MINN𝗅LINK

Minnesota-Linking Information for Kids

Impact of Plus Education Services for County-Involved Youth

Translating research to practice may be difficult, yet a better understanding of current research is necessary to ensure child welfare workers engage in best practices when working with children and families. The Minn-LInK Discussion Guide is designed to help facilitate thoughtful discussions about the information presented in the research brief in order to inform practice and enhance discussion surrounding meaningful issues.

In this issue, we sought to estimate baseline graduation and attendance rates for youth involved in Plus, assess the early impact of the program, and evaluate the success of efforts to improve and expand the program for future cohorts. In particular, to what extent attendance improved during and after Plus participation, educational trajectories (e.g., attendance and enrollment) of Plus students after transitioning to another school, and high school graduation and GED receipt of Plus youth. Overall, findings showed that differences between attendance rates before and during Plus were not significant, for the group overall or when divided by referral source. However, preliminary findings from students attending Plus in 2014 revealed graduation rates were twice as high as those experienced by students attending Plus in earlier years.

Discussion on Practice Implications

1. In this study, rates of school attendance did not significantly improve after Plus participation. What do you think are the greatest motivating factors to keep students in school and what excites students so they stay engaged? What barriers might inhibit attendance? What strategies might you employ to encourage school attendance?

2. A strength of Plus is that it was specifically designed for disengaged, struggling students. What can students, such as those in Plus or those otherwise at risk for academic failure, tell us about what would incent them to stay and continue in school?

Discussion on Agency- & System-Level Changes

1. What can *county systems* do to assist staff involved in Plus provide stronger supports for struggling students?

2. What can *school systems* do to assist staff involved in Plus better help students on the path to academic success?

3. What are the school/county policies and practices that hinder student success that can be addressed by this program?