

## Teen Outreach Program (TOP)

### Public Health & Prevention: Community-based

Literature review updated February 2020.

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:** The Teen Outreach Program (TOP) is a volunteer service and learning program for high school students. TOP aims to empower teens to develop social-emotional skills, healthy relationships, a sense of purpose, and ultimately, avoid risky behaviors. TOP targets high-risk adolescents and consists of supervised community volunteer experience (e.g., in nursing homes, senior centers, childcare centers) of between 20 to 40 hours per school year to increase students' social engagement with peers, teachers, and community adults. The volunteer service is coupled with classroom discussions of the volunteer experience and nine months of the TOP curriculum. TOP groups meet weekly throughout the school year to discuss communication skills, values, relationships, goal setting, decision-making, and adolescent health and sexual behavior with trained teachers/facilitators.

For this analysis, we exclude evaluations of TOP for youth in residential treatment centers.

### Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

Outcomes measured	No. of effect sizes	Treatment N	Adjusted effect size and standard error			Unadjusted effect size (random effects model)	
			ES	SE	Age	ES	p-value
Suspensions/expulsions	2	438	-0.265	0.115	15	-0.565	0.001
Social and emotional development	1	106	-0.146	0.136	15	-0.146	0.283
STD risky behavior	1	3352	-0.098	1.034	15	-0.098	0.924
Teen pregnancy (under age 18)	3	3711	-0.174	0.081	15	-0.518	0.053

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

Allen, J.P., Philliber, S., Herrling, S., & Kuperminc, G.P. (1997). Preventing teen pregnancy and academic failure: Experimental evaluation of a developmentally based approach. *Child Development*, 64(4), 729-742.

Philliber, S., & Allen, J.P. (1992). Life options and community service: Teen outreach program. In B. C. Miller, J. J. Card, R. L. Paikoff, & J. L. Peterson (Eds.), *Preventing adolescent pregnancy: Model programs and evaluations* (pp. 139-155). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

For further information, contact:  
(360) 664-9800, [Institute@wsipp.wa.gov](mailto:Institute@wsipp.wa.gov)

Printed on 03-28-2024



## Washington State Institute for Public Policy

The Washington State Legislature created the Washington State Institute for Public Policy in 1983. A Board of Directors—representing the legislature, the governor, and public universities—governs WSIPP and guides the development of all activities. WSIPP's mission is to carry out practical research, at legislative direction, on issues of importance to Washington State.