



Report to the Legislature

## **Response to At Risk Youth Study**

August 28, 2007

By the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee  
Report 05-18, November 30, 2005

Department of Social & Health Services  
Children's Administration  
Office of Executive Staff  
PO Box 45042  
Olympia, WA 98504-5710  
(360) 902-7653  
Fax: (360) 902-7848

## **Introduction**

This report is submitted in response to the JLARC “At Risk Youth Study” that took place in November 2005. The child welfare programs and expenditures covered by this response are those programs either mentioned in the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) report “Benefits and Costs of Prevention and Early Intervention Programs for Youth” published in September 2004 or that Children’s Administration currently uses with at risk youth.

## **Categorization of Programs**

The JLARC report recommended that DSHS provide the legislature with expenditure data for four categories of programs. The categories are:

- Cost effective programs
- Not cost effective programs
- Programs with research where cost effectiveness is unknown
- Programs with unknown impact because they have not been researched

Children’s Administration used the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) report “Benefits and Costs of Prevention and Early Intervention Programs for Youth” to categorize the programs for this report. Research on child welfare programs is limited and efforts to introduce cost effective programs are very recent.

Child welfare spending on cost effective programs is affected by the very limited amount of research on programs that have specifically targeted child welfare clients. Only a few programs have been tested rigorously for use with a child welfare population. Children’s Administration is working to identify programs that require more research but are likely to have an impact on child welfare outcomes. Children’s Administration recently began purchasing Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC), Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), and the Incredible Years Program. Expenditures for these cost effective programs will be seen in Fiscal Year 2007.

## **Methods Used to Gather Data**

Expenditure data provided in this report is for Fiscal Year 2006. The process used to gather information in this report was limited to information that could be gathered from the financial reporting system and in some cases non-automated sources of information. The expenditure data in fiscal year 2006 was not coded to allow Children’s Administration to separate expenditures on effective programs from expenditures on other programs.

## Expenditure Data

### Cost Effective Programs

<b>Cost Effective Programs *</b>	<b>Expenditures July 1, 2005 - June 30, 2006</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC)</b>	<b>\$461,057</b>	<p><b>Program is provided within the Behavioral Rehabilitation Services (BRS) in three locations (Spokane, Yakima, and Tacoma.)</b></p> <p><b>Program began in November 2005.</b></p>
<b>Functional Family Therapy (FFT)</b>	<b>\$22,400</b>	<p><b>Program was provided through an intra-agency agreement with Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration.</b></p> <p><b>The program began in December 2005.</b></p>
<b>Big Brothers / Big Sisters Mentoring</b>	<b>Currently funded by grant dollars which end in 2007</b>	<b>Program is a collaboration between Big Brothers / Big Sisters and Children's Administration the Tumwater Office.</b>
<b>Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)</b>	<b>Unable to report as program was purchased through existing contracts</b>	<p><b>Children's Administration in November 2006 initiated contracts specifically to purchase PCIT.</b></p> <p><b>Expenditures on this program will increase in fiscal year 2007.</b></p>

\* Descriptions of the cost effective programs are located on page 8 of this report.

### Not Cost Effective Programs

Not Cost Effective Programs	Expenditures (July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006)	Comments
Family Preservation Services	\$4,308,309	
Intensive Family Preservation Services	\$2,401,806	<p>Expenditures reported here include funds spent on the Homebuilders program.</p> <p>Homebuilders was identified in February 2006 as a cost effective program by WSIPP.</p> <p>Expenditures on Homebuilders can not be broken out of the overall expenditure data.</p>

### Programs with Research Where Cost Effectiveness is Unknown

Programs with Research Where Cost Effectiveness is Unknown	Expenditures (July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006)	Comments
Child Haven	\$4,039,655	This program is known as Medicaid Treatment Childcare (MTCC). **
Family Group Conferencing	\$1,579,774	Children's Administration uses a form of this program called Family Team Decision Making (FTDM).

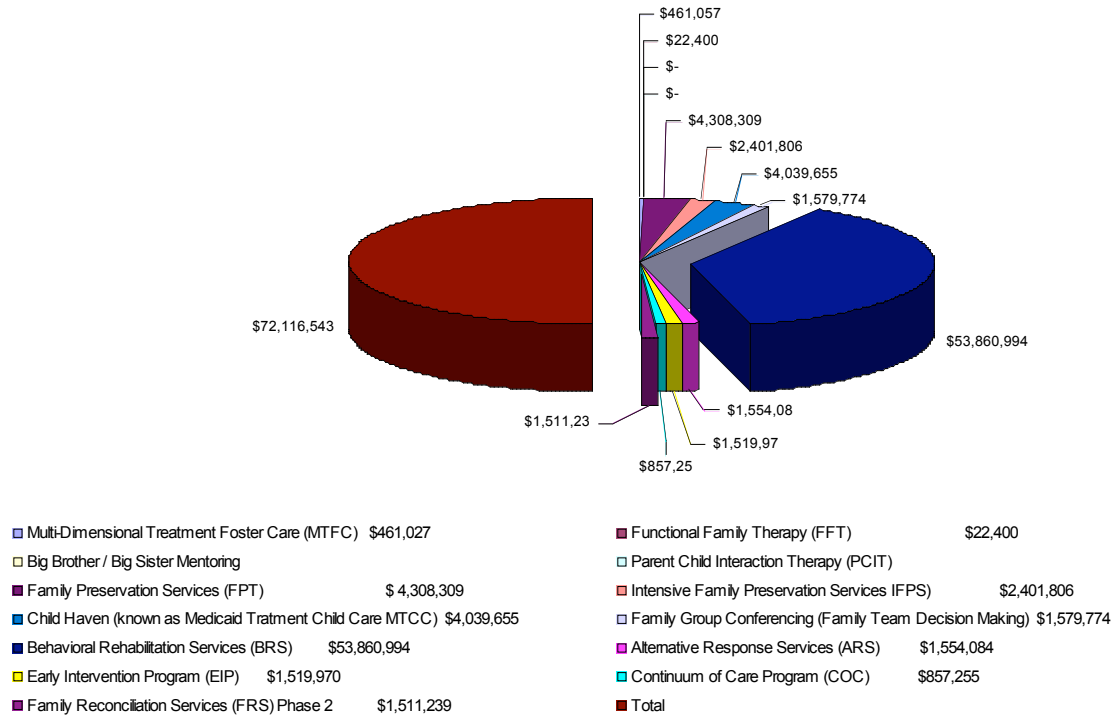
\* Additional Medicaid Treatment Childcare programs exist, but at this time only Child Haven had research that was reviewed by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

## Programs with Unknown Impact Due to Lack of Research

Programs with Unknown Impact Due to Lack of Research	Expenditures (July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006)	Comments
Behavioral Rehabilitation Services (BRS)	\$53,860,994	BRS services include costs for foster or group care and treatment services for the child.  Not all children served in the BRS program would fall into the category of "At Risk."
Alternative Response Services (ARS)	\$1,554,084	ARS programs vary in their service approach and may include items such as home visiting.
Early Intervention Program (EIP)	\$1,519,970	EIP programs vary in their service approach and may include items such as home visiting.
Continuum of Care Program (COC)	\$857,255	COC programs vary in their service approaches.
Family Reconciliation Services (FRS) – Phase 2	\$1,511,239	

# Expenditure Summary

Response to At Risk Youth Study  
FY2006



## Next Steps

Children's Administration is making a concerted effort to increase the use of cost effective programs. During Fiscal Year 2007, four cost effective programs will be operating. In fiscal year 2007 and to a greater degree in fiscal year 2008, Children's Administration will implement expenditure coding that sorts expenditures for cost effective programs.

Children's Administration will continue to identify programs that appear to be effective at addressing important issues in child welfare. Once these programs are identified, Children's Administration will seek funding to research the effectiveness of the programs. This research will include an analysis of the cost effectiveness of the program. Completing cost effectiveness research for child welfare programs may require modifications to the cost benefit analysis methodology, so the entire impact of the program on the clients is captured.

## **Conclusion**

Children's Administration is just beginning the effort to implement evidence based programs. Child welfare spending on programs is affected by the limited amount of research on programs that have specifically targeted child welfare clients. Few programs have been tested rigorously for use with a child welfare population. In response to the recent information on the effectiveness of the Homebuilders model of service, Children's Administration has initiated steps to bring the Intensive Family Preservation Services in line with the Homebuilders model.

Children's Administration spending has been prioritized for some promising new evidence based programs as part of the neglect legislation implementation. Children's Administration is reexamining how alternative response service and early intervention programs are organized. Due to the small number of well researched programs that serve child welfare clients, it will be some time before large portions of Children's Administration expenditures are on programs in the "cost effective" category. In the future, there will be an increased ability to provide information on expenditures that support cost effective programs.

## **Appendix**

### **Description of Cost Effective Programs:**

**Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC)** - MTFC is a program for children ages 12 to 18 who are in foster care and exhibit problem behaviors that led to a referral to Behavioral Rehabilitation Services (BRS). The program's goal is to increase developmentally appropriate behavior in children and adolescents who are in need of out-of-home placement. It is a strength-based, skill building model which shapes desired behaviors through positive reinforcement. The treatment model assists the youth's permanent resource family with effective parenting skills. This ensures that positive changes made while in the MTFC program are sustained long term. Children remain in MTFC foster homes for an average of 9 months. Studies indicate that children participating in MTFC experienced increased placement stability after completion of the program.

**Functional Family Therapy (FFT)** – FFT is a family therapy that is provided in a family home. The program serves families with children between the ages of 11 and 18. FFT focuses reducing conflict in the family, improving communication, increasing use of age appropriate parenting skills, and improving parent supervision of children. The program lasts an average of 4 months. The entire family participates in FFT. With child welfare clients, one study showed a 50% reduction in out of home placement for adolescents whose families received FFT.

**Parent Child Interaction Therapy** – PCIT is a parent training program that was originally designed to treat children (age two to seven) with conduct problem behavior. Further studies of the program showed that PCIT helps parents improve parenting skills, build a warm and responsive relationship with their child, and decrease child behavior problems. The service lasts about 20 weeks and is delivered in one hour sessions. Trained therapists coach the parent (use of a one way mirror in which therapist uses a microphone device from another room) in child management techniques (e.g. how to praise appropriate behavior, ignore undesirable behavior, give clear, age-appropriate instructions, how to implement “time-outs”) while parents are interacting with their children in a safe environment. Use of the program in one study with clients involved in child welfare produced a 50% reduction in re-occurrence of physical abuse and neglect.

**Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring** – The Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring program matches children with adult mentors for a period of at least two years. Studies indicate that children participating in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring program were less likely to begin using drugs and alcohol, were less likely to hit someone, skipped school and class less often, and were less likely to lie to their parents.