

Testimony for the Oregon State Legislature

Conclusion and Recommendations

The conclusions from the evaluation report were that the Family Preservation Project clearly implemented services that were informed by the best practice literature as evidenced by the overwhelmingly positive outcomes for the mothers, their children, and children's caregivers. The program's commitment to the individual needs of mothers, children, and caregivers as well as the concerted effort to work comprehensively with the family system are deemed best practices for supporting successful reentry, fostering and maintaining parent-child bonds, and overall family well-being. I strongly recommended that FPP stakeholders continue to support the program and identify resources to expand intensive case management services to more women and their families. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Any effort to re-allocate resources to create a similar program or create a program with some of FPP's service components is a waste of time and resources.

Research Methods

My findings were gleaned from administrative case-level data, which consisted of the 3 cohorts that participated in FPP from 2010-2013. The sample was 27 mothers, 46 children, and 41 caregivers.

Key Findings

Women's Outcomes

- Over 90% were successful in meeting their educational goals. Over 80% of the women participated in Coffee Creek's work programs, and nearly 90% completed a work certificate program.
- Approximately 93% of the alumni women reported living in stable housing with their children and/or significant other, partner, or spouse upon release.
- The mother-child visits that focused on literacy activities positively affected the women's abilities to effectively support and engage in their children's learning over time. For example:
 - There was an association between increased mother-child visits and a mother's increased ability to demonstrate appropriate expressive and receptive language, to actively participate in reading with their children, and support reading comprehension.

- A very important aspect of a parent's active involvement in their child's education is the ability to communicate with school teachers. FPP facilitated parent-teacher conferences and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings.
 - There was a statistically significant association between mothers and/or FPP staff making additional contact with teachers and a mother's demonstration of engagement and support of their children's learning.

Children's Outcomes

- Between 78 – 88% of the children in the program met their attendance goals.
- Slightly over half were at grade level reading. Among those who were not reading at grade level, 100% were reported to have made notable progress.
- FPP used a standardized instrument that assessed behavioral and emotional attributes such as anxiety, depression, aggression, delinquency, and hyperactivity.
 - The overall number of children who were at medium to high risk for experiencing any diagnostic disorder decreased from the baseline measure to the six-month follow-up measure.
 - The average overall stress total score from the initial measure to follow-up decreased 15% for the children assessed.

Concluding with Caregivers' Outcomes

- The report also obtained qualitative data from caregivers. One caregiver expressed:

My daughter has been given the chance to have meaningful bonding time with her son outside the general visiting. They share quite reading time, sharing lunch together...a chance to share memories together and with other children going through the same ordeal. Because of this program, I know my daughter will leave with all the tools she needs to be successful with her son and in her life.

Another Caregiver expressed:

My daughter and I have a special relationship now that we had not had before. She is an amazing mother. I am proud of her strength, confidence, and drive. She is the person I knew she could be, and now I can just be "Mom" to my daughter and Grandma" to my grandchildren. The families who come through this program gain all of this: the support needed to not only survive the trauma but to strengthen and grow both individually and as families.