



SAN MATEO COUNTY **PROBATION DEPARTMENT**

FAMILY PRESERVATION PROGRAM
ANNUAL EVALUATION

2022-2023



ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

Applied Survey Research (ASR) is a nonprofit social research firm dedicated to helping people build better communities by collecting meaningful data, facilitating information-based planning, and developing custom strategies. The firm was founded on the principle that community improvement, initiative sustainability, and program success are closely tied to assessment needs, evaluation of community goals, and development of appropriate responses.

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Contents

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	1
PROGRAMMATIC CHALLENGES	2
EVALUATION METHODS	3
EVALUATION FINDINGS	4
Fiscal Year Highlights	4
Profile of Youths Served	4
Risk Indicators	4
Justice Outcomes	5
Program-Specific Outcomes	5
Client Story	5

Program Description

The Probation Department Juvenile Services' Family Preservation Program (FPP) serves youths 12 to 18 years of age, primarily focusing on youths who have entered the juvenile justice system under specific circumstances that put them at high risk of being placed out-of-home. These circumstances typically include recent criminal charges that resulted from behaviors related to significant emotional or mental health issues, or escalating familial issues. The program is also appropriate for youths charged with low-level (non-predatory, non-violent) sex offenses, youths experiencing substance abuse issues, or those who have been or are currently exposed to domestic violence. Additionally, the program is appropriate for youths whose families are currently in crisis or are experiencing serious issues that compromise family functioning.

The Deputy Probation Officers (DPO)s who carry a FPP case, work collaboratively with Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS), Children and Family Services (CFS), schools, and other strength-based collateral agencies to provide therapeutic services for youths and their families to provide intensive probation case management and therapeutic interventions by mental health providers. Supervision is dictated by the Department's Supervision Standards policy, whereby participation in the program is monitored by meeting with the youths on a bi-weekly basis and the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) as often as needed to ensure compliance with counseling services and adherence to Court-orders. Court hearings occur every 90 days to update the Court on the progress made by the youths and their families.

The program's primary goal is to maintain youths in their homes by expanding intensive supervision, flexible support services, and community-based resources. For fiscal year 2022-23 the Probation Department had six DPOs who maintained an FPP caseload and each DPO averaged one youth during the reporting period.

Programmatic Challenges

In FY 2022-23, the Probation Department shifted to generalized caseloads to allow for a continuum of care for youth under supervision. In this new structure, a youth is assigned one DPO from the time they are booked into the Youth Services Center – Juvenile Hall, through the Court process and until they complete supervision. In this new structure, DPOs are able to provide better case management to youths and their families by following their case for the duration of their supervision. All Juvenile Services DPOs underwent training on specific standards and guidelines for FPP. DPOs continue to assess the needs of the youths and their families with whom they work and provide referrals for services as needed.

Evaluation Methods

Programs funded by San Mateo County Juvenile Probation (Probation) monitor their programs and report client, service, and outcome data to the department and its evaluator, Applied Survey Research (ASR). The methods and tools used to collect this data from funded programs include:

- **Participants and Services:** Funded programs collected demographic data (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, etc.) and service data (e.g., type of services, hours of services, etc.) for individual participants. Program staff entered these data elements into their own data systems prior to transferring the data to ASR for analysis.
- **Risk Factors:** Funded programs used the Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS) to provide a standard measure of risk for youths. This individualized assessment is a widely used criminogenic risk, strengths, and needs assessment tool that assists in the effective and efficient supervision of youths, both in institutional settings and in the community. It has been validated across ethnic and gender groups. The JAIS consists of a brief initial assessment followed by full assessment and reassessment components (JAIS Full Assessment and JAIS Reassessment). The JAIS assessment has two unique form options based on the youth's gender. Probation has elected to administer the JAIS to all youths receiving services in community programs for at-risk and juvenile justice involved youth. The JAIS Girls Risk consists of eight items, and the JAIS Boys Risk consists of ten items. Each assessment yields an overall risk level of 'low,' 'moderate,' or 'high.'
- **Risk Indicators:** Funded programs evaluated certain risk indicators upon entry for JJCPA youths, including if the youths had an alcohol or other drug problem, a school attendance problem, and whether they had been suspended or expelled from school in the past year.
- **Outcomes:** Like all JJCPA-funded programs, the FPP reports on five justice-related outcomes for program participants. They are:
 - Arrests;
 - Probation violations;
 - Detentions;
 - Court-ordered restitution completion, and
 - Court-ordered community service completion.

The outcome measures reported for FPP include Arrests and Probation Violations within 180 days post entry. The prior year's cohort of program participants serves as the reference or comparison group to interpret FY 2022-23 outcomes.

Additionally, FPP tracks progress toward its goal of keeping all youths unified with their families to avoid out-of-home placements.

Evaluation Findings

FISCAL YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

- FPP has experienced a steady decline in the number of youths in the program. In FY 2022-23, 4 youths participated, a 71% drop as compared to FY 2021-22 (n=14).
- Four of five youths evaluated for risk indicators at entry reported having an attendance problem or experience of suspension/expulsion in the past year, while one youth had an alcohol or drug problem.
- Fewer than five youths completed the JAIS criminogenic risk assessment, and their scores are suppressed due to extremely small sample size (n=2).

PROFILE OF YOUTHS SERVED

During FY 2022-23, FPP served 4 youths. Youths spent an average of 3.3 months in the program, significantly lower than the prior year.

Exhibit 1. Youth Services

YOUTH SERVICES	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23
Number of Youths Served	36	29	21	14	4
Average Time in the Program (Months)	6.8	11.7	16.6	5.9	3.3

Note: Demographics are unavailable due to the small sample size (n < 5).

RISK INDICATORS

For each youth in the program, FPP evaluated risk indicators upon entry to determine whether youths experienced: 1) an alcohol or other drug problem, 2) a school attendance problem, and 3) suspension or expulsion from school in the past year. Slightly more youths were evaluated for risk indicators at entry compared to that of FY 2021-22 (five versus three, respectively). Four of five youths evaluated this fiscal year reported having attendance problems or experience of suspension or expulsion at program entry (80% for both indicators), while one youth reported having an alcohol or drug problem (20%).

Exhibit 2. Risk Indicators at Program Entry

RISK INDICATORS AT PROGRAM ENTRY	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23
Alcohol or Other Drug Problem	59%	72%	94%	*	20%
Attendance Problem	73%	72%	76%	*	80%
Suspension/Expulsion in Past Year	64%	66%	59%	*	80%

Note: FY 2022-23 n=5. *Indicates that data were suppressed due to a sample size below five.

J AIS Reassessment data were available for fewer than five youths in FY2022-23. Their scores have been suppressed due to an extremely small sample size (n=2).

JUSTICE OUTCOMES

Exhibit 3 below presents justice-related outcomes for the six youths in the FPP program whose six-month post-entry evaluation milestone occurred in the fiscal year. In FY 2022-23, no youth (n=0) served by FPP met the criteria for reporting justice outcomes (180 days post entry into probation).

Exhibit 3. Justice Outcomes (180 Days Post Entry)

JUSTICE OUTCOMES	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23
Youths Arrested for a New Violation	58%	58%	48%	0%	NA
Youths with a Probation Violation	50%	46%	52%	*	NA

Note: FY 2022-23 n=0. *Indicates that data were suppressed due to a sample size below five.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

The central goal of FPP is to keep youths in their homes. Importantly, of the four youths who participated in the program during FY 2022-23, no youth was given an out-of-home placement order (Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4. Out-of-Home Placements

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC OUTCOMES	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23
Out-of-home placements	3%	10%	0%	0%	0%

CLIENT STORY

In FY22-23, no youth completed the FPP program. Therefore, the below success story provided by FPP features a youth who terminated from the program in the prior fiscal year (June 2022) to illustrate the program’s impact and the effect of services (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5. Client Story

Name of Client	Jimmy (pseudonym)
Age and Gender	18, male
Reason for Referral	<p>Jimmy was originally placed on a six-month period of informal probation for pushing, punching, and stealing a cell phone. He failed informal probation and was adjudged a ward of the Court at age 16, for taking his mother’s vehicle without permission and damaging the vehicle. The Court ordered him into the Family Preservation Program. Within a year, he continued to have police contact for assaulting his girlfriend. Jimmy initially struggled with curfew violations and using controlled substances.</p>
Client’s Behavior, Affect, and Appearance When They First Started in the Program	<p>Jimmy was placed on probation during the COVID-19 pandemic and there was no school at that time, so he was home a lot. The mother reported at the time she did have a good relationship with Jimmy, but he did not have a close relationship with his father. Things got difficult in the home and his father moved out and his mother got a restraining order against the father. During that time, he had a challenging time controlling his anger in the home and threatened to break things in the home and would leave the home without permission. He was very focused on smoking marijuana and being with his friends at all hours of the day. Jimmy was an angry young man and was defiant at times while at school. He also was not willing to work with probation in the beginning. When he moved high schools, Jimmy stopped going to school because he felt the staff gave up on him. He also struggled with online school because it was difficult for him to focus for more than a few minutes.</p>
Activity Engagement and Consistency	<p>Jimmy was referred to a Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) clinician who is also a Licensed Advanced Alcohol Drug Counselor to work on this substance abuse. The clinician reported he was engaged at first but after a couple of months he disengaged. Jimmy was then referred to StarVista’s Insights AOD program and for anger management. Jimmy was engaged at StarVista and worked on treatment goals. He was able to graduate from the program. The family was referred to BHRS for intensive in-home family therapy. At first, the meetings were not consistent as the mother would cancel appointments and would not respond to reschedule the next one. Once they started meeting with BHRS, things improved in the home. Jimmy was also referred to the Victim Impact Awareness program and he completed the program.</p>
Client’s Behavior, Affect, and Appearance Toward the End of the Program	<p>Jimmy’s father moved out of the home and things seemed to settle down within the home. He also started to work which seemed to give him confidence and kept his time busy. With his job, he was able to help with the bills in the home.</p>

<p>What the Client Learned as a Result of the Program</p>	<p>He learned that using drugs and being out all night was not going to get him anywhere in the future. Once he got a job he found that having his own money and having responsibility gave him confidence.</p>
<p>What the Client is Doing Differently in Their Life Now as a Result of the Program</p>	<p>Jimmy is working and is no longer hanging out with the same friends who used drugs. He has matured and his mother also sees a big difference in how he interacts with the family.</p>
<p>The Value of the Program in the Client’s Words</p>	<p>Jimmy felt counseling, especially the anger management, was very helpful in the way he handled his feelings. He stopped acting out and his relationships improved. He needed the structure and the constant redirecting from probation when he went off course.</p>