

Adulthood Preparation



Preparing adolescents for adulthood has many benefits, including youth who are less likely to engage in risky behavior. RTI International supports adulthood preparation efforts through our understanding of the topic areas, keys to success, and challenges that adolescent preparation programs face. RTI serves agencies that support youth through our experience with developing interventions, evaluating programs, and providing grantee technical assistance.

Overview

Fostering opportunities for youth to develop the skills and competencies they need to make a healthy transition to adulthood provides benefits for adolescents both in the future and in their current daily lives. Adulthood preparation subjects—including financial literacy, healthy life skills, educational and career success, healthy relationships, and parent-child communication—build confidence and compassion. Evidence shows that adulthood preparation subjects help reduce the instance of engaging in risky behavior during adolescence, underscoring the need to implement these curricula in schools and other settings that reach youth, specifically vulnerable adolescents. It is vital that adulthood preparation programs be implemented by trained facilitators and evidence-based or evidence-informed instructors in order to have the strongest preventive outcomes for youth.

Our staff of scientists, methodologists, and subject matter experts has decades of experience both developing and evaluating interventions that support the development of adulthood preparation skills. We collaborate with foundations; federal, state, and local governments; universities; and community-based organizations to

increase the capacity to help adolescents make a healthy transition to adulthood. Our experience conducting process, outcome, and cost evaluations provides us with substantive knowledge of current best practices. This knowledge allows us to contribute to the evidence base of adulthood preparation subjects through rigorous, non-biased research and innovative methods.

Areas of Expertise

RTI offers both topical and technical experience in adulthood preparation subjects, enabling us to support adolescent-focused organizations and agencies in their goals. Our subject matter expertise includes adolescent development, healthy relationships, adolescent pregnancy prevention, and prevention of risky behavior.

Our technical expertise includes literature reviews; needs and capacity assessment; intervention development; process, outcome, and economic evaluations; performance monitoring and measurement; quantitative and qualitative data analysis; social marketing; and technical assistance and training. This depth and breadth of knowledge allows us to provide agencies with the most innovative and effective programmatic and evaluative support.

Project Highlights

Evaluation of the Building Healthy Teen Relationships Program (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008–2014). This project evaluated Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships, a multi-million dollar initiative designed to prevent intimate partner violence by helping 10- to 14-year-old youth develop healthy and safe relationship knowledge and skills. RTI employed a mixed-methods study to measure the effects of one of the largest efforts ever funded to promote healthy relationships among middle school students. The results of the project were featured in a special issue on teen dating violence in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Among Teens Who Are Pregnant or Parenting (National Institute of Child Health, 2015–present). RTI is adapting the evidence-based teen dating violence prevention program, Safe Dates, for use with pregnant and parenting teens and evaluating the adaptation in a randomized control trial. Pregnant and parenting teens have an elevated risk of engaging in intimate partner violence (IPV), but there are no evidence-based programs to prevent IPV and improve healthy relationships in this population. The key aim of this study is to address the unique risk factors, forms of abuse, and consequences from abuse that pregnant and parenting teen girls and their children experience.

Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program Training and Technical Assistance Contract Social Media Option (Administration for Children and Families, 2015–present). This project supports the Administration for Children and Families' adolescent pregnancy prevention (APP) and adulthood preparation efforts through an online exchange of tools and resources that APP grantees can access and share. The online exchange and its content, both developed by RTI, provide grantees with trainings, technical assistance, and materials to help market their own APP and adulthood preparation efforts to their networks.

Implementation Evaluation of the Greenville County Schools Teen Leadership Program (United Way of Greenville, 2016–present). South Carolina's Greenville County school district is implementing the *Capturing Kids' Hearts Teen*

RTI's Subject Matter Expertise

- Adulthood preparation topics
- Adolescent pregnancy prevention
- Youth tobacco cessation

RTI's Technical Expertise

- Grantee technical assistance
- Program evaluation
- Social marketing campaigns

Leadership course, which builds personal responsibility and leadership skills through role-playing, group activities, speeches, and special projects with middle and high school students. RTI is evaluating the impact of this intervention in Greenville County youth, using innovative data collection methods (e.g., youth engagement) to increase response from evaluation participants. This intervention fosters key adulthood preparation topics, including healthy relationships, self-efficacy, and leadership.

Evaluation of the Collaborative Partnership for Excellence in Youth Development (United Way of the Greater Triangle, 2013–2015). RTI served as the evaluator for *Youth Thrive*, an initiative that focused on increasing awareness of, access to, and usage of positive youth development opportunities. RTI also helped build organizational capacity for positive youth development programs in Wake County, North Carolina.

More Information

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