Guiding Good Choices

SUPER: Substance Use Prevention Evidence-Based Resource, UCLA ISAP
Developer website: https://www.communitiesthatcare.net/programs/ggc/
Practice record last updated August 29, 2025

Cost	Prevention Category	Practice Focus	Practice Focus
Over $500	**Universal**	**SU**	**MH**

Practice Summary

Guiding Good Choices (GGC) is a five- to six-session family training program for parents and children aged 9-14. It teaches drug refusal skills, family expectations for behavior, and conflict management through videos, role-plays, and discussions. GGC strengthens family bonds, promotes prosocial behaviors, and reduces the risk of substance use initiation. Sessions are interactive and skill-based and include a Family Guide for activities. Materials are available in English and Spanish and delivered by the University of Washington's Center for Communities That Care.

Practice Details

Substance Use Prevention Category	• Universal
Practice Level	• Individual • Relationship
Substance Use Prevention Strategy	• Education
Practice Components	**Individual** • Anger Management • Communication Skills Training • Education • Pro-Social Connections and Activities • Skills Training **Relationship** • Parenting Education/Skills **Community/Society** • None
Population Age	• Age 6-12 • Age 13-17
Populations of Focus	• General Population • Hispanic or Latino • Rural
Settings	• Home • School (K-12) • Community-based program
Parent/Caregiver Involvement	• Required
Recommended Staffing	• Health or social work counselor, therapist or professional (licensed) • Health or social work counselor, therapist or professional (unlicensed)

Prevention Focus	**Substance Use Prevention Focus** • Substance Use - General **Mental Health Wellness and Promotion Focus** • Mental Health - General
Training and Technical Assistance	Training is required, and is provided through live, interactive, online trainings that take 19 hours spread over 5 days. Prior to trainings, participants are required to purchase licenses to access web content. The developer also offers implementation support and train-the-trainer workshops.
Program Costs	Over $500. Please visit the developer's website listed above for updated information about implementation costs.
Adaptations	GGC's developer has an Implementation Guide that can be used to guide adaptation and ensure that the program meets fidelity standards. Generally, the developer supports adaptations to enhance cultural relevance or incorporate local data.

Risk and Protective Factors

Youth Substance Use Risk and Protective Factors

Level	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Individual	• Early and persistent antisocial behavior • Early initiation of substance use • Favorable attitudes towards substance use • Poor coping skills and behaviors	• Positive social orientation (e.g. engaging in healthy activities, accepting rules and community values, positive social engagement) • Strong coping skills (e.g., problem-solving skills, ability to stand up for beliefs and values)
Family and Relationships	• Family conflict • Family management problems	• Attachment between caregivers and youth, including unity, warmth, and attachment • Communication and contact between caregivers and youth • Clear expectations for behaviors and values • Family environment with structure, rules, predictability, and parental supervision • Supportive relationships with family
School, Peer, and Community	• Substance use among peers	• None

Youth Mental Health Risk and Protective Factors

Level	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Individual	• Poor social skills (e.g., communication, problem-solving skills) • Poor coping skills and behaviors	• Strong coping skills (e.g., problem-solving skills, ability to stand up for beliefs and values)
Family and Relationships	• Family conflict • Family management problems	• Attachment between caregivers and youth, including unity, warmth, and attachment • Communication and contact between caregivers and youth • Clear expectations for behaviors and values • Family environment with structure, rules, predictability, and parental supervision • Supportive relationships with family

Level	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
School, Peer, and Community	• Substance use among peers	• None

Shared Substance Use and Mental Health Risk and Protective Factors

Level	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Individual	• Poor coping skills and behaviors	• Strong coping skills (e.g., problem-solving skills, ability to stand up for beliefs and values)
Family and Relationships	• Family conflict • Family management problems	• Attachment between caregivers and youth, including unity, warmth, and attachment • Communication and contact between caregivers and youth • Clear expectations for behaviors and values • Family environment with structure, rules, predictability, and parental supervision • Supportive relationships with family
School, Peer, and Community	• Substance use among peers	• None

Empirical Evidence of Impact

Prevention Focus	Outcome	Population Age	Evidence Strength and Study Populations of Focus
Alcohol	Changes in Knowledge, Attitudes, or Beliefs	6th grade	Moderate (Rural Communities) [References 1-2]
Alcohol	Reduced Use or Delayed Initiation	6th grade	Moderate (Rural Communities) [References 2-3]
Cannabis	Reduced Use or Delayed Initiation	6th grade	Moderate (Rural Communities) [References 3]
Tobacco	Reduced Use or Delayed Initiation	6th grade	Moderate (Rural Communities) [References 3]
Substance Use (General)	Reduced Use or Delayed Initiation	6th grade	Moderate (Rural Communities) [References 4-5]
Behavioral or Conduct Disorder	Symptom Prevention or Improvement	6th grade	Moderate (Rural Communities) [References 4]
Depression	Symptom Prevention or Improvement	6th grade	Moderate (Rural Communities) [References 6]
Mental Health (General)	Behavior, Attitudes, and Functioning	6th grade	Moderate (Rural Communities) [References 2,4]
Mental Health (General)	Improved Relationships and Community Connectedness	6th grade	Promising (Rural Communities) [References 1-2]

References

[1] Park, J., Kosterman, R., Hawkins, J. D., Haggerty, K. P., Duncan, T. E., Duncan, S. C., & Spoth, R. (2000). Effects of the "Preparing for the Drug Free Years" curriculum on growth in alcohol use and risk for alcohol use in early adolescence. *Prevention Science, 1*, 125-138. https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1010021205638

[2] Mason, A.W., Kosteman, R., Haggerty, K.P, Hawkins, J.D., Redmon, C., Spoth, R.L., Shin, C. (2009). Gender moderation and social developmental mediation of the effect of a family-focused substance use preventive intervention on young adult alcohol abuse. *Addictive Behaviors, 34*(6-7), 599-605. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2009.03.032
[3] Spoth, R., Redmond, C., Shin, C., & Azevedo, K. (2004). Brief family intervention effects on adolescent substance initiation: School-level growth curve analyses 6 years following baseline. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 72*(3), 535-542. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.72.3.535
[4] Mason, W. A., Kosterman, R., Hawkins, J. D., Haggerty, K. P., & Spoth, R. L. (2003). Reducing adolescents' growth in substance use and delinquency: Randomized trial effects of a parent-training prevention intervention. *Prevention Science, 4*(3), 203-212. https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1024653923780
[5] Spoth, R., Reyes, M. L., Redmond, C., & Shin, C. (1999). Assessing a public health approach to delay onset and progression of adolescent substance use: Latent transition and log-linear analyses of longitudinal family preventive intervention outcomes. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 67*(5), 619-630. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.67.5.619
[6] Mason, W. A., Kosterman, R., Hawkins, J. D., Haggerty, K. P., Spoth, R. L., & Redmond, C. (2007). Influence of a family-focused substance use preventive intervention on growth in adolescent depressive symptoms. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 17*(3), 541-564

What California Providers Are Saying

We have not yet spoken to any California providers who have experience implementing Guiding Good Choices. If you have implemented it, we would love to hear from you. Please contact us.