

The Family Check-Up® is a brief, strength-based intervention program for families with children ages 2-17 for use in a range of service settings such as schools, community agencies, and primary care. The Family Check-Up is an evidence-based, preventive approach to mental health and resilience that was designed to support families from all cultural communities. Over 30 years of research with thousands of families from diverse economic and cultural groups across the U.S. and internationally demonstrate cost-effective outcomes.

How does it work?

The Family Check-Up is a strength-based, family centered approach to prevention and intervention that provides support to parents with children who have behavioral health issues such as depression, noncompliance, ADHD, anxiety, and substance use. The Family Check-Up involves assessment, feedback, and intervention support for families with the goal of increasing parenting skills and family relationships. Intervention support is based on the needs of the family and individualized to family goals. Motivational interviewing is a key feature of the intervention and is used to support parent strengths and facilitate changes in parent-child interactions. Improvement in parenting skills and family relationships leads to reductions in child behavioral and mental health problems over time.

The Family Check-Up® Online includes the benefits of the original Family Check-Up in an easy to use, online format for practitioners and parents. Using a HIPPA-compliant web-based application, the Family Check-Up Online includes both a back-end administrative system for practitioners and agencies as well as a parent web-based application that delivers the intervention asynchronously in an easy-to-use format with engaging activities, videos, and content relevant to parents navigating the challenges of raising children today.



Steps to Implementation

[Northwest Prevention Science](#) supports organizational capacity-building with in-person and virtual training options for schools and community health practitioners. We offer a variety of levels of training tailored to the needs of the organization. Our team has trained practitioners to implement the model across the U.S. and internationally, and we provide follow-up support for fidelity monitoring as well as outcome assessment.

Summary of the Family Check-Up Online Intervention Research

The Family Check-Up Online was developed based on feedback from schools and stakeholders as an approach to reduce problem behavior and mental health concerns in middle school children.

Children across the state of Oregon were randomly assigned to receive the Family Check-Up Online (as a stand-alone program or with coaching) or school as usual. The program was offered to families with children ages 10-14 across eight middle schools in both rural and urban areas with a high percentage of students and families who were at risk for poor academic outcomes (more than 70% economically disadvantaged and fewer than 50% passing state testing with proficiency). The FCU Online with coaching support improved parents' self-efficacy and child emotional problems at three months post-test, with outcomes moderated by risk in the expected direction (e.g., higher behavioral risk was associated with greater improvements; Stormshak et al., 2019). Furthermore, for children with higher levels of behavior problems, the FCU Online also showed intervention effects on self-regulation and parenting confidence, key mechanisms of change in the development of behavioral control. Program usage data indicated that the parents who received the FCU Online were highly engaged in both the FCU and the follow-up parenting skills interventions. 73% of parents completed the FCU Online and received feedback from a coach, and each of the parenting modules was visited four or more times on average. Parents reported no technology-related barriers. These data support the acceptability and feasibility of the FCU Online and provide preliminary evidence for its effects on the target mechanisms of change, including parenting skills.

Since the initial development, new modules on providing support to children during stressful times (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) have been added and tested in focus groups with parents and providers. Focus group participants indicated that the modules were inviting and helpful and that the brief nature of these modules increased their accessibility during challenging times. The brief and tailored approach to intervention makes the FCU Online with telehealth coaching ideally suited for middle schools that want a brief, cost-effective, targeted parent support model for students in need of specific supports related to behavioral and emotional problems.

References:

The Family Check-Up Online: A Telehealth Model for Delivery of Parenting Skills to High-Risk Families With Opioid Use Histories. Elizabeth A. Stormshak, Jordan M. Matulis, Whitney Nash and Yijun Cheng. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 07 July 2021, Sec. Developmental Psychology Volume 12 – 2021. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.695967/full>

Evaluating the efficacy of the Family Check-Up Online: A school-based, eHealth model for the prevention of problem behavior during the middle school years. Stormshak, E. A., Seeley, J. R., Caruthers, A. S., Cardenas, L., Moore, K. J., Tyler, M. S., Fleming, C. M., Gau, J., & Danaher, B. (2019). *Development and Psychopathology*, 31(5), 1873-1886. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED604366.pdf>