

PREVENTION RESEARCH AND POLICY-MAKING: OPPORTUNITIES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Mark Greenberg

Penn State University

Prevention Research Center

FOR THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Types of Policy-Related Research

- Basic research that informs policy
 - Poverty and parenting influence cognitive development
- Intervention Research that Informs policy
 - RCT of University-developed program – Type 1 Translation
 - What factors influence Implementation Quality – Type 2
- Designing demonstrations and RCTs to study the effect of policy change?
 - RCT of Early Head Start
- Conducting policy analysis
 - Politics and interpretation of policy
 - The Rise of Economic Analysis in Prevention and ECE

The Opportunities and Impact are Enormous

- Human Developmental Researchers are playing a LARGE role in change

Began with the groundbreaking work of Ed Ziegler, McViker Hunt, Urie Bronfenbrenner and others

Role is now filled by Universities and many research organizations (AIR, Mathematica, Child Trends, RTI, Westat, Urban Inst)

This is a very new role for human development researchers

- Many presentations at HSRC are excellent examples of such scholarship
- As decision-making has devolved to state and regional levels, there is great opportunity to assist states and communities in policy research, evaluation, technical assistance and training to improve the quality of human services

UNIVERSITY-BASED
CHILD AND
FAMILY POLICY
CONSORTIUM



Assumption: Basic Premises

At most levels, policy-makers have the following perceptions of University Research:

- Rarely does it have any Policy-making Value
- It is usually focused on Faculty Self-Interest
- It is usually (always) Late

Basic Premises

- Research findings are rarely presented in ways that are **Practically Useful**
- University Researchers Usually **Cannot be Trusted** to answer the question they are asked to consider
- University Researchers **Don't Understand the Cycles** that drive decision-making (election cycles, budget cycles, new administrations, etc.)

But.....

- Remember that **We Do Have Knowledge** that can influence policy

"One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors."

Plato

Process of Partnerships

- The **process** of making such partnerships to influence change **is usually slow** and requires multiple contacts across agencies, legislative committees, advocates, etc.
- We have **A LOT to learn** from Them!
- If we are genuinely interested they will be surprised, will test us, and if we succeed we can become partners

The Beginning

- Show Up - Lots of Places
- Put Aside Your Agenda
- Listen, Don't Talk
- Find Out What Problems Are Important to Others
- Brainstorm with Them on Their Issues/Concerns

"Those who do not know the plans of competitors cannot prepare alliances. Those who do not know the lay of the land cannot maneuver their forces. Those who do not use local guides cannot take advantage of the ground."

Sun Tzu, The Art of War

Places to Start

- Every State and Community has different configurations
- Power and decision-making vary by state and community
- Agencies of State
 - Welfare/Health
 - Education
 - Bureau of Drug & Alcohol /Commission on Crime/Mental Health
 - Maternal and Child Health
- Legislative Committees - meet with Policy Staff
- County and City Government (same places)
- Invite Key People To Meetings at The University
 - Legislators/Key Decision-Makers
 - Policy Office Staff

Process

- Listen - Try to Understand "the World" from Their Desk
- Don't Ask for Anything
 - Change Perceptions of the University "Begging Bowl"
- Get Credibility, then be Proactive

"A decision is the action an executive must take when he has information so incomplete that the answer does not suggest itself."

Adm. Arthur W. Radford

- Understand the critical role of accountability and outcome research to government
- Circulate, circulate

Political Provisos

- You are there as a scientist to help use good science to make policy
- Try to Be Politically Neutral
- Don't look for credit

"There are two kinds of people, those who do the work and those who take the credit. Try to be in the first group; there is less competition there."

Indira Gandhi

Bipartisanship and Change

- As you move up the echelons your political contributions will be monitored
- Look for contacts and support on both sides of the political aisle
- When administrations or parties change, there are often substantial opportunities for new ideas

Timing is Key

"Politics is like football.

If you see daylight, go through the hole."

John F. Kennedy

Two Pennsylvania Initiatives

- Our Work With Prevention Initiatives with Pennsylvania State Government
- The University Children's Policy Collaborative

Three Central Policy Issues in PA

- How to assist Communities to utilize a Prevention Science/Public Health Model to Inform Decision-Making
- How to promote broad dissemination
"Going to scale" with programs
- How to integrate **specific** EV prevention programs with ongoing activities in schools, families, and communities

1998 – Began Association with PCCD

Seminars on Evidence-Based Programs and their Effects

2000 – PCCD Began the “Blueprints” Funding Program

2004 - PSU Became active in shaping the Request for Proposals

2006 - Research pointed to needed changes in the RFP criteria
“What gets Assessed, gets Attention”

Fidelity Assessed by Developer as condition for continued
funding in Years 3 and 4 – poor fidelity = loss of funding
Outcome data from Year 2 report necessary for Year 4 funding

2008 - PSU Two reports on the Program’s Effects

2008 – PSU Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention Support
Center



Reducing Youth Violence and Delinquency in Pennsylvania:

PCDD'S RESEARCH-BASED PROGRAMS INITIATIVE

Sarah Meyer Chilenski, PhD,
Brian K. Bumgarner
Sandee Tyler
Mark T. Greenberg, PhD



Prevention Research Center
FOR THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
The Pennsylvania State University

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The Economic Return on PCCD's Investment in Research-based Programs:

A COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF DELINQUENCY PREVENTION
IN PENNSYLVANIA

Damon Jones, Ph.D.
Brian K. Burnbarger
Mark T. Greenberg, Ph.D.
Peter Greenwood, Ph.D.
Sondra Kyler



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The Cost-effectiveness of Evidence-based Prevention in Pennsylvania

(measured benefits and costs community- and statewide)

Program	B-C per youth	Avg. Return/Community	Programs Statewide	Est. Total PA Return
Big Brothers/Sisters	\$54	\$13,500	28	\$378,000
LifeSkills Training	\$808	\$161,600	100	\$16,160,000
Multi. Treatment Foster Care	\$79,331	\$475,986	3	\$1,427,958
Multisystemic Therapy	\$16,716	\$2,507,400	12	\$30,088,800
Functional Family Therapy	\$32,707	\$12,395,953	11	\$136,355,483
Nurse-Family Partnership	\$36,878	\$4,782,976	25	\$119,574,400
Strength. Families	\$6,541	\$872,133	15	\$13,082,000
TOTAL				\$317,066,641

The Prevention Challenge

Systems Integration Across

- Levels of Care
- Developmental Stages
- Institutional Structures

Partnership with PA: University Children's Policy Partnership

The Universities Children's Policy Collaborative

UCPC



*Providing Research for Pennsylvania's
Children, Youth and Families*

University of Pittsburgh www.pitt.edu/~ocdweb

The Pennsylvania State University www.prevention.psu.edu

Temple University www.temple.edu/cpp

UCPC Collaborative Members

- **Penn State**

Prevention Research Center – Mark Greenberg

Early Childhood Training Institute – Rick Fiene

- **Temple University**

Center For Public Policy – Anne Shlay

Center for Improving Research for Children's Lives (*CIRCL*) -
Marsha Weinraub

- **University of Pittsburgh**

Office of Child Development - Chris Groark and Bob McCall

Director of Policy Initiatives – Ray Firth

Universities Children's Policy Collaborative

- The UCPC provides research, data, and experts to address issues affecting the well-being of children, youth and families in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- ~~UCPC works with foundations, legislators and the executive~~ branch PA government to provide scientific information to help improve child and family policy and program results.
- The UCPC is dedicated to contributing to the health and welfare of children, youth, and families by providing nonpartisan information on public policies.

The Beginning

- Meetings to get to know the issues
- Offering services
- Brief reports on issues of interest to Departments
 - Quality Child Care - Regulatory Issues
 - Teen Age Pregnancy Prevention - Effects of Abstinence
 - Disciplinary Expulsion From Schools -Boot Camps
 - Infant Mental Health

2002-2004 PROJECTS: Building the Base for Quality Early Childhood Education

Five Major Reports in 6 months!

- From Science to Policy: Review of Issues, Programs and Policies
- PA Family Survey
- PA Higher Education Survey
- PA Early Care and Education Provider Survey
- PA Early Childhood Quality Settings Study

Current PROJECTS of UCPC

- Working the Governor's Commission on Children
- Evaluating Child Care Quality
- Family Impact Seminar
 - Wisconsin Model
 - Engage Legislature in Topics of Interest

Keep your sense of humor and
perspective!

Government is the Entertainment
Division of the military-industrial
complex.

Frank Zappa

For More Information

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www.prevention.psu.edu