



## Fact Sheet on Fighting Juvenile Drug Use

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### Seven Steps Communities Can Take To Combat Illegal Drug Use and Trafficking

Although a recent survey of high school seniors showed the first substantial decline in the use of cocaine and marijuana in the past decade, juvenile drug abuse continues to be a major problem facing this Nation. Researchers caution that while these results indicate an apparent "cooling of an unhealthy romance between many of American's young people and drugs," the United States still ranks number one in industrialized nations in the rate of overall drug use by young people.

In fact, despite increasing drug seizures and record numbers of arrests, teenagers today find that drugs are readily available. In the 13th Annual Survey of High School Seniors by the University of Michigan conducted in 1987, 57 percent of the students reported that they had tried an illicit drug—42 percent in the past year. Ninety-two percent of the seniors said they had used alcohol, and 66 percent reported being current users.

Law enforcement officials play an important role in the fight against illegal drug use. Police officers understand the direct relationship between drug abuse and crime. Thus, in recent years, law enforcement has become involved in prevention efforts, most notably Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), which has been adopted by more than 790 school systems in 43 States.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), recognizing the significant contribution

that law enforcement makes in combating illegal drugs, recently developed and added a new curriculum, "Law Enforcement Strategies for Dealing with Juvenile Drug Abuse." This was added to two successful OJJDP training programs—POLICY (Police Operations Leading to Improved Children and Youth Services) and SAFE POLICY (School Administrators for Effective Police-Prosecution-Probation Operations Leading to Improved Children and Youth Services).

#### Curriculum stresses cooperation

POLICY teaches law enforcement officers new techniques both for dealing with juveniles and for managing their departments' juvenile units. POLICY stresses the importance of involving individuals from all levels of law enforcement agencies in developing activities and services to respond to juvenile-related problems. POLICY includes two training programs, POLICY I and POLICY II (available only to departments that have sent personnel to POLICY I training).

SAFE POLICY is an intensive workshop that trains teams of community leaders to work together to improve delinquency prevention efforts and school safety. SAFE POLICY emphasizes a partnership approach built on close cooperation and information sharing among all juvenile justice agencies—law enforcement, schools, prosecutors, probation officers, and

social services—to fulfill agency objectives and respond promptly and properly to troubled youth.

#### How can communities combat juvenile drug use?

Attacking illegal drug use and trafficking by juveniles requires systemwide cooperation in both enforcement and prevention efforts. SAFE POLICY recommends several important, proven strategies that communities can use to combat these problems in a comprehensive manner, including:

**Enact policies that show zero tolerance for drugs.** Juveniles need to know that involvement with drugs will not be tolerated—by parents, schools, or communities. Law enforcement and school officials must work together to develop policies that emphasize no tolerance for either drug possession or drug sales, particularly on school property. The police should always be notified when drugs are seized on a school campus.

**Establish and enforce sanctions for drug violations.** Juveniles tend to repeat negative behavior when they believe there will be no serious consequences for their actions. This is true for juveniles involved in habitual criminal behavior, as well as for juveniles involved in illegal drug use and trafficking. Local juvenile justice systems must develop specific sanctions for youths involved in illegal drug use or trafficking. These policies must be communicated clearly to parents,

youth, and the community, so that everyone will understand that drug violations will result in sanctions from both school and law enforcement authorities. When violations occur, they must be addressed swiftly and in accordance with the stated policies.

**Apply severe sanctions to drug dealers.** A complete community response to illegal drugs requires sanctions for suppliers as well as users. Law enforcement and schools must agree to—and apply—severe penalties against drug dealers who poison this Nation's youth. Sanctions for drug dealing students should include suspension by school officials, detention by juvenile justice authorities, and prosecution by the courts. School administrators and law enforcement officials must work together to seek these sanctions for anyone, juvenile or adult, convicted of dealing drugs on school property.

**Share information and provide joint training.** Schools and law enforcement agencies must share information, establish vehicles for cross-training of staff on drug abuse issues, and institute collaborative prevention programs. School staff should receive inservice training on topics such as search and seizure laws and drug awareness from law enforcement personnel and the local prosecutor's office. Police should be taught about school policies and procedures. Only by exchanging information and participating in training together will these agencies be able to maximize their resources, increase their appreciation of each other's strengths and limitations, and foster a cooperative determination to resolve overlapping problems.

**Insist on parental involvement.** Parents must participate in and support the school system's and law enforcement's efforts to eradicate the juvenile drug problem. The Sports Drug Awareness Program, cosponsored by the Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and National High School Athletic Coaches Association, and Mothers Against Drunk Driving are two national initiatives with which parents can

become involved. Many other opportunities have been created by local communities themselves. Parents should volunteer to chaperone school dances and field trips, and should insist on drug-free proms. They should also be role models of drug-free lifestyles for their children.

**Mandate urine testing for drug users.** Law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, and probation officers should ask for mandatory urine testing for adjudicated juvenile drug offenders. Urine testing allows the justice system to monitor youths' behavior without the impossible task of watching them every minute. Communities cannot eliminate drug use until they identify substance abusers, provide them with adequate treatment and support services, and hold them accountable for their behavior.

### **Initiate specialized programs.**

Parents, community groups, law enforcement agencies, and schools must unite to educate youth to say, "No," to drugs. Programs that use uniformed police officers as classroom instructors—such as DARE, started by the Los Angeles Police Department; and School Program to Educate and Control Drug Abuse (SPECDA), started by the City of New York—should be replicated. Drug prevention education must become an integral part of the elementary school curriculum.

*The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, coordinates the activities of the following program Offices and Bureaus: the Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.*

### **Finding out more about SAFE POLICY**

Tuition and lodging for SAFE POLICY are provided through an OJJDP grant to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. Participants are responsible for the costs of transportation and meals.

POLICY and SAFE POLICY courses have been scheduled in the following locations during the coming year.

Date	Program	Location
1989 Oct. 16–20	POLICY I and II	Denver, CO
Nov. 13–17	SAFE POLICY	Kansas City, MO
1990 Jan. 22–26	POLICY I and II	Little Rock, AR
Feb. 12–16	SAFE POLICY	Glynco, GA
Mar. 19–23	POLICY I and II	Albuquerque, NM
Apr. 16–20	SAFE POLICY	Denver, CO
May 14–18	POLICY I and II	Knoxville, TN
June 18–22	SAFE POLICY	Sacramento, CA
July 16–20	POLICY I and II	St. Louis, MO
Aug. 20–24	SAFE POLICY	Albany, NY
Sept. 17–21	POLICY I and II	Seattle, WA
Oct. 22–26	SAFE POLICY	New Orleans, LA
Nov. 26–30	POLICY I and II	Glynco, GA
Dec. 10–14	SAFE POLICY	Houston, TX
1991 Jan. 7–11	POLICY I and II	Artesia, NM

Further information about POLICY and SAFE POLICY, as well as other OJJDP training courses for law enforcement, can be obtained by contacting:

Ronald Laney, Law Enforcement Program Manager  
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention  
Room 710, 633 Indiana Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20531  
202-724-5940

For more information on this and other OJJDP programs, contact the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse toll free at 800-638-8736. For information on Project DARE, contact the Los Angeles Police Department, 213-485-4856.