

Education Measures for Children on TANF

The Role of Housing and Behavioral Health Risk Factors

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THE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) program provides cash assistance to low-income families and aids parents in gaining employment and achieving economic self-sufficiency. Washington State's TANF program, WorkFirst, underwent a major redesign in 2010 that resulted in a shift to considering the needs of the *whole family* in developing case management plans with parents. Accordingly, one aim of the redesign is "to ensure TANF children have tools to help them overcome the increased risks they face, to graduate from high school and to become successful and productive members of society."¹ As part of the redesign, a cross-agency workgroup overhauled the WorkFirst performance measures and added three measures related to children's education: 1) enrollment in K-12, 2) grade progression, and 3) on-time high school graduation. The INVEST database, developed in partnership with the Education Research and Data Center (ERDC), provides an opportunity to investigate risk factors that may influence these education measures. This report focuses on housing and behavioral health, as TANF caseworkers have some ability to provide assistance in these areas. Moreover, rates of homelessness and behavioral health treatment penetration among children on TANF are also now WorkFirst performance measures.

Key Findings

We examined education measures for children on TANF, looking separately at three groups: 1) children ages 5-11, 2) youth ages 12-18, and 3) a cohort of first time 9th graders.²

1. Overall, rates of enrollment, grade progression, and on-time graduation either improved or remained relatively stable from AY 2009/10 to AY 2011/12, but the challenges some students faced with housing and behavioral health issues are reflected in the education data.
2. Approximately one-quarter of both younger and older K-12 students on TANF in AY 2011/12 experienced housing instability identified through one of three systems. Those identified by *both* caseworkers and their school as being unstably housed experienced higher rates of school change and, for older youth, lower rates of grade progression and on-time graduation.
3. TANF students with behavioral health conditions—and especially those with substance abuse issues—were more likely to experience a school change within an academic year and less likely to progress to the next grade level as expected or to graduate high school on time.

¹ Washington WorkFirst (2010). "WorkFirst Re-examination: Adapting WorkFirst for the 21st Century Economy of Washington State," Olympia, WA, <http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/reexam/reexamdocs/WF%20Re-exam%20Report%20Feb%2003%202011.pdf>.

² Throughout this report, we use "TANF" to refer to the WorkFirst program. In each year, we exclude children who were *only* on a child-only TANF case but include children who were on both WorkFirst and child-only TANF in the year.



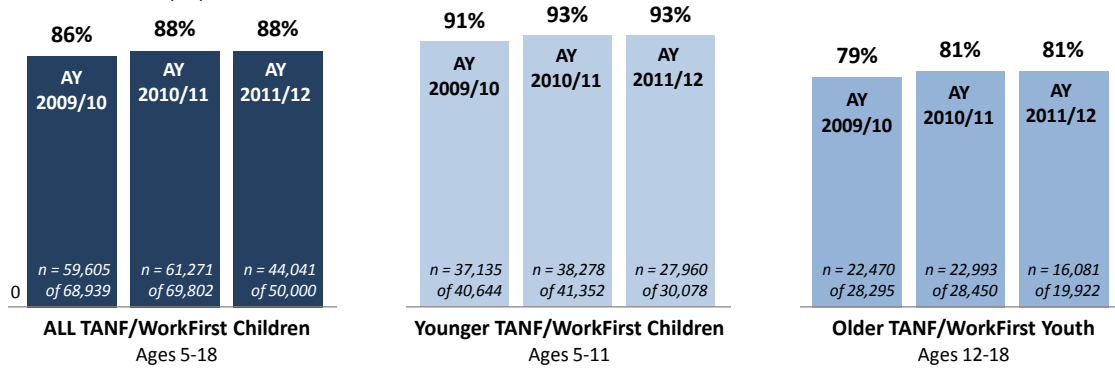
Education Measures for Children on TANF: AY 2009/10 to AY 2011/12³

PERFORMANCE MEASURE #1: Enrollment in K-12 Public School

Rates of enrollment in K-12 public school among school-aged children on TANF increased slightly from 86 percent in AY 2009/10 to 88 percent in AY 2010/11 and 2011/12.

K-12 Public School Enrollment

BY ACADEMIC YEAR (AY)

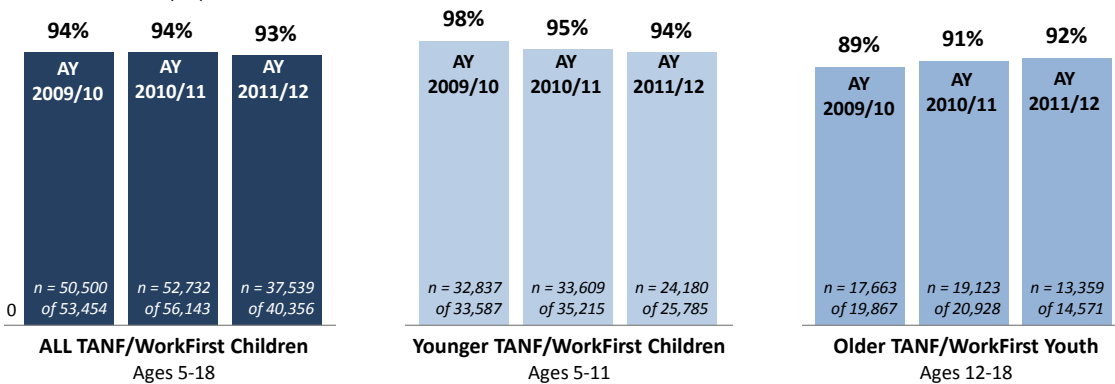


PERFORMANCE MEASURE #2: Grade Progression

Grade progression was measured as the percent of school-aged children on TANF enrolled in K-12 in a given year who had progressed to the next grade level as expected.⁴ Rates of grade progression over the three-year period declined for younger children but increased slightly for older children.

Grade Progression

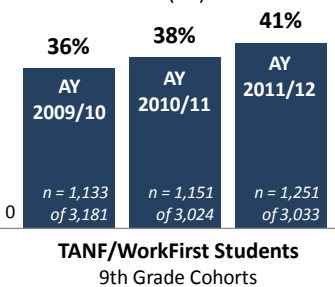
BY ACADEMIC YEAR (AY)



PERFORMANCE MEASURE #3: On-Time High School Graduation

On-time high school graduation

BY ACADEMIC YEAR (AY)



On-time high school graduation was measured by identifying a cohort of first-time 9th graders in a given year and examining the proportion who graduated within four academic years. The proportion of 9th graders on TANF in AY 2006/07 who graduated on-time in AY 2009/10 was 36 percent. The on-time graduation rate for the AY 2008/09 cohort was 5 percentage points higher at 41 percent in AY 2011/12.

³ Students who were new to TANF in the last two months of AY 2011/12 (July or August 2012) are not included in this report because the INVEST 2012 database only includes data from the DSHS Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) through June 2012.

⁴ Students who were missing grade information for the prior academic year were excluded from this measure.

The Role of Housing Instability

Q. How prevalent is housing instability among students on TANF?

Homelessness and Housing Instability among Students on TANF, Ages 5-11

Among the 27,960 TANF students ages 5-11 enrolled in K-12 in AY 2011/12, 27 percent (n = 7,613) were identified as homeless or unstably housed at some point in that year.



HOUSING INSTABILITY

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE. The Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) is used by DSHS caseworkers to record clients' self-reported housing status. Students were identified as homeless or unstably housed if they were homeless without housing, homeless with housing, or living in a shelter.

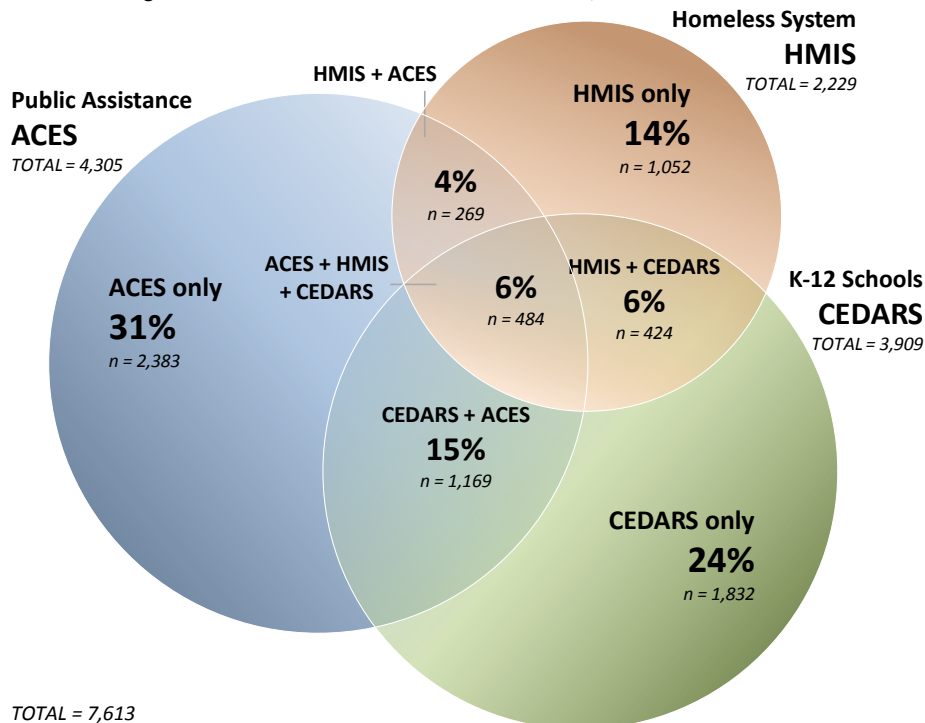
HOMELESS SYSTEM. The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is used by local housing providers to record housing assistance services. Students were identified as homeless or unstably housed in HMIS if they received emergency shelter, transitional housing, or rent assistance.

K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS. The Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) is a data warehouse containing K-12 public education data. Students were identified as homeless or unstably housed in CEDARS if they were living in shelters, hotels/motels, doubled-up with friends or family, or were unsheltered.

Among the 7,613 TANF children with identified homelessness or housing instability in AY 2011/12, 57 percent were identified through ACES, 51 percent through CEDARS, and 29 percent through HMIS. The greatest amount of overlap (15 percent) was between CEDARS and ACES.

Administrative Indicators of Homelessness and Housing Instability

TANF/WorkFirst Students Age 5-11 • TOTAL WITH HOUSING INSTABILITY = 7,613



Homelessness and Housing Instability among Students on TANF, Ages 12-18

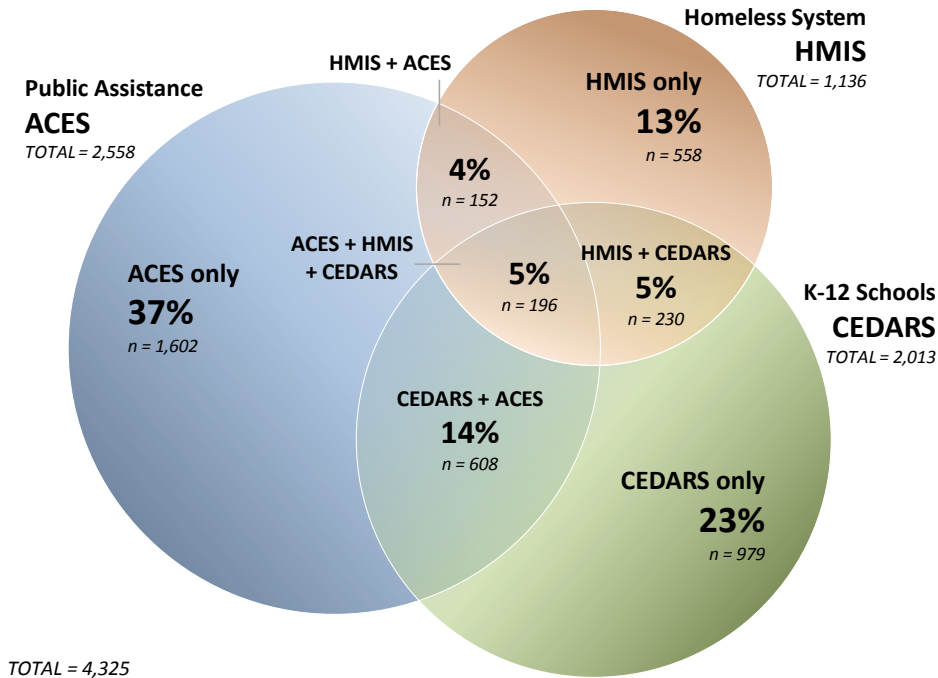
Among the 16,081 students ages 12-18 who received TANF/WorkFirst in AY 2011/12 and were enrolled in public school, 27 percent (n = 4,325) were identified as homeless or unstably housed in the year.



The proportion of housing instability identified among TANF youth ages 12-18 through each system (ACES, CEDARS, and HMIS) closely mirrored proportions shown above for TANF children ages 5-11. Among the 4,325 TANF youth with identified homelessness or housing instability, 59 percent were identified through public assistance (ACES), 47 percent through the schools (CEDARS), and 26 percent through the homeless system (HMIS). As was the case with younger children on TANF, the greatest amount of overlap in system identification of housing instability (14 percent) was between public assistance (ACES) and the schools (CEDARS).

Administrative Indicators of Homelessness and Housing Instability

TANF/WorkFirst Students Age 12-18 • TOTAL WITH HOUSING INSTABILITY = 4,325



The Take-Away

- ▶ About 27 percent of TANF children in both age groups (ages 5-11 and 12-18) who were enrolled in public school in AY 2011/12 had homelessness or housing instability identified by caseworkers, their schools, or housing providers.
- ▶ The greatest system overlap in the identification of housing instability was between the schools (CEDARS) and public assistance (ACES).

Q. How does housing instability relate to school changes, grade progression, and graduation?

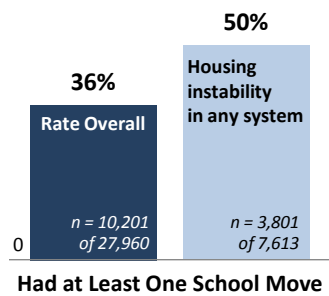
School Mobility and Housing Instability, TANF Children Ages 5-11

We identified whether or not a student changed schools in AY 2011/12. Among the 27,960 children ages 5-11 who received TANF in AY 2011/12 and were enrolled in K-12, approximately 36 percent (n = 10,201) experienced at least one school move during the academic year. Not surprisingly, children who had been identified as homeless or unstably housed by caseworkers, their schools, or housing providers were more likely to have changed schools in the year. Most notably, the rate of school change was highest (at 59 percent) for children who were identified by both caseworkers and the schools as having a housing need but who had *not* received HMIS-recorded homeless services.

School Moves and Homelessness/Housing Instability

TANF/WorkFirst Students Ages 5-11 • SFY 2012 • TOTAL = 27,960

Percent who Changed Schools in AY 2011/12



Had at Least One School Move

	At Least 1 School Move, AY 2011/12		
	AT LEAST 1 MOVE	TOTAL STUDENTS	PERCENT
ALL TANF students ages 5-11	10,201	27,960	36%
No identified housing instability	6,400	20,347	31%
Housing instability in any system	3,801	7,613	50%
Housing instability in all systems	276	484	57%
ACES + CEDARS	694	1,169	59%
CEDARS only	949	1,832	52%
HMIS + CEDARS	213	424	50%
ACES + HMIS	129	269	48%
ACES only	1,130	2,383	47%
HMIS only	410	1,052	39%

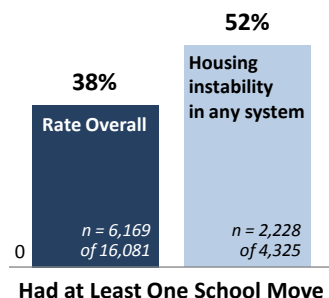
School Mobility and Housing Instability, TANF Youth Ages 12-18

Among the 16,081 youth ages 12-18 who received TANF in AY 2011/12 and were enrolled in K-12, approximately 38 percent (n = 6,169) experienced at least one school move during the academic year. Youth who had been identified as homeless or unstably housed in any of the three information systems (ACES, CEDARS, and HMIS) were more likely than other students to have changed schools at least once during the academic year. In particular, youth whose housing instability had been identified by all three systems or by both ACES and CEDARS experienced higher rates of school change (61 percent and 59 percent, respectively). Among youth with identified housing instability, those identified only through the homeless system (HMIS) had the lowest rate of school change.

School Moves and Homelessness/Housing Instability

TANF/WorkFirst Students Ages 12-18 • SFY 2012 • TOTAL = 16,081

Percent who Changed Schools in AY 2011/12



Had at Least One School Move

	At Least 1 School Move, AY 2011/12		
	NUMBER	TOTAL STUDENTS	PERCENT
ALL TANF students ages 12-18	6,169	16,081	38%
No identified housing instability	3,941	11,756	34%
Housing instability in any system	2,228	4,325	52%
Housing instability in all systems	119	196	61%
ACES + CEDARS	361	608	59%
ACES + HMIS	87	152	57%
ACES only	832	1,602	52%
HMIS + CEDARS	118	230	51%
CEDARS only	485	979	50%
HMIS only	226	558	41%

Housing Instability and Grade Progression, TANF Students Ages 5-11 and 12-18

One measure of how children are faring in school is whether they are progressing to the next grade level from one year to the next as expected. As shown above, children who experienced housing instability in both ACES and CEDARS were especially likely to change schools in the year. This—combined with the fact that HMIS data is only available for DSHS research purposes for July 2009 forward—led us to use a restricted definition of housing instability in looking at grade progression and high school completion. In particular, students on TANF were identified as unstably housed if they had housing issues identified in *both* ACES and CEDARS. Using this definition, we saw very little difference in grade progression for unstably housed children between the ages of 5 and 11 relative to their peers. However, among youth ages 12 to 18, we saw a more notable gap that had increased to 6 percent by AY 2011/12. Specifically, 87 percent of unstably housed youth had progressed to the next grade as expected that year compared to 93 percent of other TANF youth.

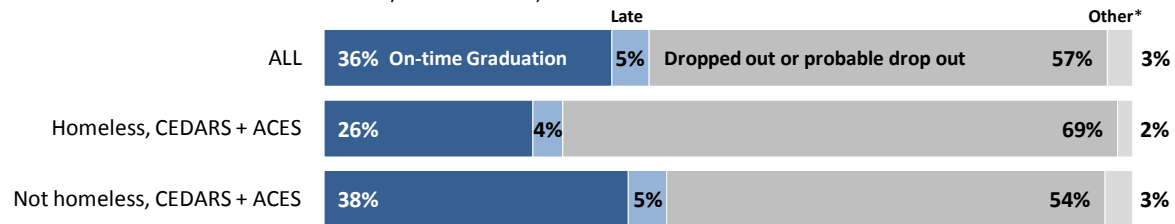
	GRADE PROGRESSION RATES			GRADE PROGRESSION RATES		
	Ages 5-11	Housing instability in CEDARS and ACES?		Ages 12-18	Housing instability in CEDARS and ACES?	
	TOTAL	Yes	No	TOTAL	Yes	No
AY 2009/10	98%	98%	98%	89%	86%	90%
AY 2010/11	95%	95%	95%	91%	88%	92%
AY 2011/12	94%	93%	94%	92%	87%	93%

Housing Instability and High School Graduation, First Time 9th Graders on TANF

Although on-time graduation rates are provided on page 2 through AY 2011/12, a more comprehensive look at high school outcomes can only be reliably provided for those who were first time 9th graders in AY 2006/07. This is because some students can remain in school until the age of 21. Defining housing instability as the presence of housing issues in *both* CEDARS and ACES data, we observe a substantial gap in on-time graduation rates among those with housing needs. While only 26 percent of students on TANF who were unstably housed in the 9th grade ended up graduating on time, 38 percent of their more stably housed peers graduated within four years. Similarly, while 69 percent of unstably housed 9th graders on TANF either officially dropped out or are presumed to have dropped out based on available data, 54 percent of their more stably housed peers did so.⁵

Expected Graduation of AY 2009/10

First Time 9th Graders on TANF in AY 2006/07 • TOTAL = 3,488



*Other typically means still enrolled in K-12, with the exception of seven students (0.2% of the cohort) who died.

The Take-Away

- ▶ **TANF children who have been identified by both caseworkers and the schools as being unstably housed experience higher rates of school change.**
- ▶ **Older youth on TANF who have housing instability identified by both the public assistance and school system have lower rates of grade progression and on-time high school graduation.**

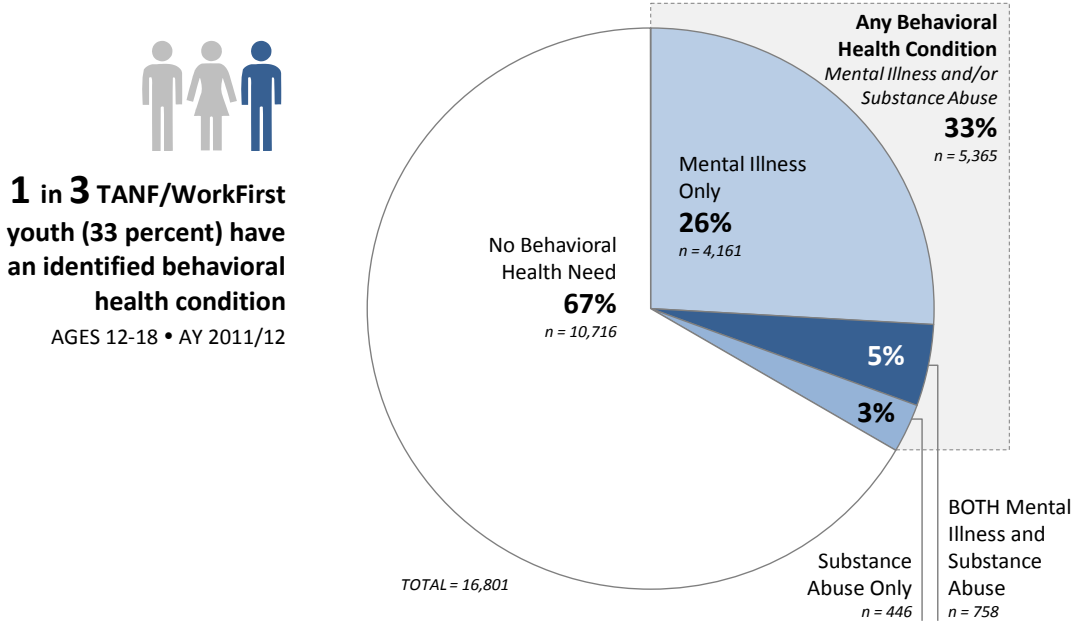
⁵ Students are considered “probable drop-outs” if they 1) appear to still be living in Washington State based on administrative records, 2) transferred out of one school, and 3) did not subsequently reappear in any K-12 school records after transferring out.

The Role of Behavioral Health Conditions

Q. How prevalent are behavioral health risk factors among TANF youth?

Prevalence of Behavioral Health Conditions, TANF Students Ages 12-18

Using administrative medical and behavioral health records, we grouped TANF youth into four categories in each year based on data from that year and the prior academic year: 1) no behavioral health needs, 2) mental illness only, 3) substance abuse only, or 4) both mental illness and substance abuse. In AY 2011/12, we found that one-third of TANF youth ages 12-18 who were enrolled in K-12 had a behavioral health condition identified.

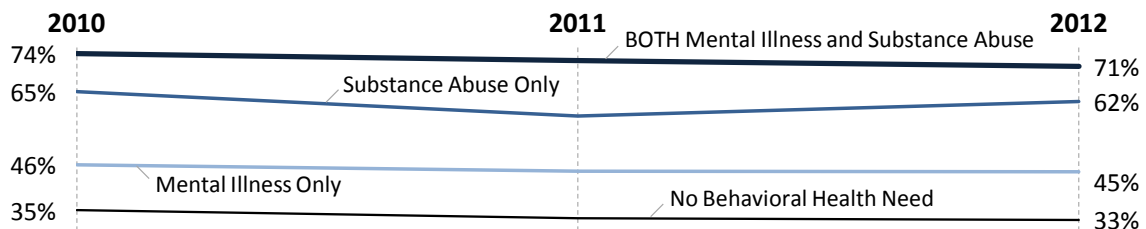


Q. How do behavioral health risk factors relate to school changes, grade progression, and graduation outcomes?

Behavioral Health and School Moves, TANF Students Ages 12-18

We identified the proportion of students in each of the four behavioral health categories who experienced a school change between AY 2009/10 and AY 2011/12. In each year, the rate of school change was highest for TANF students with co-occurring disorders, though the proportion experiencing at least one school change declined from 74 percent in AY 2009/10 to 71 percent in AY 2011/12. TANF youth with no identified behavioral health needs experienced the lowest rates of school change, as well a decline over time from 35 percent in AY 2009/10 to 33 percent in AY 2011/12.

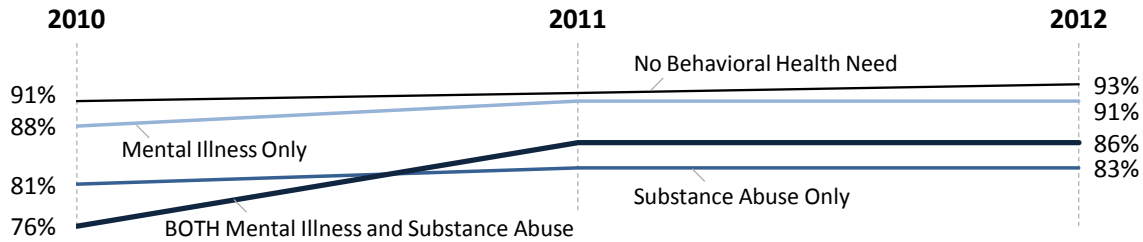
Changed schools at least once in the academic year



Behavioral Health and Grade Progression, TANF Students Ages 12-18

As with school moves, there appears to be a strong relationship between behavioral health risk factors and grade progression. In each of the three years, TANF youth with no identified behavioral health needs had the highest rates of grade progression. Youth with substance use issues—both with and without co-occurring mental illness—had the lowest rates of progression. Encouragingly, however, TANF youth with co-occurring disorders experienced an increase in grade progression of 10 percentage points between AY 2009/10 and AY 2011/12 (from 76 percent to 86 percent).

Progressed to the next grade as expected

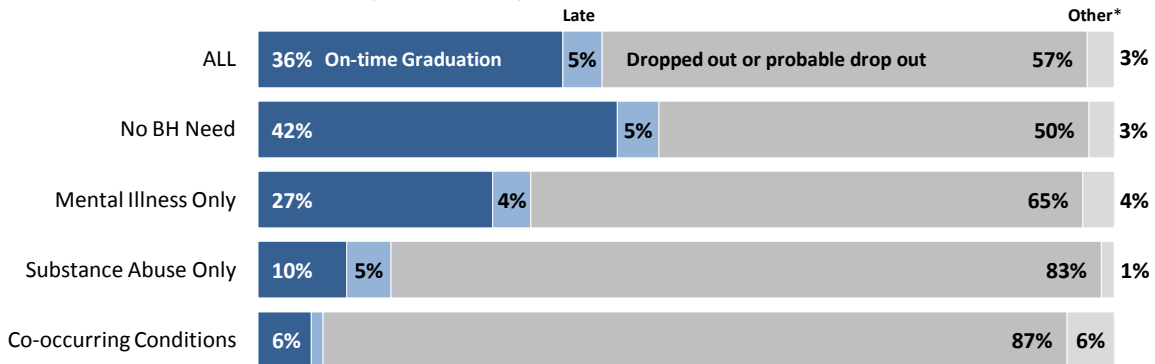


Behavioral Health and High School Outcomes, First Time 9th Graders on TANF

A previous RDA report found a strong relationship between behavioral health conditions and high school graduation outcomes, with only 12 percent of a cohort of DSHS youth with co-occurring disorders graduating within four years of first entering 9th grade.⁶ Our findings for a cohort of 9th graders on TANF mirror the patterns observed in that report in terms of sub-group differences but show lower graduation rates across the board. For example, only 6 percent of TANF 9th graders with co-occurring substance abuse and mental illness graduated high school within four years.

Expected Graduation in AY 2009/10

First Time 9th Graders on TANF in AY 2006/07 • TOTAL = 3,488



* Other typically means still enrolled in K-12, with the exception of seven students (0.2% of the cohort) who died.

The Take-Away

- ▶ **One-third of TANF students ages 12-18 have a behavioral health condition identified in administrative records. Students with substance abuse issues, in particular, are more likely to experience a school change within an academic year and less likely to progress to the next grade level as expected.**
- ▶ **TANF 9th graders with behavioral health conditions—especially substance abuse issues—are much less likely than their peers to graduate high school within four years.**

⁶ Kohlenberg, Elizabeth, et al. (2013). "Behavioral Health Needs and School Success: Youth with Mental Health and Substance Abuse Problems are at Risk for Poor High School Performance," Olympia, WA: DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division, <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ms/rda/research/11/194.pdf>.

THE INVEST DATABASE

The INVEST 2012 database contains de-identified education and social/health service data for all individuals who received a DSHS service at any point between State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2000 and 2012 and were age 35 or younger in the first year in which they received a DSHS service in SFY 2000-12 (or any age if they received a service from the DSHS Economic Services Administration). The Washington State Office of Financial Management’s Education Research and Data Center linked K-12 public education data from the state’s P-20 Education Data Warehouse for Academic Years (AY) 2004/05 through AY 2012/13. K-12 data is compiled from student-level longitudinal education records collected by the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

STUDY POPULATION

In each measurement year, the two main study populations included in this report were 1) all children ages 5 to 18 who received TANF at some point between AY 2009/10 and 2011/12 and 2) children on TANF who were first time 9th graders in AY 2006/07, 2007/08, or 2009/10 and believed to still be residing in Washington State at the point high school outcomes were observed based on the administrative data available to us. TANF receipt was defined here to exclude children who were *only* on a child-only case in the year being observed. In addition, children had to have data available in the P-20 Education Data Warehouse to be included in the study population.

DATA SOURCES

- School system. Data on the K-12 public school system came from the P210 database that is part of the P20 Data Warehouse. The P210 database contains data from the Core Student Record System (CSRS, AY 2006/07-2008/09) and the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS, AY 2009/10-2011/12) that has been reviewed by the schools and returned to OSPI in the fall following the academic year for which the information was reported.
- Public assistance system. Data from the Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) was used to identify children who had received TANF and to also identify homeless/unstable housing recorded by caseworkers in the process of determining eligibility for public assistance.
- Homeless system. Data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) was used to identify individuals defined as homeless by virtue of having received emergency shelter, transitional housing, or rent assistance recorded by local housing providers.
- Health and behavioral health system. Data from three information systems—ProviderOne (medical), the Consumer Information System (mental health), and TARGET (chemical dependency)—was used to identify the presence of substance abuse and mental illness over a two-year window of time based on health and behavioral health diagnoses, prescriptions, and treatment records. In addition, drug and alcohol-related arrest data maintained by the Washington State Patrol was used to identify likely substance abuse issues.

DEMOGRAPHICS

	TANF Students, Ages 5-11 <i>TOTAL = 27,960</i>		TANF Students, Ages 12-18 <i>TOTAL = 16,081</i>	
AVERAGE AGE	7.6 years		14.6 years	
RACE/ETHNICITY	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
White only	11,568	41%	6,981	43%
Any minority	13,500	48%	7,865	49%
African American	4,954	18%	2,917	18%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2,299	8%	1,579	10%
Native American	1,957	7%	1,205	7%
Hispanic	5,993	21%	3,026	19%
Missing	2,892	10%	1,235	8%
GENDER				
Male	14,068	50%	7,702	48%
Female	13,892	50%	8,379	52%



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