
RESPONSES TO MEETING 1 QUESTIONS

1. What data related to the Adolescent Risk Assessment in Wisconsin are available? Does it tell us the average age that kids in Wisconsin are starting to have sex? Can we get this data by ethnic / racial groups, and by urban/rural or part of the state they live in?

What data is available?

The “Adolescent Risk Assessment” refers to the *Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance System* (YRBSS), developed by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to monitor priority health risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability and social problems among youth and young adults.

The survey monitors six types of health-risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and adults, including:

- Behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence
- Sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Tobacco use
- Unhealthy dietary behaviors
- Inadequate physical activity

The YRBSS includes a national school-based survey conducted by CDC and state, tribal, and local surveys conducted by state and local education and health agencies and tribal governments. The local (state/tribal) surveys include representative samples of 9th through 12th grade public and private school students and are conducted every two years, usually during the spring semester (sample may include charter and public alternative, special education or vocational schools, and may include religious and other private schools, but not private alternative, special education or vocational schools). The national survey, conducted by CDC, provides data representative of 9th through 12th grade students in public and private schools.

Wisconsin has participated in the survey since 1991. To respond to this question, DCF staff analyzed YRBSS responses from the most recent available data - the 2013 survey. For further information, see:

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm>

What is the average age that youth in Wisconsin become sexually active?

Of those reporting they “ever had sex” (35% of those surveyed), the average age at which they first became sexually active (“at first sex”) was 14.8 years.

How does this break out by race/ethnicity, and by urban/rural or part of the state they live in?

Black youths were significantly more likely to report “ever having sex” than other race/ethnicity groups

- 62% of Black youths report “ever had sex” vs. 32% of Whites, 41% of Hispanics, and 36% “other” race/ethnicity.

Black youths who reported “ever had sex” were significantly younger “at first sex” as compared to whites, but not as compared to other race/ethnicity groups:

- Average age “at first sex” for Blacks was a year younger than that for whites: 14.1 years vs. 15.1 years
- Average age “at first sex” for Hispanics was 14.7 years and 14.4 years for “other” race/ethnicity.

Gender differences in age “at first sex” are not statistically significant; also, the data is not broken out by geography (e.g., rural/urban)

RESPONSES TO MEETING 1 QUESTIONS

Percentages and Ages of Wisconsin Youth Self-Reporting Sexual Activity

Group	Percent ever had sex	Average age (in years) at first sex
Entire 2013 Sample	35.3% [31.7%, 38.9%]	14.8 [14.7, 15.0]
Gender		
Female	37.3% [32.4%, 42.3%]	14.9 [14.8, 15.1]
Male	33.1% [29.4%, 36.8%]	14.7 [14.5, 14.9]
Race/Ethnicity		
White	31.8% [28.2%, 35.5%]	15.1 [14.9, 15.2]
Black	61.6% [52.7%, 70.5%]*	14.1 [13.7, 14.4]*
Hispanic	41.1% [32.2%, 50.1%]	14.7 [14.2, 15.1]
“Other”	36.4% [29.5%, 43.3%]	14.4 [14.0, 14.7]

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease and Control, “Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2013,” June 13, 2014. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6304.pdf>
Analysis by DCF staff

RESPONSES TO MEETING 1 QUESTIONS

2. **What effective interventions exist for teaching families to be successful and teaching young boys to be responsible men?** (context: poor urban and rural families/young men have worse economic outlooks)

Family Success

Problems are complex and interwoven. Family success in terms of achieving the American Dream means having the skills and resources to get and keep a good job, to raise healthy children and to contribute to one's community. Interventions that focus on increasing income have related positive effects on children's health, academic success and positive social behaviors.

The *Families and Schools Together program (FAST)* is an internationally acclaimed parent engagement program that supports the family bonding necessary for children to thrive. Built on evidence-based practices and rigorously tested, FAST (a) empowers parents to become more effective family leaders; (b) builds positive connections and social capital between families and schools; and (c) creates a supportive community engaged in fostering children's well-being and education.

Independent analyses of the FAST program show significant improvement of FAST children in terms of mental health, and FAST parents were significantly more active in community activities, obtaining jobs, returning to school to further their education (44%), were more involved in children's school as partners; were more likely to report that they had sought out counseling for mental health or substance abuse. Two to four years post-FAST involvement, parents were less isolated, had a support network of friends, and were more involved in their community. See: <http://parenthood.library.wisc.edu/McDonald/McDonald.html>

The *Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPCs)* is a proven effective intervention for parent involvement and student achievement; CPCs provide comprehensive educational support and family support to economically disadvantaged children and their parents. The guiding principle of the program is that by providing a school-based, stable learning environment during preschool, in which parents are active and consistent participants in their child's education, scholastic success will follow. The program requires parental participation and emphasizes a child-centered, individualized approach to social and cognitive development.

The *New Hope Project* operated from 1994 to 1998 in two inner-city areas of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is also proven effective at increasing family economic self-sufficiency as well as school achievement for children of participating families. It offered low-income individuals and families the opportunity to use a comprehensive set of integrated program services designed to increase income, financial security, and access to full-time employment. In the two target locales, all adults whose earnings were below 150 percent of the federal poverty level and who were willing to work full-time were eligible to apply for enrollment in the program. Applicants need not have been welfare recipients nor have children. Two program benefits were offered to all participants: community service-based full-time job opportunities for participants unable to find full-time work (or part-time job opportunities to supplement an existing part-time job) in the private job market; and personalized services assisting participants in job searches, child care, and other employment-related needs. For participants who worked full-time (30+ hours per week) New Hope also offered a monthly earnings supplement designed to raise participants' income to exceed the poverty threshold for the household; subsidized health insurance; and child care subsidies.

New Hope achieved a 20 percent reduction in the number of families living below the poverty line five years after the intervention. Increases in income improved parents' effective child management, which in turn was associated with improvements in children's test scores and teacher- and parent-rated school performance, as well as children's behavior. Children in New Hope families had significantly higher academic achievement: in particular, boys had higher academic achievement and classroom behavior ratings five to eight years later.

RESPONSES TO MEETING 1 QUESTIONS

For more information on CPCs and New Hope, see:

<http://www.promisingpractices.net/program.asp?programid=269>

Effective home visiting programs, such as *Nurse Family Partnership* and *Parents as Teachers*, also improve family success in terms of increasing economic self-sufficiency and child health and development. More information on Wisconsin's home visiting programs will be provided in the Meeting 2 Question Response. See:

<http://www.promisingpractices.net/program.asp?programid=16>

Responsible Men

Youth development programs seek to improve adolescent boys' life skills, belief in their future, opportunities, and, more generally, "life options." They focus on promoting academic success; encouraging meaningful participation in the community; and avoiding early childbearing and other risky behaviors. Achieving these goals increases young men's chances of finishing their education, getting a job and marrying before starting a family.

Among the best known programs proven effective at improving academic success, and reducing early childbearing and other risky behaviors among low income youth are Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Career Academies, both of which are available in Wisconsin.

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS)

The mission of Big Brothers Big Sisters is to provide supportive relationships for young people to assist them in realizing their potential. The program has been shown to positively impact behavioral outcomes using a developmental mentoring program, providing participants with a positive, caring, and supportive role model.

In the traditional Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring model, the volunteer mentor commits to spending approximately three to five hours per week with the child for at least one year. Goals for the child are set with the BBBS staff during an initial interview held with the parent and child. In addition, Big Brothers Big Sisters also offers an in-school mentoring program in which participants take part in one-to-one activities with the mentor during the school day. BBBS programs operate all across Wisconsin, in both rural and urban areas.

See:

http://ppv.issuelab.org/resource/making_a_difference_an_impact_study_of_big_brothersbig_sisters_re_issue_of_1995_study

Career Academies

Career Academies are schools within schools that link students with peers, teachers, and community partners in a disciplined environment, fostering academic success, social and emotional health, and labor market success. Originally created to help inner-city students stay in school and obtain meaningful occupational experience, Career Academies and similar programs have evolved into a multifaceted, integrated approach to reducing delinquent behavior and enhancing protective factors among at-risk youths. These academies aim to improve labor market prospects of youth beyond high school without compromising high school academic goals and preparation for postsecondary education. Each Career Academy has a specific career concentration. In Wisconsin, Construction Career Academies operate in high schools in Burlington, Fond du Lac, Kimberly, La Crosse, Marshfield and Tomah. West Allis initiated a welding career academy in 2014.

See: http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full_45.pdf

Additional proven "promising" and "effective" youth development programs are:

Teen Courts (also known as youth courts or peer courts) – these are specialized diversion programs for young offenders that use court-like procedures in a courtroom setting. The typical delinquent youth referred to teen

RESPONSES TO MEETING 1 QUESTIONS

court is 12 to 15 years old, in trouble for the first time, and charged with vandalism, stealing or another non-violent offense. Teen court offers a non-binding, informal alternative to the regular juvenile court process. In most cases, young offenders agree to participate in teen court as a way of avoiding formal prosecution and adjudication in juvenile court. The most recent, most comprehensive investigation of teen court effectiveness was conducted by the Urban Institute. The project studied teen courts in four jurisdictions: Alaska, Arizona, Maryland and Missouri. In three of the four study sites, recidivism was lower among youth handled in teen court. In Alaska, for example, recidivism for teen court cases was 6%, compared with 23% of cases handled by the traditional juvenile justice system.

See: <http://johnjayresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/buttsortizrnjan11.pdf>

Aggression Replacement Training (ART): Aggression Replacement Training® (ART®) concentrates on development of individual competencies to address various emotional and social aspects that contribute to aggressive behavior in youths. Program techniques are designed to teach youths how to control their angry impulses and take perspectives other than their own. The main goal is to reduce aggression and violence among youths by providing them with opportunities to learn prosocial skills in place of aggressive behavior.

A study of Aggression Replacement Training® (ART®) by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2004) indicated that within the 21 courts rated as either competent or highly competent, the 18-month felony recidivism rate was 19 percent, compared with 25 percent for the control group. A Gundersen and Svartdal's 2006 study of Aggression Replacement Training® (ART®) found that, based on parent-reported results, there were significant improvements in Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) scores among ART® youths. Based on these results the researchers concluded that ART® promoted an effective improvement in social skills among participating youths. See: <http://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=254>

Transformative Mentoring Program: Based in the Mentoring Center in Oakland, California, the Transformative Mentoring Program involves a structured curriculum that offers a long-term group mentoring program. Key components of the curriculum focus on character development, cognitive restructuring, spiritual development, life skills training, anger management, and employability skills. The primary audience is youth of color, who are perceived to be "highly at-risk". The program's goal is to reduce the involvement of these youth people in violence-related activities. Winner of grants funded by President Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" program, the Transformative Mentoring Program has shown promising, but not yet evidence based, results.

See: <http://mentor.org/>

RESPONSES TO MEETING 1 QUESTIONS

3. **What evidence-based curricula are being used (in WI, other states) to teach life skills?** (Context: *If kids aren't learning life skills at home, what is available to them that works, provided outside the home?*)

In terms of teaching youth life skills, we looked at three areas: financial literacy (how to manage daily living expenses), how to get a driver's license and how to look for a job.

Financial Literacy

A 2015 report card on financial literacy gave Wisconsin an "F" because students in the state can graduate without ever having the opportunity to take a course or otherwise be exposed to personal finance in school. However, the report noted that Wisconsin is doing many things to promote financial literacy in public high schools: it created an Office of Financial Literacy in 2000 (see: <https://www.wdfl.org/yymm/>) as well as a Governor's Council on Financial Literacy in 2010 (see: <https://www.wdfl.org/yymm/govcouncilfinlit/>), which gives awards and grants to individuals and corporations for financial literacy education activities.

According to the council, only 44% of Wisconsin school districts have a one-semester financial literacy requirement. For many years, Wisconsin has hosted the National Institute on Financial & Economic Literacy, which has provided teacher training to hundreds of educators. In 2006, Wisconsin also created a nationally recognized Model Academic Standards for Personal Financial Literacy for school districts to use when implementing financial literacy curricula into their classrooms. See: <http://www.champlain.edu/centers-of-excellence/center-for-financial-literacy/report-making-the-grade>

The Community Development Corporation of Long Island's (CDCLI) *Financial Fitness* program is a proven effective program that has shown marginal increases in low-income families' financial literacy. The program is focused on improving the financial literacy of recipients of federal rental housing vouchers. *Financial Fitness* is delivered over five sessions and covers a range of topics including credit, savings, and budgeting. In 2010, the Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) at the University of Wisconsin in Madison analyzed the program's effectiveness. The study showed that financial literacy education is indeed related to improved financial behavior among the program's very low-income clients. The primary evidence of behavior change is a significant increase in savings account balances (an additional \$362), as well as a modest decrease in the percentage of clients whose FICO scores were below 680. See: www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/focus/pdfs/foc271c.pdf

Driver's license

While two-thirds of 16-18 year olds in Wisconsin overall have their driver's license, the rate is significantly lower for teens from low-income families. A UW-Milwaukee report noted that only 25 percent of 16-18 year olds in the City of Milwaukee had a driver's license, compared to 66 percent of teens in the Milwaukee County suburbs.

Two key barriers are access to the funds needed to pay for driver's education and the license itself, and to pay fines related to suspension orders that prevent teens from obtaining an instruction permit until all fines and a \$50 reinstatement fee are paid to the Department of Transportation. The UW-M study found that the large number of teens with suspension orders related to juvenile offenses (i.e., curfew violations, underage drinking) contributed to the very low percentage of central city teens with a driver's license. See <https://www4.uwm.edu/eti/dot.htm>

With regard to the first barrier, access to a car and a driver's license can be critical to getting a job, but it's much tougher for low-income families to afford the \$443 bill for driver education, a permit and a license. This can leave a young person unable to obtain a juvenile work permit or eliminate his or her eligibility for jobs that require a license. In Dane County, the Access to Opportunity initiative provides free drivers education to 50 low-income teenagers in the Madison Metropolitan School District each year, and is working with local teen

RESPONSES TO MEETING 1 QUESTIONS

mentoring programs to identify adults to help these teens obtain their behind-the-wheel hours needed. The County is also looking into lowering fines for suspension orders related to juvenile offenses.

How to look for a job

Regional workforce development boards offer programming (funded by the federal Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act, or WIOA) focused on youth entering the labor force.

The *Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board* (MAWIB) offers several programs, including:

- WIA Youth Services, which helps low-income youth to develop long-term, individual and progressive career plans, rather than simply focusing on “just getting a job.” It provides coaching activities and resources to help develop skills for career development and job retention. The operates the program, which includes: (1) Tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to secondary school completion; (2) Alternative secondary school offerings; (3) Summer employment opportunities; (4) Paid and unpaid work experiences; (5) Occupational skills training; (6) Leadership development opportunities; (7) Support services; (8) Adult mentoring; (9) Follow-up services; and (10) Comprehensive guidance and counseling.
- Transform Milwaukee Jobs Foster Care program, an employment program that offers unemployed qualified foster care youth immediate work.
- See <http://milwaukeeewib.org/job-seekers/youth/#wia> for additional programs in Milwaukee

The *North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board* (NCWWDB) provides oversight, guidance and direction for the WIOA Title I-B Youth program, whose goal is to provide career awareness and employment information services to low-income in-school youth and out-of-school youth with barriers to employment. The goal is for program participants to increase their earnings and future employability. Program available in nine counties: Adams, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Wood and Vilas.

RESPONSES TO MEETING 1 QUESTIONS

4. What effective post-secondary education programs are available to low-income parents?

(Context: how can low income parents get the post-HS education/training they need to advance, whether vo-tech or other; both what's available and what is being done to encourage/ accommodate them to be able to successfully complete such programs, given family/economic constraints)

National data show that higher educational attainment leads to higher earnings, lower unemployment rates, increased family stability, and improved outcomes for children. Many different approaches have been taken in communities across the US to boost the education attainment level of low-income, at-risk populations with the goal of increasing access to the American Dream and offering a pathway to self-sufficiency.

Barriers to working parents achieving postsecondary education include tuition costs, limited child care options in terms of affordability and quality, and transportation, according to The Working Poor Families Project (WFPF), a national initiative to strengthen state policies and programs influencing the advancement of low-income working families. The project encourages states to include non-academic student support services in their strategies to increase college completion, especially at community colleges, where more than half of students are non-traditional adult students and more than a third are first generation students. The framework they support addresses non-academic supports and services: helping students pay for college; providing access to family supports for student parents, promoting career development to ensure students are on the right path to gaining these skills and credentials needed to move into a family-supporting career, and strengthening personal competencies to develop the emotional and life skills needed to persist in college. For more information: www.workingpoorfamilies.org/reports_and_pubs/

In addition to programs aimed at improving the chances of low-income adults to enter and complete a community college degree, research shows that access to apprenticeships and career pathways are instrumental to improving the economic prospects of low-income workers.

Wisconsin RISE Partnership:

The Regional Industry Skills Education (RISE) Partnership, led by the WI Department of Workforce Development and the Wisconsin Technical College System, is working to make college and workplace success an attainable reality via Career Pathways that provide low-income working adults with realistic opportunities to develop advanced technical skills and earn college credentials. Developed by the Center on Wisconsin Strategy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Career Pathways approach has shown early encouraging signs of success. A total of 1,370 students participated in Career Pathway Bridge programs during a study period between calendar years 2012 and 2014. Of these participants, 74% completed all of the postsecondary credits associated with the Career Pathway Bridge; nearly 50% completed at least one postsecondary credit after completion of the program, and 25% enrolled in 12 postsecondary occupational credits.

For more information:

<http://risepartnership.org/>

http://www.cows.org/data/files/Wisconsin_Career_Pathways_v4_FINAL.pdf

http://risepartnership.org/Media/Default/pdf/RISE_Career_Pathway_Bridge_Evaluation_10.2.14.pdf

Gateway to College National Network:

Partially funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Gateway to College National Network helps transform high school dropouts into college graduates by incorporating a combination of intensive academic and non-academic supports. Located on community college campuses, supports include helping students hone basic skills in reading, writing and math, developing individual college graduation plans, and teaching time

RESPONSES TO MEETING 1 QUESTIONS

management and stress management skills. Initial evaluation of the Gateway to College model conducted by Pacific Research and Evaluation showed that 73.2% of participants who earn their high school diploma continued on to attend post-secondary education.

For more information: <http://www.gatewaytocollege.org/assets/pre-grad-final-report.pdf>
<http://www.mdrc.org/publication/gateway-college>

Working Families Success Network (WFSN) and Achieving the Dream

The Working Families Success Network is a group of nonprofit organizations and community colleges that uses a model based on three core service areas: employment and career advancement, income enhancement and work supports, and financial and asset building services. A review of these programs showed that asset building and financial education services were associated with achievement of major outcomes, including term to term retention rates of 80% or higher. In 2015, the model expanded to 19 institutions in four states (Arkansas, California, Virginia and Washington) and entered into collaboration with Achieving the Dream; this collaboration integrates the WFSN model within community colleges' existing student success and workforce development efforts. See: www.mdcinc.org/resources/publications/center-working-families-community-colleges-clearing-financial-barriers

Opening Doors

Funded by MDRC, Opening Doors demonstrations tested a range of services and interventions to improve college outcomes for low-income students. Launched in 2003, Opening Doors was the first large-scale random assignment study in a community college setting. The demonstration pursued promising strategies that emerged from focus groups with low-income students, discussions with college administrators, and an extensive literature review. Partnering with six community colleges across the country, MDRC helped develop and evaluated four distinct programs based on the following approaches: financial incentives, reforms in instructional practices, and enhancements in student services. Colleges were encouraged to focus on one strategy but to think creatively about combining elements of the other strategies to design programs that would help students perform better academically and persist toward degree completion. See: www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/policybrief_27.pdf. The programs and their effects follow:

Financial incentives - One site (Louisiana) used performance-based scholarships paired with counseling, targeted to low-income parents attending community college. The program resulted in students earning more credits and showing more persistence to complete a degree.

Instructional reform – one site (Brooklyn, NY) created learning communities, in which incoming students had linked courses; were provided enhanced counseling and tutoring, as well as a text book voucher. The approach resulted in increased number of courses passed and credits earned, and moved students more quickly through requirements.

Enhanced student services – two programs in this area: enhanced academic counseling and enhanced targeted services. The first (northern Ohio) had a modest positive effect on registration choices, while the second (Los Angeles) resulted in an increased number of credits earned, positively impacted students' moving off probation and increased GPA.

Benefits Access for College Completion (BACC)

This demonstration (in CA, KY, OH, MI, NY & PA) embedded access to public human services programs on community college campuses within financial aid or academic advising offices; it raised staff and faculty awareness of services; they in turn connected students to these services. Students receiving multiple public benefits demonstrated higher degree persistence and completion rates. See: www.equalmeasure.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/BACC-Final-Report-FINAL-111914.pdf