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 index[2]	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*™ 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 WWC Improvement Index Technical Paper). 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 WWC Intervention Rating Scheme 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.

Appendix

Appendix A1 Study characteristics: Hall & Bacon, 2005 (randomized controlled trial)

Characteristic	Description
Study citation	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.
Participants	The study included 999 third-grade students from 10 elementary schools. Of the sample, 48% were females, 20% received exceptional education services, 17% received limited English proficiency services, 44% were Caucasian, 12.5% African-American, 36% Hispanic, and 7.5% "multicultural or other race." About 54% of the students in the sample were eligible for participation in the free or reduced lunch program.
Setting	One large school district in Florida serving students from urban, suburban, and rural regions.
Intervention	The program was implemented during the first quarter of the school year. The program instructors in the intervention group delivered seven lesson units—one a week—over a seven-week period, with each lesson averaging 45 minutes in length.
Comparison	Students in the comparison group did not participate in the *Too Good for Violence* program. In addition, the comparison schools were asked to refrain from delivering any major prevention curriculum or program until the fourth quarter.
Primary outcomes and measurement	The two measures, the Student Protective Factor Survey Questionnaire and the Teacher Checklist of Student Behaviors, were administered immediately after the intervention and again 20 weeks later. (See Appendices A2.1 and A2.2.)
Teacher training	The program was delivered by program instructors (off-site educators). So no teacher training was conducted.

Appendix A2.1 Outcome measures in the behavior domain

Outcome measure	Description
Teacher Checklist of Student Behaviors (TCSB)	Teacher Checklist of Student Behaviors (TCSB). A teacher survey of 21 behavioral items rated on a five-point scale. Response options ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (almost always). The TCSB, developed by the study authors, consists of three subscales: personal and social skills; positive social behaviors; and inappropriate social behaviors (as cited in Hall & Bacon, 2005).

Appendix A2.2 Outcome measures in the knowledge, attitudes, and values domain

Outcome measure	Description
Student Protective Factors Survey Questionnaire (SPFSQ)	Student Protective Factors Survey Questionnaire (SPFSQ). A student survey of 32 items rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The SPFSQ, developed by the study authors, consists of four subscales: emotional competency, social and resistance skills, communication skills, and interactions with others (as cited in Hall & Bacon, 2005).

Appendix A3.1 Summary of study findings included in the rating for the behavior domain[1]

Outcome measure	Study sample	Sample size (schools)	Author's findings from the study: Mean outcome (standard deviation[2]) — *Too Good for Violence* group (column 1)	Author's findings from the study: Mean outcome (standard deviation[2]) — Comparison group (column 2)	WWC calculations: Mean difference[3] (column 1–column 2)	WWC calculations: Effect size[4]	WWC calculations: Statistical significance[5] (at $\alpha = 0.05$)	WWC calculations: Improvement index[6]
Hall & Bacon, 2005 (randomized controlled trial)								
Teacher Checklist of Student Behaviors (20-week follow-up)—total score	Grade 3	10	4.17 (0.16)	3.86 (0.82)	0.31	0.47	Statistically significant	+18
Domain average[7] for behavior (Hall & Bacon, 2005)						0.47	Statistically significant	+18

1. This appendix reports overall findings 20 weeks after the end of the program considered for the effectiveness rating and the improvement index. End-of-program findings from the same studies are not included in these ratings but are reported in Appendix A4.1.
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. The standard deviations reported by the study authors for the school-level analysis represent variations among schools rather than students. The standard deviations shown in this table were estimated by the WWC to reflect variations among students.
3. Positive differences and effect sizes favor the intervention group; negative differences and effect sizes favor the comparison group.
4. For an explanation of the effect size calculation, please see the WWC Technical Working Paper on Effect Size.
5. Statistical significance is the probability that the difference between groups is a result of chance rather than a real difference between groups. 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 about the clustering correction, see the WWC Tutorial on Mismatch. See the WWC Intervention Rating Scheme for the formulas the WWC used to calculate statistical significance. In the case of the *Too Good for Violence* report, no corrections for clustering and multiple comparisons were needed. The study also reported findings using the classroom and the student levels as the units of analysis. The classroom-level findings were statistically significant and favored the intervention group on the teacher checklist of student behavior. The student-level analysis reported statistically significant effects favoring the intervention group on two out of three subscales of the teacher checklist of student behavior. The classroom-level and student-level analyses were not reviewed because they did not account for clustering within classrooms or schools and multiple comparisons.
6. 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.
7. This row provides the study average, which is also the domain average in this case. The WWC-computed domain average effect size is a simple average rounded to two decimal places. The domain improvement index is calculated from the average effect size.

Appendix A3.2 Summary of study findings included in the rating for the knowledge, attitudes, and values domain[1]

Outcome measure	Study sample	Sample size (students/ schools)	Author's findings from the study: Mean outcome (standard deviation[2]) — *Too Good for Violence* group (column 1)	Author's findings from the study: Mean outcome (standard deviation[2]) — Comparison group (column 2)	WWC calculations: Mean difference[3] (column 1– column 2)	WWC calculations: Effect size[4]	WWC calculations: Statistical significance[5] (at $\alpha = 0.05$)	WWC calculations: Improvement index[6]
Hall & Bacon, 2005 (randomized controlled trial)								
Student Protective Factor Survey (20-week follow-up)—total score	Grade 3	10	3.89 (0.44)	3.7 (0.41)	0.19	0.40	ns	+16
Domain average[7] for knowledge, attitudes, and values (Hall & Bacon, 2005)						0.40	ns	+16

ns = not statistically significant

1. This appendix reports overall findings considered for the effectiveness rating and the improvement indexSubtest and subgroup findings from the same studies are not included in these ratings but are reported in Appendix A4.2.
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. The standard deviations reported by the study authors for the school-level analysis represent variations among schools rather than students. The standard deviations shown in this table were estimated by the WWC to reflect variations among students.
3. Positive differences and effect sizes favor the intervention group; negative differences and effect sizes favor the comparison group.
4. For an explanation of the effect size calculation, please see the WWC Technical Working Paper on Effect Size.
5. Statistical significance is the probability that the difference between groups is a result of chance rather than a real difference between groups. 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 about the clustering correction, see the WWC Tutorial on Mismatch. See the WWC Intervention Rating Scheme for the formulas the WWC used to calculate statistical significance. In the case of the *Too Good for Violence* report, no corrections for clustering and multiple comparisons were needed. The study also reported findings using the classroom and the student levels as the units of analysis. The classroom-level findings were statistically significant and favored the intervention group on the student protective factors survey. The student-level analysis reported statistically significant effects favoring the intervention group on three out of four subscales of the student protective factors survey. The classroom-level and student-level analyses were not reviewed because they did not account for clustering within classrooms or schools and multiple comparisons.
6. 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.
7. This row provides the study average, which is also the domain average in this case. The WWC-computed domain average effect size is a simple average rounded to two decimal places. The domain improvement index is calculated from the average effect size.

Appendix A4.1 Summary of end-of-program study findings for the behavior domain[1]

Outcome measure	Study sample	Sample size (students/ schools)	Author's findings from the study: Mean outcome (standard deviation[2]) — *Too Good for Violence* group (column 1)	Author's findings from the study: Mean outcome (standard deviation[2]) — Comparison group (column 2)	WWC calculations: Mean difference[3] (column 1–column 2)	WWC calculations: Effect size[4]	WWC calculations: Statistical significance[5] (at $\alpha = 0.05$)	WWC calculations: Improvement index[6]
Hall & Bacon, 2005 (randomized controlled trial)								
Teacher Checklist of Student Behaviors (end of program)—total score	Grade 3	10	4.18 (0.47)	3.87 (0.66)	0.31	0.49	Statistically significant	+19

1. This appendix presents end-of-program findings for the behavior domain. Follow-ups 20 weeks after the end of the program were used for rating purposes and are presented in Appendix A3.1.
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. The standard deviations reported by the study authors for the school-level analysis represent variations among schools rather than students. The standard deviations shown in this table were estimated by the WWC to reflect variations among students.
3. Positive differences and effect sizes favor the intervention group; negative differences and effect sizes favor the comparison group.
4. For an explanation of the effect size calculation, please see the WWC Technical Working Paper on Effect Size.
5. Statistical significance is the probability that the difference between groups is a result of chance rather than a real difference between groups. 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 about the clustering correction, see the WWC Tutorial on Mismatch. See the WWC Intervention Rating Scheme for the formulas the WWC used to calculate statistical significance. In the case of the *Too Good for Violence* report, no corrections for clustering and multiple comparisons were needed. The study also reported findings using the classroom and the student levels as the units of analysis. The classroom-level findings were statistically significant and favored the intervention group on the teacher checklist of student behavior. The student-level analysis reported statistically significant effects favoring the intervention group on two out of three subscales of the teacher checklist of student behavior. The classroom-level and student-level analyses were not reviewed because they did not account for clustering within classrooms or schools and multiple comparisons.
6. 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.

Appendix A4.2 Summary of end-of-program study findings for the knowledge, attitudes, and values domain[1]

Outcome measure	Study sample	Sample size (schools)	Author's findings from the study: Mean outcome (standard deviation[2]) — *Too Good for Violence* group (column 1)	Author's findings from the study: Mean outcome (standard deviation[2]) — Comparison group (column 2)	WWC calculations: Mean difference[3] (column 1–column 2)	WWC calculations: Effect size[4]	WWC calculations: Statistical significance[5] (at $\alpha = 0.05$)	WWC calculations: Improvement index[6]
Hall & Bacon, 2005 (randomized controlled trial)								
Student Protective Factor Survey (end of program)—total score	Grade 3	10	4.04 (0.60)	3.82 (0.60)	0.22	0.33	ns	+13

ns = not statistically significant

1. This appendix presents end-of-program findings for measures in the knowledge, attitudes, and values domain. Follow-ups 20 weeks after the end of the program were used for rating purposes and are presented in Appendix A3.2.
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. The standard deviations reported by the study authors for the school-level analysis represent variations among schools rather than students. The standard deviations shown in this table were estimated by the WWC to reflect variations among students.
3. Positive differences and effect sizes favor the intervention group; negative differences and effect sizes favor the comparison group.
4. For an explanation of the effect size calculation, please see the WWC Technical Working Paper on Effect Size.
5. Statistical significance is the probability that the difference between groups is a result of chance rather than a real difference between groups. 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 about the clustering correction, see the WWC Tutorial on Mismatch. See the WWC Intervention Rating Scheme for the formulas the WWC used to calculate statistical significance. In the case of the *Too Good for Violence* report, no corrections for clustering and multiple comparisons were needed. The study also reported findings using the classroom and the student levels as the units of analysis. The classroom-level findings were statistically significant and favored the intervention group on the student protective factors survey. The student-level analysis reported statistically significant effects favoring the intervention group on three out of four subscales of the student protective factors survey. The classroom-level and student-level analyses were not reviewed because they did not account for clustering within classrooms or schools and multiple comparisons.
6. 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.

Appendix A5.1 Rating for the behavior domain

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

For the outcome domain of behavior, the WWC rated *Too Good for Violence* as having potentially positive effects. It did not meet the criteria for positive effects, because it only had one study. The remaining ratings (mixed effects, no discernible effects, potentially negative effects, and negative effects) were not considered because *Too Good for Violence* was assigned the highest applicable rating.

Rating received

Potentially positive effects: Evidence of a positive effect with no overriding contrary evidence.

- Criterion 1: At least one study showing a statistically significant or substantively important *positive* effect, thus qualifying as a *positive* effect.

  Met. The one study on *Too Good for Violence* had a positive and statistically significant effect size for the single outcome in this domain.

- Criterion 2: No studies showing a statistically significant *negative* effect. Fewer or the same number of studies showing indeterminate effects than the number showing statistically significant or substantively important positive effects.

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

Other ratings considered

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.

  Not met. *Too Good for Violence* had only one study meeting WWC evidence standards for a strong design.

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

  Met. The one study meeting WWC evidence standards did not show 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.

Appendix A5.2 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 Violence* as having potentially positive effects. It did not meet the criteria for positive effects, because it had only one study. The remaining ratings (mixed effects, no discernible effects, potentially negative effects, and negative effects) were not considered because *Too Good for Violence* was assigned the highest applicable rating.

Rating received

Potentially positive effects: Evidence of a positive effect with no overriding contrary evidence.

- Criterion 1: At least one study showing a statistically significant or substantively important *positive* effect, thus qualifying as a *positive* effect.

  Met. The one study on *Too Good for Violence* in this domain had a substantially important effect size (greater than 0.25), which the WWC considers a positive effect.

- Criterion 2: No studies showing a statistically significant *negative* effect. Fewer or the same number of studies showing *indeterminate* effects than the number showing statistically significant or substantively important *positive* effects.

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

Other ratings considered

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.

  Not met. *Too Good for Violence* had only one study meeting WWC evidence standards for a strong design.

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

  Met. The one study meeting WWC evidence standards did not show 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.