

Understanding Substance Use Prevention



Evidence-based Prevention Strategies

Infancy and Early Childhood

Middle Childhood

Early Adolescence

Adolescence and Adulthood

Key Developmental Goals

- Development of warm and safe attachment to caregivers
- Age-appropriate language skills, as well as other executive cognitive functions
- Self-regulation
- Pro-social attitudes and skills

Key Resilience Factors

- Caregivers who are responsive and provide stimulation
- Children who learn how to be effective in having needs met, are easy to soothe, and are not temperamental

Evidence-based strategies



Services for pregnant women



Nurse visitation



Early childhood education

Infancy and Early Childhood

Middle Childhood

Early Adolescence

Adolescence and Adulthood

Key Developmental Goals

- Emergent executive cognitive and emotional regulatory functions: maintaining attention, controlling emotions, social inclusivity, receptivity to others, effective

Vulnerability

- Problems such as the onset of mental disorders (such as anxiety disorders, impulse control disorder, and conduct disorders) may also impede the development of the achievement of these goals

Key Resilience Factors

- Community norms, school culture and quality of education become increasingly important for safe and healthy emotional, cognitive, and social development

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<p>communication, and accurate perception of emotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued development of age specific language and numeracy skills • Impulse control and self-control • Goal directed behavior • Decision-making and problem-solving skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children of dysfunctional families often start to affiliate at this time with deviant peers, thus putting themselves at increased risk for negative life choices, including substance use and involvement in illegal activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of social skills and prosocial attitudes grows in middle childhood and they become key protective factors, impacting also the extent to which the school-aged child will cope and bond with school and peers
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Evidence-based strategies

Family skills	Personal and social skills	Classroom management	Keep children in school	Address mental health disorders

Infancy and Early Childhood	Middle Childhood	Early Adolescence	Adolescence and Adulthood
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Key Developmental Goals	Vulnerability	Key Resilience Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning self-regulation of emotion and behavior, for instance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social/emotional skills to establish stable relationships ○ Sensitivity to feelings and needs of others ○ Conflict resolution ○ Pro-social skills ○ Impulse control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associations with people and organizations beyond those experienced in childhood • Exposure to new ideas and experiences • A time to “try out” adult roles and behaviors • A time of significant changes in the adolescent’s brain -- a potentially opportune time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protective factors against drug use • Healthy attitudes towards substances and safe social normative beliefs • Good social skills, resilient mental and emotional health • “Plasticity and malleability” of brain opens the door to evidence-based prevention

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for poorly reasoned decisions and involvement in potentially harmful behaviors

- Leads to a range of behaviors from choices on fashion and entertainment to experimenting with substance use and other problem behaviors
- Peers' strongly influence adolescents with fear of peer rejection a major concern:
- Parents' influence remains significant though not always obvious

Evidence-based strategies



Family skills



Prevention education



School policies on substance use



Programmes on school attachment



Keep children in school



Address psychological vulnerabilities



Address mental health disorders



Mentoring

Understanding Substance Use Prevention



Infancy and Early Childhood

Middle Childhood

Early Adolescence

Adolescence and Adulthood

Vulnerability

- Maturation processes described in early adolescence continue in adolescence and adulthood
- For older adolescents, significant brain changes are still occurring creating opportunities for poorly thought out decisions and involvement in potentially harmful behaviors, such as risky sexual behaviors, smoking and drinking, risky driving behaviors and drug use
- Vulnerability factors related to peers and resilience factors related to mental health, personal and social skills, and healthy attitudes remain relevant

Key Resilience Factors

- The "plasticity" and malleability of the brain continues, suggesting that also this period of development is a time when interventions can reinforce or alter earlier experiences
- In addition, interventions delivered in settings other than the family and the school, such as the workplace, the health sector, entertainment venues and the community, become more relevant

Evidence-based strategies



Prevention education



School policies on substance use



Programmes on school attachment



Address psychological vulnerabilities



Address mental health disorders



Mentoring



Brief intervention



Tobacco/ alcohol policies



Workplace prevention



Community-based



Media campaigns



Entertainment venues