



Why D.A.R.E. is Unique and Set Apart from Other Curricula

Comprehensive Coverage

D.A.R.E.'s curricula are effective, impactful, and developmentally age-specific for all grades, preK-2, 3rd and 4th grade, Elementary, Middle, and High School, and include supplemental enhancement lessons including the recently launched K-12 OTC/Rx and Opioid package of lessons.

Comprehensive System of Advisory Boards

D.A.R.E. has always sought oversight for its activities with experts from various fields and has four longstanding advisory boards: Scientific Advisory Board, Education Advisory Board, Law Enforcement Advisory Board, and Youth Advocacy Board.

Robust Training System

The key to effective delivery of school-based, curriculum-driven prevention programming is a comprehensive "system" dedicated to training those who will deliver the curricula. D.A.R.E. has 22 Regional/State Training Centers and six International D.A.R.E. Training Centers that arrange for DOTs (D.A.R.E. Officer Training). The D.A.R.E. Training and Curriculum Committee, consisting of officers with extensive experience delivering curricula, oversee the entire training process. Additionally, every four years, each D.A.R.E. training center undergoes a rigorous accreditation process. Merrill et al. (2006) said: "The only national delivery system for drug abuse prevention in the United States that comes closest to an ideal model is Drug Abuse Resistance Education or D.A.R.E. Essential to understanding how important D.A.R.E. is to the field of prevention is recognizing...the delivery system itself, made up of thousands of trained local law enforcement officer-instructors."

In contrast, the length of training for most other prevention programs is only 2-3 days and is usually offered only to existing classroom teachers. Further, these programs offer neither a nationwide training system for instructors nor a rigorous process to ensure that training centers are accredited.

Highly Trained Officers Deliver the Curricula

Only officers who are carefully vetted by leadership in their community law enforcement agencies are sent to DOTs. They are further vetted by the mentors responsible for training new D.A.R.E. officers. Then, D.A.R.E. officers undergo a rigorous 80-hour training course conducted by mentors with a significant number of years of classroom experience as well as university-level educators in Colleges of Education. All officers are taught to deliver the curricula exactly as they are written, thereby achieving the goal of nearly 100% implementation fidelity. It is important to note that not all who begin a DOT graduate. Throughout the 80-hour course (this includes only time spent receiving instruction, it does not include hours of practicing the lessons in small groups and in front of the entire group) officers in the DOT are assessed for readiness to deliver the curricula. It is not unusual for an officer undergoing the training to be sent home without graduating.

“Local Human Face” for Prevention at the Community-Level

When classroom teachers deliver a prevention curriculum, parents and others in the community think of them as “teachers” of a certain grade, or “teachers” of a certain topic (mathematics, English, Civics, Health Education, etc.), not as teachers of “prevention.” However, parents, school administrators, teachers, and members of the general community think of law enforcement officers as THE D.A.R.E. Officer who teaches drug prevention. The most common comment from parents received by researchers evaluating the effectiveness of D.A.R.E. is: “The D.A.R.E. officer was always at our family dinner table on the days he/she was in our child’s classroom/school.”

Annual National/International Training Conferences

In 2017, D.A.R.E held its 30th annual training conference for D.A.R.E. officers offering over 70 workshops on updates of the curricula and topic-specific issues that will help the officers address issues experienced by youth in preK-12 grades. In addition to the United States, trained officers deliver D.A.R.E. curricula in 52 other countries. The Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Committee of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), responsible for drug abuse issues held its annual summer meeting at the 30th D.A.R.E. training conference.

Annual College Scholarship for One Youth Leader

For 25 years, from 1995-2017, D.A.R.E. America has awarded an annual college scholarship to one member of the Youth Advocacy Board that is comprised of one representative from each state. D.A.R.E. enlists an intensive and extensive review and selection process to select the annual recipient to receive the \$20,000 scholarship. Since 1995, D.A.R.E. has awarded \$440,000 in total scholarship funds; no other curricula program has a college scholarship award.

Every one of the 3,142 counties in the United States contains at least one, often more than one law enforcement agency and one or more community schools with grades pre K-12, and the appropriate educational administrative structures. These local institutions, found universally in all communities, benefit substantially when there is “collaboration” among representatives of the various institutions. Nationally, “community-based policing” is a dominant approach for law enforcement agencies. D.A.R.E. is an essential component of community-based policing.

From a prevention perspective, the pre K-12, D.A.R.E. keepin’ it REAL curricula are targeted at all students (i.e. “universal” prevention) rather than being targeted at students with specific risk factors (“selected” prevention) or at students who are already using drugs (“indicated” prevention). The primary goal of most school-based, curriculum-driven prevention programming is to encourage decisions to never use drugs, or at least facilitate a significant delay in the onset of use of drugs. The focus of social-emotional learning principles in the D.A.R.E./keepin’ it REAL curricula could be critical elements in decisions to not continue using drugs, to encourage decreasing and/or completely stopping the use of drugs.

D.A.R.E. America recognizes that its comprehensive pre K-12 curricula are only one, although a potentially significant part of an overall and comprehensive approach to drug use and abuse. It is important to note that all law enforcement agencies are officially committed to the mission of reducing the supply of drugs (i.e., supply reduction) as well as reducing the demand (demand reduction) for drugs via prevention.