

Safe Communities ~ Safe Schools Guide to Effective Program Selection

A Tool for Community Violence Prevention Efforts



Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence

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INTRODUCTION

With the increase in public awareness and concern about youth violence, programs that address violence issues have sprung up worldwide. One only has to look on the Internet to find thousands of programs and organizations that address all forms of violence prevention across the life span. From wilderness programs to prenatal programs to gang resistance programs, the options can be overwhelming.

Increased awareness and funding has also led to an abundance of violence prevention programs. With so many choices, organizations and individuals hoping to implement a program in their specific community are struggling to determine what might be a good program for their needs. As a result, programs are selected, implemented and then discarded within a year or two only to be replaced by the latest “program of choice.” Not only is this costly and ineffective, but it is frustrating for the individuals receiving the program.

In recent years, people have begun to question whether or not these programs are working, and the trend toward funding any and every violence prevention program has slowed. Now funding agencies are asking for proof that a program has been effective in the past before granting the funds for implementation. While this is a change in the right direction, the confusion about program choice has, unfortunately, not changed. Now there are not only an abundance of programs, but also a vast array of agencies with lists of “best practices.” The latest challenge facing agencies and individuals is not only “which program,” but also “which list” is best.

Safe Communities ~ Safe Schools Initiative

In an effort to support school violence prevention efforts in the state of Colorado, the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV), along with The Colorado Trust, the Colorado Attorney General, the Colorado Department of Education and other Colorado educational agencies, the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, and the Coors Brewing Company introduced the Safe Communities ~ Safe Schools (SCSS) Initiative in 1999.

As part of the SCSS Initiative, CSPV is currently providing in-depth training and technical assistance to sixteen schools and school districts within the state of Colorado, while providing general technical assistance to schools and districts statewide. The purpose of the SCSS Initiative is to facilitate development of individualized safe school plans based on the unique needs of each school and community. The following components comprise the SCSS Model:

- Establishing a safe school planning team from community members and school staff
- Conducting a site assessment
- Developing strategies and selecting programs that address school safety needs based on data results
- Establishing an Interagency Social Support Team
- Developing a Crisis Management and Response Plan

Before selection and implementation of an effective violence prevention program can occur, it is critical to consider a school/community assessment. The assessment is performed by surveying students, teachers,

parents and community members, as well as reviewing school district policies, procedures and the physical environment. The results of the assessment provide the school and community with information about risks that children are likely to encounter at school and in the community, as well as the assets or protective factors that might buffer them from these risks for violence and other harmful behavior.

Once a need is identified, that is, a serious risk condition is discovered or protective conditions are found to be weak or nonexistent, communities and schools require information and resources to address it. The goal of CSPV is to assist in this process by providing information regarding the most effective violence prevention programs and strategies that will most appropriately meet the needs of the site, as reflected in the findings of the site assessment.

SUMMARY

Schools, agencies and individuals seeking to implement a violence prevention program have many options from which to choose—they also have an important responsibility to choose wisely. This Effective Program Guide has been developed to assist Safe Communities ~ Safe Schools sites, as well as other organizations and individuals interested in selecting and implementing effective violence prevention programs and strategies. The guide is designed to be a resource that enhances understanding about what constitutes an effective program, what the needs are to be addressed, and what effective programs will meet those needs. The guide also includes a listing of programs and the goals, objectives, and targets of each program. This information will provide organizations with the ability to make informed decisions about choosing a prevention program suitable for their needs.

EFFECTIVE PROGRAM PLANNING

Effective program planning requires finding the right solution for the right problem. It is natural for groups to want to hurry to get to a solution before being clear about the problem they are trying to solve. When there is a “crisis,” any “solution” will do. However, our experience is clear on this subject. Most major failures are caused by jumping from a vague feeling about a problem into a solution, which sounds good at the moment. Sometimes the solution works, especially when the problems are simple and the solutions are easily implemented. However, in most cases when the problems are complex, there are no simple solutions. Not only do simple solutions to complex problems not work, but they can have negative results. Moreover, in the *National Study of Delinquency Prevention in Schools*, Gottfredson, et.al. report that only about ten percent of all programs currently being implemented are effective. (2000)

Developing a thorough, carefully thought-out plan requires time, effort, and commitment. It goes beyond developing goals based on the opinions of a limited number of individuals. Instead, it requires the input of the entire planning team with someone to facilitate the process and keep the group focused and on-task. Furthermore, it necessitates that the team works collaboratively toward a common vision.

Therefore, before a determination is made regarding program selection, it’s important to follow a clear strategic planning process. These planning processes can require anywhere from a half a day to a year or more commitment.

Strategic planning requires:

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Clarity in the “vision” of the desired future2. Measurable definition of the problem(s)3. Identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats4. Criteria for a good solution5. Options for solving the problem6. Strategy for implementation and evaluation |
|--|

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

No school will ever solve the problems of violence without a clear commitment to a shared vision of the future. Whether that vision is for a 100 percent violence-free school climate or 100 percent respect for all, all stakeholders must agree on the vision. Without consensus about the vision, there is little hope that dwindling resources can be targeted effectively within the school.

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

One of the most challenging tasks in developing a comprehensive safe school plan that addresses prevention, intervention, and crises is defining the problems that currently exist. Often decisions are made or strategies are implemented based on “the obvious,” or what everyone agrees to as the most critical issues. Taking the time to gather accurate information not only will assist the planning team in choosing appropriate strategies, but it will also allow them to track the progress of their chosen strategies through on-going evaluation. Below are some recommended techniques for gathering accurate, useful information to use in determining needs within a school and community. A site assessment involves looking at as many sources of information as

possible. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- **A comprehensive survey** that evaluates the school's current level of safety and the quality of the school climate. Questions about drugs, violence, and delinquent behavior are included as negative indicators of school climate. Questions about positive attitudes and behavior, specific assets, and protective factors should also be included. Surveys should be administered to students, and adapted to school teachers/staff, parents, and community members. CSPV has developed surveys suitable for elementary, middle/high school students, parents, and teachers that assess school and community climate. If multiple surveys have been conducted, overlapping themes should be identified.
- **Student and staff focus groups** conducted by an objective individual or outside agency are useful in gathering more detailed, rich information about important issues. These discussion sessions should be structured in such a way where students and staff feel comfortable expressing their true thoughts and opinions. They should not feel pressure to answer in any particular way. It is imperative that a trained expert facilitates these groups to prevent the possibility of bias affecting participants' responses.
- **A pre-planning assessment** is essential to allow a planning team to examine at what is already in place and what is missing with respect to the elements of safe school planning. CSPV has developed a series of checklists designed to assist schools in discovering what is lacking, such as an effective discipline

policy, crisis management and response plan, and effective parental involvement.

- **Community and school statistics** about violence and delinquent behavior are also important data sources. This may include crime rates within the community, number of office referrals, suspensions and expulsions.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Once data has been collected, the planning team should separate it into "strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats." "Strengths and weaknesses" refer to the school policies and practices that add to or detract from a safe school environment. Strengths are of particular importance as they can be expanded to address identified needs. Knowing your assets and strengths will influence how to address problems. Once separated, the problems (weaknesses and threats) can be prioritized. The development of effective solutions focuses on these high priority problems using the strengths and assets of the students and the school.

CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE SOLUTION(S)

Developing criteria BEFORE generating solution options ensures that planning is not wasted on poor solutions or poorly implemented solutions. Criteria should include: feasibility of implementation, "smoothness" of fit between problem and solution, quality of the solution (i.e., does the solution developed have research to prove its effectiveness), and cost of implementation.

OPTIONS FOR SOLVING THE PROBLEM

This brainstorming process for setting criteria is designed to obtain maximum possible options for effective programming. Each priority problem is rewritten as a measurable goal. Options for meeting each goal are compared to the criteria for effective solutions. The best option is selected to meet each goal.

STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

The development of an effective action plan requires the buy-in and commitment of individuals to carry out specific tasks. Thus, the planning team is responsible for identifying the needs, determining goals, writing the action plans, and monitoring the implementation of strategy. If a planning team, through its assessment of progress, discovers that the strategy or program is not yielding significant positive effects, it is important that the team re-evaluates this strategy.

By coordinating extensive needs assessments every year and by selecting strategies which are more likely to be effective, the strategies that are implemented will remain consistent with these needs and hopefully prove to be successful in improving safety in schools and communities.

SELECTING A PROGRAM

Once several candidate programs have been identified that appear to meet the needs identified through the SCSS site assessment, the next step is to identify the one program with the “best fit.” Of the candidate programs, the one with the best fit will most closely match the specific needs identified during the site assessment, the characteristics of the school and community, and the resources available for program implementation. Consideration of the following factors will aid in identifying the program with the best fit.

Considerations for “Best Fit”

Needs

- Priorities identified during Site Assessment
- Details of the priority problems

Target Population

- General population (students/teachers/parents/community members)
- Age
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Poverty/income
- Geographic location

Resources

- Human resources
- Financial resources
- Physical resources

IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND STRENGTHS

The first step in identifying effective violence prevention programs is to identify school and community needs by conducting a site assessment. As discussed in the previous section, these needs, framed in the form of problems, could include student bullying, fighting at school, exposure to

violence in the community, poor parenting, high absenteeism, a poor overall school climate, or other issues. Schools and communities should work together to identify which of these needs are most critical, and each of the candidate programs should target these needs.

A thorough site assessment can also provide more detailed information about the nature of these problems at a particular site. For instance, the site assessment may not only identify bullying as a problem in a particular community, but also indicate that bullying is greatest in middle schools, and mainly takes the form of relational aggression (e.g., name calling, social isolation), rather than physical aggression (e.g., hitting, kicking). Furthermore, the school may have strengths that can be developed. These might include a Big Brothers/Big Sisters chapter or robust after-school programs. These details should be considered when selecting the most appropriate prevention program for a particular site. Considering past evaluations of the candidate programs, program designers, and marketing groups can provide important information on whether or not an individual program matches these specific needs.

Some questions to ask when identifying the specific needs in your community include:

- What strengths and assets do we currently rely upon?
- What is the greatest violence- or safety-related problem in the community?
- What is the nature of the problem?
- What types of violence are occurring?
- What are the causes of the problem?
- What resources are already in place to address this problem?

IDENTIFYING TARGET POPULATION

To the extent possible, prevention programs should also be selected to best match the characteristics of the population in which they will be implemented. Age, race, poverty, and geographic location can all affect the appropriateness of a particular prevention program at a specific site. When selecting among candidate programs, efforts should be made to select those that have been evaluated in environments similar to the environment in which they will be implemented. Of course, it will be difficult to identify a perfect match. Large differences may indicate a need to evaluate the prevention program when it is implemented. SCSS Field Representatives and other technical assistance providers at CSPV can aid in making this decision.

Some questions to consider in assessing matching prevention programs to the target population include:

- Has the program been evaluated in:
 - rural, urban or suburban communities?
 - multiethnic communities?
 - lower-, middle- or upper-class communities?
 - preschool, elementary, middle or high school aged children?

IDENTIFYING RESOURCES

Unfortunately, most schools and communities have limited resources for implementing violence prevention programs. In some cases, this means that additional resources will need to be identified in order to implement the most effective programs. It is important to identify and address resource gaps early in the process of identifying the best prevention programs for individual schools and communities.

Some questions to consider in assessing available resources include:

- What are your human resources?
 - Will you need additional aides, counselors, or other staff to implement the program?
 - Will parent or community volunteers be needed?
 - Will you need to make staff available for training?
- What are your financial resources?
 - Can your existing violence prevention or safe and drug free budget support the program?
 - Will you need to apply for grants or solicit donations/sponsorships from local businesses?
- What are your physical resources?
 - Will you need to identify locations for parent or community training?
 - Do you have an appropriate facility for community-based programs for youth?

BLUEPRINTS FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION

In response to the confusion around choosing an effective program, CSPV reviewed more than six hundred violence, delinquency and drug prevention programs to determine which programs have been shown to work. Employing a very high standard of scientific evidence of effectiveness, CSPV found eleven programs that qualify as Blueprints Model Programs. Most of the programs that were reviewed had not been scientifically evaluated, which disqualified them from consideration. Others simply either had defective methods of evaluation design or did not show positive outcomes. Still others had some evidence of

effectiveness and met some of the scientific standards, but not all of them.

The following set of selection criteria for Blueprints Model Programs establishes a very high standard, but it reflects the level of confidence necessary in order to recommend that communities replicate these programs with reasonable assurances that they will prevent violence. Given the high standards set for program selection, the burden for communities mounting an expensive outcome evaluation to demonstrate their effectiveness is removed; this claim can be made as long as the program is implemented well. Documenting that a program is implemented well is relatively inexpensive and critical to the claim that a program is effective.

Selection Process

CSPV established four rigorous evaluation standards to be used in judging programs for effectiveness:

- Research Design – a strong experimental design with control groups.
- Demonstrated Effects – evidence of statistically significant prevention or deterrent effects for delinquency, drug use, and/or violence.
- Sustained Effects – the effects of the program need to be detectable for at least one year after the end of the treatment or program intervention.
- Multiple Site Replication – the ability to replicate the program in other settings with similar prevention or deterrent effects.

Model Blueprint Programs

Blueprint criteria for model programs are the most stringent scientific standards currently proposed. Most of the other published lists

of recommended programs either have no formal (scientific) selection criteria or involve a lower standard, typically using only the first criterion presented above (experimental design). Blueprints Model Programs are those that have passed the most rigorous tests of program effectiveness.

Programs identified as Blueprints Model Programs were those that met all of the above criteria. Not all eleven programs meet all of the above criteria equally well, but, with only minor exceptions, these programs meet the standards set by CSPV as criteria for determining program effectiveness. The list of programs includes:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (Mentoring/Tutoring Program)
- Bullying Prevention Program (Bully Prevention Program)
- Functional Family Therapy (Family Therapy Program)
- The Incredible Years: Parent, Teacher and Child Training Series (Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management)
- Life Skills Training (Drug/Alcohol Prevention Program)
- Midwestern Prevention Project (Drug/Alcohol Prevention Program)
- Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (Family Therapy Program)
- Multisystemic Therapy (Family Therapy Program)
- Nurse-Family Partnership (Parent Training & Home Visitation Program)
- Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management)
- Quantum Opportunities Program (Educational/Vocational Competence Program)

Promising Blueprints Programs

In addition to Model programs that met all of the criteria, there were a number of programs that met some of the criteria for Model programs, and thus show some promise. These programs were designated Promising Programs. Criteria for Promising programs include the following:

- Research Design – A good experimental or quasi-experimental design with control groups.
- Demonstrated Effects – Effects on one or more of the following: (1) delinquency/crime, violence, drug use (not smoking alone), or (2) pre-delinquent aggression (e.g., Conduct Disorder).
- Sustained Effects – the program must not show a failure to produce a sustained effect through the hazardous years of adolescence (age 17 for violence, age 22 for drugs).
- Evidence:
 1. There must be no evidence that contradicts earlier positive effects through these years.
 2. Programs may have not yet demonstrated their long-term effects; this is acceptable for Promising programs.

Promising programs may have a single site evaluation and may be unreplicated projects; they also may have small effect sizes on outcome measures. Some of these programs may move up into the model program category as more evaluation results become available over time. The Promising programs include:

- ATLAS (Drug/Alcohol Prevention Program)
- Brief Strategic Family Therapy (Family Therapy Program)

- CASASTART (Drug/Alcohol Prevention Program)
- FAST Track (Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management Program)
- Good Behavior Game (Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management Program)
- I Can Problem Solve (Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management Program)
- Intensive Protective Supervision Project (Adjudicated Youth Intervention)
- Iowa Strengthening Families Program (Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management Program)
- Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers (Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management Program)
- Parent Child Development Center Programs (Parent Training & Home Visitation Program)
- PATHE (School Climate Change Program)
- Perry Preschool (Early Childhood Education Program)
- Preparing for the Drug-Free Years (Drug/Alcohol Prevention Program)
- Preventive Intervention (Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management Program)
- Preventive Treatment Program (Parent Training & Home Visitation Program)
- Project Northland (Drug/Alcohol Prevention Program)
- Project STATUS (Education/Vocational Competence Program)
- School Transitional Environment Program (School Climate Change Program)
- Seattle Social Development Project (Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management Program)
- Syracuse University Family Development Research Program (Parent Training & Home Visitation Program)

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- Yale Child Welfare Project (Parent Training & Home Visitation Program)

Favorable Programs

While the 32 Model and Promising programs address a fairly wide range of risk and protective factors (needs), some schools and communities may have other needs. Moreover, some of these programs are designed and validated for specific populations, and should not be used for other populations. And finally, some are quite expensive, and possibly beyond the means of a particular school or community. With that in mind, CSPV has identified 22 additional programs for consideration, called Favorable Programs. It is important to note that these programs do not meet the more stringent criteria for Model or Promising programs. Following are the criteria for Favorable programs:

- Research Design – programs must have an experimental or quasi-experimental design.
- Demonstrated Effects – programs show significant deterrent effects on violence or violence-related risk factors.
- Evidence:
 1. No direct evidence that the observed behavioral effects might be attributed to something other than the intervention (i.e., evidence of selection effects).
 2. Consistency of effects if there are multiple studies.
 3. No evidence of deterioration of effects if there are long-term studies.

It is important that organizations understand that though these programs showed some positive results, there is no guarantee they will yield positive results in future implementations of the programs. Any organization that decides to utilize one of

the Favorable programs must be aware that it is essential to do an outcome evaluation at some point to determine program effectiveness in their setting. Programs that have been classified as Favorable include the following:

- Abecedarian Project (Early Childhood Education Program)
- Across Ages (Drug/Alcohol Prevention Program)
- Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices (Early Childhood Education Program)
- Bully Proofing Your School (Bullying Prevention Program)
- CAPSLE-Creating a Peaceful School Learning Environment (Bullying Prevention Program)
- Child Development Project (School Climate Change Program)
- Coca-Cola Valued Youth (Educational/Vocational Competence Program)
- Comer School Development Program (School Climate Change Program)
- Creating Lasting Family Connections (Drug/Alcohol Prevention Program)
- Earls court Social Skills Group Program (Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management Program)
- Effective Black Parenting (Parent Training & Home Visitation Program)
- Family Effectiveness Training (Family Therapy Program)
- Improving Social Awareness/Social Problem Solving (Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management Program)
- Parent Child Interaction Training (Parent Training & Home Visitation Program)
- PCS-Peer Coping Skills (Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management Program)
- Peacebuilders (School Climate Change Program)
- Positive Action Program (School Climate Change Program)

- Reconnecting Youth (Social/ Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management Program)
- Safe Dates (Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management Program)
- Second Step (Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management Program)
- Socio-moral Reasoning Development Program (Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management Program)
- Viewpoints (Adjudicated Youth Intervention)

In selecting a program, schools and communities should begin by reviewing Model programs to determine if one of these will meet their need. There are many advantages to selecting a Model program:

1. The evidence for effectiveness is very strong—there is less risk of failure;
2. There is no need to conduct an expensive outcome evaluation to document effectiveness;
3. The effect sizes are typically greater, that is, the expected reduction in violence, drug use or delinquency tends to be larger than for Promising or Favorable Programs.

If there is no Model program that meets your needs, then consider Promising programs. Only when neither Model nor Promising programs meet your needs should you consider Favorable programs. The chance that these programs will prove to be ineffective is substantially greater than for Model or Promising programs. When Favorable programs are implemented, there must be a commitment to conduct an outcome evaluation. This will substantially increase the cost of the program. This should always be taken into account when cost factors are considered in selecting programs.

For this reason, Model and Promising programs will typically be less expensive.

WHAT NEXT?

There are several sources of information you can use to answer the questions posed in this section. Appendix I in this manual offers some basic information about the programs being recommended through the SCSS Initiative. Other sources of information on prevention programs include:

- Program descriptions for Blueprints Model and Promising programs and Favorable programs available at CSPV
- Program materials, curricula or descriptions available through the program developers or marketing groups
- Feedback from other schools or communities in your area that are implementing the same programs

Where to Find Information on Programs

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence

- Blueprints Model and Promising Program Fact Sheets
- SCSS Favorable Program Fact Sheets

Program Developers

- Curricula/program materials
- Program summaries and outlines
- Contact information for local implementers

IMPLEMENTING A PROGRAM

Identifying the right program(s) for your community is the first step in addressing the needs identified during the site assessment process. Next, attention must be focused on the details of program implementation. The quality of program implementation is as critical as program effectiveness and fit when it comes to achieving the violence prevention objectives set by schools and communities.

The quality of implementation is essentially defined as the degree to which the program is implemented as it was during its evaluation and as recommended by its designers. For instance, the designer may recommend implementing a school-based curriculum in 20 sessions along with a parent-training curriculum in 10 sessions. Unless all of these sessions are delivered, the program may not achieve the effects suggested by prior research. In fact, many experts in the field will not even consider the results of program evaluations as evidence of effectiveness if the program was poorly implemented.

Fortunately, researchers who have studied program implementation and its effects on overall program success have identified some guidelines for ensuring complete, quality program implementation. These guidelines address factors that should be considered during both program selection and program implementation.

Characteristics of Effective Implementation

Program Characteristics

- Limited complexity
- Strong theoretical foundation
- Clearly written, standardized materials
- Training and technical assistance available

Site Characteristics

- Local buy-in
- Local need
- Committed “champion”
- Clear lines of authority
- Low turnover for program implementers

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS THAT AFFECT IMPLEMENTATION

Several characteristics of a program can help, or hinder, a site’s ability to implement the program completely. Some characteristics that may improve implementation quality include:

- Clearly written, standardized materials
- Formal training for staff
- Technical assistance to help with any implementation problems
- A theory-driven approach
- Limited complexity

A planning team should consider each of these characteristics when selecting a program to implement. Fortunately, the designers of the most effective violence prevention programs have already incorporated many of these characteristics into their programs.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

Ensuring quality program implementation means involving the community from the initial stages of school safety planning. Without appropriate buy-in from community members, parents, school administrators, teachers, students, and others, even the best efforts to implement a program could fail. Obtaining buy-in at the community level involves identifying community needs and demonstrating that the program to be implemented meets those needs, as described in the previous section of this manual. Obtaining buy-in from teachers or other staff who will be implementing the program may require involving these individuals in decisions about which program will be implemented, when it will be implemented, where and by whom. In other words, implementers should have the opportunity to make the program their own.

Implementation success also requires that someone in the community take on the task of “championing,” or leading, the violence prevention effort. This is one of the tasks of the SCSS Planning Team, and is an integral component of the entire SCSS Model. The process of recruiting members to the planning team and advertising its goals to the community is a major component of the championing process. This process helps to create an environment that is receptive to the implementation of new violence prevention efforts.

Characteristics of the site in which the program is to be implemented can also affect program success. In particular, researchers have identified the presence of clear lines of authority and low staff turnover as characteristics of effective implementation. These factors should be considered when selecting a site in which to

implement a violence prevention program. These issues may also be important targets for efforts to improve the overall success of violence prevention initiatives.

Research suggests that careful staff training and supervision of implementation also contribute to overall program success. Therefore, taking advantage of staff training and other technical assistance available from program designers or marketers is highly recommended, even if these services are associated with additional fees. If training and technical assistance can contribute to better outcomes for youth, then these services are well worth their cost. If no training on the program is available, observing others who are already implementing the program in a local area may be helpful. Program designers and marketing groups may be able to identify local individuals who are implementing the programs under consideration.

MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION QUALITY

Researchers have developed several guidelines for monitoring the quality of program implementation, a process known as implementation evaluation. In general, the quality of program implementation is defined as “the degree to which treatment is delivered as intended.” (cited in Domitrovich and Greenberg, 2000) According Domitrovich and Greenberg, the specific characteristics of program implementation that should be measured when evaluating its quality include:

- The actual delivery of each program component
 - Were all recommended components actually delivered, including staff training, curriculum modules, parent training sessions, etc.?

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- The frequency and duration of program implementation
 - Were sessions delivered as often and as long as recommended?
 - The content and quality of the program as administered
 - Was the content or quality of the program altered in any way?
 - Participant responsiveness
 - Were students actively engaged in the program? What proportion of parents actually attended parent training sessions?

An implementation evaluation should be conducted whenever a violence prevention program is being implemented. Even the most effective programs are only successful when they are implemented properly. Monitoring implementation and making improvements as necessary are critical to ensuring successful outcomes for youth.

EVALUATING A PROGRAM

The final step in the *Guide to Effective Program Selection* is evaluation. All violence prevention programs, regardless of how effective they appear in prior studies, should be evaluated in some way. Various types of evaluation can be used to determine if the program is being implemented properly, if enough people are being exposed to the program, and if the program is working to address the needs identified during the site assessment. Planning for these evaluations should take place early in the process of identifying and implementing prevention programs to ensure that adequate information is being collected from the first days of program implementation.

Three types of evaluation will be discussed in this section: implementation evaluation, process evaluation, and outcome evaluation. *Implementation evaluation* refers to the measurement of adherence to program delivery as outlined by program designers. *Process evaluation*, which in many ways overlaps implementation evaluation, is the measurement of the proportion of the target population reached by the program and characteristics of program delivery. *Outcome evaluation* is defined as the measurement of specific outcomes related to program goals, such as reduced rates of violence and bullying.

The violence prevention programs recommended in this manual meet three different sets of criteria for effectiveness. Favorable programs meet what is believed to be the minimum standard for effectiveness; Promising programs meet an intermediate level of effectiveness; and Model programs have achieved the highest, most rigorous scientific standards. Programs within these three categories require different levels of evaluation when they are implemented.

Recommended Evaluations for Model, Promising, and Favorable Programs

Blueprints Model

- Implementation/process evaluation

Blueprints Promising

- Implementation/process evaluation
- Outcome evaluation in select cases

Favorable

- Implementation/process evaluation
- Outcome evaluation

IMPLEMENTATION AND PROCESS EVALUATION

Since implementation and process evaluation overlap in many ways, they will be discussed as a combined evaluation approach in this manual. The purpose of implementation and process evaluation is to monitor how well each of the program components is being implemented, the quality of training achieved, and how close the content of the program matches what the designers call for. It also considers if the program is being delivered to the type of persons for which it was designed. This information can help in addressing important barriers to program success early in the program implementation process, and can aid in understanding the program's overall effects.

Both implementation evaluation and process evaluation should be performed for any violence prevention program, even Model programs. This combined evaluation should be designed to measure the following:

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- Collaboration and community involvement
 - Communication of the program's goals and objectives to the community
 - Community and minority representation on a planning team and at meetings related to the program
 - Community ownership or buy-in
 - Training
 - Attendance at staff trainings
 - Utilization of training and technical assistance resources
 - Implementation
 - Implementation of each program component
 - Adherence to the frequency and duration (sometimes referred to as "dose") recommended
 - Adherence to program content
 - Participation by target populations

OUTCOME EVALUATION

An outcome evaluation is designed to measure the overall effects of a violence prevention program on violence or related behaviors. Outcome evaluations should be conducted whenever the effects of a program cannot be reliably predicted from earlier evaluation studies. While outcome evaluations require the use of limited violence prevention resources, without an outcome evaluation there may be no way to determine if the program being implemented is achieving positive results.

For programs that meet the Blueprints Model criteria, an outcome evaluation will not be necessary as long as the program is implemented in the population and setting intended by the program designers. This means that a Blueprints Model program designed for elementary school students can only be expected to be effective in this

population. If the program is implemented in middle schools, for example, an outcome evaluation will be necessary.

For Blueprints Promising programs, the decision about whether or not to conduct an outcome evaluation is less clear. For instance, some Blueprints Promising programs have undergone long-term evaluations of their effects, while others have not. In addition, some Blueprints Promising programs have been evaluated at multiple times in multiple settings, while others have not. The specific gaps in knowledge about the effects of these programs will determine whether or not an outcome evaluation is necessary, and how that evaluation should be conducted. Technical assistance providers at CSPV can help individual sites in determining whether or not an outcome evaluation is necessary for a particular Blueprints Promising program.

An outcome evaluation is always advisable for Favorable programs or programs that do not meet any of the rigorous criteria outlined in this manual. Favorable programs have met only the most minimal criteria for effectiveness, while programs not listed in this report have not achieved even this level of evidence. For details of conducting an outcome evaluation, contact CSPV staff. Under most conditions, it will be necessary to obtain professional help in designing and conducting a good outcome evaluation.

The *SCSS Planning Guide* outlines a seven-step process for conducting a site assessment, which includes both process and outcome evaluations. Limited technical assistance on conducting a site assessment is available to schools and communities through CSPV. Other sources for technical assistance in conducting a program evaluation include program designers and local evaluation groups.

CONCLUSION

This *Guide to Effective Program Selection* offers a simple but comprehensive four-step process for identifying and implementing the best prevention program for a particular school or community. These four steps include:

- 1) define the problem
- 2) identify the program with the “best fit”
- 3) implement the program well
- 4) monitor your efforts

While many best practices manuals stop at step 2, this manual is intended to provide the best available information on each phase of prevention programming, from conducting a needs assessment through monitoring your efforts. Schools and communities that follow this process can expect to yield the best possible results from limited violence prevention resources.

Please contact the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence for additional resources on violence prevention or technical assistance with this process.

APPENDIX I - PROGRAM MATRIX

This program matrix may be used as a tool to establish an initial list of programs that correspond to the needs of the school and community identified in a site assessment. This matrix includes three levels of programs: Model, Promising and Favorable. The research supporting these programs meets the highest criteria for Model programs, an intermediate set of criteria for Promising programs and the lowest criteria for effectiveness for Favorable programs. It is recommended that schools and communities consider the following criteria for effectiveness when selecting a violence prevention program:

Model—Programs meet and maintain the most stringent set of research and evaluation criteria. Evaluations of these programs demonstrate significant effects in the reduction of violence and/or drug use, with these effects lasting at least one year or longer.

Promising—Programs have demonstrated effect on violence or violence-related risk factors such as delinquency/crime, drug use, and pre-delinquent aggression (e.g., conduct disorder). Promising programs must demonstrate a strong research design and show sustained effects if there are long-term studies, although programs which have not yet demonstrated their long-term effects may remain in the Promising category. Some of these programs may move up into the Model program category as more information becomes available.

Favorable—Programs are not necessarily categorized as “violence prevention” programs, but have significant positive effects on violence-related risk factors such as, substance use, male aggression, antisocial behavior, poverty, abusive parents, poor school performance or antisocial peers.

The programs outlined in this matrix, 54 in total, are divided into the following categories or program types:

- Adjudicated Youth Interventions
- Bullying Prevention Programs
- Drug/Alcohol Prevention Programs
- Early Childhood Education Programs
- Educational/Vocational Competence
- Family Therapy Programs
- Mentoring/Tutoring
- Parent Training and Home Visitation
- School Climate Change
- Social/Emotional Competence and Behavioral Management

Within these categories, programs are described by their target population, setting, risk factors they address, and their effectiveness level. Brief descriptions of each of these programs are included in Appendix II.

MATRIX OF EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

Program Type	Target Population	Setting	Risk Factors	Effectiveness Level*
<i>Adjudicated Youth Interventions</i>				
Intensive Protective Supervision	Age 16 and under	In-home	Neighborhood crime, recidivism	Promising
Viewpoints	Ages 13-21, Incarcerated Adolescents	Correctional facilities	Aggressive behavior	Favorable
<i>Bullying Prevention Programs</i>				
Bullying Prevention Program	Ages 6-15, Elementary and Junior High School	School-based	Antisocial behavior including theft, vandalism, truancy	Model
Bully Proofing Your School	Grades K-5, Elementary and Junior High School	School-based	Problem behaviors	Favorable
Creating a Peaceful Learning Environment (CAPSLE)	Grades K-6	School-based	Increase pro-social attitudes, increase attachment to school and community	Favorable
<i>Drug/Alcohol Prevention Programs</i>				
Across Ages	Inner city Middle School students	Community/School-based	Low socio-economic status/poverty, substance use	Favorable
ATLAS	Male High School athletes	School-based	Drug/alcohol use, antisocial peers	Promising
CASASTART	Ages 11-13	Community-based	Decrease individual, peer group, family, and neighborhood risk factors; improve attachment to adults; attachment to prosocial norms; school performance; participation in prosocial activities, norms	Promising
Creating Lasting Family Connections	Ages 12-14, high risk youth	Church-based	Drug use; parent child relationships	Favorable
Life Skills Training	Ages 10-14, Middle/Junior High School	School-based	Drug use; association with drug-using peers; prior use; beliefs; societal laws and norms favorable of drug use	Model

Program Type	Target Population	Setting	Risk Factors	Effectiveness Level*
<i>Drug/Alcohol Prevention Programs</i>				
Midwestern Prevention Project	Ages 10-14, Middle/Junior High School	Community-based	Drug use; association with drug-using peers; prior use; beliefs; societal laws and norms favorable of drug use	Model
Preparing for the Drug Free Years	Ages 8-14, Economically stressed families of adolescents,	Community/ Family-based	Parent-child relations; parent self-efficacy and coping	Promising
Project Northland	Grades 6-8	Community-based	Drug and alcohol use; peer norms	Promising
<i>Early Childhood Education Programs</i>				
Abecedarian Project	Infant-Age 5, Preschool	School-based	Low income	Favorable
Al's Pals: Kids Making Heal	Preschool-1st grade	School-based	Aggressive behavior, antisocial behavior	Favorable
Perry Preschool Program	High-risk, disadvantaged pre-school children	School-based	Socioeconomic disadvantage; early antisocial behavior; poor family management practices; low IQ	Promising
<i>Educational/Vocational Competence</i>				
Coca Cola Valued Youth Program	Elementary and Middle School	School-based	Academic performance, attachment and commitment to school, parent involvement in school	Favorable
Project STATUS (Student Training Through Urban Strategies)	Junior and Senior High School	School-based	Low commitment to school; low self-esteem; low levels of belief in the validity of social rules and laws; academic failure; association with delinquent peers	Promising

Program Type	Target Population	Setting	Risk Factors	Effectiveness Level*
<i>Educational/Vocational Competence</i>				
Quantum Opportunities	Junior and Senior High School	Community-based	Socioeconomic disadvantage; school dropout	Model
<i>Family Therapy Programs</i>				
Brief Strategic Family Therapy	Ages 8-17, At-risk children and adolescents	Community/ Family-based	Family conflict, poverty	Promising
Family Effectiveness Training	Ages 8-17, Hispanic children with behavior problems	Community/ Family-based	Youth problem behavior (including aggression); recidivism, parent-child relationships	Favorable
Functional Family Therapy	Delinquent adolescents and their families	Community/ Family-based	Family conflict, poor family management practices, early antisocial behavior, parental drug use and crime, beliefs favorable to delinquent behaviors among youth and family members, extreme economic deprivation, academic failure	Model
Multisystemic Therapy	Ages 12-17, Chronic juvenile offenders	Community/ Family-based	Antisocial behavior (low cognitive functioning, poor social skills), family conflict, poor management practices, low bonding, association with deviant peers, school bonding, academic performance, drop-out	Model
Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care	Chronic juvenile delinquents ages 11-18	Community/ Family/Foster home	Family management practices	Model

Program Type	Target Population	Setting	Risk Factors	Effectiveness Level*
<i>Mentoring/Tutoring</i>				
Big Brothers Big Sisters	Ages 6-18, Disadvantaged youth	Community-based	Extreme economic deprivation, family structure, family conflict, family drug use and crime, weak bonding to family, history of family violence, victim of abuse, association with delinquent peers, academic failure	Model
<i>Parent Training & Home Visitation</i>				
Effective Black Parenting	Grades 1-2, High-risk African-American children	School-based	Parent-child relationships, delinquency, aggression	Favorable
Nurse-Family Partnership	Women at risk of pre-term delivery and delivery of low birth weight children	Community-based	Economic deprivation, family structure (single parent status), lack of prenatal care and pre-term infants, history of substance abuse, poor family management practices including child abuse and neglect	Model
Parent Child Development Center Program	Ages 2 months – 3 years	Community-based	Economic deprivation, child abuse, poor family management practices, school failure	Promising
Parent Child Interaction Training	Low income preschool children with behavioral emotional problems	Community-based	Aggressive behavior, problem behavior	Favorable
Preventive Treatment Program	Ages 7-9, Males with disruptive behaviors	School-based	Poor family management, low socioeconomic status, disruptiveness in childhood	Promising
Syracuse University Family Development Program	Impoverished families	Community-based	Socioeconomic deprivation, child abuse, poor family management practices	Promising
Yale Child Welfare Project	Impoverished families	Community-based	Socioeconomic deprivation, child abuse, poor family management practices	Promising

Program Type	Target Population	Setting	Risk Factors	Effectiveness Level*
<i>School Climate Change</i>				
Child Development Project	Grades K- 8	School-based	Drug use, delinquency, aggressive behavior	Favorable
Comer School Development Program	Elementary School, Inner City	School-based	Academic achievement, attitude toward school, suspensions, problem behaviors, psychological conditions	Favorable
PATHE	Middle and High School	School-based	Low commitment to school, academic failure	Promising
Peacebuilders	Elementary School	School-based	Aggressive behavior (fighting-related injuries)	Favorable
Positive Action Program	Grades K–6	School-based	Problem behaviors, substance use, violence, academic achievement, suspensions, truancy, family bonding	Favorable
School Transitional Environment Program	Middle, Junior and Senior High School	School-based	Behavior problems, attachment to school, family bonding, delinquent behavior, attendance	Promising
<i>Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management</i>				
Earls court Social Skills Group Program	Ages 6-12	School-based	Aggressive behavior, weak social ties, problem behavior	Favorable
FAST Track	Elementary School	School-based	Anti-social behavior, academic achievement, parent-child relationships	Promising
Good Behavior Game	Elementary School	School-based	Aggressive, problem behavior, academic achievement	Promising
I Can Problem Solve	Pre-K and K, Elementary School	School-based	Problem solving, peer relations, aggressive behavior	Promising

Program Type	Target Population	Setting	Risk Factors	Effectiveness Level*
<i>Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management</i>				
Improving Social Awareness-Social Problem Solving	Grade 5	School-based	Weak social ties, problem behavior, poor attitude toward school	Favorable
Incredible Years	Ages 2-8	School and Community-based	Emotional and social competency	Model
Iowa Strengthening Families Program	Ages 10-14, Middle and Junior	Community/School /Family-based	Problem behaviors, drug/alcohol use	Promising
Linking Interests of Families & Teachers (LIFT)	Grades 1-5	School-based	Parent practices, coercive parenting, problem solving	Promising
Peer Coping Skills (PCS)	Grades 1-5	School-based	Aggression	Favorable
Preventive Intervention	Grades 7-8, High Risk	School-based	Low academic achievement, disregard for rules, feeling of distance from family	Promising
Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)	K-5, Elementary School	School-based	Poor expression, understanding, regulation of emotions	Model
Reconnecting Youth	Grades 9-12	School-based	Stress in peer, family and school context, prior high-risk behaviors, substance use	Favorable
Safe Dates	Grades 8-9	School-based	Peer sexual violence	Favorable
Seattle Social Development Center	Elementary and Middle School	School-based	Low commitment/attachment to school, academic failure, early conduct disorders, family mgt. problems, peer rejection, involvement with antisocial others, weak beliefs in the convention moral order	Promising
Second Step	Grades K-9	School-based	Antisocial attitudes/beliefs, aggressive behavior	Favorable

Program Type	Target Population	Setting	Risk Factors	Effectiveness Level*
<i>Social/Emotional Competence & Behavioral Management</i>				
Socio-moral Reasoning Development Program	At-risk adolescents with predictors of delinquency	School-based	Antisocial behavior	Favorable

*Effectiveness Levels:

Model Programs meet and maintain the most stringent set of research and evaluation criteria. Evaluations of these programs demonstrate significant effects in the reduction of violence, with these effects lasting at least one year or longer.

Promising Programs have a demonstrated effect on violence or violence-related risk factors such as delinquency/crime, drug use, and pre-delinquent aggression (e.g., Conduct Disorder). Promising programs must have good research design and show sustained effects if there are long-term studies, although programs which have not yet demonstrated their long-term effects may remain in the Promising category. Some of these programs may move up into the Model Program category as more information becomes available

Favorable Programs are not necessarily categorized as “violence prevention” program, but have significant positive effects on violence-related risk factors such as, substance use, male aggression, antisocial behavior, poverty, abusive parents, poor school performance or antisocial peers.

APPENDIX II – BLUEPRINTS PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Model Programs

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is the oldest and best known mentoring program in the United States. The program serves 6-18 year old disadvantaged youth from single-parent households. The goal is to develop a caring relationship between a matched youth and an adult mentor.

Bullying Prevention Program

The Bullying Prevention Program has as its major goal the reduction of victim-bully problems among primary and secondary school children. It aims to increase awareness of the problem, to achieve active involvement on the part of teachers and parents, to develop clear rules against bullying behavior, and to provide support and protection for the victims of bullying.

Functional Family Therapy

Functional Family Therapy is a short term, easily trainable, and well-documented program. The program involves phases and techniques designed to engage and motivate youth and families; change youth and family communication, interaction, and problem solving; and help families better deal with and utilize outside system resources.

The Incredible Years

A set of three comprehensive, multi-faceted, and developmentally-based curriculums for parents, teachers, and children designed to promote child emotional and social competence for children ages 2-8.

Life Skills Training

Life Skills Training is a drug use prevention program that provides general life skills training and social resistance skills training to junior high/middle school students. The curriculum is taught in school by regular classroom teachers.

Midwestern Prevention Project

This community-based program targets adolescent drug use. The program uses five intervention strategies designed to combat the community influences on drug use: mass media, school, parent, community organization, and health policy change. The primary intervention channel is the school.

Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care

This program is an effective alternative to residential treatment for adolescents who have problems with chronic delinquency and anti-social behavior. Community families are trained to provide placement, treatment and supervision to participating adolescents.

Multisystemic Therapy

This program targets chronic and violent juvenile offenders and specific factors in each youth's and family's environment (family, peer, school, neighborhood) that contribute to antisocial behavior. The goal of the intervention is to help parents deal effectively with their youth's behavior problems, including deviant peers and poor school performance.

Nurse-Family Partnership

Nurse home visitation is a program that sends nurses to homes of pregnant women who are predisposed to infant health and developmental problems in order to improve parent and child outcomes. Home visiting also promotes the cognitive and social-emotional development of the children, and provides general support and parenting skills to the parents.

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) is an elementary school-based intervention designed to promote emotional competence, including the expression, understanding and regulation of emotions.

Quantum Opportunities

This program provides education, development, and service activities, coupled with a sustained relationship with a peer group and a caring adult, over the four years of high school for small groups of disadvantaged teens. The goal of the program is to help high-risk youth from poor families and neighborhoods to graduate from high school and attend college.

Promising Programs

ATLAS (Athletes Training and learning to Avoid Steroids)

ATLAS is a drug prevention and health promotion program designed to reduce the use of anabolic steroids and other drugs in male high school athletes. The program consists of seven weekly, 50-minute class sessions delivered by coaches and student team leaders and 7-8 weight room sessions. Topics include sports nutrition and strength training alternatives to athletic enhancing substances and other drugs.

Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT)

BSFT is a short-term, problem-focused family therapy intervention to improve youth's behavior problems by improving family interactions that are presumed to be directly related to the child's symptoms. BSFT targets Hispanic families with children between the ages of 8-17.

CASASTART (Striving Together to Achieve Rewarding Tomorrows)

CASASTART, formerly the Children at Risk (CAR) program, is a community-based program that targets youth in high risk environments and seeks to reduce their exposure to drugs and criminal activity by providing case management services, after-school and summer activities, increased police involvement, family and education services, and mentoring.

FAST (Families and Schools Together) Track Program

FAST Track is a comprehensive, six year school-based program that reduces children's anti-social behavior. Its components include parent training, home visitation, social skills training, academic tutoring, and a multidimensional elementary school curriculum.

Good Behavior Game

The Good Behavior Game is a universal intervention for early elementary students. It is based upon behavior modification tactics that reduce aggressive and shy-aggressive classroom behaviors. It is a team-based program, in which students are divided into groups and are rewarded if all members of the team display prosocial acts and avoid maladaptive behaviors.

Intensive Protective Supervision Project

The Intensive Protective Supervision Project (IPSP) provides non-violent adjudicated youth with an alternative to institutionalization. In order to decrease future, serious delinquency, project counselors closely supervise the offenders, maintain close contact with their families, and identify additional professional and therapeutic services when necessary.

I Can Problem Solve (ICPS)

This universal, school-based curriculum enhances children's problem-solving skills and peer relationships by teaching participants evaluate conflict situations and the feelings and motives that created them, develop alternative solutions, and consider the consequences of their behavior.

Iowa Strengthening Families Program

This universal, family-based program enhances parents' general management skills, parent-child affective relationships, and family communication. By increasing these protective family processes and strengthening children's peer resistance and refusal techniques, the intervention delays the onset of adolescent alcohol and substance use.

Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers (LIFT)

LIFT is a school-based intervention for first and fifth graders and their families. LIFT aims to decrease antisocial behavior and involvement with delinquent peers by providing classroom-based child social and problem skills training, playground-based behavior modification, and group-delivered parent training.

Parent Child Development Center Programs

These programs offer low-income mothers a wide range of support services to combat the many social problems that can accompany poverty. Project staff teach mothers about their children's development, provide training in home management and child-rearing techniques, and share community resource and adult education opportunities.

Perry Preschool Program

The Perry Preschool provides disadvantaged children with two years of high-quality early education. Its success in decreasing delinquency and improving later life experiences lies in the following key components: small classroom size, trained staff who provide close supervision and encourage parent involvement, and sensitivity to children's non-educational needs.

Preparing for the Drug-Free Years

This family competency training program promotes healthy and protective parent-child interactions and reduces adolescent initiation into alcohol and drug use. Parents learn to manage anger, reduce family conflict, set appropriate guidelines regarding children's substance use, and provide effective discipline practices, and children are trained in peer resistance skills.

Preventive Intervention

Prevention Intervention targets at-risk adolescents to prevent delinquency, substance use, and school failure. Project staff and teachers monitor students' school performance, inform parents of their children's progress, and reward participants for school attendance and prosocial behaviors.

Preventive Treatment Program

This program focuses on youth who display early, problem behavior. Parents are taught to monitor children's behavior, provide positive reinforcement, use effective discipline, and manage family crises, while children practice self-control and model prosocial behaviors.

Project Northland

Project Northland allows students, teachers, parents, and community members to collaborate in preventing adolescent alcohol use. Its intervention strategies include a school curriculum, parent involvement, a community task force, and a peer participant program.

Project PATHE (Positive Action Through Holistic Education)

Project PATHE encourages school staff, students, parents, and community members to work together to improve schools' academic weaknesses, discipline policies, and climate. At-risk students receive additional monitoring to improve their academic success, social bonds, self-concept, and healthy behaviors.

Project Status (Student Training Through Urban Strategies)

Project STATUS encourages high school students to become more active members of their schools and communities. Students, parents, and school personnel identify and overcome school problems, and community members visit schools to provide participants with prosocial role models and training in job and life skills.

School Transitional Environmental Program (STEP)

The STEP program seeks to make transitions between schools less stressful. Incoming students are assigned to homerooms where teachers provide extra guidance and increased communication with parents, and participants are enrolled in a core group of classes with the same students to foster stable peer groups and reduce social isolation.

Seattle Social Development Project

This universal intervention provides on-going training for students, teachers, and parents to increase children's prosocial bonds and decrease delinquency. Instructors improve their classroom management and interactive teaching skills; students learn communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution techniques; and parents are encouraged to improve their discipline and supervision strategies and increase their communication with teachers.

Syracuse University Family Development Research Program (FDRP)

This multi-year intervention strengthens child and family functioning for low-income participants. Project staff make frequent home visitations to provide mothers with social support, parent training, and prosocial role models. Children attend a day care program that utilizes cognitive and interactive games and positive reinforcement to emphasize cooperation and caring.

Yale Child Welfare Project

The Yale Child Welfare Project offers disadvantaged parents personalized support for their newborn and infant children. Its interventions include home visitations, pediatric medical care, day care services, and regular, physical exams to assess children's development.

Favorable Programs

Abecedarian Project

This early childhood educational intervention program is designed to increase family support for children's learning. This is done through assistance of a Home School Resource Teacher who delivers the curriculum to parents through biweekly home visits.

Across Age

A mentoring/drug prevention program which seeks to improve relations between youth and older adults. Program combines three modalities: mentoring, community service, and a classroom curriculum component. Research evaluations indicate that these children exhibit more positive attitudes toward school, futures, and the elderly following the program. Also, frequency of drug use and truancy decline.

AI's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices

This is a classroom prevention, resiliency-promotion, and social skills training program for children ages 3-8. It is a 47 lesson curriculum designed to teach young children the skills necessary for appropriate expression of feelings, problem-solving and coping skills, managing self-control, and engaging in positive interactions and relationships with peers and adults.

Bully Proofing Your School

This bullying prevention program targets students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Students are taught specific strategies and techniques to cope with and prevent bullying behavior through role-playing, modeling, class discussion, and classroom materials. Also contains a parent-training component.

Child Development Project (CDP)

CDP is an intensive program that uses the classroom, the entire school, and the family as vehicles for change. It is targeted to elementary students (K-8), and is designed to influence all aspects of the school – curriculum, pedagogy, organization, management, and climate. Studies indicate positive effects on relationships, social, ethical, and intellectual learning, as well as intrinsic motivation.

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

This is a cross-age tutoring project whereby at-risk youth with lower than average reading ability take classes to develop or enhance tutoring skills, as well as improve reading, writing, and other subject matter skills. It also is designed to reduce dropout rates, strengthen students' perception of self and school, and reduce student disciplinary referrals.

Comer School Development Program

This program is intended to improve school climate and prepare young elementary students for the academic and social demands of public schooling. One piece of the program is utilization of three teams: a Management Team, a Mental Health (or Student Services) Team, and a Parent Team. Overall, it shows positive effects in academics, school behavior, self concept of students who participate.

Creating a Peaceful Learning Environment (CAPSLE)

CAPSLE is a school-based bullying prevention program for elementary school students in grades K-5. The core components include zero tolerance for bullying, bystanding, and being a victim, a discipline plan, and implementation of a relaxation program. It also includes a peer mentoring module whereby students and adult mentors collaborate and monitor power dynamics within the school

Creating Lasting Family Connections

As a church-based intervention, this program increases resiliency at the individual, family, and community levels. The focus is alcohol and drug use prevention for high risk youth aged 12-14.

Earlscourt Social Skills Group Program

This school-based social skills training intervention aims to increase pro-social behavior and to improve the self-control and social skills of moderately aggressive, noncompliant children ages 6-12. Results show significant improvement in teachers' ratings of negative behavior for children who received intervention through this program.

Effective Black Parenting Program

The three goals of this program are: 1) to improve the quality of parent-child relationships, 2) to increase positive parenting practices, and 3) to decrease behavior problems and improve social skills in children. It contains 15 sessions and is framed within the perspective of the African-American culture.

Family Effectiveness Training (FET)

A long-term goal of this family intervention is to reduce drug abuse of at-risk Hispanic adolescents. Short term goals include decreasing other problem behaviors by improving the family structure and climate. FET uses components of Brief Strategic Therapy as part of the intervention.

Improving Social Awareness-Social Problem Solving

This program aims to improve elementary aged school children's problems solving skills. Children who have completed the program showed increased abilities to cope with stresses and pressures associated with the adjustment of entering adolescence and adulthood in the middle school environment.

Parent-Child Interaction Training

This program aims to decrease children's attention-deficit disorder symptoms and other behavioral problems. It is a parent-training program using techniques of modeling, role-playing instruction, story-reading, and dramatic play. It is most effective when used with low-income parents and pre-school children who have behavioral or emotional problems.

Peacebuilders

Peacebuilders is a program that employs comprehensive strategies designed to change the school climate – the everyday interactions of students/staff, and families. It uses four components: parent education, marketing to families, collateral training, and mass media tie-ins. It aims to ultimately reduce youth violence. The goals are to increase resiliency, reinforce positive behavior, and to alter the school environment to emphasize rewards and praise for pro-social behavior.

Peer Coping Skills Training (PCS)

PCS is designed to promote pro-social coping among children in first through third grade who are displaying high rates of aggressive behavior. The program had demonstrated positive effects in reducing aggressive behavior, and increasing social skills among program participants.

Positive Action Program

Designed as a school climate change program for grades K-6, Positive Action uses a holistic approach to school reorganization. It also addresses teacher-student relations, parent involvement, instructional practice, and development of the self-concept.

Reconnecting Youth

This school-based life skills training and social support program for high school students aims to decrease drug involvement, increase school performance, and decrease depression. It is geared toward students who are showing signs of poor school achievement, are at risk of dropping out of school, and are showing signs of multiple problem behaviors.

Safe Dates Program

Safe Dates is a dating abuse prevention program for adolescents. It uses social skills training and social norming to decrease peer sexual violence. Outcome studies indicate that this program is effective in decreasing sexual violence among adolescents. It consists of school and community activities promoting prevention.

Second Step

This K-9 program is a school-based violence prevention curriculum which includes exercises in cognition, emotion, and behavior to reduce impulsive and aggressive behavior. It is aimed especially at children who lack skills in empathy, impulse-control, and anger management.

Socio-moral Reasoning Development Program

This program targets adolescents with behavior disorders who also have a high risk for delinquency. The goal is to increase the average level of maturity of sociomoral reasoning and prevent antisocial behavior both in and out of school.

Viewpoints

Viewpoints is a program for adjudicated adolescent youths who have been convicted of a violent offense and who show highly aggressive behaviors. It uses cognitive mediation training and attention control to increase their social problem-solving ability, and decrease aggression, impulsive, and inflexible behaviors. Program is held once a week for one hour, for a total of 12 weeks.

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