



Los Angeles County
Office of Education

BRIDGES TO SUCCESS

A Publication from the Division of Student Support Services

Arturo Delgado, Ed.D., *superintendent*

July 2015

Mission

The Division of Student Support Services is committed to supporting the physical, social/emotional and mental health, safety, and well-being of all students in Los Angeles County, and to facilitate learning and success in expanded learning environments and in the community.

**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR ARTICLE
ABOUT THE CHOKING GAME**

Inside this issue:

<i>The Choking Game</i>	2
<i>Every Monday Matters</i>	3
<i>OnScene: 5 Reasons Why Paper Based Emergency Plans are as Dead as Disco</i>	5
<i>CyberEducation</i>	6
<i>Homeless: AB 1806, School on Wheels, & Resources</i>	7
<i>Section 504 Resources and Tips</i>	10
<i>Vaccinations (SB 277)</i>	11
<i>Positive Behavior Interventions & Support</i>	12
<i>Students in Foster Care Are Vulnerable to Sex Traffickers</i>	13
<i>LA County Unaccompanied Youth Resource Guide</i>	14
<i>Professional Development Opportunities</i>	15

Even Smart Strong Kids Can Make Dumb Choice with Deadly Consequences: “The Choking Game”

An equal-opportunity danger that has no racial, cultural, religious or socio-economic boundaries

Pass-out activities, commonly known in the media as “The Choking Game,” have been around for generations. Kids experiment with this for non-sexual reasons (*e.g.*, curiosity, peer pressure, the mistaken belief that it is safer than drugs) because they are unaware of the dangers.

Easy access to hundreds of thousands of “how to play” videos on YouTube alone allow this activity to flourish on the Internet without adequate education of its dangers. Statistics are poor because of lack of data being collected via student risk assessment surveys, and a lack of knowledge, methodology and/or standard protocols to investigate injuries and deaths. Injuries are rarely attributed correctly and *many deaths are misclassified as suicide*. News reports show only the tip of the iceberg. News incidents include a Colorado boy who died in a middle school bathroom and a Northern California elementary school student who passed out in class as an after-effect, resulting in the student being transported to the hospital by paramedics.

The Choking Game differs from other risky activities in that it: (1) is not illegal and has no deterrent of legal consequence; (2) does not require acquisition of a product; (3) can be “played” alone; and (4) interrupts basic brain function, making it difficult to know when brain damage or death might occur.

Erik Robinson is one such victim of the Choking Game

Erik died in April 2010 at the age of 12 in Santa Monica just one day after he learned about it from a schoolmate at Lincoln Middle School. Erik’s family was ready to bear his blindsiding death in silence and shame despite police insistence that it was the Choking Game and not a suicide. They could not believe he would do something so ridiculous. Fortunately a classmate came forward and confirmed the truth, which is when they decided to take action.

Thus began the journey called Erik’s Cause

The time has come to bring The Choking Game out of the shadows and into public awareness.

Erik’s Cause has created an exceptional **non-graphic, skills-based training program** addressing this under-discussed issue in a way that does not make kids curious to try it. The program is flexible, can be easily integrated into existing prevention curricula, and excludes material that could expose a school district to potential liability and is presented in a way that minimizes the risk of triggering a possible existing trauma based on a student’s psychological history. The training is standardized, and can be easily replicated. Iron County, Utah is the first school district in the U.S. to formally incorporate this training into its Health curricula (5th, 7th and 10th grades) and is pleased with its success.

The goal is to provide students with tools to effectively resist peer pressure and empower them to make better choices by providing factual information and instilling common-theme strategies to help them avoid sticky situations. Parent education is an integral component to offer new ways to open dialog with their children.

Please visit www.erikscause.org for further information. By proactively educating students and parents, you will save lives and keep families intact.

