

What Works Clearinghouse



Too Good for Drugs and Violence

Program description *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* is designed to promote high school students’ prosocial skills, positive character traits, and violence- and drug-free norms. The curriculum consists of 14 core lessons and an additional 12 lessons that can be infused into other subject areas (such as English, science, and social studies). Students engage in role-play and cooperative

learning activities and are encouraged to apply the skills to different contexts. The program includes optional family and community involvement components that may or may not be implemented as part of the program evaluated. Two related programs are addressed in the intervention reports on [Too Good for Violence](#) (K–8) and [Too Good for Drugs™](#) (K–8).

Research One Study of *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* met What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards, and one study met WWC evidence standards with reservations. These studies,

which included nearly 700 students attending six high schools in Florida, examined results on students’ knowledge, attitudes, and values.¹

Effectiveness *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* was found to have positive effects on students’ knowledge, attitudes, and values.

	Behavior	Knowledge, attitudes, and values	Academic achievement
Rating of effectiveness	Not reported	Positive effects	Not reported
Improvement index²	Not reported	Average: +16 percentile points Range: +5 to +21 percentile points	Not reported

1. The evidence presented in this report is based on available research. Findings and conclusions may change as new research becomes available.

2. These numbers show the average and range of improvement indices for all findings across the study.

Additional program information

Developer and contact

Mendez Foundation, 601 S. Magnolia Avenue, Tampa, FL 33606.
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Scope of use

Too Good for Drugs and Violence was introduced in 2000. According to the developer, the program was first developed in Hillsborough County (Tampa), Florida. *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* and its companion programs (*Too Good for Drugs™* and *Too Good for Violence*) have been implemented in high schools in more than 2,500 districts in more than 48 states in rural, urban, and suburban communities with African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic and Latino, and Caucasian student populations and across diverse socioeconomic groups. *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* may have changed since the studies were conducted. The WWC recommends asking the developer for information about the most current version of this curriculum and taking into account that student demographics and school context may affect outcomes.

Teaching

The *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* program was included in the character education review because the program addresses several character traits that are infused into most of the lessons. The program consists of 14 core curriculum lessons at 60 minutes each and 12 additional infusion lessons to be incorporated into subject areas across grade levels. All lessons are scripted and intended to be taught by trained teachers or *Too Good* instructors. The program emphasizes prosocial skills, respect for others, and personal and social responsibility. Lessons include a combination of information about normative peer use and the consequences of drugs and violence and life skills development such as goal setting, decisionmaking, developing healthy relationships, stress management, coping, communication, peer

resistance, and interpersonal skills. Cooperative learning activities, role-playing, and skill building methods reinforce positive behaviors and skills and encourage students to apply skills in other contexts.

The developer provides such teacher resources as grade-level kits that include scripted curriculum, student workbooks, measurable objectives, evaluation tools, lesson extenders, and tips for teaching the program. Additional curriculum materials include a parent component consisting of newsletters and interactive family materials such as the “Home Workout” and “Home Pages” and information on holding parent information sessions. The program also includes 50 educator workbooks and a staff development curriculum that features 10 lessons that are 30–45 minutes long. According to the developer, the program is school-based and also includes community and parent components.

Cost

The cost of a classroom kit for the *Too Good for Drugs and Violence—High School* program, including core curriculum lessons, infusion lessons and lesson notebooks, staff development curriculum, scripted lesson format, and student and educator workbooks, is \$750.

Teachers are encouraged to attend training workshops and schools are encouraged to send teachers to train the trainer workshops, which may be on-site or within their region. The cost per day of a regional curriculum training workshop is \$300 a person for the curriculum training and \$400 a person for the train the trainer sessions. The cost of the regional training is reduced to \$850 total, if a participant attends three days of training. The cost per day of an on-site training workshop, which can train groups of 15 to 20 participants, is \$1,500 plus travel for the curriculum training and \$225 a person for the train the trainer sessions. The developer states that smaller school districts may collaborate with nearby districts to share the cost of on-site training.

Research Two studies reviewed by the WWC investigated the effects of *Too Good for Drugs and Violence*. One study (Bacon, 2001a) was a randomized controlled trial that met WWC evidence standards. The second study (Bacon 2001b) used a quasi-experimental design and met WWC evidence standards with reservations.

The Bacon (2001a) study included more than 300 students in grades 9–12 attending five high schools in one school district in Florida. This study compared outcomes for students participating in a *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* curriculum with the outcomes for students in classes that did not use a character

education curriculum. In addition, this study focused on *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* as implemented in classrooms rather than as a schoolwide intervention.

The Bacon (2001b) study included more than 200 students in grades 9–12 attending one large high school in Florida. This study compared outcomes for students participating in a *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* curriculum with the outcomes for students in classes that did not use a character education curriculum. In addition, this study focused on *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* as implemented in classrooms rather than as a schoolwide intervention.

Effectiveness Findings

The WWC review of character education addresses student outcomes in three domains: behavior; knowledge, attitudes, and values; and academic achievement.

Knowledge, attitudes, and values. All outcomes reported by Bacon (2001a) were assessed immediately following the delivery of the program. The study reported statistically significant differences favoring the intervention group on positive attitudes toward nonviolence, perceptions of emotional competency skills, perceptions of social and peer resistance skills, and perceptions of assertiveness and self-efficacy. Two of these outcomes, perceptions of social and peer resistance skills and perceptions of emotional competency skills, were found to be statistically significant (as calculated by the WWC). The average effect size across all outcomes in this study in the knowledge, attitudes, and values domain was large enough to be considered substantively important using WWC criteria, although it was not statistically significant.³

All outcomes reported by Bacon (2001b) were assessed immediately following the delivery of the program. The study

reported statistically significant differences favoring the intervention group on attitudes towards violence, perceptions of emotional competency skills, perceptions of social and peer resistance skills, and perceptions of goals and decisionmaking skills. The WWC confirmed statistical significance for the same outcomes. The average effect across all outcomes in this study in the knowledge, attitudes, and values domain was statistically significant.

Rating of effectiveness

The WWC rates interventions as positive, potentially positive, mixed, no discernible effects, potentially negative, or negative. The rating of effectiveness takes into account four factors: the quality of the research design, the statistical significance of the findings (as calculated by the WWC); the size of the differences between participants in the intervention condition and the comparison condition, and the consistency of the findings across studies (see the [WWC Intervention Rating Scheme](#)).

3. The level of statistical significance was calculated by the WWC and corrects for clustering within classrooms or schools and for multiple comparisons. For an explanation see the [WWC Tutorial on Mismatch](#). See the [Technical Details of WWC-Conducted Computations](#) for the formulas the WWC used to calculate statistical significance. In the case of the *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* report, corrections were needed both for clustering and for multiple comparisons.

The WWC found *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* to have positive effects on knowledge, attitudes, and values

Improvement index

For each outcome domain, the WWC computed an improvement index based on the effect size (see the [Technical Details of WWC-Conducted Computations](#)). The improvement index represents the difference between the percentile rank of the average student in the intervention condition versus the percentile rank of the average student in the comparison condition. Unlike the rating of effectiveness, the improvement index is entirely based on the size of the effect, regardless of the statistical significance of the effect, the study design, or the analysis. The improvement index can take on values between -50 and +50, with positive numbers denoting favorable results. The average improvement index for knowledge, attitudes, and values is +16 percentile points, with a range of +5 to +21 percentile points across findings.

Summary

The WWC reviewed two studies on *Too Good for Drugs and Violence*. One study (Bacon, 2001a) met WWC standards, and the second study (Bacon, 2001b) met WWC standards with reservations. When the WWC aggregated the results across all outcomes in the knowledge, attitudes, and values domain in each of the studies, the average effect size on one study (Bacon, 2001a) was substantively important (at least +/- 0.25), and the average effect size in the other study (Bacon, 2001b) was statistically significant. So the WWC rated the program as having positive effects on knowledge, attitudes, and values. Character education, an evolving field, is beginning to establish a research base. The evidence presented in this report is limited and may change as new research emerges.

References

Met WWC evidence standards

Bacon, T. P. (2001a). Evaluation of the *Too Good for Drugs and Violence*—High School prevention program. A report produced for the Florida Department of Education, Department of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Tallahassee, FL. Available from: Mendez Foundation, 601 S. Magnolia Avenue, Tampa, FL 33606

Met WWC evidence standards with reservations

Bacon, T. P. (2001b). 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 and 4), 1–40.

Additional sources:

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. Available from the Mendez Foundation website: www.mendezfoundation.org/TGFDVHS%20research.htm.

For more information about specific studies and WWC calculations, please see the [WWC *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* Technical Appendices](#).

Appendix

Appendix A1.1 Study characteristics: Bacon, 2001a (randomized controlled trial)

Characteristic	Description
Study citation	Bacon, T. P. (2001a). Evaluation of the Too Good for Drugs and Violence—High School prevention program. A report produced for the Florida Department of Education, Department of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Tallahassee, FL. Available from: Mendez Foundation, 601 S. Magnolia Avenue, Tampa, FL 33606.
Participants	The study included 303 students in 20 classrooms across five high schools. About 54% of the total sample were females. The overall sample was primarily white (79%), with an equal number of African-American and Hispanic students (9%). The majority of the sample were ninth graders (81%) followed by 10% tenth graders, 5% eleventh graders, and 5% twelfth graders.
Setting	One large school district in Florida.
Intervention	The <i>Too Good for Drugs and Violence</i> (TGFVD) program, implemented during health or personal fitness classes, was integrated into the fourth quarter of instruction. Teachers delivered the programs in nine weeks rather than the program's intended 18-week, or semester, time frame. Therefore, teachers delivered two lessons a week rather than one. In addition, the TGFVD program components related to infusing lesson units into other subject areas and strategies for community involvement were not implemented in this study.
Comparison	Students in the control group received the standard health and personal fitness curriculum and were not exposed to the TGFVD curriculum.
Primary outcomes and measurement	Students responded to paper-and-pencil questionnaires that assessed intentions to use marijuana and engage in fighting, attitudes toward nonviolence, perceptions of emotional competency skills, perceptions of social and peer resistance skills, perceptions of assertiveness skills, attitudes toward drugs, perceptions of peer norms, perceptions of peer approval, and perceptions of goals and decisionmaking skills. (See Appendix A2 for a more detailed description of outcome measures.)
Teacher training	Teachers received one day of training provided by representatives of the Mendez Foundation.

Appendix A1.2 Study characteristics: Bacon, 2001b (quasi-experimental design)

Characteristic	Description
Study citation	Bacon, T. P. (2001b). Impact on high school students' behaviors and protective factors: A pilot study of the Too Good for Drugs and Violence prevention program. <i>Florida Educational Research Council, Inc. Research Bulletin</i> , 32(3 and 4), 1–40.
Participants	The study included 394 students from 11 classrooms in one high school. About 49% of the total sample were females. The majority of the students (68%) were white, followed by 20% Hispanic, and 9% African-American. Almost half of the sample (46%) were ninth grade students, 26% were tenth graders, 12% eleventh graders, and 16% twelfth graders. About 9% of the sample was of a low socioeconomic background.
Setting	One school district in Florida.

(continued)

Appendix A1.1 Study characteristics: Bacon, 2001a (randomized controlled trial) (continued)

Characteristic	Description
Intervention	The <i>TGFDV</i> group received 14 lessons during health classes. Each lesson ranged from 45 to 55 minutes.
Comparison	Students in the comparison group participated in the standard health and personal fitness curriculum and were not exposed to the <i>TGFDV</i> program content or any equivalent program.
Primary outcomes and measurement	Students responded to paper-and-pencil questionnaires that assessed intentions to use marijuana and engage in fighting, attitudes toward nonviolence, perceptions of emotional competency skills, perceptions of social and peer resistance skills, perceptions of assertiveness skills, attitudes toward drugs, perceptions of peer norms, perceptions of peer approval, and perceptions of goals and decisionmaking skills. (See Appendix A2 for a more detailed description of outcome measures.)
Teacher training	All lessons were delivered by program instructors (trained off-site educators). So, no training of teachers was done.

Appendix A2 Outcome measures in the knowledge, attitudes, and values domain

Outcome measure	Description
Intentions for marijuana	One survey item on which students indicate if they intend to use marijuana anytime during the next year (as cited in Bacon, 2001a; Bacon, 2001b).
Intentions for fighting	One survey item on which students indicate if they intend to be involved in physical fights anytime during the next year (as cited in Bacon, 2001a; Bacon, 2001b).
Positive attitudes toward nonviolence	A seven-item student measure assessing attitudes toward violence as an acceptable way to get what one wants and toward prejudice and discrimination (as cited in Bacon, 2001a; Bacon, 2001b). A higher score indicates less support of violence.
Perceptions of emotional competence and self-efficacy	A nine-item measure on which students indicate if they feel confident in their ability to manage their behavior and emotions and to plan for personal goals (as cited in Bacon, 2001a; Bacon, 2001b).
Perceptions of goal setting and decisionmaking skills	A six-item measure on which students indicate if they manage their actions by setting goals and creating plans to reach these goals (as cited in Bacon, 2001a; Bacon, 2001b).
Perceptions of social and resistance skills	A nine-item measure on which students indicate if they can tell the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships and if they are able to avoid unhealthy behaviors (as cited in Bacon, 2001a; Bacon, 2001b).
Perceptions of assertiveness and self-efficacy	A three-item scale on which students indicate if they are able to tell someone who has created a wrongdoing (for example, cut in line in front of them) (as cited in Bacon, 2001a; Bacon, 2001b). Perceptions of parental negative attitudes toward substance use
Perceptions of parental negative attitudes toward substance use	A scale composed by the study author for the purposes of this study. Students rate their parent's expectations of their children's non-use of drugs (as cited by Bacon, 2001a).

Appendix A3 Summary of study findings included in the rating for the knowledge, attitudes, & values domain¹

Outcome measure ³	Study sample	Sample size (students/schools) ⁴	Author's findings from the study		WWC calculations			
			Mean outcome (standard deviation ²)		Mean difference ⁵ (column 1–column 2)	Effect size ⁶	Statistical significance ⁷ (at $\alpha = 0.05$)	Improvement index ⁸
			TGFDV group (column 1)	Comparison group (column 2)				
Bacon, 2001a (randomized controlled trial)								
Perceptions of social and resistance skills	Grades 9–12	303/16	4.08 (0.58)	3.77 (0.61)	0.31	0.52	Statistically significant	+20
Perceptions of emotional competence	Grades 9–12	303/16	4.04 (0.62)	3.72 (0.65)	0.32	0.50	Statistically significant	+19
Positive attitudes towards nonviolence	Grades 9–12	303/16	3.78 (0.79)	3.52 (0.78)	0.26	0.33	ns	+13
Perceptions of assertiveness and efficacy	Grades 9–12	303/16	4.18 (0.70)	3.94 (0.89)	0.24	0.29	ns	+11
Perceptions of goal setting and decisionmaking skills	Grades 9–12	303/16	3.59 (0.93)	3.43 (0.82)	0.16	0.18	ns	+7
Intentions for marijuana (no intentions)	Grades 9–12	197/16	76 of 85 students	89 of 112 students	2.18	0.47 ¹⁰	ns	+18
Intentions for fighting (no intentions)	Grades 9–12	151/16	44 of 61 students	61 of 90 students	1.23	0.13 ¹⁰	ns	+5
Average⁹ for knowledge, attitudes, and values (Bacon, 2001a)						0.35	ns	+14
Bacon, 2001b (quasi-experimental design)								
Perceptions of social and resistance skills	Grades 9–12	201/11	4.07 (0.56)	3.73 (0.67)	0.34	0.56	Statistically significant	+21
Perceptions of emotional competence	Grades 9–12	201/11	4.09 (0.52)	3.79 (0.59)	0.30	0.55	Statistically significant	+21
Positive attitudes towards non-violence	Grades 9–12	201/11	3.97 (0.77)	3.55 (0.78)	0.42	0.54	Statistically significant	+21
Perceptions of assertiveness/efficacy skills	Grades 9–12	201/11	4.17 (0.72)	3.98 (0.73)	0.19	0.26	Statistically significant	+10
Perceptions of parental negative attitudes towards substance use	Grades 9–12	201/11	3.76 (0.72)	3.33 (0.86)	0.43	0.55	ns	+21

(continued)

Appendix A3 Summary of study findings included in the rating for the knowledge, attitudes, & values domain¹ (continued)

Outcome measure ³	Study sample	Sample size (students/schools) ⁴	Author's findings from the study		WWC calculations			
			Mean outcome (standard deviation ²)		Mean difference ⁵ (column 1–column 2)	Effect size ⁶	Statistical significance ⁷ (at $\alpha = 0.05$)	Improvement index ⁸
			TGFDV group (column 1)	Comparison group (column 2)				
Intentions for marijuana (no intentions)	Grades 9–12	138/11	67 of 79 students	43 of 59 students	2.08	0.44 ¹⁰	ns	+17
Intentions for fighting (no intentions)	Grades 9–12	129/11	65 of 77 students	37 of 52 students	2.20	0.47 ¹⁰	ns	+18
Average⁹ for knowledge, attitudes, and values (Bacon, 2001b)						0.48	Statistically significant	+18
Domain average⁹ for knowledge, attitudes, and values across studies						0.42	na	+16

ns = not statistically significant

na = not applicable

1. This appendix reports overall findings considered for the effectiveness rating and the improvement index.
2. The standard deviation across all students in each group shows how dispersed the participants' outcomes are: a smaller standard deviation on a given measure would indicate that participants had more similar outcomes.
3. Bacon (2001a; 2001b) examined effects on students' intentions for drinking alcohol, but this outcome was not included in the review because of severe student attrition (above 50%). In addition, Bacon (2001a; 2001b) examined effects on students' attitudes toward drugs, students' perceptions of peer norms, students' perceptions of peer disapproval of substance use, students' perceptions of the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol, and students' intentions to smoke tobacco. The WWC examined the items that compose these five scales. While these items may be related to behavior, most of them are not relevant to character development. For further information about the scope of this review please see [Character Education Protocol](#).
4. The Bacon (2001a) study involved a random assignment of 20 classrooms to conditions (10 intervention, 10 comparison). Four of the intervention classrooms were dropped from the analysis because they implemented 12 or fewer lessons of the 14 suggested by the developer. The study author conducted an analysis of the remaining 16 classrooms (6 intervention, 10 comparison) and demonstrated that they were equivalent at baseline. So the exclusion of the four classrooms from the analysis was not considered a design flaw.
5. Positive differences and effect sizes favor the intervention group; negative differences and effect sizes favor the comparison group.
6. For an explanation of the effect size calculation, please see the [Technical Details of WWC-Conducted Computations](#).
7. Statistical significance is the probability that the difference between groups is a result of chance rather than a real difference between the groups. The level of statistical significance was calculated by the WWC and corrects for clustering within classrooms or schools and for multiple comparisons. For an explanation see the [WWC Tutorial on Mismatch](#). See the [Technical Details of WWC-Conducted Computations](#) for the formulas the WWC used to calculate statistical significance. In the case of the *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* program, corrections were needed for both clustering and multiple comparisons.
8. The improvement index represents the difference between the percentile rank of the average student in the intervention condition and that of the average student in the comparison condition. The improvement index can take on values between -50 and +50, with positive numbers denoting favorable results.
9. The WWC-computed average effect sizes for each study and for the domain across studies are simple averages rounded to two decimal places. The average improvement indices are calculated from the average effect sizes.
10. Effect size for this outcome measure was calibrated using the odds ratio formula. For an explanation, please see the [WWC Technical Working Paper on Effect Size](#).

Appendix A4 Rating for the knowledge, attitudes, and values domain

The WWC rates interventions as positive, potentially positive, mixed, no discernible effects, potentially negative, or negative.¹

For the outcome domain of knowledge, attitudes, and values, the WWC rated Too Good for Drugs and Violence™ as having positive effects. The remaining ratings (potentially positive effects, mixed effects, no discernible effects, potentially negative effects, and negative effects) were not considered, because Too Good for Drugs and Violence was assigned the highest applicable rating.

Rating received

Positive effects: Strong evidence of a positive effect with no overriding contrary evidence.

- Criterion 1: Two or more studies showing statistically significant *positive* effects, at least one of which met WWC evidence standards for a strong design.

Met. *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* had two studies meeting WWC evidence standards. One of these studies was a randomized controlled trial. In one study, the average effect size was substantively important (at least 0.25), which the WWC considers a positive effect. Further, the WWC analysis found that two of the effects were statistically significant, also considered a positive effect.² In the second study, the average effect size was statistically significant, a positive effect. Further, the WWC analysis found that four of the effects were statistically significant.

- Criterion 2: No studies showing statistically significant or substantively important *negative* effects.

Met. The WWC analysis found no statistically significant or substantively important negative effects in this domain.

1. For rating purposes, the WWC considers the statistical significance of individual outcomes and the domain level effect. The WWC also considers the size of the domain level effect for ratings of potentially positive effects. See the [WWC Intervention Rating Scheme](#) for a complete description.

2. Although the study author reported four statistically significant effects, the WWC analysis confirmed the significance of only two of those findings. (See Appendix A3 for more details.)