



# 2015 Mental Health Statistics Improvement Program: Trends in School Disciplinary Events for Child and Adolescent Consumers

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## Survey Data from Five Years of Consumer Sampling

The following charts represent five years of survey data obtained annually through random, stratified sampling of the parent/guardians of children and adolescents (C&A) who received mental health services through providers certified by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS). Each year, respondents were asked to report on the occurrence of suspensions and/or expulsions (school disciplinary events) within a 24-month period. The Time 1 (T1) question asked respondents if there had been a suspension and/or expulsion during the year prior the current year. The Time 2 (T2) question asked if there had been any suspensions and/or expulsion during the current year. The term “current year” refers to the 12 months prior to being asked the question on the survey. Respondents with school disciplinary events reported at T1 are referenced in the following charts as “Students with Disciplinary Histories,” while the 12 months measured as T2 is referred to as the “Treatment Period.”

These data are reported annually to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as National Outcome Measures. Although sample sizes vary somewhat from year to year, sufficient samples are collected annually for a confidence interval (CI) of +/-3 percentage points. CI are indicated in the charts by an “I” bar passing through the data point for each year.

### Students with Disciplinary Histories

Chart 1 shows the annual percentages of students with disciplinary histories who experienced no disciplinary events during the treatment period. The trend line is essentially flat, and the CI’s for each year’s data points all have overlapping ranges. The year-to-year variation shown in Chart 1 is not statistically significant. The five-year average (not shown in chart) for students with disciplinary histories who report no disciplinary events during treatment is 7.2 percent, with standard deviation (SD) = .6 percent.

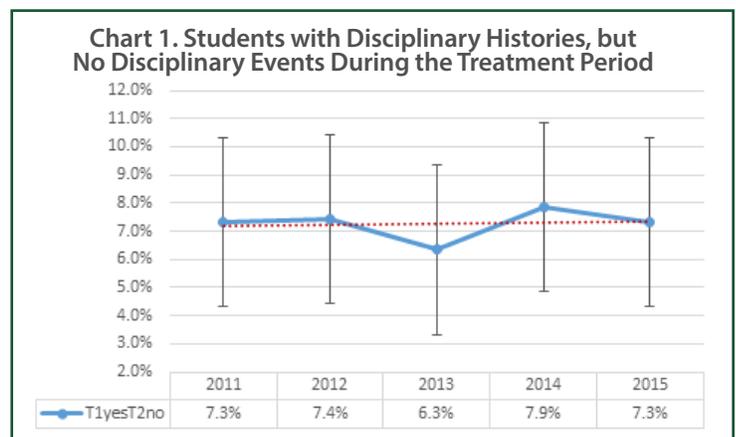


Chart 2 shows annual percentages of students with disciplinary histories who reported new disciplinary events during the treatment period. The trend line is flat and the year-to-year variation is not statistically significant. The five-year average is 14.1 percent, with SD = 0.5 percent.

## Students without Disciplinary Events

Chart 3 shows the annual percentages of students with no disciplinary events before or during the treatment period. The five-year average is 68.7 percent, with  $SD = 1.7$  percent. The trend is flat, and the variation seen from year-to-year is not statistically significant. The CI's for each year have overlapping ranges.

### Limitations

There is always a risk with survey data that sampling does not represent the entire population. Low survey response rates also pose a threat to the validity of results, inasmuch as there could be a difference between responders and non-responders. Randomization and stratification of the survey samples help to reduce the risk of misrepresentation somewhat. There is also a problem posed by asking for respondents to self-report on negative events such as suspension and/or expulsion prior to and during the treatment period addressed by the survey. Respondents may be under-reporting disciplinary events for any number of reasons. This problem is partially addressed by looking at the annual data points in relation to each other. Low variation from year-to-year suggests the measure is reliable, even if accuracy may be questioned.

### Discussion

Charts 1 through 3 show no statistically significant changes in outcome measures for the school success of child and adolescent consumers. Whatever the measures may lack as change indicators, they can tell us something about the status of C&A consumers with regard to school disciplinary events. There is a higher percentage of C&A consumers with ongoing disciplinary problems (Chart 2) than those who report a reduction in disciplinary events during treatment (Chart 1). An average of 14.1 percent is nearly twice the 7.2 percent who report success in reducing disciplinary events.

We do not know what percentage of C&A consumers with disciplinary problems receive school-based treatment from providers licensed by OhioMHAS. We can say with confidence that an average of 68.7 percent (CI = 65.7% – 71.7%) of C&A consumers report no school disciplinary problems. Conversely, this means an average of 31.3 percent (CI = 28.3% – 33.3%) of C&A consumers experience school disciplinary problems. We do not know what percentage of these consumers have Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) that address behavioral issues affecting school success. Further study of the C&A treatment population with regard to their school experience is needed.

