

# School-Based Programs to Reduce Violence

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## Task Force Finding

### Intervention Definition

Universal school-based programs to reduce violence are designed to teach all students in a given school or grade about the problem of violence and its prevention or about one or more of the following topics or skills intended to reduce aggressive or violent behavior: emotional self-awareness, emotional control, self-esteem, positive social skills, social problem solving, conflict resolution, or team work. In this review, violence refers to both victimization and perpetration.

### Task Force Finding (June 2005)\*

Juvenile violence is a substantial public health problem in the United States. In a representative national survey in 2003, U.S. residents aged 12 years and older reported more than 1.56 million incidents of violent victimization by perpetrators who they estimated to be aged between 12 and 20 years—a rate of approximately 4.2 incidents of violent crime committed per every 100 juveniles in this age group. Based on the same survey, juvenile perpetrators commit violent acts at a higher rate than any other age group. Over the past 25 years, juveniles aged 10 to 17 years, who comprise less than 12% of the population, have been involved as offenders in approximately 25% of serious violent victimizations. A principal risk factor for juvenile violence is violent and aggressive behavior in childhood.

The accompanying systematic review found strong evidence that universal, school-based programs decrease rates of violence among school children. Universal, school-based programs intended to prevent violent behavior are delivered to all children in a particular grade or school, regardless of prior violence or risk of violence. Programs effects were found at all grade levels. On the basis of this evidence, the Task Force on Community Preventive Services (the Task Force) recommends the implementation of universal, school-based programs to prevent violent behavior. A recently updated meta-analysis of school-based programs confirms and supplements these Guide to Community Preventive Services (Community Guide) findings.

\*From the following publication:

Task Force on Community Preventive Services. A recommendation to reduce rates of violence among school-aged children and youth by means of universal school-based violence prevention programs. *Am J Prev Med* 2007;33(2S):S112-13.

### Publications

CDC. [The effectiveness of universal school-based programs for the prevention of violent and aggressive behavior: a report on recommendations of the Task Force on Community Preventive Services](#) [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5607.pdf]. *MMWR* 2007;56(RR-7):1-16.

Hahn R, Fuqua-Whitley D, Wethington H, et al., Effectiveness of universal school-based programs to prevent violent and aggressive behavior: a systematic review. *Am J Prev Med* 2007;33(2S):S114–29.

Task Force on Community Preventive Services. A recommendation to reduce rates of violence among school-aged children and youth by means of universal school-based violence prevention programs. *Am J Prev Med* 2007;33(2S):S112-13.

## Disclaimer

The findings and conclusions on this page are those of the Community Preventive Services Task Force and do not necessarily represent those of CDC. Task Force evidence-based recommendations are not mandates for compliance or spending. Instead, they provide information and options for decision makers and stakeholders to consider when determining which programs, services, and policies best meet the needs, preferences, available resources, and constraints of their constituents.

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### Suggested citation:

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