

## **¡Cuidate! (Take Care of Yourself) Evidence of Failure**

“¡Cuidate! (Take Care of Yourself)” is a comprehensive sex education (CSE) program for Latino youth ages 13 to 18 (in grades 8–11). The focus of ¡Cuidate! is to teach children how to use condoms and how to negotiate with sexual partners about abstinence and condom use.

### **Key Points Related to the ¡Cuidate! Curriculum and its Evidence of Failure**

¡CUÍDATE!	Villaruel, et.al., 2006	Abt & Associates, 2015 Kelsey, et.al., 2016
Study conducted by independent evaluator?	NO	YES
Follow-up at least 12 months after the program to show duration of effect?	YES	YES
<b>MEASURES</b>		
Pregnancy rates	Not measured	No effect
STD rates	Not measured	No effect
Sexual initiation	No effect	Increased oral sex for white teens
Consistent condom use	(12 months)*	Not measured
Unprotected sex	12 months	No effect
Number of sex partners	12 months	No effect
Condom use frequency or use at last sex	No effect	No effect
Recent sex	12 months	Increased recent sex for sexually experienced teens
Dual benefit: Delay sexual initiation & increase condom use after 12 months	No effect	No effect
Negative Effects	NO	YES

\* This was a questionable effect: the study did not control for existing pre-test differences

According to the report, *Re-examining the Evidence for Comprehensive Sex Education in Schools: Part One - Research Findings in the United States*, by Stan Weed and Irene Ericksen of The Institute for Research and Evaluation (IRE), the **¡Cuidate! curriculum has not shown sufficient evidence to be considered an effective, evidence-based program for the youth it was designed to serve:**

The original study by the program’s developers found several positive effects after 12 months. However, the positive effect reported for consistent condom use was questionable because the elevated rate for program participants after 12 months was also found at the pre-test and was not

controlled for in the outcome analysis. The replication study by independent evaluators found no positive effects and two negative/harmful effects. **These null and harmful impacts outweigh the positive effects from the initial study and negate the program's claim to be an effective program.**

The IRE analysis found:

1. The positive evidence for ¡Cuidate! was not produced by an independent evaluator: the original outcome study (Villaruel, et.al., 2006) was conducted by the program designers, or, in other words, by those who would benefit from the finding of positive program effects.
2. The positive effect that the initial study reported for consistent condom use was a questionable finding because the elevated rate found for program participants after 12 months was also found at the pre-test and this was not controlled for in the analysis.
3. The other positive outcomes in the initial study were found for less-protective measures of risk behavior – recent sex, number of sex partners, and unprotected sex (a measure that conflates effects on abstinence and condom use); there was **no positive effect on teen sexual initiation or condom use at last intercourse.**
4. The replication study by independent evaluators found **no positive effects and several harmful effects on program participants:** the program increased rates of recent sex for those who were sexually experienced and rates of oral sex for white participants, and **there were no positive effects on sexual initiation, condom use, pregnancy, or STDs.**
5. CSE's so-called "comprehensive" strategy involves teaching two very different messages – both condom use and delay of sexual initiation (i.e., abstinence) – in the same classroom. The initial study did report a dual impact using a less-protective measure of sexual activity (recent sex). But, even this was not found in the replication study, which showed increases in sexual activity. Thus, effectiveness at the purported dual benefit of CSE—increasing both teen abstinence and condom use—was not demonstrated.

**Summary.** In spite of being included on the Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) program's list of programs "showing evidence of effectiveness," **¡Cuidate! has not demonstrated any success at reducing teen pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in school populations in the United States. Moreover, it has not delayed teen sexual initiation, has shown mixed results at increasing rates of teen condom use for the intended population, and has produced significant harmful effects on important subgroups of participants.**