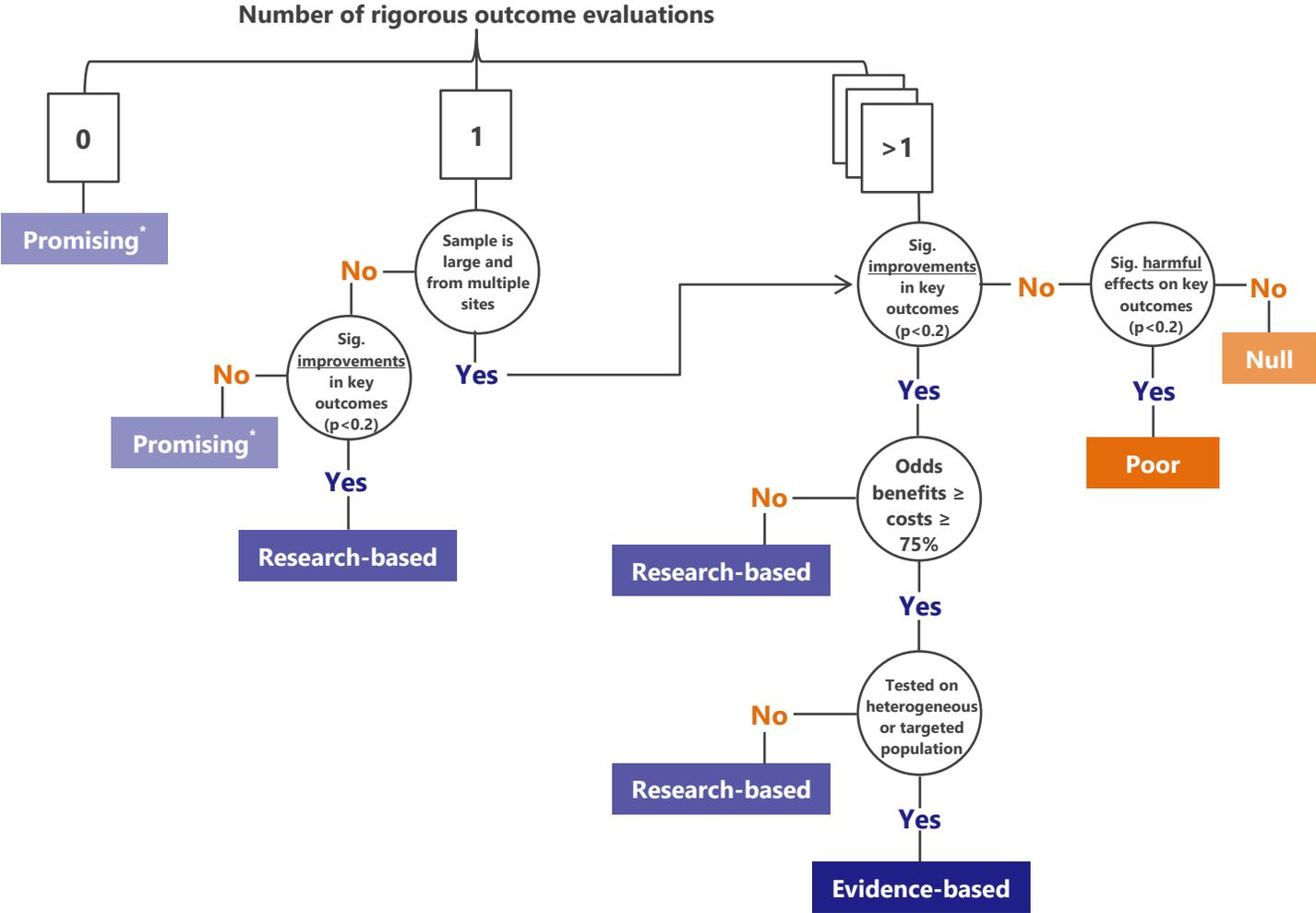


# Decision Tree for Program Classification For WSIPP's Inventories of Evidence-Based, Research-Based, and Promising Practices



Note:  
\* Considered "promising" if based on a logic model or well-established theory of change; [RCW 71.24.025](#).

When the legislature directs WSIPP to compile inventories of evidence-based, research-based, and promising practices, we use the definitions in [RCW 71.24.025](#):

Evidence-based: *a program or practice that has been tested in heterogeneous or intended populations with multiple randomized, or statistically controlled evaluations, or both; or one large multiple site randomized, or statistically controlled evaluation, or both, where the weight of the evidence from a systemic review demonstrates sustained improvements in at least one outcome. "Evidence-based" also means a program or practice that can be implemented with a set of procedures to allow successful replication in Washington and, when possible, is determined to be cost-beneficial.*

Research-based: *a program or practice that has been tested with a single randomized, or statistically controlled evaluation, or both, demonstrating sustained desirable outcomes; or where the weight of the evidence from a systemic review supports sustained outcomes.*

Promising: *a program or practice that, based on statistical analyses or a well-established theory of change, shows potential for meeting the evidence-based or research-based criteria, which may include the use of a program that is evidence-based.*

As of 2017, WSIPP defines two additional categories to distinguish between programs producing null results (no significant effect on desired outcomes) or producing poor results (significant harmful effects) and has standardized the application of these definitions.

Null: *A program or practice for which the results from a random-effects meta-analysis of multiple evaluations or one large multiple-site evaluation are not statistically significant for relevant outcomes.*

Poor: *A program or practice for which the results from a random-effects meta-analysis of multiple evaluations or one large multiple-site evaluation indicate that the practice produces undesirable (harmful) effects.*

WSIPP has published inventories in the following policy areas: children's mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, youth cannabis use treatment and prevention, adult criminal justice, adult behavioral health, and K–12 learning assistance. For each inventory, we use a consistent four-step research approach.

- 1) We estimate whether various public policies and programs ("programs") achieve desired outcomes (e.g., improving high school graduation rates or reducing crime). WSIPP conducts a meta-analysis using all rigorous evaluations we can locate on a given program to determine the average effect of the program and a margin of error for that effect.
- 2) We use the results from our analysis of the program effects to determine whether the lifetime benefits of the program exceed the costs to Washington's taxpayers. That is, we conduct a formal benefit-cost analysis.
- 3) We test the robustness of our results. Any tabulation of benefits and costs involves some degree of uncertainty about future performance. To assess the riskiness of our conclusions, we perform a "Monte Carlo simulation" in which we vary the key factors in our calculations. The purpose of the risk analysis is to determine the likelihood that the benefits of a particular program will exceed the costs.
- 4) We use information from the first three steps to categorize programs as evidence-based, research-based, or promising. We also identify programs that report null or poor outcomes. Our approach is illustrated in the decision tree and detailed in our inventory reports.