



American university granted \$2 million to study Triple P and child welfare

The University of Washington in St Louis has received a \$2 million grant to evaluate Pathways Triple P in the United States child welfare system.

The Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development is funding the five-year trial, to be led by Patricia Kohl, assistant professor of social work at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work.

Pathways Triple P is a Level 5 Triple P intervention for parents at risk of maltreating their children. Its specialised modules help parents prevent problem behaviour, manage their anger and develop coping strategies to deal calmly with risky situations.

During the randomised, controlled trial, Dr Kohl and additional researchers will provide Pathways Triple P to 70 families. Over a 21-month period, they will evaluate the Triple P families as well as 70 others in a control group.

The study will focus on three questions:

- How does the program impact disruptive behaviour of children aged 5 – 10 years?
- Does it prevent maltreatment recidivism, and if so, how?
- How do the costs and benefits of the program compare with those of treatment as usual?

Dr Kohl said children within the child welfare system were highly susceptible to behavioural problems in the short and long term.

“The majority of children enter the child welfare service system due to abuse and/or neglect, and may be at especially high risk of disruptive behaviour problems,” Dr Kohl said.

“This further places them at risk for further adverse outcomes including the development of conduct disorder and juvenile delinquency, violent delinquency and juvenile court involvement.”

Dr Kohl said it was important to consider the financial cost of maltreatment and find cost-effective prevention measures.

“Our inclusion of a cost benefit analysis will allow us to inform state-wide policy and practice, including the potential large scale uptake of an empirically-supported intervention.”

Triple P founder Professor Matt Sanders welcomed news of the independent trial which he hoped would add to the growing international evidence base of the program.