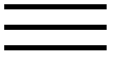


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Applied and Preventive Psychology

Volume 2, Issue 4, Autumn 1993, Pages 179-190

Enhancing young people's social competence and health behavior: An important challenge for educators, scientists, policymakers, and funders *

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Abstract

Large numbers of America's young people engage in multiple high-risk behaviors that may jeopardize their health and social development. Given the gravity of this situation, many federal agencies and national organizations have called for the implementation of school-based K-12 social competence and health promotion programs. Unfortunately, there is a gap between the comprehensive programs that policymakers are asking educators to implement and the limited scope, duration, and intensity of state-of-the-art health promotion programs that scientists have developed and evaluated. As a result, most schools currently adopt well-marketed programs that lack documented

effectiveness. Although current research indicates that brief, well-designed, theory-driven competence promotion and health education programs produce short-term benefits, there have been no controlled, longitudinal field studies to evaluate the long-term effects of K-12 efforts. This paper proposes that policymakers and funding agencies support long-term collaborations among educators and scientists to develop and evaluate K-12 comprehensive social competence and health education programs and identifies critical issues that funded projects should address.



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Health promotion programs; Prevention; School-based interventions; Social competence programs

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* We appreciate the helpful intellectual contributions to this article made by Kelly Brownell, Alice S. Jackson, and our collaborators from the Consortium on the School-Based Promotion of Social-Competence: Kenneth A. Dodge, Denise C. Gottfredson, J. David Hawkins, Leonard A. Jason, Philip C. Kendall, Cheryl A. Perry, Mary Jane Rotheram-Borus, Renee Wilson-Brewer, and Joseph E. Zins.

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