

Impact Summary for Public Health

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 can bring about positive community-wide change. Some of the empirical outcomes that result from using the PROSPER Partnership Model include:

- Reducing alcohol use by an average of 32% 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.
- Significantly reducing initiation rates for marijuana and meth use. About 61 students in a PROSPER community try marijuana compared to 100 students in a non-PROSPER community.
- 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.

PROSPER programs are positive

Sharon Aalfs was amazed when her 11-year-old grandson raised his hand to volunteer at their very first SFP 10-14 session a year ago.

"Johnathon is autistic, and he usually doesn't like to be in new situations. But there was something different about the program that helped him feel comfortable from the beginning. He totally loved it," says Aalfs.

Aalfs says that the parenting training she received there brought some changes at home that have helped her family. *"We're a little stricter. We open up and share more, before we get angry. When he gets in trouble, he knows he'll have to pick a consequence from the cookie jar. But he also knows when things go well, he can get a reward."*

Aalfs is also raising her granddaughter and hopes she will have the chance to go through the SFP 10-14 program as well.

"There is so much out there that's negative, but everything with this is so positive. I wish every family had the chance to benefit from it," says Aalfs.

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.

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

Want to learn more? Go to: www.prosper.ppsi.iastate.edu and www.helpingkidsprosper.org.



Lyndon Town School

