



# Effects of Functional Family Parole on Re-Arrest and Employment for Youth in Washington State

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Barbara A. Lucenko, PhD, Lijian He, PhD, David Mancuso, PhD, and Barbara Felver, MES, MPA  
*In collaboration with Bob Salsbury, Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration*

**NOTE:** See *Technical Appendix* for Methods and Definitions: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/rda/>.

**T**HE JUVENILE REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION (JRA) implemented a new model of juvenile parole services in 2003, based upon the Blueprints for Violence evidence-based program, Functional Family Therapy (FFT). This new model of parole, Functional Family Parole (FFP), is intended to make families the unit of intervention—not just the youth—and uses family therapy-based approaches to enhance case management outcomes. The new model of parole was implemented in concert with several other evidence-based changes in the JRA residential program. The entire program was called the Integrated Treatment Model. Because all these changes were implemented at the same time, and because almost all JRA youth received both residential and parole treatment, it was initially impossible in practice to separate the effects of the change to Functional Family Parole from the effects of other components.

However, in State Fiscal Year 2009, budget reductions driven by a severe budget crisis led to the elimination of parole for all JRA offenders except high-risk, auto theft offenders, and sex offenders. In an effort to mitigate the impacts of the reduction, JRA re-engineered its pre-release assistance for youth and their families. Targeted areas for pre-release assistance include education, vocation, treatment and mentoring as well as linkages to needed resources during the transition period. However, once released, there was no parole, follow-up or aftercare for those youth. The elimination of parole for a group of JRA youth created a “natural experiment” allowing a test of the impacts of Functional Family Parole upon youth in the period following their release from JRA residential care. Two key areas of outcomes were identified for evaluation: re-arrests and employment. This paper summarizes that outcome evaluation.

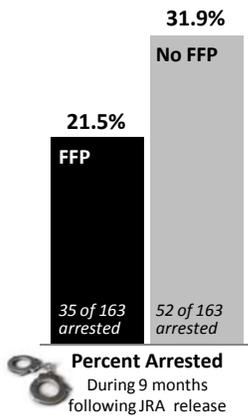
### FFP-Group Youth were:

- Less likely to be arrested and had less total arrests during the 9 months following release than those released later without parole.
- More likely to be employed and earned more on the average during the year following release than those released without parole.

**Methods.** The two cohorts of JRA youth were released prior to and after the elimination of parole. The two groups were defined using a sophisticated, multivariate propensity score matching process to ensure they were closely matched with respect to criminal and employment histories, demographics and other risk factors and characteristics.



**ARREST RATES | Youth released without FFP were 48 percent MORE likely to be arrested than those released with parole**



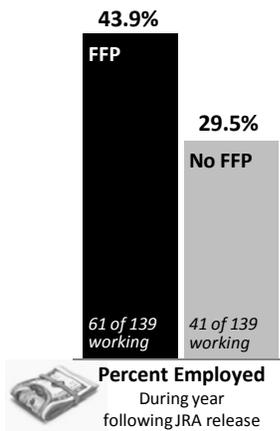
Those in the FFP group were 48 percent LESS likely to be arrested during the follow-up period than a matched comparison group of similar youth from the later period who did not get parole. A logistic regression model demonstrated results of a similar magnitude in that that the odds of being arrested in the nine months following release were 70 percent higher for youth released between July and December of 2009, following the elimination of enhanced parole, than the odds for those released between July and December of 2008. This finding was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

- **No FFP:** Youth released from JRA residences July through December 2009 ( $n = 163$ )
- **FFP:** Similar youth released from JRA residences July through December 2008 ( $n = 163$ )

**NUMBER OF ARRESTS | Youth released without FFP have MORE total arrests following release than those released with FFP**

In addition to being more likely to have *any arrest* in the follow-up period, youth released following the discontinuation of FFP also had more *total arrests* during the nine months following release than youth in the FFP group. A regression model controlling for demographics, risk scores, and criminal history demonstrated that those released in the no FFP period (July-December 2009) had more arrests on average in the post period than those released prior to the discontinuation of enhanced parole (July-December 2008). This finding was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). The trend towards more total arrests (including felonies, gross misdemeanors, and other charges) following release from incarceration appears to be associated with the discontinuation of funding for the enhanced form of parole (i.e. FFP).

**EMPLOYMENT | Youth released with FFP are MORE likely to be employed than those released without FFP**



FFP youth had a higher rate of employment following release from JRA than a similar group of youth who were released without parole. In addition to the unadjusted differences (49 percent) shown in the chart, a logistic regression model showed that the odds of being employed during the four quarters following release were 55 percent lower for those released after the discontinuation of FFP (July through December 2009) than for those who were released during the enhanced parole period (July through December 2008). This finding was statistically significant ( $p = .005$ ). In addition to the matching process, this analysis controls for pre-existing differences between the groups, such as age, prior employment, earnings, and arrests (see technical appendix).

- **No FFP:** Youth age 17 and older released from JRA residences July through December 2009 ( $n = 139$ )
- **FFP:** Similar youth age 17 and older released from JRA residences July through December 2008 ( $n = 139$ )

**EARNINGS | Youth released with FFP earn MORE than those released without FFP**

Youth released during the no parole period made \$237 LESS on average per quarter than youth released with FFP ( $p < .05$ ). In addition to the matching process, this analysis controls for pre-existing differences between groups, such as age, prior employment and average quarterly earnings, and arrests (technical appendix has complete list). The model adjusted average quarterly earnings in the four quarters following release were \$467 (\$1,868/year) for the parole group and \$230 (\$920/year) for the no parole group.

<sup>1</sup> Since 2003, all JRA youth in enhanced parole have been exposed to Functional Family Parole (FFP), a parole aftercare model based on evidence-based Functional Family Therapy (FFT). FFP is a family focused strengths based case management and supervision model that uses evidence-based practice principles to assist youth and families in successful transition, reentry and aftercare in their home communities (Sexton, et al., 2009).