

# SUPPORT THE PARENT CHILD REPRESENTATION PROGRAM

## PCRPP IN OREGON

In 2013, the Oregon State Legislature funded the Parent Child Representation Program (PCRPP), a pilot program developed by the Office of Public Defense Services (OPDS) to provide quality legal representation for parents and children in juvenile dependency and parental termination cases. The PCRPP, modeled after the successful Washington State Parental Representation Program (PRP), uses a multidisciplinary model of legal representation to achieve positive outcomes for children and families and decrease the use of foster care and the time to permanency for children. In addition to multidisciplinary collaboration, the PCRPP provides caseload limits for attorneys, additional oversight and training, and access to specialized services to ensure that parents and children have better experiences with the child welfare system.



## BENEFITS

### High Quality Legal Representation

An attorney's increased communication with clients and legal advocacy can help steer the case toward reunification.

### Multidisciplinary Client Advocacy & Support

Independent social workers can increase parent engagement and provide advocacy for flexible and creative solutions.

### Positive Outcomes

Children in PCRPP counties spend 3 1/2 fewer months in foster care and are 13% more likely to achieve permanency within 12 months of removal than children in non-PCRPP counties, according to OPDS.

### Cost Effective

Reducing the time children spend in foster care and the length of cases saves money and resources.

## STUDY FINDINGS

In 2011, a study was published examining the impact of Washington State's PRP. The program had multiple key components, like reduced caseloads, clear professional expectations, tailored professional development, program oversight, and access to social work staff. The study found that the program increased the speed to all types of permanency, and therefore reducing the number of children in care for long periods.

The speed of reunification was 11% faster for those in a PRP county, the speed to adoption was 83% faster, and the speed to guardianship was 102% faster. The study also found that "enhanced parental representation is associated with an increase in the rate of family reunification."

## EXPERIENCES FROM YRJ STAFF ATTORNEYS

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“ The addition of social workers under the PCRCP allows me to no longer feel like I have to fill the role of social worker for my client. In addition to connecting clients to services, there are many small but enormously helpful things that can be achieved in a much quicker fashion by having someone dedicated to those tasks. As a part of the team, our case managers can take clients food, support visitation in hospitals, deliver car seats, or just spend time building rapport and emotionally support them throughout the process.”

“ Having a bilingual, culturally-fluent case manager to connect with my Spanish-speaking clients has been life-changing for me and my clients in terms of client engagement in their cases. The case manager goes so much further than an interpreter in truly connecting with my clients to understand and help them meet their goals.”

“ Our social workers have been instrumental in many of my cases. In one specific case, the social worker not only made sure that the parent had the items they needed to care for the child, but also communicated with family members and other service providers to bridge any gaps. With the help of all of her hard work, that child was reunited with their parent, and the case was dismissed by the first review hearing. In another case, the social worker was able to communicate with a family member who did not speak English and get information about the children’s history that would not have been available otherwise. He was also able to be a calming influence in hard circumstances and craft creative solutions to any problems that came up. In yet another case, the social worker was able to work together with the parent’s PCRCP social worker to secure housing for the family, the only barrier to the children returning home. Together they looked for available homes, viewed them in person, and communicated with property owners to make sure the family could be together as soon as possible.”

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Youth, Rights & Justice is a non-profit juvenile defense provider serving Oregon youth and families since 1975. YRJ advances the rights of children, parents, and families through advocacy in the courts, schools, legislature, and community.

*For more information, visit [youthrightsjustice.org](http://youthrightsjustice.org), call (503) 232-2540 or contact Heather Busby at [heather.b@youthrightsjustice.org](mailto:heather.b@youthrightsjustice.org)*