Too Good for Drugs

SUPER: Substance Use Prevention Evidence-Based Resource, UCLA ISAP
Developer website: https://toogoodprograms.org/collections/too-good-for-drugs
Practice record last updated September 9, 2026

Cost	Prevention Category	Practice Focus
Over $500	**Universal Direct, Selective, Indicated**	**SU**

Practice Summary

Too Good for Drugs is a K-12 school-based prevention program designed to enhance resilience and reduce substance use risks by building social and emotional competencies. It teaches skills like decision-making, positive relationship building, self-efficacy, communication, and resisting peer pressure, promotes a nonviolent, drug-free lifestyle and educates participants about the harmful effects of drug use through developmentally appropriate activities. The curriculum includes ten weekly lessons for grades K-8 and fourteen lessons for high school students.

Practice Details

Substance Use Prevention Category	• Universal Direct • Selective • Indicated
Practice Level	• Individual • Relationship
Substance Use Prevention Strategy	• Education
Practice Components	**Individual** • Education • Goal Setting • Pro-Social Connections and Activities • Self-Efficacy or Self-Esteem Enhancement • Skills Training **Relationship** • Peer Norm Development **Community/Society** • None
Population Age	• Age 6-12 • Age 13-17 • Age 18-20
Populations of Focus	• General Population • Hispanic or Latino
Settings	• School (K-12)
Parent/Caregiver Involvement	• Recommended or optional
Recommended Staffing	• Health or social work counselor, therapist or professional (licensed) • Health or social work counselor, therapist or professional (unlicensed) • Prevention staff • Teachers or educators

Prevention Focus	**Substance Use Prevention Focus** • Substance Use - General **Mental Health Wellness and Promotion Focus** • None
Training and Technical Assistance	Program developers offer scheduled in-person trainings at locations nationwide, which generally include trainings given in Southern California each August. Ad-hoc technical assistance is freely provided by the University of South Florida's Institute for Translational Research Education in Adolescent Drug Abuse to support program planning, implementation, and sustainability. Implementation design support and technical assistance is freely available through the developer before, during, and following implementation to support sustainability.
Program Costs	Over $500. Please visit the developer's website listed above for updated information about implementation costs.
Adaptations	Program sessions can be shortened according to need, and the developer recommends adapting them rather than skipping them completely. The developer encourages adaptations to accommodate participants' learning needs and culture, as well as the needs of smaller communities.

Risk and Protective Factors

Youth Substance Use Risk and Protective Factors

Level	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Individual	• Favorable attitudes towards substance use	• Positive social orientation (e.g. engaging in healthy activities, accepting rules and community values, positive social engagement) • Emotional self-regulation • High self-esteem • Personal engagement in two or more of the following: school, peers, athletics, employment, religion/spirituality, culture • Strong coping skills (e.g., problem-solving skills, ability to stand up for beliefs and values)
Family and Relationships	• None	• Attachment between caregivers and youth, including unity, warmth, and attachment • Supportive relationships with family
School, Peer, and Community	• Norms favorable towards substance use • Substance use among peers	• Community norms, beliefs, and standards against substance use • Opportunities for prosocial engagement in the school and community • Positive social norms • Presence of mentors and healthy adults for positive emotional support

Youth Mental Health Risk and Protective Factors

Level	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Individual	• Low self-esteem • Poor social skills (e.g., communication, problem-solving skills)	• Subjective sense of self-sufficiency • Emotional self-regulation • High self-esteem • Personal engagement in two or more of the following: school, peers, athletics, employment, religion/spirituality, culture • Strong coping skills (e.g., problem-solving skills, ability to stand up for beliefs and values)
Family and Relationships	• None	• Attachment between caregivers and youth, including unity, warmth, and attachment • Supportive relationships with family
School, Peer, and Community	• Norms favorable towards substance use • Substance use among peers	• Opportunities for prosocial engagement in the school and community • Positive social norms • Presence of mentors and healthy adults for positive emotional support

Shared Substance Use and Mental Health Risk and Protective Factors

Level	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Individual	• None	• Emotional self-regulation • High self-esteem • Personal engagement in two or more of the following: school, peers, athletics, employment, religion/spirituality, culture • Strong coping skills (e.g., problem-solving skills, ability to stand up for beliefs and values)
Family and Relationships	• None	• Attachment between caregivers and youth, including unity, warmth, and attachment • Supportive relationships with family
School, Peer, and Community	• Norms favorable towards substance use • Substance use among peers	• Opportunities for prosocial engagement in the school and community • Positive social norms • Presence of mentors and healthy adults for positive emotional support

Empirical Evidence of Impact

Prevention Focus	Outcome	Population Age	Evidence Strength and Study Populations of Focus
Alcohol	Changes in Knowledge, Attitudes, or Beliefs	Elementary School	Promising (General Population) [References 1]
Alcohol	Changes in Knowledge, Attitudes, or Beliefs	High School	Moderate (General Population) [References 2]
Alcohol	Reduced Use or Delayed Initiation	6th grade	Moderate (General Population) [References 3]

Prevention Focus	Outcome	Population Age	Evidence Strength and Study Populations of Focus
Cannabis	Changes in Knowledge, Attitudes, or Beliefs	Elementary School	Promising (General Population) [References 1]
Cannabis	Changes in Knowledge, Attitudes, or Beliefs	High School	Moderate (General Population) [References 2]
Cannabis	Reduced Use or Delayed Initiation	6th grade	Moderate (General Population) [References 3]
Substance Use (General)	Changes in Knowledge, Attitudes, or Beliefs	Elementary School	Moderate (General Population) [References 1,4]
Substance Use (General)	Changes in Knowledge, Attitudes, or Beliefs	6th grade	Moderate (General Population) [References 3]
Tobacco	Reduced Use or Delayed Initiation	6th grade	Promising (General Population) [References 3]

References

[1] Bacon, T. P. (2000). The effects of the Too Good for Drugs II drug prevention program on students' substance use intentions and risk and protective factors. *Florida Educational Research Council, Inc., Research Bulletin, 31*(3 & 4), 1-25. https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/effects-too-good-drugs-2-drug-prevention-program-students-use

[2] Bacon, T. P. (2001). Impact on high school students' behaviors and protective factors: A pilot study of the Too Good for Drugs and Violence prevention program. *Florida Educational Research Council, Inc., Research Bulletin, 32*(3 & 4), 1-40

[3] Hall, B. W., Bacon, T. P., & Ferron, J. M. (2013). Randomized controlled evaluation of the Too Good for Drugs prevention program: impact on adolescents at different risk levels for drug use. *Journal of drug education, 43*(3), 277–300. https://doi.org/10.2190/DE.43.3.e

[4] Bacon, T. P. (2003). Technical report: Evaluation of the Too Good for Drugs--elementary school prevention program. A report produced for a project funded by the Florida Department of Education, Department of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Tallahassee, FL

[5] Bacon, T. P. (2007). Technical report: Evaluation of the Too Good for Drugs--elementary school prevention program 2006-2007. A report produced for a project funded by the Florida Department of Education, Department of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Tallahassee, FL

What California Providers Are Saying

What They Like About Too Good For Drugs:

- The program allows users to sample lessons before purchasing and provides opportunities to consult with developers for questions.
- Trainers are aware of the need for adaptation and are sensitive to it.
- The program is relatively inexpensive compared to other options.
- It addresses the use of all substances comprehensively.
- In addition to teaching about substance use, it also develops social-emotional learning skills.
- The program is a good fit for health class requirements about drug awareness.
- The developer is open to feedback and regularly updates the content to ensure its relevance.
- Program materials are highly engaging.
- Students enjoy the program.
- Student peer interactions provide good opportunities for English language learners to develop communication skills.
- Can be implemented even in classrooms and settings that have limited technology.

Tips and Recommendations for Implementing Too Good For Drugs:

- Since the program is time-intensive, ensure that partners are committed to its implementation.
- The sessions can be lengthy, so staff need adequate support to implement them and may face challenges in completing the sessions.
- The program is well-suited for 6th grade and upper elementary school students, who tend to be eager and curious participants.
- While providers are not required to follow the script verbatim, it is important to emphasize the program's key points.

- Training is essential to ensure the program is implemented with fidelity.
- Although the upfront costs for expanding beyond minimum implementation can cost thousands of dollars, the ongoing expenses after the initial setup are reasonable.
- It can be helpful to create visual aids for students who are more visual learners and have trouble following the curriculum.
- Some of the content feels outdated for today's youth.
- Some program materials can be hard for students to follow.