



# Children, Youth and Families

*Building Capacity for Strong Families and Communities*



**For more than 50 years, Abt Associates has been a global leader in state-of-the-art research, monitoring and evaluation. We help answer hard questions that lead to important decisions about what works in public policy and programs. We work to identify effective practices, more responsive programs and behavioral changes that improve the health and economic wellbeing of children and families, and prepare young adults for adulthood.**

## Relevant Work

### Building Evidence and Determining Effectiveness

Abt is leading the **Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse**, which was established by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in accordance with the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018. Abt will rate programs and services as promising, supported or well-supported practices. These practices will include mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services; in-home parent skill-based programs; and kinship navigator services.

The **Determining Common Components of Effective Prevention Programs for At-Risk Youth** project is supported by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) within HHS. Drawing on an existing database of hundreds of rigorous, controlled studies on a variety of youth-focused programs, Abt is using an innovative approach to empirically identify the program characteristics strongly related to positive effects on youth and then translate those effectiveness factors into specific, actionable guidance for improving practice in the field.

Under the **Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE)** study for the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within HHS, Abt implemented a random assignment design of Year Up, a national training program in growth sectors such as finance and information technology for adults 18-24.



**Year Up** provides six months of technical training followed by a six-month internship. Participants assigned to the study's treatment group, which could access Year Up, had large, positive increases in earnings compared with a control group. Year Up increased average quarterly earnings by \$1,895 in the two quarters after program completion. Large positive effects persisted through the third follow-up year. Year Up's earnings impacts are the largest reported to date for workforce programs tested using a random assignment design.

Abt conducted the **Teen Pregnancy Prevention Replication Study** for the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) and the Office of Adolescent Health to test multiple replications of popular school and clinic-based teen pregnancy prevention program models to provide important information about their effectiveness in reducing teen pregnancy and associated risk behaviors. Abt researchers are also conducting a meta-analysis of 44 federally funded evaluations of teen pregnancy prevention programs to assess whether the short-term effects of these programs were associated with program or participant characteristics.

### Early Childhood and Strengthening Families

Abt and Harvard University researchers are conducting an ambitious study to follow about 5,000 representative 3- and 4-year-olds over time. The **Early Learning Study** at Harvard (ELS@H) will follow children who participate in a variety of early learning settings in Massachusetts.





The study will examine experiences that can be measured across all types of care settings. Findings will focus on relationships between children's development and early learning experiences.

The **Building Capacity To Evaluate Child Welfare Community Collaborations To Strengthen and Preserve Families Project** supports OPRE within HHS to advance the evidence around collaborative approaches to preventing child abuse and neglect. Abt provides evaluation technical assistance to grantees and their evaluators and documents, through a process evaluation, the ways each grantee designs and implements its unique community-level child-safety approach.

### Trauma and Well-Being

Abt Associates evaluated the Office of Women's Health (OWH) **Trauma Informed Care (TIC) Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Initiative** within HHS. Women and girls report a disproportionate level of exposure to trauma and violence throughout their lives. Abt examined the initiative's training and technical assistance planning, development and administration processes. Abt also evaluated participant satisfaction and outcomes for individual participants and their organizations, which were engaged in the provision of trauma-informed care to promote recovery and foster resiliency.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) within HHS recognizes that bullying among youth is prevalent in the United States, with significant consequences to healthy development. Abt provided communications support to **StopBullying.gov**, a federal collaborative among 26 partners, and technical assistance to state health departments. We created a prevention assessment capacity tool and change package to help states measure their progress over time.

### Youth and Family Homelessness

Administered by the Family and Services Youth Bureau (FYSB) within HHS, the **Transitional Living Program (TLP)** provides supervised shelter and services to runaway and homeless young people (RHY) aged 16 to 21. Abt has partnered with FYSB and OPRE on three major evaluation activities to shed light on TLP's contributions to positive outcomes for RHY in such areas as housing stability, employment, educational attainment and socio-emotional well-being. Abt's work has included pilot testing randomized controlled trial methods for the TLP/RHY population, a process study to describe the program operations and the design of a pre-post outcomes study.

**The First Place Program**, funded by the John T. Gorman Foundation, provides barrier-free services to help people experiencing problems with homelessness. Abt examined youth characteristics and experiences in housing, employment, education, risk behaviors, demographic characteristics and social and emotional well-being for a sample of program participants.

Abt Associates is conducting the **How TANF Agencies Support Families Experiencing Homelessness** project for OPRE. This project will help HHS understand the extent to which TANF agencies across the country are using TANF funds to serve and support families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. It also will document the approaches and strategies used by TANF agencies to serve these families.

The **Homeless Families Research Briefs** project, led by Abt for OPRE and ASPE, produced a series of 10 research briefs examining children and families affected by homelessness. The project leveraged data already collected by Abt for the HUD **Family Options Study**. The Family Options Study collected information from 2,282 families who had spent at least seven days in emergency shelters in 12 communities nationwide.

Since September 2011, the **Conrad N. Hilton Foundation** has contracted with Abt to evaluate its **Chronic Homelessness Initiative's** strategy to end long-term homelessness in Los Angeles County. Through this evaluation, Abt is helping the foundation improve the system's structure for addressing homelessness and building capacity to address chronic homelessness in Los Angeles.

### For More Information

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Abt is an engine for social impact, harnessing the power of data and our experts' grounded insights to move people from vulnerability to security worldwide.

