

What Works Clearinghouse



Too Good for Violence

Program description *Too Good for Violence* promotes character values, social-emotional skills, and healthy beliefs of elementary and middle school students. The program includes seven lessons per grade level for elementary school (K–5) and nine lessons per grade level for middle school (6–8). All lessons are scripted and engage students through role-playing and cooperative learning games,

small group activities, and classroom discussions. Students are encouraged to apply these skills to different contexts. *Too Good for Violence* also includes optional parental and community involvement elements. Two related programs are addressed in the intervention reports on *Too Good for Drugs and Violence* (high school) and *Too Good for Drugs™* (K–8).

Research One study of *Too Good for Violence* met the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. This study included almost 1,000 students attending 10 schools in a large school

district in Florida. The study authors examined results on students' behavior and knowledge, attitudes, and values.¹

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

	Behavior	Knowledge, attitudes, and values	Academic achievement
Rating of effectiveness	Potentially positive effects	Potentially positive effects	Not reported
Improvement index²	Average: +18 percentile points Range: +18 percentile points	Average: +16 percentile points Range: +16 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. Web: www.mendezfoundation.org. Email: sales@mendezfoundation.org. Telephone: 800-750-0986.

Scope of use

Too Good for Violence was first developed in Hillsborough County (Tampa), Florida. *Too Good for Violence* and its companion programs (*Too Good for Drugs*TM and *Too Good for Drugs and Violence*) have been implemented in schools in more than 2,500 districts across more than 48 states in rural, urban, and suburban communities with African-American, Asian, Hispanic, and Caucasian student populations and across diverse socioeconomic groups. *Too Good for 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.³

Teaching

Too Good for Violence was included in the character education review because the program addresses several character traits that are infused into most of the lessons. *Too Good for Violence* consists of seven 30–60 minute lessons per grade level for elementary school (K–5) and nine 30–45 minute lessons per grade level for middle school (6–8). All lessons are scripted and intended to be taught by trained teachers or Mendez Foundation instructors. Lessons include information about peaceful conflict resolution strategies and prosocial skill development in such areas as goal setting, decisionmaking, developing healthy relationships, anger and stress management, coping, communication, peer resistance, and interpersonal skills. Eight character values are incorporated into the curriculum: caring, cooperation,

courage, fairness, honesty, respect, responsibility, and self-discipline. Cooperative learning activities, role-playing, and skill building methods are used to reinforce positive behaviors and skills and encourage students to apply these behaviors and skills in other contexts.

The developer provides teacher resources such as grade-level kits that include a scripted curriculum, 50 student workbooks, measurable objectives, evaluation tools, lesson extenders, and tips for teaching the program. According to the developer, the program is school-based but also includes such optional community and parental involvement components as parent newsletters and interactive family materials such as the “Home Workout” and “Home Pages.”

Cost

The cost of a grade-level kit for a classroom for the *Too Good for Violence* (K–8) program, including a scripted curriculum, additional lessons that can be integrated into various subject areas, 50 student workbooks, puppets and visual materials to accompany each lesson, and parent materials, varies by grade level. Kits for kindergarten and grade 2 cost \$125, grades 1 and 3 cost \$130, and grades 4–8 cost \$100.

Teachers are encouraged to attend an on-site or regional workshop held by the developer. The cost per day of a regional training workshop is \$300 a person for curriculum training and \$400 a person for train the trainer sessions. The cost of the regional training is reduced to \$850 if the participant attends all three days of training. The cost per day of an on-site training workshop, which can train groups of 15 to 50 participants, is \$1,500 plus travel expenses for the curriculum training and \$225 a person for one day of train the trainer sessions. Smaller school districts may collaborate with nearby districts to share the cost of on-site training.

3. The revised middle school curriculum is also known as *Too Good for Drugs II*.

Research One study reviewed by the WWC investigated the effects of *Too Good for Violence*. The study (Hall and Bacon, 2005) was a randomized controlled trial that met WWC evidence standards. The study focused on *Too Good for Violence* as implemented in classrooms rather than as a schoolwide intervention.

The Hall and Bacon (2005) study included almost 1,000 third-grade students attending 10 elementary schools in one large school district in Florida. The study compared outcomes for students participating in the *Too Good for Violence* curriculum with outcomes for students in classes that did not use a prevention curriculum during the study and follow-up period.

Effectiveness Findings

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

Behavior. Hall and Bacon (2005) reported, and the WWC confirmed, statistically significant differences favoring the intervention group on the teacher checklist of elementary school students' behavior (total score) 20 weeks after the end of the program.⁴

Knowledge, attitudes, and values. Although the study authors reported no statistically significant impacts on elementary school students' total scores using the student protective factor survey 20 weeks after the end of the program, the effect size

was large enough to be considered substantively important using WWC criteria.⁵

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](#)).

The WWC found *Too Good for Violence* to have potentially positive effects on behavior and 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 is +18 percentile points for behavior and +16 percentile points for knowledge, attitudes, and values.

Summary

The reviewed study was a randomized controlled trial that met WWC evidence standards. At the 20-week follow-up, there was a statistically significant, positive effect on behavior and a substantively important, but not statistically significant, positive effect on the knowledge, attitudes, and values. So the WWC rated the program as having potentially positive effects on behavior and knowledge, attitudes, and values. Character education, an evolving field, is beginning to establish a research

4. The level of statistical significance was calculated by the WWC and where necessary, 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 the statistical significance. In the case of the *Too Good for Violence* report, the WWC focused on the school-level results, where the unit of analysis correctly matched the unit of assignment. Accordingly, no corrections for clustering (or for multiple comparisons) were needed.

5. Bacon also reported end-of-program outcomes not considered in this review. These outcomes are summarized in the [Too Good for Violence Technical Appendices](#).

base. The evidence presented in this report is limited and may change as new research emerges.

References **Met WWC evidence standards**

Hall, B. W., & Bacon, T. P. (2005). Building a foundation against violence: Impact of a school-based prevention program on elementary students. *Journal of School Violence*, 4(4), 63–83.

Additional sources:

Bacon, T. P. (2003). Technical report: The effects of the Too Good for Violence prevention program on student behaviors and protective factors. Tampa, FL: C. E. Mendez Foundation, Inc. Available from: Mendez Foundation, 601 S. Magnolia Avenue, Tampa, FL 33606.

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