

Impact Summary for Education

To have a community-wide impact, prevention programs must be delivered to a critical mass of families and youth. PROSPER Teams, composed of community stakeholders, cooperate to deliver evidence-based programs to targeted age groups and bring about positive community-wide change.

Empirical outcomes resulting from use of the PROSPER Partnership Model to deliver evidence-based programs to middle school youth include:

- Significantly reducing initiation rates for marijuana and meth use. For every 100 7th graders in non-intervention communities, only about 60 in PROSPER communities are likely to use marijuana over the same period.
- Reducing drunkenness by an average of 7.4% for 10th grade students. Programs are offered during 6th and 7th grades and can have a long-term impact on alcohol use during the high school years.
- Reaching about 17% of families with evidence-based programs as compared to traditional family program participation, which ranges from 1-6%. Researchers have found that once 15-20% of families participate, they collectively have a positive impact on the rest of the families in that community.
- For each dollar invested in the family program used in this prevention approach, about \$9.60 is returned on that investment.

How are these results achieved?

The PROSPER Partnership Model uses a menu of proven prevention programs delivered as part of the school curriculum with family-focused programs offered outside the classroom. This allows PROSPER to **reach more youth** and a **more diverse** cross-section of youth and parents. Because the programs are offered to everyone, bridges are built to improve family, youth and community relationships across the board.

It takes a team

Britney Rosburg became Program Educator at Emmet County Extension in November 2012. In this position, she also serves as the PROSPER Team Leader for Iowa's Estherville team.

*"I continue to learn about the PROSPER model and its programs," says Rosburg. "Seeing it all come together and experience it in action in the **Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth 10-14** last winter helped me realize the impact that PROSPER can have on our communities and families."*

She relates two instances that suggest how teams make a difference in the lives of youth.

"In one group, I saw how patient, caring listening by the adult leaders allowed a couple of kids that were especially shy to open up. Clearly, this was a place where kids felt safe."

Another time, Rosburg was there when a couple of 6th-grade girls shared serious concerns about friends who were being bullied. *"They looked at the facilitator as someone they could trust to help them address the situation," she says.*

"I truly appreciate having the opportunity to coordinate the PROSPER programs and work with team members," says Rosburg. "Without the team, it wouldn't be possible to offer this set of successful programs."

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The programs on the PROSPER menu are successful because they are focused on risk and protective factors that make a difference. The empirical evidence confirms that the theoretical model of decreasing risk factors while increasing protective factors is effective in reducing risky behaviors among youth.

The PROSPER Partnership Model uses collaborative teams made up of Extension, schools, social service agencies and groups, and other stakeholders, who work together to implement proven prevention programs for youth and families. The PROSPER delivery system was developed and tested cooperatively by prevention scientists and Extension staff at Iowa State University and The Pennsylvania State University, and was funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

The Cooperative Extension System, based at the land grant university in your state, is a key agency in the PROSPER partnership. Extension leads local teams that include the community school as a partner in delivering evidence-based programs focused on positive youth development and substance abuse prevention as part of the middle school curriculum. Teams also implement a family-focused program designed to support healthy family interaction and problem-solving. Other important partners needed for cohesive community collaboration on these teams include juvenile justice agencies, civic and community development groups, faith organizations, community foundations and even families themselves.

Do PROSPER partnerships really make a difference?

Research shows that:

- Youth in PROSPER communities are ***better at problem solving***, are less likely to hang out with classmates that get into trouble, and are ***more likely to refuse offers of alcohol and other drugs***.
- Youth who participated in the family program on the PROSPER menu in other studies tend to be more ***engaged in school*** and have ***higher academic success*** than youth who did not participate in the programs.
- The evidence-based programs used by PROSPER teams are implemented as intended over 90% of the time, as compared to a range of 40-80% for similar programs implemented outside of the PROSPER structure. That means the programs used are likely to ***achieve positive youth and family outcomes***.
- PROSPER community stakeholders in the original PROSPER research project reported more ***positive perceptions*** of the school system and school leaders than do stakeholders in non-PROSPER communities.
- PROSPER ***Teams sustain programs*** and continue to thrive as compared to other community groups and coalitions that tend to come and go. This is, in part, due to the ongoing support of PROSPER Teams by the PROSPER Network, that includes the State Management Team.

PROSPER has a vision

- To promote success for children, youth, and families
- To help children and youth realize their positive developmental potential
- To join the forces of science with community practice to create these successes

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