

Fostering Healthy Futures Child Welfare

Literature review updated August 2017.

As part of WSIPP’s research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies, WSIPP determines “what works” (and what does not work) to improve outcomes using an approach called meta-analysis. For detail on our methods, see our [Technical Documentation](#). At this time, WSIPP has not yet calculated benefits and costs for this topic.

Program Description: Fostering Healthy Futures is an intensive mentoring program for children, ages 9 to 11, who were placed in foster care because of maltreatment within the previous year. Children are paired with mentors who meet with them two to four hours per week for 30 weeks. Children also attend weekly group meetings that focus on emotion recognition, perspective taking, problem solving, anger management, cultural identity, change and loss, healthy relationships, peer pressure, abuse prevention, and future orientation.

Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

Outcomes measured	Treatment age	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	p-value
				ES	SE	Age	ES	SE	Age		
Internalizing symptoms	n/a	1	69	-0.069	0.170	11	-0.051	0.134	13	-0.193	0.257
Permanent placement	n/a	1	56	0.129	0.232	11	0.129	0.232	17	0.358	0.130
Placement stability	n/a	1	56	0.094	0.191	11	0.094	0.191	17	0.262	0.172
Post-traumatic stress	n/a	1	74	-0.113	0.168	11	-0.113	0.168	12	-0.314	0.063

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

- Taussig, H.N., Culhane, S.E., Garrido, E., & Knudtson, M.D. (2012). RCT of a mentoring and skills group program: placement and permanency outcomes for foster youth. *Pediatrics*, 130(1), 33-9.
- Taussig, H.N., & Culhane, S.E. (2010). Impact of a mentoring and skills group program on mental health outcomes for maltreated children in foster care. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 164(8),739-46.

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