



# CREATING RESULTS WITH YOUTH & THEIR FAMILIES

## Annual Evaluation

PARENT PROGRAMS

San Mateo County  
Probation Department  
Juvenile Justice  
Coordinating Council (JJCC)



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## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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The Probation Parent Programs (PPP) 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 Parent Program.

***The Parent Project***<sup>®</sup>—The Parent Project ([www.parentproject.com](http://www.parentproject.com)) 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 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.

### Programmatic Challenges in FY 2015-16

PPP did not report any programmatic challenges for FY 2015-16.

## EVALUATION METHODS

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Programs funded by San Mateo County Juvenile Probation (SMCJP) 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 and entered demographic (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity) and service data (e.g., types and hours of service) for individual clients and entered these in their own data systems prior to transferring the data to ASR for analysis.

**Risk Factors**—In FY 2015-16, SMCJP implemented two new measures of client risk level, the pre-JAIS and the CANS. Funded programs were asked to complete these measures with existing clients beginning January 2016 and at intake with all new clients subsequently.

- The **Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS)** is a risk, strength and needs assessment designed to assist workers to effectively and efficiently supervise youth, both in institutional settings and in the community. It is reliable and has been validated across ethnic and gender groups. The JAIS consists of a brief prescreen assessment (**pre-JAIS**) in addition to full assessment and reassessment components; SMCJP has elected to administer the pre-JAIS to provide an initial indicator of recidivism risk. The pre-JAIS consists of 8 (girls) or 10 (boys) items and yields an overall risk level of low, moderate, or high.
- The **Child Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)** survey is a multi-purpose tool developed for children’s services to support decision-making including level of care and service planning, to facilitate quality improvement initiatives, and to allow for the monitoring of outcomes of services. The CANS consists of multiple items scored on a 4-point scale (0 to 3, with a score of 2 or 3 indicating an actionable need) and grouped into stand-alone modules—e.g., Risk Behaviors, Strengths, Behavioral/Emotional Needs, Trauma. Each grantee completed a different set of CANS modules according to the specific fit with their programs and clientele.
- Because PPP serves only parents of youth, they do not collect pre-JAIS nor CANS data.

**Outcomes**—In FY 2015-16, SMCJP intended to assess change over time using CANS follow-up data at the conclusion of services. Because the CANS is recommended to be administered at 6-month intervals and with low response rates due to the post-January start, ASR was not able to analyze CANS post-test data for FY 2015-16.

- Additionally, many grantees elected to collect their own program-specific outcome data. PPP conducted a pre/post survey with parents participating in *The Parent Project* but did not report survey results for the *Staying Connected* program this year.

## EVALUATION FINDINGS

### FY 2015-16 Data Highlights

- PPP served 84 clients this year, an increase of 68% over FY 2014-15; the average hours of service per client also increased 19% compared to last year
- Participants in The Parent Project who completed pre- and post- surveys (n = 11) showed small to moderate improvements across many items, though few approached statistical significance

### Profile of Clients Served

This year PPP served 84 parent participants, all of whom had demographic data (see Table 1). A majority of participants were female (73%) and identified predominantly as Latino (71%), followed by White/Caucasian (8%), Filipino/Pacific Islander (7%) or Other/Unknown (6%). Service data was available for all participants, who received an average of 17.5 hours of parent education through an average of 6.9 classes each. Of the 71 participants exiting the program, 80% successfully completed, 10% dropped out, and 10% moved or terminated for another reason. Participants were primarily referred to PPP by Probation (70%), followed by self (19%) and police (7%).

Table 1. Client Demographics, FY 2015-16

Metric	FY 11-12	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16
<b>Clients &amp; Services</b>					
Number of clients served	127	121	93	50	84
Average number of hours of service	18.6	16.2	15.8	14.7	17.5
Average time in the program (months)	1.8	2.1	2.5	2.4	1.8

### Program-specific Outcomes

A pre and post-survey was administered to 11 parents who participated in The Parent Project in FY 2015-16. Each survey item was measured on a 4-point scale, with 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Not often*, 3 = *Often*, and 4 = *Always*. Negatively worded items (e.g., “*My child yells at me*”) were reverse-scored (“rs”) so that for all items, higher scores were associated with more positive parenting practices (see Table 2).

Parents made improvements on nearly every item on the survey, but only one rose to a level of statistical significance: “*I know how my child spends his/her free time.*” Two other items that showed marginally significant improvement included: “*I hug or kiss my child*” and “*I have conversations with my child about: Depression.*”

On the other hand, scores on some items did not change over time (e.g., “*I check my child’s: Room*”) and several others actually declined (e.g., “*My child and I verbally argue*”). In previous years, some parents reported to program staff that they rated themselves higher at program entry than at program exit, not because their parenting was better at pre-test than at post-test, but because over the course of services, they learned about ways in which their parenting could be improved and felt their scores at pre-test were actually somewhat inflated. This may help account for the apparent drop or lack of change in scores on some of the survey items. It should also be noted that the sample size was small and this could also account for lack of significance in change scores. These results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 2. Parent Project Survey Results, FY 2015-16

	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean	Pre/Post change
I tell my child that I love him/her	3.73	4.00	0.27
I enforce consequences when my child breaks the rules	3.10	3.55	0.45
I am able to tell or show my child that I am proud of his/her actions	3.45	3.73	0.28
I hug or kiss my child	3.73	4.00	0.27+
I recognize when my child does something positive	3.73	3.91	0.18
I write my child notes that say I love him/her	2.70	2.27	-0.43
My child yells at me (rs)	2.91	3.00	0.09
I yell at my child (rs)	2.64	2.82	0.18
My child and I verbally argue (rs)	3.09	2.73	-0.36
I am aware of where my child is after school, at night and/or on weekends	3.70	3.91	0.21
I have conversations with my child about:			
<b>Drugs</b>	2.89	3.22	0.33
<b>Alcohol</b>	2.89	3.22	0.33
<b>Peer pressure</b>	2.67	3.00	0.33
<b>Gangs</b>	2.38	2.78	0.40
<b>Sexual activity</b>	1.75	2.44	0.69
<b>Depression</b>	1.63	2.44	0.81+
<b>Suicide</b>	1.29	2.29	1.00
<b>Running away</b>	1.67	2.17	0.50
My child and I do things together	3.27	3.36	0.09
I monitor my child's grades	3.60	3.80	0.20
I monitor my child's school attendance	3.67	3.91	0.24
I listen to my child without interrupting	3.30	3.45	0.15
I check my child's:			
<b>Backpack</b>	3.70	3.60	-0.10
<b>Room</b>	3.60	3.60	0.00
<b>Car</b>	Only 1 response		
My child:			
<b>Lies (rs)</b>	3.00	3.33	0.33
<b>Cheats (rs)</b>	3.25	3.60	0.35
<b>Steals (rs)</b>	4.00	4.00	0.00
<b>Complies with his/her curfew</b>	Only 5 responses		
<b>Complies with house/family rules</b>	2.75	3.30	0.55
<b>Cuts classes at school (rs)</b>	4.00	4.00	0.00
I pay full attention when my child talks to me	3.40	3.70	0.30
I have house or family rules for my child	3.27	3.20	-0.07
I know what consequences to apply when my child breaks the rules	3.00	3.45	0.45
I know who my child's friends are by name	3.36	3.60	0.24
I know how to contact my child's friends and their guardians	3.27	3.40	0.13
I know how my child spends his/her money	3.50	3.70	0.20
I know how my child spends his/her free time	3.36	3.90	0.54*
Note: The sample size varied between 6 and 11. (*) = statistically significant at p<.05; (+) = marginally significant at p<.10.			

## Client Vignette

PPP provided the following case summary to illustrate the program's benefits to its participants:

<b>Name of focus client:</b>	Annie Hall (Not her real name)
<b>Age and sex of client:</b>	She has a 16 year old daughter
<b>Reason for referral:</b>	Annie and her husband Louis (not his real name either) were court ordered to attend through their daughter's probation officer.
<b>Client's behavior, affect and appearance when they first started your program:</b>	On Annie's first night, she was so anxious about attending. Her biggest fear was that she would be judged by others in the group and that her daughter would be judged also. She actually cried in the class a few times that first night.
<b>What activities did your client engage in and was their engagement consistent?</b>	Annie and Louis participated every week in the group.
<b>Describe client's affect, behavior or appearance toward the end of your program, noting any ways in which they changed.</b>	With each week, we noticed improvement, little things. In the beginning, both parents worked long hours because they own a business. Meal times were not shared as a family nor did they do activities together. Slowly Annie started cooking for her family and they made time to eat together. They took their daughter out to a restaurant and a movie one weekend. As Annie became more confident as a parent, she opened up more and shared a lot more. Turns out, she is a very funny lady, who had the whole group laughing by the end of the series.
<b>What did your client learn as a result of this program?</b>	Annie's most noticeable change was her confidence. And her daughter noticed and appreciated it also, as she shared with the group. She blamed herself and her husband for the actions of her daughter. She learned that she had to open up more and to be there for her daughter. She had to make time to check in and listen to her. She learned more effective ways to communicate and how to discipline her daughter without blowing up and ending up in tears.
<b>What is your client doing differently in their life as a result of the program?</b>	As important as her job is to her and her family, she is working less to have more time to spend with her daughter. She realized the value of quality time and how she will never get this time back. The communication between the two has improved because of it.
<b>What does your client say is the value of the program for them?</b>	"I am a work in progress. I came into this program, embarrassed, thinking I would be judged for being a bad parent with a daughter on probation. Throughout the course, I never felt that way. Michelle, Jessica and the group were always supportive in a positive way. It took a few weeks, but I was able to open up and be honest not only with the group but also with myself. If I wanted change to happen within my home, I had to make changes myself and not just expect my daughter to change on her own. And we are making changes, positive changes. We will learn from the whole probation experience and rather than feeling as though it was a negative thing and something to be shameful about, it has actually made our family stronger, closer, and eager to utilize the services that probation offer."