



CREATING RESULTS WITH YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES

San Mateo County Probation Department:
Juvenile Probation and Camps Funding &
Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act

Probation's Parent Programs

JPCF Evaluation Report 2013-2014

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OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

Presented here is an overview of key data findings covering three evaluation years: 2011-2012 through 2013-2014. The following sections of the report will discuss these findings in detail.

Figure 1. **Data Highlights from 2011-2012 through 2013-2014**

Data Highlights	Evaluation Years		
	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Number of clients served	127	121	93
Average number of hours of service	18.6	16.2	15.8
Average length of time in the program (months)	1.8	2.1	2.5
Percentage of participants who:			
Improved their Total Asset Score	NA	NA	NA
Continued to abstain from AOD <i>(only includes those who reported no drug/alcohol use at program entry)</i>	NA	NA	NA
Reduced their use of AOD <i>(only includes those who were at or above the clinical cutoff score)</i>	NA	NA	NA
Arrested for new law violations	NA	NA	NA

EVALUATION BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

In 2011, six programs serving San Mateo County youth and their families were awarded three-year grants from the San Mateo County Probation Department's allocation of Juvenile Probation and Camps Funding. The Juvenile Probation and Camps Funding Program (JPCF) was developed in response to legislation signed by Governor Schwarzenegger in July 2005 (AB 139, Chapter 74) which appropriated state funds to support a broad spectrum of county Probation services targeting at-risk youth, juvenile offenders, and their families. JPCF is administered by the State Controller's Office with the funding amount being dependent upon actual receipts from California Vehicle License fees. After having awarded programs their contracts for the 2011-12 fiscal year, San Mateo learned that they were receiving less JPCF funding than anticipated and was required to reduce contract amounts by one-third. All programs were therefore required to adjust their scope of services for that year. During fiscal year 2012-13, however, 100% of the funds were reinstated, allowing programs to return to their original scope of services.

Applied Survey Research (ASR) was awarded the contract as the evaluator of San Mateo's JPCF programs and also experienced reduced funding from the original proposal. The first year of evaluation was very formative in nature, consisting of an evaluation kick-off meeting to discuss the overall goals and driving evaluation questions, and meetings with each grantee to review program-specific outcomes and finalize the evaluation plan. ASR identified and piloted assessment tools to capture youth development changes (i.e., the Search Institute's Developmental Asset Profile) as well as changes in perception and usage of alcohol and other drugs (i.e., Adolescent Alcohol and Drug Inventory Scale). These assessments were formally launched during fiscal year 2012-2013.

This year's JPCF evaluation report documents:

- Service- and client-level data: number of clients served, the number of units of service and basic client demographics
- Client survey data: pre- and post-survey data captured on the Parent Project and Staying Connected surveys
- Client success stories illustrating the extent to which services impacted youth

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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

The Parent Project® (www.parentproject.com) is a parent training program designed specifically for parents of strong-willed or out of control teens ages 13-18. The program targets 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 children'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) 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 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 encouraging their adolescent growth toward independence in the process. The program is 10 weeks in length.

Youth Risk Factors

The families referred to the Parent Programs exhibit risk factors known to significantly influence youth development and delinquency.¹ As indicated during ASR's interview with program staff, a little over half of the parents served by this program are single mothers and about half of the youth have mental health disorders and are at-risk of becoming affiliated or involved in gang activities.

Programmatic Challenges

One of the biggest challenges experienced this year was filling our classes due to the continued decrease in the number of youth placed on probation. Additionally, of the parents who are referred to Parent Programs, their attendance is not always guaranteed primarily because they have to work, do not have childcare, or do not have the gas or gas money to attend weekly. The Parent Program is in the process of addressing these concerns.

¹ Please refer to the Local Action Plan 2011-2015 for a list of risk factors identified in the literature, and for a list of needs to be addressed by Local Action Plan strategies.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Profile of Clients Served

From July 2013 through June 2014, a total of 93 unduplicated parents were served by both the Parent Project and the Staying Connected program. The majority of parents who attended one of the two parenting series were females (65%) and over half of participants were Latinos (54%).

Figure 1. **Client Demographics, FY 2013-2014**

		Sample
Number served		93
Gender	Male	35%
	Female	65%
Ethnicity	Latino	54%
	Caucasian	25%
	Filipino/Pacific Islander	12%
	Asian	2%
	Black	3%
	Other/Multi-racial	3%
Average age of clients		NA

Note: Gender and ethnicity based on 92 participants.

Client Services

Parents who entered and exited the program during fiscal year 2013-2014 received services for about two months. For all parents served, the average amount of service was 16 hours, and the overall number of units of service for the year totaled 1,376 hours.

Figure 2. **Units of Service, FY 2013-2014**

	Units of service
Mean Units of Service	15.8
Total Units of Service	1,376

Parenting Project Survey Findings

A pre and post-survey was administered to 36 "Parent Project" parents who participated in FY 2013-2014. Each survey item was measured on a 4-point scale, with 1 being "Never," 2 being "Not often," 3 being "Often," and 4 being "Always." As such, the higher the mean score, the more desirable the answer; this also applies to items that are reverse-scored ("rs").

Parents made improvements on nearly every item on the survey, many of which rose to a level of statistical significance. The items that experienced the highest change from pre- to post-test are: *"I have conversations with my child about suicide," "I have conversations with my child about sexual activity," "I have conversations with my child about drugs."*

Figure 3. Parent Project Pre/Post Mean Scores

	Pre-test mean score	Post-test mean score	Pre/Post change
I tell my child that I love him/her	3.13	3.39**	0.26
I enforce consequences when my child breaks the rules	2.72	3.08**	0.36
I am able to tell or show my child that I am proud of his/her actions	3.00	3.44*	0.44
I hug or kiss my child	2.75	3.19*	0.44
I recognize when my child does something positive	3.26	3.49**	0.23
I write my child notes that say I love him/her	2.00	2.35**	0.35
My child yells at me (rs)	2.97	3.25**	0.28
I yell at my child (rs)	2.83	3.06**	0.23
My child and I verbally argue (rs)	2.78	2.84	0.06
I am aware of where my child is after school, at night and/or on weekends	3.14	3.30	0.16
I have conversations with my child about:			
Drugs	3.00	3.46*	0.46
Alcohol	3.06	3.41	0.35
Peer pressure	3.06	3.33	0.27
Gangs	2.91	3.25	0.34
Sexual activity	2.65	3.16*	0.51
Depression	2.79	3.14	0.35
Suicide	2.43	3.11*	0.68
Running away	2.64	2.96	0.32
My child and I do things together	2.38	2.78*	0.40
I monitor my child's grades	3.17	3.22	0.05
I monitor my child's school attendance	3.25	3.50	0.25
I listen to my child without interrupting	3.08	3.44*	0.36
I check my child's:			
Backpack	2.61	3.06*	0.45
Room	3.09	3.16	0.07
Car	(only 3 cases)		
My child:			
Lies (rs)	2.45	2.76**	0.31
Cheats (rs)	3.13	3.10	-0.03
Steals (rs)	3.37	3.57	0.20
Complies with his/her curfew	2.94	2.88	-0.06
Complies with house/family rules	2.59	2.70	0.11
Cuts classes at school (rs)	2.97	3.16	0.19
I pay full attention when my child talks to me	3.48	3.52	0.04
I have house or family rules for my child	3.14	3.33	0.19
I know what consequences to apply when my child breaks the rules	2.83	3.03	0.20

	Pre-test mean score	Post-test mean score	Pre/Post change
I know who my child's friends are by name	2.69	2.63	-0.06
I know how to contact my child's friends and their guardians	2.14	2.23	0.09
I know how my child spends his/her money	2.44	2.81*	0.37
I know how my child spends his/her free time	2.65	2.83	0.18

Note: The sample size varied between 28 and 36. (*)=statistically significant at p<.01; (**)=statistically significant at p<.05.

Staying Connected Survey Findings

Provided next are the findings associated with Staying Connected. Please note that this program’s curriculum does not emphasize all aspects of the Parent Project curriculum and, as such, some of the items were removed from the survey. A pre and post-survey was administered to 20 “Staying Connected” parents who participated in FY 2013-2014. Each survey item was measured on a 4-point scale, with 1 being “Never,” 2 being “Not often,” 3 being “Often,” and 4 being “Always.” As such, the higher the mean score, the more desirable the answer; this also applies to items that are reverse-scored (“rs”).

Staying Connected parents made some gains, but the most significant ones were about their increased dialogues with their children about suicide, running away, and depression. Parents were also significantly more aware of their child’s whereabouts.

Conversely, some practices stayed the same over the course of their participation, while others worsened slightly from pre- to post-test. Parents did not report any changes in the frequency of their conversations about alcohol and sexual activity with their child, and the extent to which they have house rules and apply consequences did not change either. The practices that worsened over the course of parents’ participation include conversing with their child about drugs and peer pressure, monitoring their child’s grades and school attendance, and practicing active listening. As explained in the section above, some parents may have ‘under-reported’ on these practices at the time they started the program or were not aware of these issues prior to participating in the program.

Figure 4. **Staying Connected Pre/Post Mean Scores**

	Pre-test mean score	Post-test mean score	Pre/Post change
I tell my child that I love him/her	3.10	3.30	0.20
I enforce consequences when my child breaks the rules	3.05	3.26	0.21
I am able to tell or show my child that I am proud of his/her actions	3.10	3.35	0.25
I recognize when my child does something positive	3.25	3.50*	0.25
My child yells at me (rs)	2.80	2.85	0.05
I yell at my child (rs)	2.85	2.95	0.10
My child and I verbally argue (rs)	2.82	2.76	-0.06
I am aware of where my child is after school, at night and/or on weekends	3.05	3.26	0.21
I have conversations with my child about:			
Drugs	3.00	2.95	-0.05
Alcohol	3.00	3.00	---
Peer pressure	2.89	2.79	-0.10
Gangs	2.58	2.74	0.16
Sexual activity	2.74	2.74	---
Depression	2.00	2.61*	0.61

	Pre-test mean score	Post-test mean score	Pre/Post change
Suicide	1.63	2.47*	0.84
Running away	1.56	2.38*	0.82
My child and I do things together	2.56	2.75	0.19
I monitor my child's grades	3.37	3.32	-0.05
I monitor my child's school attendance	3.42	3.37	-0.05
I listen to my child without interrupting	3.06	2.94	-0.12
I check my child's:			
Backpack	2.50	2.65	0.15
Room	2.84	3.00	0.16
Car	(only 3 cases)		
I pay full attention when my child talks to me	3.41	3.35	-0.06
I have house or family rules for my child	3.05	3.05	---
I know what consequences to apply when my child breaks the rules	2.85	2.85	---
I know how my child spends his/her free time	2.90	3.15	0.25

Note: The sample size varied between 16 and 20. (*) statistically significant at $p < .01$.

Client Vignettes

Probation's Parent Project staff provided the following client vignettes to help illustrate the impact of its services.

This family attended Parent Project. The parents are divorced and share one son who is 16. They were struggling with being consistent between their homes. Their son was getting all Fs and Ds on his report card, and they suspected he was smoking marijuana. He also lost all motivation to play school sports. Parent Program staff worked with both parents and explained the importance of being consistent with rules and expectations in both homes. They began to create rules, expectations, and consequences (both negative and positive) for their son. The father also acknowledged that he needed to express his love to his son regularly. His son felt that his father only cared about school sports and nothing else. The changes the son made were slow, but because the parents worked together and changed their behavior, he was also able to make positive changes. The family had regular check-ins with Parent Program staff, during which time they worked together to come up with family goals and a plan to accomplish the goals. A couple of months ago a staff member was invited to watch the son play on the varsity basketball team. His parents pointed out that their son was getting all passing grades and that he was on track to graduate from high school. The family seemed happy and the son looked well and healthy.

Parent Program staff worked with a single mother who has been dealing with the Probation system for many years. She has had two sons on probation and currently has a daughter in our G.I.R.L.S. program. In the past, she was court-ordered to attend Parent Project, but she never successfully completed the program. This year, she attended Parent Project and she also attended additional classes with our Staying Connected Program. She brought her 17-year old daughter to one of the last classes she attended. Her daughter told me that she loved our program because her mother seemed more confident and much happier. She said that her mother began telling her kids how much she loved them and that she also began to attend events at her school. The mother said that she loved the support she was receiving from the program and that she was putting in place all of the advice given to her. It was nice to finally see this mother feel good about her parenting, and to hear her daughter speak so well of all that she had learned from our programs.