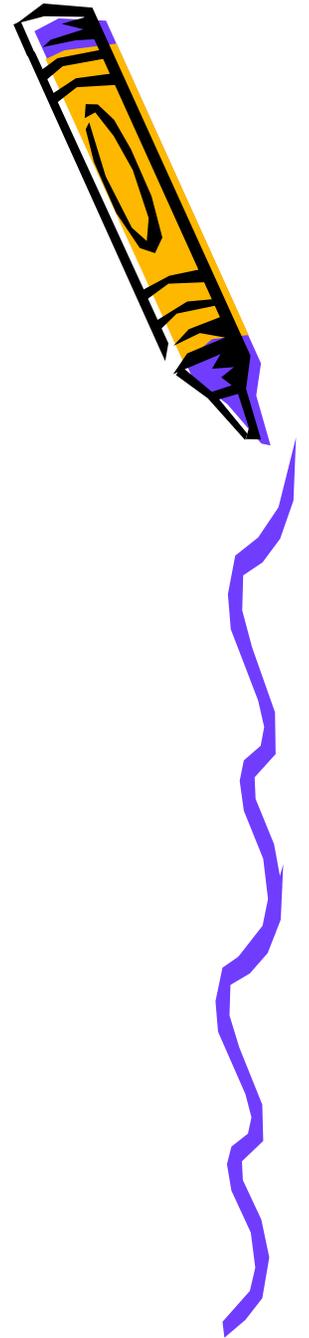
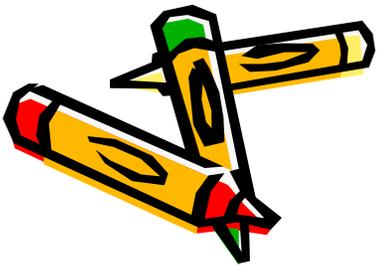
# STUDENT RISK FACTORS

- Low IQ/Learning problems/ADHD
- Medical conditions
- Grade failure/poor school performance
- Teen pregnancy
- Negative attitude about school
- Traumatic experiences



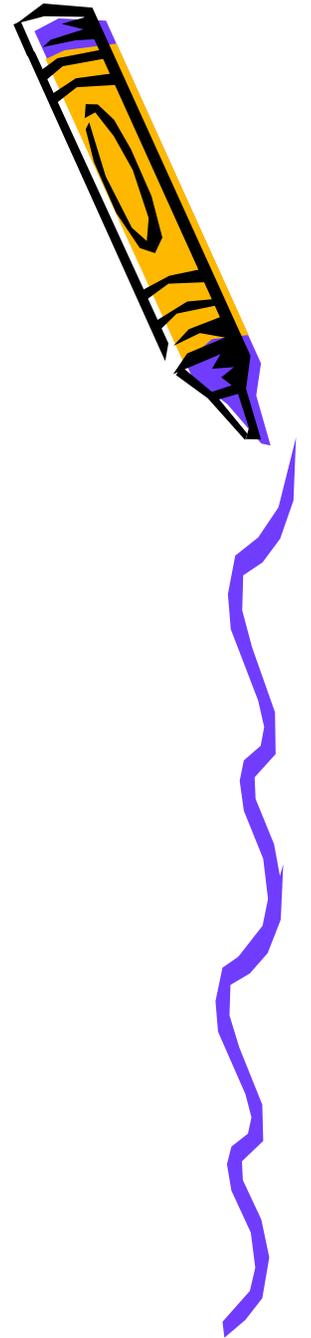
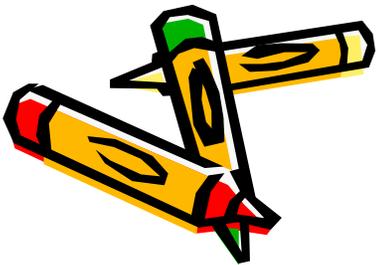
# FAMILY RISK FACTORS

- Parental stress
- Family history of mental illness
- Medical conditions
- Incarceration/illegal activity
- Substance or alcohol abuse
- Domestic violence
- Inconsistent caregiving or housing



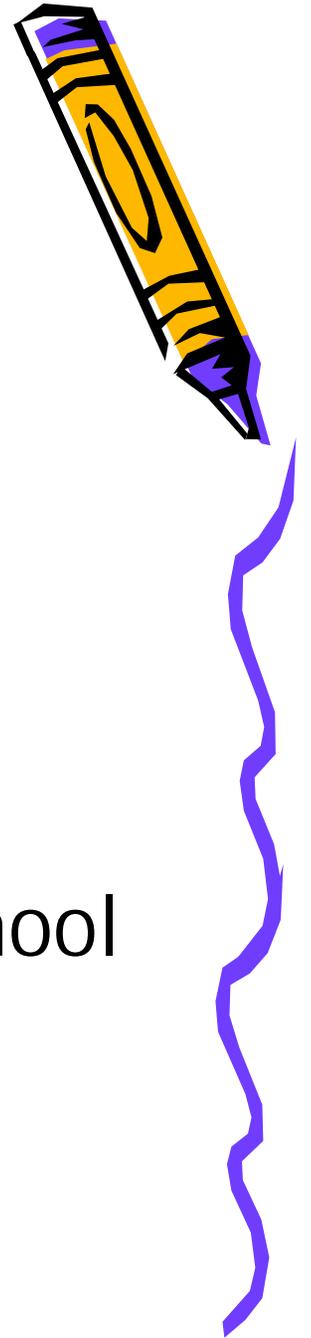
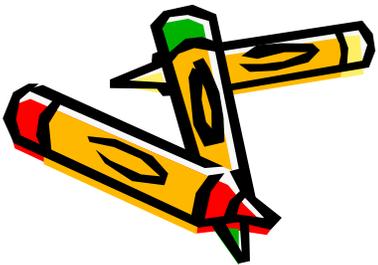
# COMMUNITY RISK FACTORS

- Poverty
- Lack of resources
- Drug use, drug dealing
- Violence
- Noise
- Overcrowding



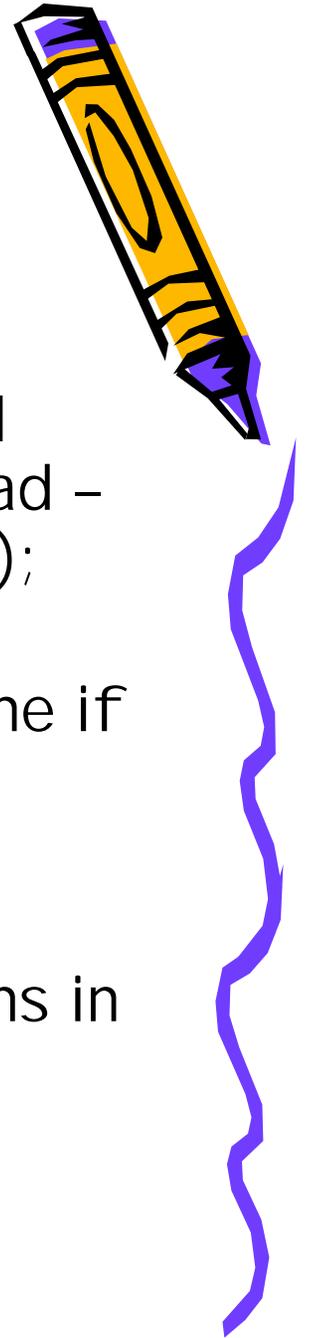
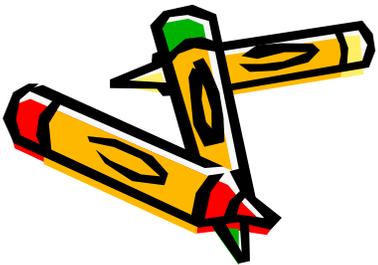
# SCHOOL RISK FACTORS

- Violence, bullying
- Poor school achievement
- High student: teacher ratio
- High staff turnover
- Poor funding/poor condition of school
- Apathy

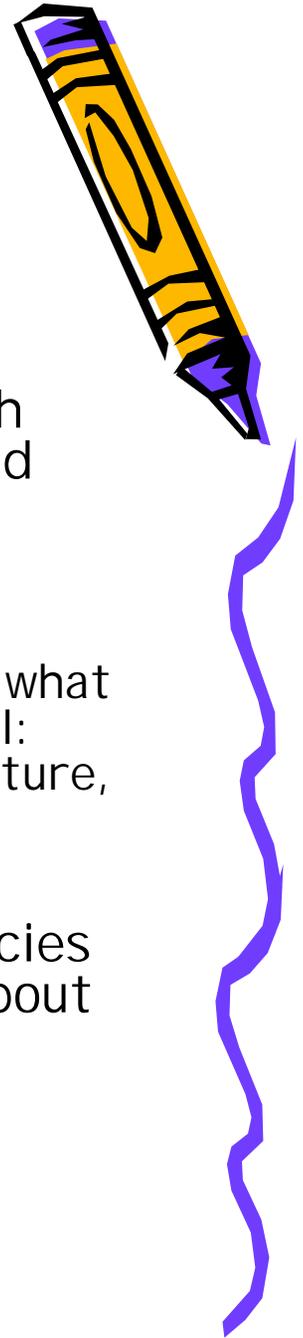


# Menu of Suggested Activities

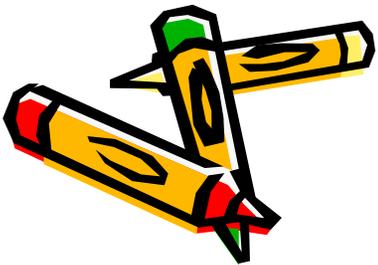
- 1) Utilize specific instruments to assess risk and protective factors in the youth in your caseload – e.g., Risk/Stress Factor Assessment (CSMHA); Assets Checklist
- 2) Review current intake assessment to determine if it inquires about common risk factors, and to augment where appropriate.
- 3) Make an effort to include risk and protective factor assessment and associated interventions in your treatment planning and progress notes.



# Menu of Suggested Activities

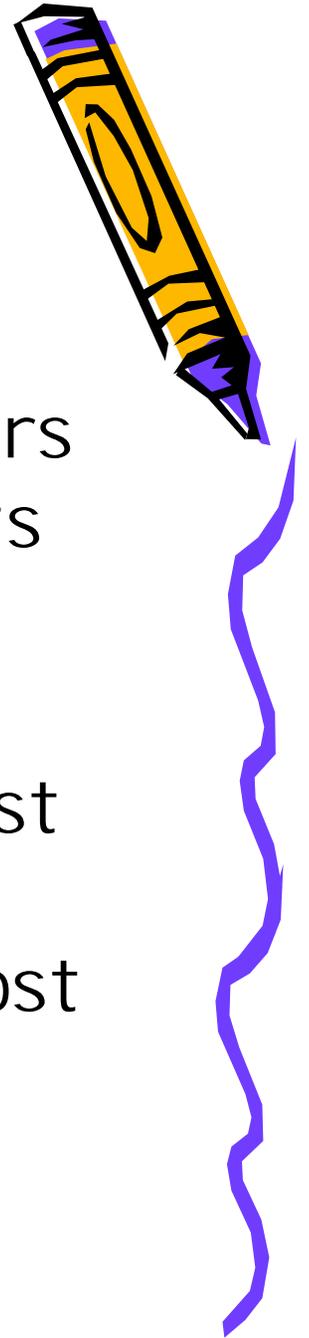
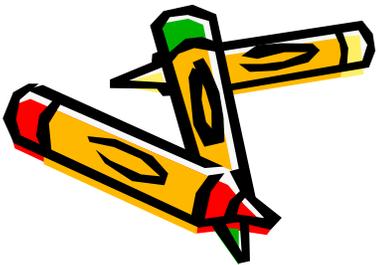


- 4) Assess community/school risk level for your school through needs assessments, focus groups, informal interviews, and review of existing data.
  - Check out the census data for the neighborhood around your school at <http://www.census.gov/>.
  - Check with your school administration and school staff about what they see as the biggest risk factors and stressors in the school: drop-out rates, school achievement scores, violence, infrastructure, etc.
  
- 5) Network with other community service providers and agencies to access their data and gather additional information about the school and the surrounding community.



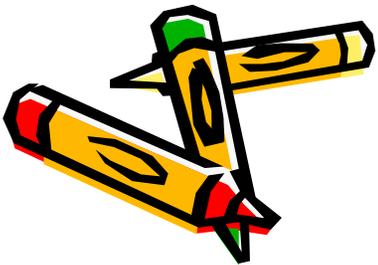
# Menu of Suggested Activities

- 6) Host focus groups with key stakeholders to determine stressors for the students and assets/resources that exist to address those needs.
- 7) Brainstorm as a group about how to best assess common risk and stress factors. Discuss factors that seem to be the most prevalent within your community.



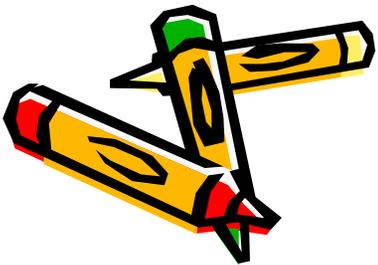
# HELPFUL HINTS

- Do not ignore the larger context/ environment in which children and families live and just try to focus on the presenting issues. This information can help inform the etiology behind a problem and how to best implement treatment.
- While it is important to understand risk factors, it is also necessary to understand individual, family, and community assets.



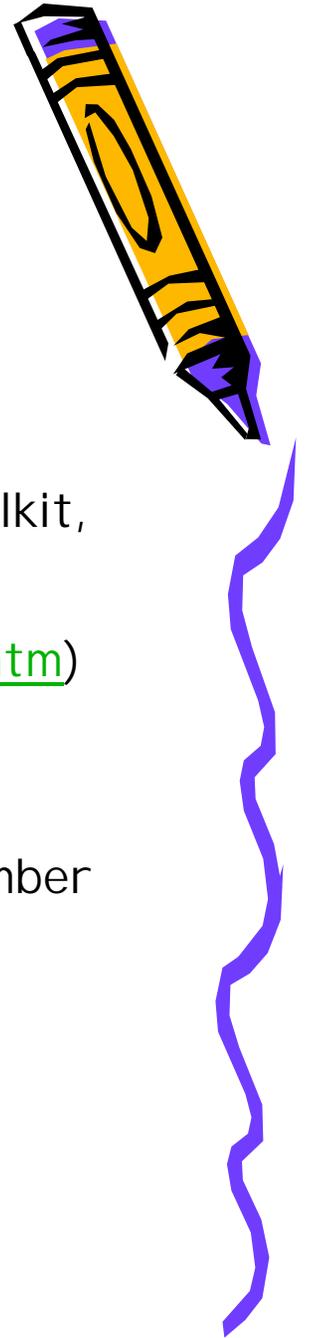
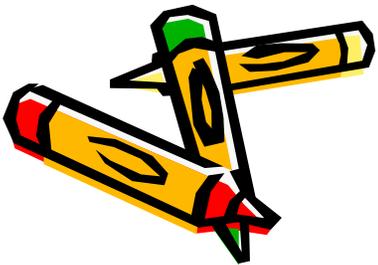
# HELPFUL HINTS

- Be open with students and families and ask them what they feel are the biggest stressors and risk factors for students.
  - Ask questions that target individual, school, social, community, and family issues to develop a broad picture.
    - Example of questions:
      - Ask, *"What 3 things do you think are most stressful about your neighborhood?"*
      - For example: Violence, police presence, lack of police presence, noise, trash/pollution, fighting between neighbors, drug use
    - The interviews with students and families should not be seen as invasive or pushy. Also, protecting students confidentiality will be very important and when addressing personal factors may be best addressed with individual interviews.

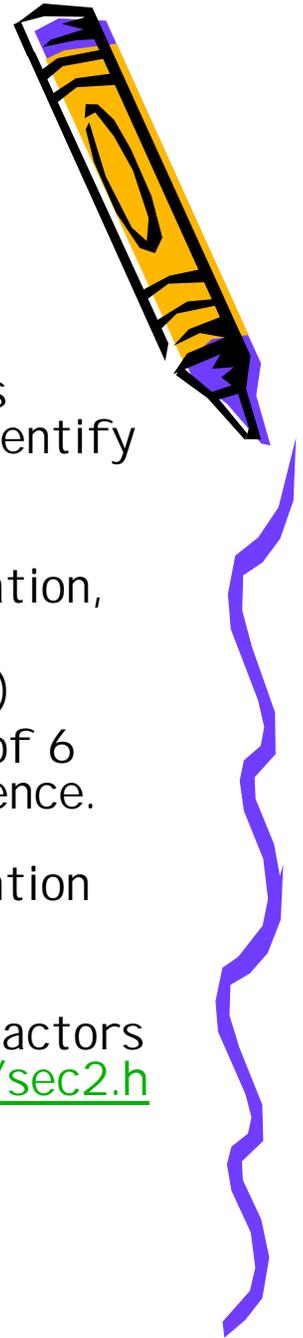


# Web Resources

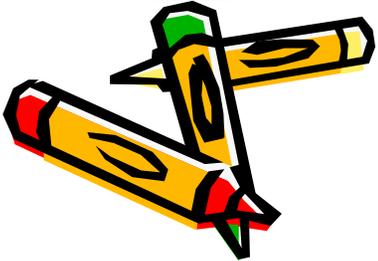
- National Center for Children Exposed to Violence (<http://www.nccev.org/>)
- National School Boards Association, Education leadership toolkit, Assessment tips (<http://www.nsba.org/sbot/toolkit/assesstps.htm>)
- Project Resilience (<http://www.projectresilience.com/index.htm>)
- Resiliency in Action (<http://www.resiliency.com/>)
- Search Institute (<http://www.search-institute.org/>)
- Turning the corner from risk to resiliency: A compilation of articles from Western Center News by Bonnie Benard, November 1993, available through the NWERL website (<http://www.nwrel.org/index.html>)
- Youth in a difficult world. (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/youthdif.cfm>)



# Web Resources



- Early warning, timely response: A guide to safe schools. Includes research-based practices designed to help school communities identify risk factors for violence and develop plans for prevention. (<http://cecp.air.org/guide/guide.pdf>)
- Getting to outcomes: Methods and tools for planning, Self-evaluation, and accountability. (Click on GTO I or GTO II) (<http://www.stanford.edu/~davidf/empowermentevaluation.html>)
- Predictors of youth violence. This document covers the results of 6 longitudinal studies of risk and protective factors for youth violence. ([www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojdp/179065.pdf](http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojdp/179065.pdf)) Risk and protective factors for youth violence by the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center. (<http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/facts/docs/risk.pdf>)
- Surgeon General's report on Mental Health Risk and Prevention Factors (<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/chapter3/sec2.html>)



# Background References

- Fraser, M.W., Kirby, L.D., & Smokowski, P.R. (2004). *Risk and Resilience in Childhood: An ecological Perspective (2nd Ed.)*. Washington DC: National Association of Social Workers.
- Luthar, S., Burack, J., Cicchetti, D., & Weisz, J. (1997). *Developmental Psychopathology: Perspectives on Adjustment, Risk, and Disorder*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Pellegrini, D.S. (1990). Psychosocial risk and protective factors in childhood. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, 11*, 201-209.

