

Adolescent Diversion Project (ADP) (vs. simple release) Juvenile Justice

Literature review updated June 2019.

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 Adolescent Diversion Project (ADP) is a diversion program developed by researchers at Michigan State University. Diversion programs provide an alternative to formal sanctions in the juvenile justice system, aim to mitigate potential negative consequences associated with the juvenile justice system (e.g., stigmatizing youth as deviant), and maintain a youth's pro-social ties in the community. In ADP, diverted youth are matched with a volunteer caseworker who provides tailored community-based services that focus on skill building (e.g., strengthening family relationships, improving school involvement, garnering employment, or enrolling in extracurricular activities). Caseworkers spend an average of seven hours a week with their youth over 18 weeks.

This analysis compares the outcomes of ADP youth who were diverted following arrest to youth who are released into parental custody following an arrest and are not formally processed by the juvenile court system. The comparison group youth do not receive any programming following release. In the studies included that report demographic information, 33% of participants were youth of color and 16% were female.

Studies that compare ADP youth to youth formally processed in the juvenile justice system are excluded from this analysis and analyzed separately.

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
Crime	3	49	-1.542	0.374	15	-1.542	0.001

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

Davidson, W.S., Seidman, E., Rappaport, J., Berck, P.L., Rapp, N.A., Rhodes, W., & Herring, J. (1977). Diversion program for juvenile offenders. *Social Work Research and Abstracts*, 13 (2), 40-49.

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