Family Check-Up (also known as Positive Family Support)

Benefit-cost estimates updated June 2016. Literature review updated June 2014.

Current estimates replace old estimates. Numbers will change over time as a result of model inputs and monetization methods.

The WSIPP benefit-cost analysis examines, on an apples-to-apples basis, the monetary value of programs or policies to determine whether the benefits from the program exceed its costs. WSIPP's research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies has three main steps. First, we determine "what works" (and what does not work) to improve outcomes using a statistical technique called meta-analysis. Second, we calculate whether the benefits of a program exceed its costs. Third, we estimate the risk of investing in a program by testing the sensitivity of our results. For more detail on our methods, see our Technical Documentation.

Program Description: Positive Family Support/Family Check-Up (formerly Adolescent Transitions Program) is a three-tiered intervention implemented in middle schools. The first level is a universal component that involves the establishment of a family resource center and a six-week prevention curriculum. The second tier is Family Check-Up, an assessment and brief motivational interview component for students identified as at-risk. The third tier is the Family Intervention Menu, which directs parents of substance-using adolescents to treatment options, parenting groups, and family therapy sessions. Our review is of the entire Positive Family Support model and not solely the second tier Family Check-Up component.

Benefit-Cost Summary Statistics Per Participant

Benefits to:

Taxpayers	($19)	Benefit to cost ratio	($0.62)
Participants	($102)	Benefits minus costs	($534)
Others	$90	Chance the program will produce benefits greater than the costs	41 %
Indirect	($174)		
Total benefits	($205)		
Net program cost	($329)		
Benefits minus cost	($534)		

The estimates shown are present value, life cycle benefits and costs. All dollars are expressed in the base year chosen for this analysis (2015). The chance the benefits exceed the costs are derived from a Monte Carlo risk analysis. The details on this, as well as the economic discount rates and other relevant parameters are described in our Technical Documentation.

Detailed Monetary Benefit Estimates Per Participant

Benefits from changes to:[1]	Benefits to:				
	Participants	Taxpayers	Others[2]	Indirect[3]	Total
Crime	$0	$48	$118	$23	$189
K-12 special education	$0	$0	$0	$0	$1
Property loss associated with alcohol abuse or dependence	$2	$0	$3	$0	$4
Labor market earnings associated with major depression	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Health care associated with major depression	$1	$2	$2	$1	$5
Costs of higher education	($104)	($69)	($32)	($34)	($241)
Adjustment for deadweight cost of program	$0	$0	$0	($164)	($164)
Totals	($102)	($19)	$90	($174)	($205)

[1]In addition to the outcomes measured in the meta-analysis table, WSIPP measures benefits and costs estimated from other outcomes associated with those reported in the evaluation literature. For example, empirical research demonstrates that high school graduation leads to reduced crime. These associated measures provide a more complete picture of the detailed costs and benefits of the program.

[2]"Others" includes benefits to people other than taxpayers and participants. Depending on the program, it could include reductions in crime victimization, the economic benefits from a more educated workforce, and the benefits from employer-paid health insurance.

[3]"Indirect benefits" includes estimates of the net changes in the value of a statistical life and net changes in the deadweight costs of taxation.

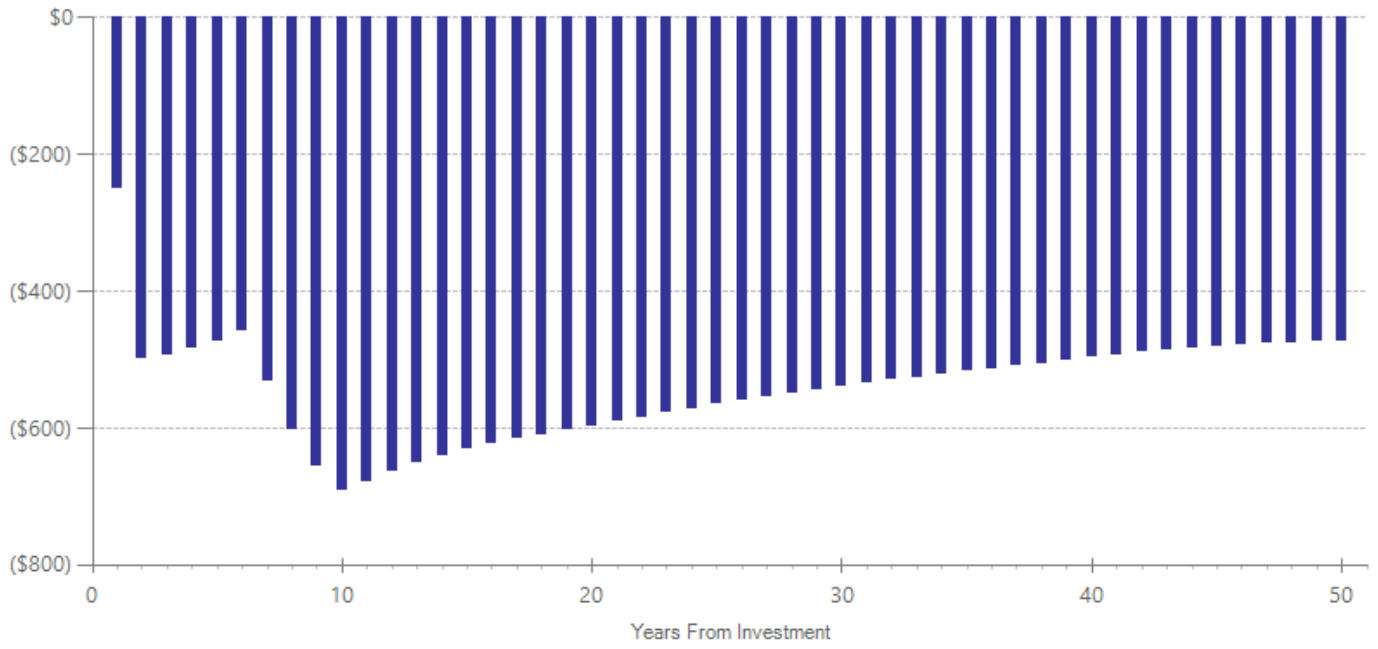
Detailed Annual Cost Estimates Per Participant

	Annual cost	Year dollars	Summary	
Program costs	$164	2013	Present value of net program costs (in 2015 dollars)	($329)
Comparison costs	$0	2013	Cost range (+ or -)	10 %

This program is typically delivered over a two-year period. The cost estimate includes training, materials, and setup costs obtained from Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development (http://www.blueprintsprograms.com/program-costs/positive-family-support-family-check-up). The estimate also includes compensation costs for a half-time (0.5 FTE) intervention/family resource staff member. To calculate a per-student annual cost, we divide the implementation and staff costs by the number of students in a middle school in Washington's Prototypical School model.

The figures shown are estimates of the costs to implement programs in Washington. The comparison group costs reflect either no treatment or treatment as usual, depending on how effect sizes were calculated in the meta-analysis. The cost range reported above reflects potential variation or uncertainty in the cost estimate; more detail can be found in our Technical Documentation.

Detailed Annual Cost Estimates Per Participant



The graph above illustrates the estimated cumulative net benefits per-participant for the first fifty years beyond the initial investment in the program. We present these cash flows in non-discounted dollars to simplify the "break-even" point from a budgeting perspective. If the dollars are negative (bars below $0 line), the cumulative benefits do not outweigh the cost of the program up to that point in time. The program breaks even when the dollars reach $0. At this point, the total benefits to participants, taxpayers, and others, are equal to the cost of the program. If the dollars are above $0, the benefits of the program exceed the initial investment.

Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

Outcomes measured	No. of effect sizes	Treatment N	Adjusted effect sizes and standard errors used in the benefit-cost analysis						Unadjusted effect size (random effects model)	
			First time ES is estimated			Second time ES is estimated				
			ES	SE	Age	ES	SE	Age	ES	p-value
Crime	1	500	-0.013	0.152	18	-0.013	0.152	28	-0.039	0.797
Smoking before end of middle school	1	386	-0.240	0.208	13	-0.240	0.208	15	-0.727	0.001
Cannabis use before end of middle school	1	386	-0.101	0.208	13	-0.101	0.208	15	-0.305	0.142
Alcohol use before end of middle school	1	386	-0.116	0.208	13	-0.116	0.208	15	-0.350	0.092
Major depressive disorder	1	52	-0.098	0.468	15	0.000	0.039	16	-0.296	0.527
Externalizing behavior symptoms	1	500	-0.004	0.152	17	-0.002	0.079	20	-0.012	0.939
Grade point average	1	500	-0.020	0.152	18	-0.020	0.152	18	-0.062	0.685
Alcohol use in high school	1	500	-0.017	0.152	18	-0.017	0.152	18	-0.050	0.741
Smoking in high school	1	500	-0.048	0.152	14	-0.048	0.152	18	-0.145	0.342
Cannabis use in high school	1	500	-0.041	0.152	18	-0.041	0.152	18	-0.126	0.410

Meta-analysis is a statistical method to combine the results from separate studies on a program, policy, or topic in order to estimate its effect on an outcome. WSIPP systematically evaluates all credible evaluations we can locate on each topic. The outcomes measured are the types of program impacts that were measured in the research literature (for example, crime or educational attainment). Treatment N represents the total number of individuals or units in the treatment group across the included studies.

An effect size (ES) is a standard metric that summarizes the degree to which a program or policy affects a measured outcome. If the effect size is positive, the outcome increases. If the effect size is negative, the outcome decreases.

Adjusted effect sizes are used to calculate the benefits from our benefit cost model. WSIPP may adjust effect sizes based on methodological characteristics of the study. For example, we may adjust effect sizes when a study has a weak research design or when the program developer is involved in the research. The magnitude of these adjustments varies depending on the topic area.

WSIPP may also adjust the second ES measurement. Research shows the magnitude of some effect sizes decrease over time. For those effect sizes, we estimate outcome-based adjustments which we apply between the first time ES is estimated and the second time ES is estimated. We also report the unadjusted effect size to show the effect sizes before any adjustments have been made. More details about these adjustments can be found in our Technical Documentation.

Citations Used in the Meta-Analysis

Connell, A.M., & Dishion, T.J. (2008). Reducing depression among at-risk early adolescents: three-year effects of a family-centered intervention embedded within schools. *Journal of Family Psychology (division 43), 22*(4), 574-85.

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Van, R.M.J., & Dishion, T.J. (2012). The impact of a family-centered intervention on the ecology of adolescent antisocial behavior: modeling developmental sequelae and trajectories during adolescence. *Development and Psychopathology, 24*(3), 1139-55.

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