## Appendix A: Snapshot of research on parent partner programs

Here is a brief summary of the research on individual parent partner programs. For the companion issue brief on this topic, please see *How do parent partner programs instill hope and support prevention and reunification?*

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<td>Parents Anonymous®</td>
<td>Parents Anonymous® is open to any parent or caregiver in a parenting role who is seeking support, positive nurturing, and parenting strategies regardless of the age or special challenges of their children or youth, including severe emotional concerns. Services include weekly support groups, parent partner services (such as advocacy, kinship navigator services, in-home parenting, and supportive services including linkages to community resources), and helpline services.</td>
<td>A 2010 evaluation assessed whether participation in Parents Anonymous® mutual support groups was associated with child maltreatment prevention. Parents new to groups were interviewed at baseline, one month, and six months; the sample represented about 20% of group newcomers. <strong>All parents showed improvements in child maltreatment outcomes, risk factors, and protective factors.</strong> Parents starting out with particularly serious needs showed statistically significant improvement on every scale. A 2011 study utilized a longitudinal design with three data collection time points and a nonrandomized comparison group of 210 families. Results indicated that after attending Parents Anonymous® mutual support group meetings, <strong>parents had statistically significant reductions in risk factors for child abuse and neglect.</strong></td>
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*casey family programs*
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| Parents in Partnership (PIP) (Los Angeles County, CA) | Parent partners are a committed group of parents who have successfully navigated the system and now work in partnership with the Department of Children and Family Services to provide parents with information, support, empowerment, mentorship, and hope. They serve parents who have recently lost custody of their children as well as parents whose children are in foster care without permanency. | A 2017 study examined (a) whether distance was a barrier to participation in orientation of a parent mentor program (PIP) for 98 parents involved with the child welfare system and (b) whether participation affected reunification outcomes for 73 parents. Findings showed:  
• Parents who lived closer to the PIP orientation location were more likely to participate in the orientation.  
• Parents who attended PIP orientation were **5 times more likely to reunify with their children.** |
| Iowa Parent Partner Program (IA)                    | Parent Partners provide one-on-one mentoring by providing advice, support, and encouragement to families whose children are currently involved with DHS in efforts to enhance their capacity to provide for and guide their children’s healthy development. Parent Partners meet with families face-to-face as well as by phone. | The University of Nebraska at Lincoln is evaluating the Iowa Parent Partner Project. The outcome evaluation utilizes a matching technique, propensity-score matching (PSM), to match treated (children with Parent Partner participants) with untreated participants (children without Parent Partner participants) on the probability of being treated in order to approximate an experimental design (with random assignment). Preliminary findings across the 2011-15 cohort include:  
• Length of time in foster care is not reduced by Parent Partner participation; the trend suggests Parent Partner children may remain in foster care slightly longer.  
• Returning to home (reunification with the removal home) from foster care does not reach statistical significance but data in each 4-year cohort trends toward higher reunification rates for children with family Parent Partner participants.  
• Children whose parent participates in Parent Partners are less likely to have a subsequent removal from home within 12 months or 24 months of returning home compared with matched children whose parents are not participating in the Parent Partner program. |
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| Parents for Parents (WA) | The Parents for Parents Program connects parent allies (parents who have successfully navigated the juvenile dependency system) with parents who are new to the system. Parent allies provide support and help parents new to the system understand what they must do to successfully reunite with their children. The program consists of three main elements: Parent ally support at dependency court hearings, a two-hour educational class called Dependency 101, and an ongoing support class called Dependency 201. | • Based on evaluation findings from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) in 2011 and 2013, the King County Superior Court’s Parents for Parents Program was identified as a promising practice by the University of Washington’s Evidence Based Practice Institute.¹ Key findings include:  
- Increased compliance with the court-ordered case plan by both mothers and fathers, including visitation;  
- Increased participation by the mother at key court events;  
- Increased likelihood of reunification and decreased likelihood of termination of parental rights for white families who participated in Dependency 101.  
• In 2014, Partners for Our Children analyzed rates of reunification in counties with Parents for Parents programs and found them to be significantly higher than those in comparable families in counties in which there is not yet a Parents for Parents program. |
<p>| Parent Partner Program (Contra Costa County, CA) | The principal goal of the Parent Partner Program is to help parent clients gain awareness of their rights and responsibilities, and to assist parents toward reunification with their children. Parent Partners are selected because of the successes they have experienced in overcoming significant obstacles, changing patterns of personal behavior that diminished their parenting skills, and by acknowledging the role of child welfare in motivating them to re-prioritize their family. | The outcome study² included data from two groups of children: 236 children whose parents were served by Contra Costa County during the time period July 2005 – March 2008, and whose parent worked with a Parent Partner following removal of their child, along with a matched comparison group of 55 children whose parents were served by Contra Costa County in 2004, before the Parent Partner Program was established. Groups were matched based on ethnicity, case intervention reason, substance use, child age, and child gender. Cases were examined 12 months following case opening to determine reunification status. Results indicate that reunification may be more likely for children whose parents were served by Parent Partners. Approximately 60% of children whose parent engaged with a Parent Partner reunified within 12 months post removal, compared to 26% of children whose parents were not served. |</p>
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| Parent Advocate (Jefferson County, KY) | Parent advocates work with caseworkers to achieve the following goals: (1) work intensely with parents to prevent removal of children from their homes; (2) work instructively with parents to reunify children in a timely manner; (3) work collaboratively with foster parents to maintain family connections; and (4) maintain connections between parents and children while in out-of-home care. Parent advocates and caseworkers engage parents to participate in case planning, to provide information to parents about foster care and the child welfare system, and support families by providing support, resource linkage, and modeling. | Key findings included:<sup>5</sup>  
• Children in families receiving parent advocate services had fewer placement moves in their current episode of care, 0.8 moves vs. 1.8 moves, than those who did not receive services.  
• Children in families receiving parent advocate services overall spent less time in care, 10.2 months vs. 18.2 months, than those who did not receive services.  
• Children in families receiving parent advocate services had higher percentages of reunification than those not receiving services.  
• Children in families receiving parent advocate services exited to adoption and emancipation less frequently than those not receiving services.  

Other findings included:  
• Of the 250 closed cases, 215 children did not have subsequent CPS referrals; 25 children had a substantiated finding of abuse or neglect within one year.  
• Of the 202 children receiving parent advocate services who left out-of-home care before 2008, 70.3% reunified with their parents or relatives, compared to 56.7% of children who did not receive parent advocate services. |
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<td>Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) (KY)</td>
<td>START is an intensive program for families with co-occurring substance use and child maltreatment delivered in an integrated manner with local addiction treatment services. START pairs child protective services workers trained in family engagement with family mentors (peer support employees in long-term recovery) using a system-of-care and team decision-making approach with families, treatment providers, and the courts. Essential elements of the model include quick entry into services to safely maintain children in the home when possible and rapid access to intensive addiction or mental health assessment and treatment. Each worker-mentor pair has a capped caseload, allowing for intensive work with families, individualized wraparound services, and identification of natural supports.</td>
<td>2012 evaluation outcomes included:&lt;br&gt;• Women in START have nearly double the sobriety rate of non-START counterparts.&lt;br&gt;• Children in START are about half as likely to enter foster care.&lt;br&gt;• At case closure, more than 75% of START kids remained with or were reunified with parent(s).&lt;br&gt;• Parents show improved parental capacity.&lt;br&gt;• For every dollar spent on KY START, $2.22 is saved in offset foster care costs.&lt;br&gt;2015 evaluation outcomes:&lt;br&gt;• Children served by START were less likely to experience recurrence of child abuse or neglect within 6 months compared with a matched control group.&lt;br&gt;• Children served by START were less likely to re-enter foster care at 12 months compared with a matched control group.</td>
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