




# What is an Effective Safe, Drug-Free School and Community Program



Southeast Comprehensive Assistance Center  
3330 N. Causeway Blvd., Suite 430  
Metairie, Louisiana 70002-3573  
1-800-644-8671 or (504) 838-6861  
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## Effective, Safe and Drug-Free Schools are . . .

The desire to have schools safe and drug free has been of great concern to parents and their children. National Education Goal 6 challenges us to create safe, disciplined, drug-free schools for our children. The expectation that schools will be safe havens from societal ills that surround schools encourages an ongoing commitment by parents, schools and communities. Fostering these conditions also provides an important cornerstone for effective learning. To achieve these goals school and community members have implemented comprehensive Safe, Drug-Free Schools & Communities (SDFS&C) prevention programs that have included the following organizational components:

- ✓ Involve parents, youth and citizens in the planning sessions.
- ✓ Complete a community and school assessment for factors affecting school safety and illegal use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- ✓ Review the local, state law and norms of the community to determine the limits that are set for behavior. Advocate for revisions that support safe, drug free lifestyles.
- ✓ Create a Safe School Plan that includes short and long term goals that will bring about systemic change supportive of a safe, drug-free environment. Policies are recommended that free schools of drugs and guns.
- ✓ Identify a variety of comprehensive strategies which address three levels of prevention - primary (education), secondary (intervention) and tertiary (treatment).
- ✓ Create a team inclusive of all groups that will monitor this comprehensive program.
- ✓ Plan multiple, diverse events and activities that support on-going programs throughout the year. The approaches can be large and small in scale, simple or complex.
- ✓ Foster a climate in schools, home and community that supports the development of "protective factors" such as caring and supportive relationships, high expectations for academic and personal success, and opportunities for children to participate.
- ✓ Encourage media to spotlight activities that are supportive of safe and drug free family, school and community living.

In 1997, the U.S. Department of Education provided schools with a list of *Principles of Effectiveness* (2/14/97) in order to improve accountability of programs funded by Title IV, Safe, Drug-free Schools & Communities moneys. The following principles are expected to insure that schools and communities will be successful in their planning efforts:

- ☆ Programs should be based on an assessment of objective data about drug and violence problems in the schools and communities served.
- ☆ Programs should be designed to meet measurable goals and objectives for drug and violence prevention
- ☆ Program activities should be designed and implemented based on models shown to be effective based on research demonstrating reductions in drug use, violence or disruptive behavior among youth.
- ☆ Programs should be evaluated periodically to assess the progress towards meeting the goals.
- ☆ Program evaluation results should be used to correct approaches that are not working, to strengthen approaches that are, and to refine program goals and objectives.

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## Is It a Comprehensive Program?

Many schools and communities have been actively involved in the development of a comprehensive SDFS&C prevention program. Take a moment to evaluate the level of comprehensiveness of your existing program. Does your program contain these?

### Checklist - A Comprehensive SDFS&C Prevention Program

- Using Primary Prevention Activities identified as Effective, Research-Based**  
(see Model Primary Prevention Programs to right):

#### Drug-Free Programs

- Grades K-3 Curricula
- Grades 4-8 Curricula
- Grades 9-12 Curricula

- Other Primary Activities Supportive of a Safe and Drug-Free school:**

- Attendance Monitoring
- Anti-Hate/Bias, Diversity Curricula
- Community Mobilization Events
- Community Partnership Development
- Conflict Resolution Skills Training
- Gang and Violence Prevention Curricula
- Life Skills Training Curricula
- Media Awareness Activities
- Parenting and Discipline Techniques
- District Policy & Procedures for Drugs and Guns
- Neighborhood Watch and Nights Out
- School Safety Plan
- Other:

- Using Secondary (Intervention) Prevention Programs such as:**

- Employee and Student Assistance Programs/Support Teams.
- Peer Mediation
- Specialized Support Groups for Students/Parents
- Other:

- Using Tertiary Prevention (Treatment) opportunities:**

- Alternative to Suspension
- Referral Mechanism for youth and staff affected by drugs, violent behaviors.
- Relationships established with community social service providers.
- Other:

If you find that there are components of this list that you would like to receive help implementing . . . SECAC can assist you!

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## Model Primary Prevention, Substance Abuse Programs

Below is a list of substance abuse programs that have been recognized in *Making the Grade* (1996, Drug Strategy, Inc.), and in other reports summarizing the most effective primary prevention programs recognized to reduce drug use:

***Alcohol Misuse Prevention Project.*** Two versions of this social resistance skills curriculum exist. The more complete version is for students in Grades 6-8, with eight sessions in the first year five sessions in the second year, and four sessions in the third year.

***Growing Healthy.*** Growing Healthy covers broader social and personal skills in a comprehensive health program. An average of 40 sessions per year for Grades K-6 are contained in the curriculum.

***Know Your Body.*** Is another comprehensive health program for grades K-6. Approximately 60 sessions per year can be taught.

***Life Skills Training.*** The Life Skills Training Program is a broader personal and social skills training program for middle school students designed to prevent tobacco, alcohol, and drug use. It has 15 sessions the first year, 10 the second, and eight sessions the final year.

***Project Alert.*** Project Alert is a social resistance skills training program for students in Grades 6 and 7, or 7 and 8. It consists of 11 sessions the first year and three the second year.

***Project Northland.*** Project Northland is a social resistance skills training approach to alcohol prevention. The curriculum consists of eight sessions per year for Grades 6 through 8.

***Social Development Project.*** The Social Competence Promotion Program is a 27-session social problem-solving program with a nine session drug abuse prevention module. It includes social resistance skills modules within the context of broader social skills training.

***STAR.*** STAR is a two-year, grades 5-8, social resistance skills training approach. There 10-13 sessions the first year, 5 sessions the second.

***Teenage Health Teaching Modules.*** THTM is a comprehensive health program with 40-70 sessions per year for grades 7-12. It covers social resistance skills training in the context of broader personal and social skills.

***Other Programs :*** AL Co Hol, Drug Proof, From Peer Pressure to Peer Support, Healthy for Life, Ombudsman, Project All-Stars, Setting Norms for Refusal, Social Competence Promotion Program, Talking with Your Students About Alcohol.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Program Summaries from: Dusenbury, Linda; Falco, Mathea and Lake, Antonia. (1997) A review of the evaluation of 47 drug abuse prevention curricula available nationally. *Journal of School Health*. Kent, Ohio: Vol. 67:4. 127-131.

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## What Can SECAC Do for You?

SECAC provides comprehensive technical assistance and professional development to schools, districts, regional educational assistance centers implementing programs related to Title IV, Safe, Drug-free Schools and Communities.

Services are available to assist in all phases of implementation, from needs assessment, identification of issues, selection of effective programs, training and implementation in the classroom to program evaluation. For technical assistance and training assistance contact:

## Examples of Training and Technical Assistance

SECAC is able to provide technical assistance and professional development support in many areas. Some of these are:

Anti-Hate/Bias	Gangs & Violence Prevention
Comprehensive Health	Model Drug Abuse Programs
Conflict Resolution	Peer Mediation
Crisis Plan Development	SAT/SAP Training
Fostering Resiliency	
Identifying and Evaluating Risk and Protective Factors	
Organizing Community Partnerships	



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