

**Program: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

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**Population Served:**

Size: 4,849 students

Age: 16- to 18-year-old AFDC recipients (average age 17.1 years)

Other characteristics: Residing in San Diego, Calif. The following teens were excluded: pregnant or parenting teens, teens in foster care, teens attending private school, teens who had graduated from high school or received a GED, and teens engaged in TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) work activities.

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**Studies:** 1 experimental

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**Program Components**

<u>Component</u>	<u>Provided by</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Description</u>
Financial incentive	Welfare office	Over the course of 19 months	Participants were subject to a sanction if they did not attend school at least 80 percent of the time for 2 consecutive months and did not attend an orientation for services.
Multifaceted service delivery	SADP services unit consisting of 14 workers, including 1 MSW-level supervisor, 8 case managers, 2 income maintenance technicians, 1 undergraduate BSW intern, 1 graduate MSW intern, and a unit clerk	Staff had a mean of 13.11 contacts per student	Teens were assessed at time of orientation and were assigned to a case manager, if necessary. The service approach was family-centered and used individual and group interventions, combined with community resources, to address reasons why teens were not attending school. Services included meeting with school counselor, math assistance, transportation assistance, financial assistance, employment help, medical assistance, and school placement facilitation.

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**Program Objectives/Goals:**

To improve the school attendance rates of 16- to 18-year-olds receiving public assistance. Participants were required to attend school full-time as a condition of TANF eligibility. Also to help teens and their families reach independence through a multifaceted service delivery approach.

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**Costs:**

No information available

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**Study:**

Jones, L.P., Harris, R., & Finnegan, D. (2002). School Attendance Demonstration Project: An evaluation of a program to motivate public assistance teens to attend and complete school in an urban school district. *Research on Social Work Practice, 12 (2), 222-237.*

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**Study Objectives and Measurements:**

Objective:

1. To determine if students in the experimental group will attend school according to the attendance rule in greater numbers than students in the control group.
2. To determine if students in the experimental group will graduate from secondary school at a higher rate than students in the control group.

Measurement instrument:

Participants' daily school attendance patterns were followed for up to 19 months. Data were collected from the San Diego Unified School District (attendance data, graduation status, type of school attendance) and from the San Diego County Department of Social Services (income maintenance data such as benefit amounts, sanctions, and basic demographics).

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**Evaluation:**

Type: Experimental

Statistical techniques: logistic regression. Multivariate model using logistic regression was used to predict graduation.

Significance level:  $p \leq .05$

Population evaluated: 4,849 students in the experimental group; 2,398 students in the control group. The entire sample was tracked from February 1996 until February 1998 during the school months, for a total of 19 time periods; however, sample size varied during each data collection period.

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**Key Findings:**

The program did not reach many of the intended recipients:

Only a small proportion of students responded to the orientation for services: 569 students attended the orientation; 1,031 ignored the orientation notice, did not improve their attendance, and were discontinued from public assistance. Another 61 teens were dropped after attending the orientation for failure to improve school attendance.

Attendance rates increased for participants who attended the orientation:

In February 1996, the probability of participants' meeting the 80 percent rule was 2 percent higher than that of control group members, a difference that is not significant. A year later, the probability was 8 percent higher, a significant difference.

There was no impact on graduation rates:

57.5 percent of participants and 55.4 percent of the control group had graduation certificates (difference not significant).

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Multivariate analysis:

The program appeared to improve attendance for participants with relatively few risks:

The program was less effective for students from single-parent homes, Hispanic students, female students, students in alternative schools, students from families receiving child protective services, and probationers. Female participants were significantly less likely to meet the rule than males. Hispanics were significantly less likely to meet the rule than other racial/ethnic subgroups. Younger students may be significantly less likely to meet the rule than older students. Students with two parents were significantly more likely to graduate than students with one parent. Students from larger households were less likely to graduate than students from smaller households (difference not significant).

Results on “attended orientation” suggest that services were not sufficient to reverse attendance difficulties.

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**Other Information:**

All students were eligible to receive social services, but the experimental group was eligible to receive them from the SADP services unit.

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