

San Mateo Probation

Probation Parent Programs Annual Evaluation

Fiscal Year 2017-2018



Contents

Program Description.....	2
Programmatic Challenges in Fiscal Year 2017-18	2
Evaluation Methods	3
Evaluation Findings.....	4
Fiscal Year 2017-18 Highlights.....	4
Profile of Clients Served.....	4
Program Specific Outcomes.....	5
Communication	5
Difficult Conversations	6
Behaviors	7
Enforcing Consequences.....	8
Monitoring	9
Client Story.....	10

Program Description

The Probation Parent Programs (PPP) serve court-ordered or court-directed probation-referred parents of children 12 years and older. Generally, one parent is required to complete the series (as defined by attending at least eight classes), and the other parent may also attend. Sessions range in length from two to three hours each. There are two curricula administered by the Parent Program, described below:

- **The Parent Project¹:** The Parent Project¹ is a parent training program designed specifically for parents of strong-willed or out-of-control teens ranging in age from 13 to 18. The program targets key issues, including: poor school attendance and performance, emotional/behavioral problems, family conflict, runaway behavior, violence, substance abuse, criminal activity, and gang affiliation. The curriculum teaches concrete prevention, identification, and intervention strategies for the most destructive of adolescent behaviors. Parents learn how to increase communication, create positive parent-teen relationships, improve teen's school performance, intervene with substance abuse, and apply techniques for active listening and discipline. This is a 10-week program (3-hour groups and 2 hours for the last 4 sessions), and is taught in English and Spanish. The Parent Project is led by trained, certified facilitators, and parents practice "homework" between groups. Facilitators encourage the group to function independently during the last four weeks. Parents are provided with the UCLA Self-Help Model and are encouraged to continue to meet together when the "formal" group ends.
- **Staying Connected with Your Teen – Prevention Program:** Staying Connected is an educational and skill building program created for families with youth between the ages of 12-18. The goal of the program is to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors that are known to predict later alcohol and other drug use, delinquency, violent behavior, and other behavioral problems in adolescence. The program focuses on strengthening family bonds, establishing clear standards for behavior, and helping parents more appropriately manage the behavior of their teens while also encouraging appropriate growth toward independence. The program is 10 weeks in length.

Programmatic Challenges in Fiscal Year 2017-18

Due to the decrease in the number of youth placed on probation within San Mateo County, the biggest challenge experienced in this fiscal year was filling classes. Additionally, of the parents who are referred to PPP, attendance is not guaranteed because of conflicting work schedules, childcare needs, and/or a lack of transportation to attend weekly classes. These challenges remain consistent across the three prior fiscal years.

¹ See more at www.parentproject.com

Evaluation Methods

Programs funded by San Mateo County Juvenile Probation (Probation) monitor their programs and report client, service, and outcome data to the department and its evaluator, Applied Survey Research (ASR). The methods and tools used to collect this data are described below.

Clients and Services: Grantee programs collected demographic data (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, etc.) and service data (e.g., type of services, hours of services, etc.) for individual clients. Program staff entered these data into their own data systems prior to transferring the data to ASR for analysis.

Outcomes: PPP also conducts its own locally-developed survey to parent participants to track progress toward creating better relationships between parents and their children by improving parenting practices. Some of the indicators measured on the survey include:

- Creating positive parent-teen relationships
- Improving children's school performance
- Intervening with substance use
- Applying techniques for active listening and discipline
- Strengthening family bonds
- Establishing clear standards for behavior
- Helping parents more appropriately manage the behavior of their teens
- Reducing alcohol and other drug use, delinquency, and violent behavior.

Evaluation Findings

Fiscal Year 2017-18 Highlights

- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of participating parents were female, and 59% identified as Latino/Hispanic.
- Parents showed statistically significant improvements in communication with their children, having difficult conversations, yelling less, monitoring their children, and enforcing consequences.

Profile of Clients Served

In FY 2017-18, Parenting Programs served 64 parents, all of whom had demographic data. A majority of parents were female (64%) and identified predominantly as Latino/Hispanic (59%), followed by White/Caucasian (17%), and Asian/Pacific Islander (8%). The average age of children was 16 years old. Parents received an average of 12.5 hours of service and spent an average of 1.8 months in the program.

Table 1. Client Services

CLIENT SERVICES	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18
Number of clients served	121	93	50	84	52	64
Average number of hours served	16.2	15.8	14.7	17.5	17.3	12.5
Average time in the program (months)	2.1	2.5	2.4	1.8	1.8	1.8

Program Specific Outcomes

PPP administered a locally-developed survey to parents who attended the Parent Project and Staying Connected programs. PPP administered pre- and post-surveys to fifteen parents in the Parent Project program and twenty parents in the Staying Connected program in FY 2017-18.² Parents made significant improvements from pre- to post-test in several areas targeted by the course. In fact, 58% (22 of 38) of the pre- and post-test item scores showed statistically significant improvement in behaviors in both the participants and their children as seen in the Tables below.³

Communication

Over the course of the program, parents showed statistically significant improvements in showing or telling their children they are proud of his/her actions, and listening to their child without interrupting.

Table 2. Communication Survey Results

COMMUNICATION ITEMS	n	PRE-TEST MEAN	POST-TEST MEAN	PRE/POST CHANGE
I tell my child that I love him/her	34	3.26	3.47	0.051
I hug or kiss my child	14	2.93	3.14	0.272
I write my child notes that say I love him/her	14	1.86	2.57	0.055
I pay full attention when my child talks to me	32	3.50	3.72	0.032*
I am able to tell or show my child that I am proud of his/her actions	34	3.35	3.59	0.009**
I recognize when my child does something positive	34	3.38	3.53	0.134
I listen to my child without interrupting	34	2.91	3.32	0.002**

Note: 'n' column represents number of paired responses to both pre and post items (out of 35). Statistically significant at ** $p < .01$ or * $p < .05$. Pre-post change is the absolute value of change.

² Each survey item was measured on a 4-point scale, with 1=Never, 2=Not often, 3=Often, and 4=Always.

³ Paired t-test applied to determine significance.

Difficult Conversations

Parents reported a significant increase in whether they were having conversations with their children about drugs, alcohol, peer pressure, gangs, sexual activity, depression, and suicide. The only conversation topic that did not significantly increase was about running away.

Table 3. Conversations Survey Results

CONVERSATION ITEMS	n	PRE-TEST MEAN	POST-TEST MEAN	PRE/POST CHANGE
I have conversations with my child about drugs	34	2.88	3.50	0.000**
I have conversations with my child about alcohol	34	2.85	3.44	0.001**
I have conversations with my child about peer pressure	34	2.76	3.26	0.004**
I have conversations with my child about gangs	34	2.59	3.35	0.000**
I have conversations with my child about sexual activity	34	2.68	3.15	0.003**
I have conversations with my child about depression	32	2.47	3.16	0.000**
I have conversations with my child about suicide	32	2.16	2.94	0.000**
I have conversations with my child about running away	30	2.20	2.67	0.080

Note: 'n' column represents number of paired responses to both pre and post items (out of 35). Statistically significant at ** $p < .01$ or * $p < .05$. Pre-post change is the absolute value of change.

Behaviors

Parents reported yelling at their children less and doing more activities with their children after being involved in the program. Additionally, parents reported their children were more closely following house and/or family rules and complying with curfews.

Table 4. Behavior Survey Results

BEHAVIOR ITEMS	n	PRE-TEST MEAN	POST-TEST MEAN	PRE/POST CHANGE
My child yells at me (rs)	33	3.00	3.12	0.354
I yell at my child (rs)	34	2.74	3.00	0.005**
My child and I verbally argue (rs)	33	2.82	3.09	0.059
My child and I do things together	33	2.85	3.15	0.016*
My child lies (rs)	14	2.71	2.86	0.336
My child cheats (rs)	14	3.00	3.00	1.000
My child steals (rs)	14	3.71	3.79	0.583
My child complies with his/her curfew	14	2.64	3.43	0.001**
My child complies with house/family rules	14	2.64	3.07	0.008**
My child cuts classes at school (rs)	13	3.15	3.15	1.000

Note: 'n' column represents number of paired responses to both pre and post items (out of 35). Statistically significant at ** $p < .01$ or * $p < .05$. Pre-post change is the absolute value of change. Negatively worded items (e.g., "My child yells at me") were reverse-scored (noted as "rs") so that for all items, higher scores were associated with more positive parenting practices.

Enforcing Consequences

After their time in the program, parents reported a significant increase in having house and/or family rules in place and a greater ability to enforce consequences when their child breaks rules.

Table 5. Enforcing Consequences Survey Results

ENFORCING CONSEQUENCES ITEMS	n	PRE-TEST MEAN	POST-TEST MEAN	PRE/POST CHANGE
I have house or family rules for my child	34	3.00	3.35	0.003**
I enforce consequences when my child breaks the rules	34	2.97	3.21	0.030*
I know what consequences to apply when my child breaks the rules	34	2.82	3.00	0.205

Note: 'n' column represents number of paired responses to both pre and post items (out of 35). Statistically significant at ** $p < .01$ or * $p < .05$. Pre-post change is the absolute value of change.

Monitoring

After the program, parents reported more closely monitoring their children's grades, school attendance, free time, and location. They also reported more closely monitoring their children's backpacks and rooms.

Table 6. Monitoring Survey Results

MONITORING ITEMS	n	PRE-TEST MEAN	POST-TEST MEAN	PRE/POST CHANGE
I monitor my child's grades	34	3.00	3.32	0.019*
I monitor my child's school attendance	33	3.18	3.55	0.012*
I check my child's backpack	34	2.44	2.71	0.037*
I check my child's room	34	2.59	3.00	0.008**
I check my child's car	7	2.57	2.86	0.172
I know how my child spends his/her money	13	2.77	2.85	0.584
I know how my child spends his/her free time	34	2.85	3.12	0.037*
I am aware of where my child is after school, at night and/or on weekends	34	3.03	3.38	0.021*
I know who my child's friends are by name	14	2.43	2.79	0.055
I know how to contact my child's friends and their guardians	14	2.21	2.43	0.336

Note: 'n' column represents number of paired responses to both pre and post items (out of 35). Statistically significant at ** $p < .01$ or * $p < .05$. Pre-post change is the absolute value of change.

Client Story

Each year, Parent Project staff provide a client story to help illustrate the effect of services on their clients. FPP provided a client story from each of their two programs in FY 2017-18. The following is the client story provided by the Parent Education Program.

Table 7. Parent Education Program Client Story

Name of client	Maria (Pseudonym)
Age and gender	38, female
Reason for referral	This mother participated in the Parent Project because her son was out of control. He would leave home without permission, smoke a lot of marijuana, and hang out with gang members.
Client's behavior, affect, and appearance when they first started in the program	When I met Maria, she was very stressed and sad. She had no idea how to deal with her son's behavior, and was disillusioned because he had been picked up by the police.
Activity engagement and consistency	My client attended all ten Parent Project classes, participated in the activities, and did the assigned home practice.
Client's behavior, affect, and appearance toward the end of the program	Toward the end of the program, my client appeared confident and had a smile on her face. She began coming to class early in order to share some of the changes she was making in her home.
What the client learned as a result of the program	My client learned positive communication skills which helped her express herself to her children, husband, and other people. She also learned that it was important not to lose hope even when it seemed things could not get worse. Additionally, my client learned to follow through with consequences with her son. She was able to keep him off the street and participating with the family. She was especially happy he started eating dinner with the family again.
What the client is doing differently in their life now as a result of the program	My client started: staying calm when expressing herself, exercised more to relieve stress, and followed through with consequences and called probation when necessary.
The value of the program in the client's words	My client stated on the last day of the class that the program helped her regain a sense of hope. She was happy to meet all the other parents and said that the classes, along with the support from the group, were a big help. She told the class it was important to keep their head up and never give up on their children.

The following is the client story of a parent who participated in the Staying Connected Program in FY 2017-18.

Table 8. Staying Connected Program Client Story

Name of client	Jane (Pseudonym)
Age and gender	Jane has a 16-year-old daughter
Reason for referral	Jane and her ex-husband were court ordered to attend through their daughter's probation officer.
Client's behavior, affect, and appearance when they first started in the program	Jane was very open and honest on the first night. She sat right next to her ex-husband and they got along so well, joking, sharing how their daughter is their number one priority. It was a great example of co-parenting for the group.
Activity engagement and consistency	They both actively participated every week. They always volunteered when we asked for a volunteer.
Client's behavior, affect, and appearance toward the end of the program	After a few weeks, Jane's current husband voluntarily attended with her. Since all 3 adults were parenting their daughter, all 3 wanted to be consistent with each other. The biggest challenge they faced was consistency within the 2 homes. They didn't necessarily have the same set of rules or consequences and when she went from one home to another, the consequences were not enforced, and their daughter knew this. She would manipulate her parents to allow her to go to the other home to get out of a punishment. By the end of the series, they all agreed to communicate better and to enforce and follow through with any punishment that was given to her prior to going to the other home.
What the client learned as a result of the program	They learned a lot during the 10 weeks, and all 3 were very grateful for the classes. They learned how to effectively communicate with each other, even though they all got along well. It was an underlying problem that neither addressed for fear of it "blowing up" and this was a perfect forum to bring it up and learn how both sides could work together on this issue, even if they didn't agree with the punishment given by the other parent.
What the client is doing differently in their life now as a result of the program	They are communicating more frequently and always before she leaves her Mom's house for her Dad's house, and vice versa. The other one is enforcing the punishment, even if they might not necessarily agree with the punishment. One parent is much more lenient than the other and had trouble enforcing the rules and consequences.
The value of the program in the client's words	"We usually get along well, but I knew that my ex-husband would not enforce her being grounded, or give her the cell phone back, even though I asked him not to. I turned the

other cheek. I did not know how to address this with him, because I felt like we got along so well, it might ruin that relationship between us. I didn't like it, but I also didn't do anything about it. All 3 of us were receptive to what was being taught and it was the perfect opportunity to bring this up. We are now working as a united force, from 2 homes, with our daughter still being our first priority."