

# What Works Clearinghouse



Dropout Prevention

January 24, 2008

## New Chance

**Program description** *New Chance*, a program for young welfare mothers who have dropped out of school, aims to improve both their employment potential and their parenting skills. Participants take GED (General Educational Development) preparation classes and complete a parenting and life skills curriculum. Once they complete this first phase of the program, they can receive occupational training and job placement assistance from *New Chance*, which also offers case management and child care.<sup>1</sup>

**Research** One study of *New Chance* met What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. This randomized controlled trial, including over 2,000 women, was conducted in 16 sites in 10 states: California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Oregon, and Pennsylvania. Based on this one study, the WWC considers the extent of evidence for *New Chance* to be small for completing school. That study did not examine the effectiveness of *New Chance* in the domains of staying or progressing in school.<sup>2</sup>

**Effectiveness** *New Chance* was found to have potentially positive effects on completing school.

	<i>Staying in school</i>	<i>Progressing in school</i>	<i>Completing school</i>
<b>Rating of effectiveness</b>	na	na	Potentially positive effects
<b>Improvement index<sup>3</sup></b>	na	na	Average: +8 percentile points

na = not applicable

1. The WWC dropout prevention review includes interventions designed to encourage students who drop out to return to school and earn a high school diploma or GED certificate, as well as interventions designed to prevent initially enrolled students from dropping out. For more details, see the [WWC dropout prevention review protocol](#).
2. The evidence in this report is based on available research. Findings and conclusions may change as new research becomes available.
3. These numbers show the average improvement indices for all findings across the study.

## Additional program information

### Developer and contact

*New Chance*, developed and evaluated by MDRC, is no longer an active program, and no current developer or contact information is available. Additional information about the *New Chance* model and the implementation experience of the organizations that used it can be found in Quint, Fink, and Rowser (1991), listed in the “References” for this report.

### Scope of use

*New Chance* operated in 16 communities (as part of the MDRC evaluation) in 10 states between 1989 and 1992. Local institutions, including schools, community colleges, and community service organizations, ran the *New Chance* programs using funding from both private and government sources.

### Description of intervention

*New Chance* aims to improve the education, parenting, life skills, and employment prospects of young welfare mothers. Program services have two phases. In the first phase, participants receive adult basic education, GED preparation, and pre-employment skills training. They also receive life skills training, including health education, family planning, parenting education, and pediatric health services. In this phase, participants attend classes five days a week for six hours a day. After five months (or after they

receive their GED certificates if this occurs first), participants enter the second phase of *New Chance*. During this phase, participants receive occupational skills training, participate in internships, and receive job placement assistance, services typically provided by an outside agency. Throughout their time in the program, they have access to free child care and a case manager who monitors and assists their progress. To create a personal environment, *New Chance* programs are small, serving no more than 40 participants at any time. *New Chance* services are available to participants for a period of up to 18 months. Participation in the program is voluntary. To be eligible young mothers must be 16 to 22 years old, have first given birth as a teenager, be economically disadvantaged (most often determined by their receipt of cash assistance), lack a high school diploma or GED certificate, and not be pregnant at program entry. Programs are also allowed to serve a small number of young mothers who have already completed high school if they have poor reading skills and would benefit from the program’s adult basic education classes.

### Cost

According to study authors, the average cost of *New Chance* is just over \$11,700 per participant.<sup>4</sup> Child care and case management services represent more than half of the total cost of the program.

## Research

The WWC reviewed one study of the effectiveness of *New Chance* (Quint, Bos, & Polit, 1997), a randomized controlled trial that met WWC evidence standards.

The Quint, Bos, and Polit study (1997) examined the *New Chance* program in 16 sites in 10 states. Between 1989 and 1991, 2,322 women who were eligible and volunteered for the program were randomly assigned: 1,553 to the *New Chance* group and 769 to the control group. The results summarized here

are based on data for the 1,401 *New Chance* mothers and 678 control group mothers who completed the 42-month follow-up survey.

### Extent of evidence

The WWC categorizes the extent of evidence in each domain as small or moderate to large (see the [What Works Clearinghouse Extent of Evidence Categorization Scheme](#)). The extent of

4. See Quint, Bos, & Polit (1997). The WWC converted costs to 2007 dollars using the consumer price index.

## Research (continued)

evidence takes into account the number of studies and the total sample size across studies that met WWC evidence standards.<sup>5</sup>

### Effectiveness Findings

The WWC review of interventions for dropout prevention addresses student outcomes in three domains: staying in school, progressing in school, and completing school. The *New Chance* study by Quint et al. examined outcomes in the completing school domain.

*Completing school.* The study showed a statistically significant difference between *New Chance* and control group youth on the likelihood of receiving a high school diploma or GED certificate. Three and a half years after random assignment, 52% of the *New Chance* group had earned a diploma or GED certificate, compared with 44% of the control group. This positive effect on completion came entirely from *New Chance*'s positive and statistically significant effect on the likelihood of receiving a GED

The WWC considers the extent of evidence for *New Chance* to be small for completing school.

certificate. *New Chance* was found to have a small, but statistically significant, negative effect on the likelihood of earning a high school diploma.<sup>6</sup>

### Rating of effectiveness

The WWC rates the effects of an intervention in a given outcome domain as positive, potentially positive, mixed, no discernible effects, potentially negative, or negative. The rating of effectiveness takes into account four factors: the quality of the research design, the statistical significance of the findings, the size of the difference between participants in the intervention and the comparison conditions, and the consistency in findings across studies (see the [WWC Intervention Rating Scheme](#)).<sup>7</sup>

## The WWC found *New Chance* to have potentially positive effects on completing school

### Improvement index

The WWC computes an improvement index for each individual finding. In addition, within each outcome domain, the WWC computes an average improvement index for each study as well as an average improvement index across studies (see [Technical Details of WWC-Conducted Computations](#)). The improvement index represents the difference between the percentile rank of the average student in the intervention condition and that of the average student in the comparison condition.

Unlike the rating of effectiveness, the improvement index is based entirely on the size of the effect, regardless of the statistical significance of the effect, the study design, or the analyses. The improvement index can take on values between -50 and +50, with positive numbers denoting results favorable to the intervention group.

Based on the one study of *New Chance* that met evidence standards, the average improvement index for completing school is +8 percentile points.

5. The Extent of Evidence Categorization was developed to tell readers how much evidence was used to determine the intervention rating, focusing on the number and size of studies. Additional factors associated with a related concept, external validity—such as students' demographics and types of settings in which studies took place—are not taken into account for the categorization. Information about how the extent of evidence rating was determined for *New Chance* is in Appendix A6.
6. As in other WWC dropout prevention reviews, the combined effect of *New Chance* on receiving a high school diploma or GED certificate was used to determine the effectiveness rating. These results are reported in Appendix A3. The separate effects of *New Chance* on receiving a high school diploma or a GED certificate are reported in Appendix A4.2.
7. The level of statistical significance was reported by the study authors, or where necessary, calculated by the WWC to correct for clustering within classrooms or schools and for multiple comparisons. For an explanation, see the [WWC Tutorial on Mismatch](#). For the formulas the WWC used to calculate statistical significance, see [Technical Details of WWC-Conducted Computations](#). For the Quint et al. (1997) study summarized here, no corrections for clustering or multiple comparisons were needed.

**The WWC found *New Chance* to have potentially positive effects on completing school** *(continued)*

**Summary**

The WWC reviewed one study of the effectiveness of *New Chance*. This study met WWC evidence standards. Based on the

results from the one qualifying study, the WWC found potentially positive effects on completing school. The conclusions presented in this report may change as new research emerges.

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**References**

**Met WWC evidence standards**

Quint, J. C., Bos, H. M., & Polit, D. F. (1997). *New Chance: Final report on a comprehensive program for young mothers in poverty and their children*. New York, NY: MDRC.

**Additional sources**

Quint, J. C., Fink, B. L., & Rowser, S. L. (1991). *New Chance: Implementing a comprehensive program for disadvantaged young mothers and their children*. New York, NY: MDRC.

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Quint, J., Polit, D., Bos, H., & Cave, G. (1994). *New Chance: Interim findings on a comprehensive program for disadvantaged young mothers and their children*. New York, NY: MDRC.

**For more information about specific studies and WWC calculations, please see the [WWC New Chance Technical Appendices](#).**