

*Deviant Peer Influences in Programs for Youth*, edited by Kenneth A. Dodge, Thomas J. Dishion, and Jennifer E. Lansford. New York: The Guilford Press, 2006, 462 pp. (hardcover).

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Separating high-risk youth from the mainstream and aggregating them with other high-risk youth is common practice in many youth service organizations and institutions. *Deviant Peer Influences in Programs for Youth* reviews evidence suggesting that such practices can foster deviant peer influences that detract from or even counteract intended program outcomes. This edited volume explores the size and scope of the deviant peer contagion threat to high-risk youth in educational, juvenile justice, recreational, treatment, and other settings; poses questions regarding the relative benefits to mainstream youth and the larger community of separating or segregating high-risk youth; and makes recommendations for improving youth programs. *Deviant Peer Influences in Programs for Youth* is the fourth volume of the Duke Series in Child Development and Public Policy addressing the translation of research in child development to contemporary issues in public policy, and it is the product of the Duke Executive Sessions in Deviant Peer Influences, which consisted of more than two dozen scholars from a range of disciplines, public policy officials, and community leaders.

Although few studies can directly attribute the poor outcomes of a given intervention specifically to group deviancy, research across a range of disciplines and methodologies clearly indicates that deviant peer influences are a potential threat when high-risk youth are aggregated. The authors rebuke a list of practices and programs that often contain conditions conducive to deviant peer influences, including academic-tracking and ability-grouping systems, military style boot camps, midnight basketball, and group prevention and treatment interventions. The authors review evidence indicating that these and other practices are ineffective if not iatrogenic (i.e., intervention efforts that produce negative effects) overall. They further propose replacing them with alternative evidenced-based programs and practices with little or no potential for fostering deviant peer influences.

