

Drug Education Program Checklist

20 questions to check whether your school, agency or organization's drug education follows what research shows works.

How to use it: tick each statement that is true of your program today. Unchecked items are your improvement plan. Score yourself on page 2.

1 CONTENT

- ☐ **Facts are accurate and current**, covering what young people actually encounter today: vapes, cannabis edibles, alcohol and counterfeit pills.
- ☐ **No exaggeration or scare tactics**. Risks are presented honestly, without shock images or worst-case stories.
- ☐ **Real norms are shared**, showing that most young people don't use, to counter "everyone is doing it."
- ☐ **Content is age-appropriate** and builds in depth from elementary to high school.
- ☐ **Students learn when and how to get help**, including what to do if a friend is in danger.

2 SKILLS AND DELIVERY

- ☐ **Lessons are interactive**: discussion, role-play and small-group work, not lectures.
- ☐ **Students practice refusal skills** for real situations they're likely to face.
- ☐ **Lessons build life skills**: decision-making, managing stress and handling peer pressure.
- ☐ **Students can ask questions** openly or anonymously and get honest answers.

3 DOSAGE AND TIMING

- ☐ **It's a series, not a single assembly**: several structured sessions each year.
- ☐ **Booster lessons** revisit the topics in later grades.
- ☐ **Timing fits the risk**: core lessons come before the ages when first use usually happens.

4 THE EDUCATOR

- ☐ The person teaching has been trained in drug facts and interactive teaching methods.
- ☐ Educators get refresher training as drugs and trends change.
- ☐ Officers and guest speakers who teach use interactive methods, not lectures or personal war stories.

5 FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY

- ☐ Parents get information and tools to reinforce the same messages at home.
- ☐ Teachers, counselors, coaches and officers share consistent messages.
- ☐ The program connects to community resources, such as counseling and local prevention coalitions.

6 MEASURING RESULTS

- ☐ You measure before and after, for example knowledge, attitudes and intentions surveys.
- ☐ You review and update the program at least once a year based on results and new trends.

17–20 checked

Strong, evidence-aligned program. Keep measuring and updating.

11–16 checked

Good foundation. Focus on the unchecked items in sections 2 and 3.

10 or fewer

Time for a refresh. Start with educator training and interactive lessons.

Avoid these: one-time assemblies, scare tactics and shock images, information-only lectures, and former-user testimonials. Research links them to little or no effect, and sometimes the opposite.

Train your educators

Drug Educator Certification: an 8-hour live online training in interactive, evidence-based drug education.

druggeducators.org/drug-educator-certification
→

Get a custom curriculum

We'll build a drug education curriculum fitted to your students, staff or community, ready to teach.

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Based on research summarized in What Works in Drug Education and Prevention (2017), the UNODC International Standards on Drug Use Prevention, and the EUDA evidence summary on interactive programs. Full guide and sources: druggeducators.org/drug-education