

Kentucky Early Intervention Program, 1997-2000; Final Results

POPULATION:

2296 Kentucky youth 13 through 18 years old who had first or second time substance abuse-related charges, and after screening were determined to be appropriate for an educational intervention program.

EVALUATION DESIGN:

From November 1997 to February 2000, the youth and their parents received pre-tests at the onset of the intensive education program and post-tests at the end of their diversion agreements, approximately six months later. There was an additional follow-up at 18 months, which showed very positive results; however, those findings are not included below because they are based on less than 4% of the original sample.

EVALUATOR:

Spalding University School of Social Work.

REFERENCE

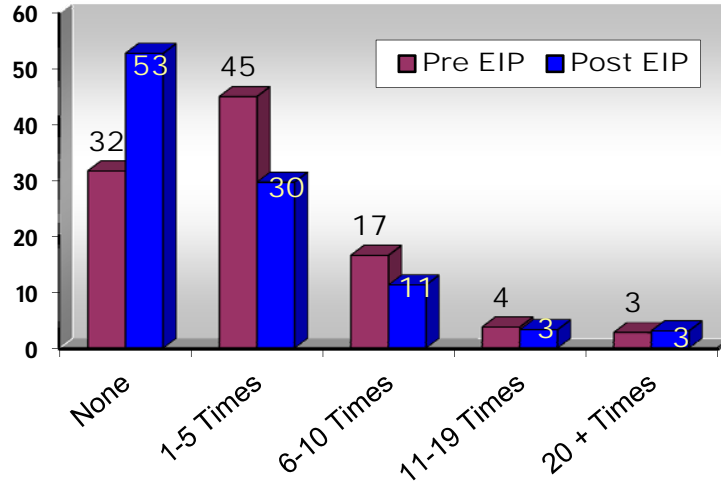
Cummings, P., Johnson, J. and Linfield, K. (April 2002). *Kentucky Division of Substance Abuse Evaluation of the Early Intervention Program: Final Report.*

MAJOR FINDINGS:

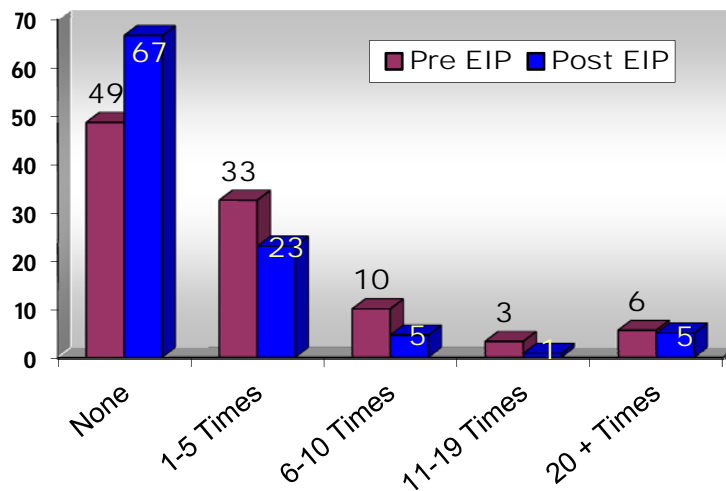
- ◆ Before the program, there was a strong, statistically significant relationship between the youth's perception of harmfulness of alcohol and marijuana and their report of use in the past six months, with the youth reporting infrequent use of alcohol and drugs having much higher perception of harmfulness than those reporting more frequent use.
- ◆ At the six-month follow-up, the youth reported statistically significant increases on several perceptions of the harmfulness of alcohol and on the perceptions that marijuana can affect school performance and can be addictive. The youth who had increases in these perceptions of harmfulness were the most likely to report reduced use of these substances.
- ◆ Significant increases in abstinence from beer, wine, liquor, and marijuana were reported by the 391 youth with matched pre- and post-surveys and who also had matched pre- and post-surveys from their parents/guardians ($p=.003$ for wine; $p\leq .0005$ for beer, liquor and marijuana).

Substance	No Use		Difference (%)	Increase in Abstinence (%)
	Pre-test (%)	6-Month Follow-up (%)		
Beer	31.7	52.7	21.0	66.2
Wine	78.3	86.5	8.2	10.4
Liquor	50.1	70.8	20.7	41.3
Marijuana	48.6	66.5	17.9	36.8

- ◆ Use of beer in prior six months reduced (n=391); statistically significant at .0005 level:



- ◆ Use of marijuana in prior six months reduced (n=391); statistically significant at .0005 level:



COMMENTARY:

While the above results are very positive, it is important to note that only about 18% of the youth had matched data at the six-month follow-up. Unfortunately, the researchers did not provide information on how similar or dissimilar the youth with matched follow-up data were to the youth with unmatched data or who were not successfully followed up. In addition, due to the lack of a control group, it is unknown as to what extent other factors, such as the parents’ reaction to the arrest, had on the youth’s substance use. Nonetheless, the study found significant increases in perceptions of harmfulness, such as increases in the belief that marijuana can be addictive. Most of these changes in perceptions logically seem to be largely due to the experience of the PRIME For Life Under 21 curriculum. These findings, along with the analyses conducted by Prevention Research Institute in 2002, suggest that the curriculum played a major role in the significant decrease in use and increase in abstinence among the young people in the study.