

At-Risk Youth Prevention Survey Results – West Virginia Child Care Association
Preliminary Analysis Provided by West Virginia University Division of Social Work
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This survey was completed by 440 child service professionals across the state of West Virginia.

Role of respondents in the Child Service System:

- Social Service Agency = 127, 28.9%
- Education System = 74, 16.8%
- State Agency = 54, 12.3%
- Juvenile Justice System = 31, 7.0%
- Law enforcement = 14, 3.2%
- Other = 139, 31.6%

Age of youth with whom respondents typically interact:

- Birth to 3 = 129, 29.3%
- 4-10 = 225, 51.1%
- 11-16 = 319, 72.5%
- 17-21 = 251, 57%

What risk factors do you and your organization deal with on a regular basis?

- Learning, emotional, or behavioral problems = 338, 76.8%
- Abuse and neglect = 328, 74.5%
- Substance abuse = 320, 72.7%
- Poverty = 320, 72.7%
- Poor educational and employment options = 259, 58.9%
- Peer pressure = 244, 55.5%
- Criminal activity not gang related = 185, 42%
- Gang activity = 61, 13.9%

Which risk factors do you believe lead children ages birth -3 in your community to be involved in future at-risk behavior?

- Parental substance abuse/criminal behavior/psychopathology = 305, 69.3%
- Poorly educated parents = 254, 57.7%
- Parental abuse/neglect = 238, 54.1%
- Poverty = 175, 39.8%
- Inadequate parental monitoring = 117, 26.6%
- Harsh and/or erratic discipline = 65, 14.8%
- Pregnancy and delivery complications = 38, 8.6%
- Antisocial behavior such as aggression = 26, 5.9%
- Hyperactive/impulsive behavior = 22, 5.0%

Which risk factors do you believe lead children ages 4-10 in your community to be involved in future at-risk behavior?

- Parental substance abuse/criminal behavior/psychopathology = 272, 61.8%

- Inadequate parental monitoring = 245, 55.7%
- Parental abuse/neglect = 227, 51.6%
- Poverty = 155, 35.2%
- Harsh and/or erratic discipline = 84, 19.1%
- Hyperactive/impulsive behavior = 65, 14.8%
- Lack or guilt, lack of empathy = 59, 13.4%
- Antisocial behavior such as aggression = 58, 13.2%
- Social isolation or target of school bullying = 54, 12.3%
- Violence in the media = 35, 8.0%
- Persistent lying = 11, 2.5%

Which risk factors do you believe lead children ages 11-16 in your community to be involved in future at-risk behavior?

- Inadequate parental monitoring = 253, 57.5%
- Early onset of substance use = 218, 49.5%
- Parental substance abuse/criminal behavior/psychopathology = 181, 41.1%
- Peer pressure = 143, 32.5%
- Lack of organized youth activities = 107, 24.3%
- Poverty = 96, 21.8%
- Early onset of sexual activity = 76, 17.3%
- Social isolation or target of school bullying = 63, 14.3%
- Antisocial behavior such as aggression = 61, 13.9%
- Harsh and/or erratic discipline = 32, 7.3%
- School practices and policies = 30, 6.8%
- Violence in the media = 16, 3.6%
- Presence of gang activity = 5, 1.1%

Which risk factors do you believe lead children ages 17-21 in your community to be involved in future at-risk behavior?

- Substance abuse = 328, 74.5%
- Unemployment = 193, 43.9%
- Peer pressure = 140, 31.8%
- Poverty = 128, 29.1%
- Parental abuse/neglect = 104, 23.6%
- Lack of access or opportunity for higher education = 102, 23.2%
- Antisocial behavior such as aggression = 96, 21.8%
- Lack of organized youth activities = 84, 19.1%
- School practices and policies = 37, 8.4%
- Harsh and/or erratic discipline = 26, 5.9%
- Presence of gang activity = 11, 2.5%

Which family characteristics do you believe lead to at-risk youth behavior?

- Poor parenting practices, such as lack of monitoring, lack of positive reinforcement = 368, 83.6%

- Parental substance abuse/criminal behavior = 295, 67.0%
- Poor parent-child communication = 166, 37.7%
- Parent conflict/divorce = 107, 24.3%
- Poorly educated parents = 106, 24.1%
- The prevalence of physical abuse = 66, 15.0%
- Parental psychopathology = 61, 13.9%
- A history of physical violence = 54, 12.3%
- Maternal substance abuse while pregnant = 41, 9.3%
- Antisocial parents = 18, 4.1%
- Large family size = 1, .2%

Which school or community characteristics do you believe lead to at-risk youth behavior?

- Poor student-teacher relations = 207, 47%
- Poor academic achievement = 183, 41.6%
- Neighborhood crime, drugs = 183, 41.6%
- The prevalence of norms and values that support antisocial behavior = 178, 40.5%
- Inadequate rule enforcement = 139, 31.6%
- Residence in disadvantaged neighborhood, 100, 22.7%
- Poorly defined conduct rules/expectations = 92, 20.9%
- Little cooperation among teachers = 45, 10.2%
- Low levels of teacher satisfaction = 42, 9.5%
- Violence in the media = 40, 9.1%

Do you think at-risk youth behaviors could be prevented, for the most part, with intervention prior to negative behaviors manifesting?

- Yes = 422, 95.9%
- No = 17, 3.9%

The biggest obstacle in your opinion to prevent children ages birth-3 from engaging in at-risk behavior as they get older are:

- Lack of parenting skills = 196, 44.5%
- Lack of family support (e.g. isolated parents) = 130, 29.5%
- Transportation to programs/activities = 108, 24.5%
- Prevalence of poverty = 107, 24.3%
- Working single parent = 70, 15.9%
- Affordable and appropriate daycare = 62, 14.1%
- Lack of access to mental health services = 53, 12%
- Lack of parent education programs = 41, 9.3%
- Incarcerated parent(s) = 19, 4.3%
- Lack of access to medical services = 9, 2.0%
- Do not work with age group = 149, 33.9%

What is the biggest obstacle facing children ages birth to 3 in West Virginia today?

- Parental substance abuse/criminal behavior/psychopathology = 189, 43%

- Poverty = 114, 25.9%
- Lack of parental education = 72, 16.4%
- Lack of parental employment = 24, 5.5%
- Lack of access to medical services = 10, 2.3%
- Lack of housing = 2, .5%

The biggest obstacle in your opinion to prevent children ages 4-10 from engaging in at-risk behavior as they get older are:

- Lack of parenting skills = 156, 35.5%
- Lack of parental supervision = 127, 28.9%
- Money for programs and services = 117, 26.6%
- Lack of facilities/activities targeted for youth (e.g. after school programs, rec. centers, scouting activities) = 117, 26.6%
- Transportation to programs/activities = 117, 26.6%
- Lack of knowledge of existing services by the people who could benefit = 94, 21.4%
- Lack of family support (e.g. isolated parents) = 86, 19.5%
- Prevalence of poverty = 78, 17.7%
- Lack of educational support (tutoring, mentoring, oversight) = 60, 13.6%
- Lack of access to mental health services = 30, 6.8%
- Do not work with age group = 84, 19.1%

What is the biggest obstacle facing children ages 4-10 in West Virginia today?

- Parental substance abuse/criminal behavior/psychopathology = 183, 41.6%
- Poverty = 113, 25.7%
- Lack of parental education = 75, 17.0%
- Lack of parental employment = 31, 7.0%
- Lack of access to medical services = 6, 1.4%
- Lack of housing = 1, .2%

The biggest obstacle in your opinion to prevent children ages 11-16 from engaging in at-risk behavior as they get older are:

- Prevalence of drugs/alcohol = 210, 47.7%
- Lack of facilities/activities targeted for youth (e.g. after school programs, rec. centers, scouting activities) = 168, 38.2%
- Lack of parental supervision = 181, 41.1%
- Lack of parenting skills = 126, 28.6%
- Money for programs and services = 106, 24.1%
- Transportation to programs/activities = 90, 20.5%
- Prevalence of poverty = 86, 19.5%
- Lack of family support (e.g. isolated parents) = 84, 19.1%
- Lack of educational support (tutoring, mentoring, oversight) = 77, 17.5%
- Lack of access to mental health services = 27, 6.1%
- Do not work with age group = 22, 5.0%

What is the biggest obstacle facing children ages 11-16 in West Virginia today?

- Parental substance abuse/criminal behavior/psychopathology = 132, 30.0%
- Poverty = 72, 16.4%
- Children's substance abuse = 55, 12.5%
- Lack of parental education = 52, 11.8%
- Children's mental health issues = 39, 8.9%
- Early onset of sexual behavior = 26, 5.9%
- Lack of parental employment = 15, 3.4%
- Lack of access to medical services = 4, .9%
- Lack of housing = 0, 0%

The biggest obstacle in your opinion to prevent children ages 17-21 from engaging in at-risk behavior as they get older are:

- Prevalence of drugs/alcohol = 243, 55.2%
- Lack of educational support (tutoring, mentoring, oversight) = 131, 29.8%
- Lack of family support (e.g. isolated parents) = 119, 27.0%
- Lack of jobs for older teens = 115, 26.1%
- Lack of affordable activities for youth = 103, 23.4%
- Money for programs and services = 102, 23.2%
- Lack of parenting skills = 87, 19.8%
- Transportation to programs/activities = 71, 16.1%
- Prevalence of poverty = 68, 15.5%
- Lack of access to mental health services = 40, 9.1%
- Do not work with age group = 38, 8.6%

What is the biggest obstacle facing children ages 17-21 in West Virginia today?

- Youth substance abuse/mental health issues = 164, 37.3%
- Lack of employment opportunities for youth = 86, 19.5%
- Poverty = 51, 11.6%
- Parental substance abuse/criminal behavior/psychopathology = 44, 10.0%
- Lack of education for youth = 33, 7.5%
- Onset of sexual behavior = 14, 3.2%
- Lack of parental employment = 8, 1.8%
- Lack of housing = 3, .7%
- Lack of access to medical services = 0, 0%

What obstacles do WV youth face that are unique to them (not true of youth in other areas)?

- Geographical problems (such as living in a rural area) = 322, 73.2%
- Poverty = 226, 51.4%
- Attitude toward healthy lifestyles = 209, 47.5%
- Our own belief in Appalachian stereotypes = 125, 28.4%
- Obesity = 77, 17.5%

Are there obstacles that interfere with youth and their families accessing programs/services in your community?

- Yes = 379, 86.1%
- No = 60, 13.6%

Which obstacles do you believe impedes interagency information-sharing programs the most?

- The lack of adequate funding and resources to enable successful programs to continue = 212, 48.2%
- The difficulty of working effectively with other agencies = 102, 23.2%
- The burden of gathering and reporting information = 54, 12.3%
- The failure to conduct an evaluation = 14, 3.2%

Who are the most important people to be training to respond to high-risk behaviors?

- Parents = 375, 85.2%
- Teachers = 310, 70.5%
- Community members = 108, 24.5%
- Child welfare workers = 94, 21.4%
- Law enforcement = 88, 20.0%
- Counselors = 85, 19.3%
- School administrators = 73, 16.6%
- Youth leaders = 58, 13.2%
- Religious community = 28, 6.4%
- Medical personnel = 27, 6.1%

What services are available in your community for at-risk youth?

- Counseling services = 346, 78.6%
- Mental health treatment services = 333, 75.7%
- Drug and alcohol treatment services = 271, 61.6%
- Faith based services = 268 = 60.9%
- DARE = 239, 54.3%
- Parenting education services and support = 193, 43.9
- Teen pregnancy services = 174, 39.5%
- Teen pregnancy prevention services = 163, 37%
- School resource officer = 160, 36.4%
- Mentoring services = 150, 34.1%
- Employment services for youth = 85, 19.3%
- Gender specific services = 49, 11.1%
- Cultural specific services = 36, 8.2%
- Youth accountability board = 4, .9%

Are there programs/services that are not available to youth and their families that YOU would like to see developed in your community?

- Yes = 335, 76.1%
- No = 104, 23.6%

Which organizations ARE involved in at-risk youth behavior prevention in your community?

- Social service agencies = 375, 85.2%
- Juvenile justice system = 313, 71.1%
- Education system = 291, 66.1%
- Law enforcement = 266, 60.5%
- Federal/state agencies = 255, 58.0%
- Community or business leaders = 134, 30.5%

Which organizations would you like to have involved in efforts to prevent at-risk youth behavior in your community that are not already involved?

- Community or business leaders = 280, 63.6%
- Education system = 171, 38.9%
- Law enforcement = 142, 32.3%
- Juvenile justice system = 124, 28.2%
- Federal/state agencies = 122, 27.7%
- Social service agencies = 98, 22.3%

How could agencies in your community work together in a more cohesive unit to better prevent at-risk youth behavior?

- Coordinate prevention programs = 303, 68.9%
- Sharing information = 277, 63%
- Coordinate training programs = 217, 49.3%
- Developing a committee composed of all involved with at-risk youth to discuss and implement prevention methods = 209, 47.5%
- Reducing the overlap of at-risk programs = 76, 17.3
- Agencies in my community do not work together to prevent at-risk behavior = 45, 10.2%

What are the most important aspects of information sharing between agencies?

- Providing appropriate programs and services to deter at-risk youth from delinquent behavior = 302, 68.6%
- Improving interagency collaboration = 163, 37%
- Providing appropriate programs and services to intervene with juveniles currently involved in juvenile justice system = 155, 35.2%
- Leveraging resources and training programs through coordination = 145, 33%
- Developing a formal structure and process for interagency collaboration = 106, 24.1%
- Increasing the safety of the community and its children by reducing juvenile crime = 97, 22.0%
- Eliminating the duplication of services = 78, 17.7%
- Improving case and management level decision-making = 72, 16.4%
- Identifying processes and data systems for resource collection and dissemination = 69, 15.7%

Do you and your organization spend the majority of your time preventing at-risk youth behavior in your community OR addressing the at-risk behavior once it has already manifested?

- Addressing the at-risk behavior after it manifests = 220, 50%
- Both equally = 136, 30.9%
- Preventing at-risk youth behavior = 83, 18.9%

Have you received any professional training in prevention of at-risk youth behavior?

- No = 250, 56.8%
- Yes = 189, 43%

Which type of prevention efforts do you feel is most lacking in your community?

- Universal prevention which focuses on the entire population at risk and the identification of those conditions (personal, social, environmental) that promote at-risk behavior = 247, 56.1%
- Indicated prevention which targets high-risk individuals who are exhibiting beginning symptoms or signs of the problem behavior = 104, 23.6%
- Selective prevention which targets those individuals who have been identified as being at greater risk of becoming delinquent = 88, 20.0%

Which strategies are most needed to prevent at-risk youth behavior in your community?

- Mobilizing community leaders and residents to plan, strengthen, or create new opportunities or linkages to existing organizations for at-risk youth = 245, 55.7%
- Providing or facilitating access to academic, economic, and social opportunities = 226, 51.4%
- Conducting at-risk youth behavior prevention activities and holding at-risk youth accountable = 220, 50%
- Facilitating organizational change and development to help community agencies better address at-risk youth problems through a team 'problem-solving' approach that is consistent with the philosophy of community-oriented policing = 208, 47.3%
- Using outreach workers to engage at-risk youth = 128, 29.1%
- Screening policies to facilitate early identification of those most at-risk in order to be able to provide targeted services = 106, 24.1%

If the following were readily available in your community, the number of at-risk youth would be reduced.

- Money for programs and services = 241, 54.8%
- Transportation to programs/activities = 186, 42.3%
- Knowledge of existing programs/services by the people who could benefit = 162, 36.8%
- Facilities targeted for youth = 160, 36.4%
- Employment opportunities in general = 124, 28.2%
- Coordination of community programs = 122, 27.7%
- Drug/alcohol education or programs = 102, 23.2%
- Support groups for parents = 82, 18.6%
- Jobs for older teens = 55, 12.5%
- Daycare = 21, 4.8%

If parents consistently used the following skills in raising children, the number of at-risk youth would be reduced.

- Encouragement = 266, 60.5%
- Role-modeling = 227, 51.6%
- Consequences = 218, 49.5%
- Listening = 159, 36.1%
- Discipline = 158, 35.9%
- Support = 137, 31.1%
- Praise = 85, 19.3%
- Tough-love = 19, 4.3%
- Spanking = 4, .9%
- Punishment = 3, .7%
- Parents as friends = 1, .2%
- Lecture = 0, 0%

Parents could be more responsive to preventing at-risk behavior by:

- Actively communicating with children = 324, 73.6%
- Being clear and consistent with discipline = 320, 72.7%
- Getting involved with school and community organizations and activities = 217, 49.3%
- Identifying positive and negative behaviors = 142, 32.3%
- Limiting the children's exposure to and experience with crime and violence = 94, 21.4%
- Recognizing antecedents of problem behavior = 89, 20.2%
- Participating in family management training or counseling opportunities = 74, 16.8%
- Keeping guns and other weapons out of reach of unsupervised children = 10, 2.3%

Community and business leaders could be more responsive to preventing at-risk behavior by:

- Establishing school-community partnerships = 282, 64.1%
- Offering resources to local schools = 170, 38.6%
- Identifying and measuring the at-risk behaviors problems in the community = 161, 36.6%
- Providing internships and employment opportunities = 147, 33.4%
- Identifying appropriate research-based programs and services = 127, 28.9%
- Providing flexible work hours and leave to parents and volunteers = 119, 27.0%
- Providing training in basic job skills = 105, 23.9%
- Curfew enforcement = 65, 14.8%

Schools could be more responsive to preventing at-risk behavior by:

- Training school staff in all aspects of prevention of at-risk behavior = 263, 59.8%
- Providing more educational support (tutoring, assessment, remedial) = 209, 47.5%
- Addressing and preventing youth truancy = 128, 29.1%
- Providing all students access to school psychologists and counselors = 122, 27.7%
- Designing an effective discipline system = 116, 26.4%
- Providing wider availability of alternative school settings = 115, 26.1%
- Educating teachers on child abuse/neglect = 112, 25.5%
- Reaching out to communities and businesses to improve safety of students = 90, 20.5%

- Building local law enforcement partnerships = 39, 8.9%

Social Service Agencies could be more responsive to preventing at-risk behavior by:

- Implementing, evaluating, and revising a comprehensive prevention plan = 292, 66.4%
- Providing educational/training programs = 259, 58.9%
- Identifying and measuring the at-risk behavior problem in the community = 213, 48.4%
- Identifying appropriate research-based programs and strategies = 161, 36.6%
- Providing affordable daycare = 116, 26.4%

The courts could be more responsive to preventing at-risk behavior by:

- Better support of youth who experience high family conflict, domestic violence in the home and divorce = 197, 44.8%
- Stricter punishments for parent/guardians who engage in behavior that increases the likelihood of their children being at-risk for future negative behavior = 189, 43%
- Enhancing access to safe and appropriate prevention and treatment services for youth and their families = 187, 42.5%
- Holding parent/guardian accountable for child's behavior = 111, 25.2%
- Working in clear coordination with other agencies in the child welfare system = 103, 23.4%
- Intervening at a younger age = 100, 22.7%
- Improving how the law addresses system "cross-over" youth, those youth who cross over from the foster care system into the justice system due to unresolved risk factors in their past and current situations = 105, 23.9%
- Support changes in law and policy to promote positive youth outcomes = 94, 21.4%
- Voices of youth better heard in the legal and judicial process = 73, 16.6%
- Promote more youth related legal and judicial education = 40, 9.1%
- Disseminate information on best practices for aiding at-risk youths = 27, 6.1%

Elected officials and government agencies could be more responsive to preventing at-risk behavior by:

- Building collaboration between and among federal, state and local agencies to pool resources and maximize use of effective approaches to the prevention of at-risk youth behavior = 297, 67.5%
- Providing leadership to schools/communities for prevention of at-risk youth behavior = 203, 46.1%
- Responding within 24 hours of receiving a child maltreatment complaint = 158, 35.9%
- Educating communities about maltreatment and maltreatment reporting = 148, 33.6%
- Supporting at-risk youth behavior prevention research = 112, 25.5%
- Beginning a discussion of key legislative issues in prevention of at-risk youth behavior = 108, 24.5%
- Preventing maltreatment of youth = 99, 22.5%

How can we reach the greatest number of youth with information about solutions to at-risk behavior issues?

- Internet = 246, 55.9%

- School-based outreach = 234, 53.2%
- Television = 195, 44.3%
- Peer-based outreach = 158, 35.9%
- Youth centered community groups = 103, 23.4%
- Parent-focused outreach = 94, 21.4%
- Sporting events = 57, 13.0%
- Radio = 56, 12.7%
- Local service providers = 38, 8.6%
- Church based outreach = 33, 7.5%
- Billboards = 20, 4.5%

Which programs do you think would be beneficial in preventing at-risk youth behavior?

- Social skills, life skills training = 229, 52%
- Positive youth development activities = 223, 50.7%
- After-school /mentoring programs = 175, 39.8%
- Parent training = 155, 35.2%
- Home visitation to provide counseling, support, monitoring for at-risk families = 143, 32.5%
- Bullying prevention programs = 93, 21.1%
- Behavior techniques for classroom management = 57, 13.0%
- Behavior monitoring reinforcement = 57, 13.0%
- School transitional environmental programs = 45, 10.2%
- Building school capacity = 37, 8.4%
- Cooperative learning = 32, 7.3%