

Drug Education and Counseling

Talking Points

Drug education programs should help students make safe and sensible lifestyle decisions.

D.A.R.E.

- Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) is the most widely used school-based drug prevention program, even though it has been called ineffective by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Surgeon General, National Academy of Sciences, and Government Accountability Office.
- To help them make safe and sensible lifestyle decisions, students need accurate, science-based, nonjudgmental drug education instead of the scare tactics provided by the 20-year-old D.A.R.E. program.
- Students should receive drug education from health professionals, not uniformed police officers.
- D.A.R.E.'s abstinence-only approach fails to effectively reach students who have used or are at high risk of using drugs. It doesn't provide a fallback strategy for students who don't "just say no."
- One study revealed that D.A.R.E. may have a "boomerang" effect, actually increasing drug use among suburban students.
- The fundamentally flawed D.A.R.E. program can't be improved by making superficial changes to its curriculum and calling it "New D.A.R.E."

The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign

- The federal government's \$120 million a year anti-drug ad campaign has repeatedly been shown to be a failure in encouraging young people to stay away from drugs. One long-term federally funded evaluation reported that there is "little evidence" the ads reduce drug use and "some evidence for an increase in use." The government pulled the study's funding after the report was published.
- The U.S. Government Accountability Office found that federal anti-drug officials have resorted to "covert propaganda" to distribute their anti-drug messages by sending out prepackaged news stories for TV stations to air.
- The government was caught paying TV networks to incorporate anti-drug messages into the scripts of sitcoms and other programs