

## *It's Your Game...Keep It Real*

### More Evidence of Failure than Success

<i>It's Your Game... Keep It Real</i>	Tortolero, et al, 2009 <sup>1</sup>	Markham, et al, 2012, 2014 <sup>2</sup>	Potter, et al, 2016 <sup>3</sup>	Coyle, et al, 2016 <sup>4</sup>	Peskin, et al, 2019 <sup>5</sup>
Study conducted by independent evaluators?	<b>NO</b> , study was by the program authors	<b>NO</b> , study was by the program authors	<b>NO</b> , a study author was also a program marketer	<b>NO</b> , lead study author was a program marketer	<b>NO</b> , study was by the program marketers & authors
Follow-up measures 12 months after program?	<b>YES</b> , at 12 months after	<b>YES</b> , at 10 & 24 months after	<b>YES</b> , at 12 months after	<b>YES</b> , at 12 months after	<b>YES</b> , at 12 & 24 months after
<b>OUTCOMES:</b>					
Pregnancy	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured
STDs	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured
Sexual Initiation	<b>Significant only for oral &amp; anal sex, not vaginal</b>	Reduced at 10 but not 24 months after the program*	<b>NEGATIVE EFFECT (increased)</b>	<b>NO EFFECT</b>	<b>NO EFFECT on vaginal or oral sex</b>
Consistent Condom Use	Not measured	Increased at 10 but not 24 months after program	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured
Condom Use At Last Sex	<b>NO EFFECT</b>	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured
Unprotected Sex	<b>NO EFFECT</b>	Reduced at 10 but not 24 months after the program	<b>NO EFFECT</b>	Not measured	Not measured
Number of Sex Partners	<b>NO EFFECT</b>	<b>NEGATIVE EFFECT</b>	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured
Frequency of Sex	<b>Reduced 12 months after program</b>	Reduced at 10 but not 24 months after the program	<b>NO EFFECT</b>	Not measured	Not measured
Dual Effect: Condom Use & Abstinence	<b>NO EFFECT</b>	At 10 but not 24 months after program	<b>NO EFFECT</b>	Not measured	Not measured

\*The positive effect on sexual initiation was not statistically significant for boys and was actually in the negative, i.e., *harmful*, direction. However, with nearly twice as many girls as boys in the sample, the overall effect was positive and statistically significant when boys and girls were combined.

## Key Findings

There have been five studies of *It's Your Game...Keep It Real* (IYG); all have been conducted by the program's developers/authors or marketers. According to a published research review by *The Institute for Research & Evaluation*,<sup>6</sup> **these studies have not produced sufficient evidence to label IYG an effective school-based program.** The two early studies showed some positive effects and one negative/harmful impact—IYG increased the number of sex partners for program participants. The three subsequent studies found no positive effects at all and one found a harmful outcome—program participants had higher rates of sexual initiation after 12 months.<sup>3</sup>

**Summary.** Contrary to the claims of the U.S. Teen Pregnancy Prevention website,<sup>7</sup> *It's Your Game...Keep It Real* has not shown evidence of effectiveness. The field of prevention research stipulates that programs producing important negative effects should not be labeled effective.<sup>8</sup> The multiple harmful impacts produced by IYG, combined with the lack of any positive evidence from independent studies and the fact that the five non-independent studies produced more evidence of failure than success, **invalidates the credibility of IYG and indicates that it may actually do more harm than good in U.S. schools.** (*It's Your Game...Keep It Real* is marketed by ETR, an offshoot of Planned Parenthood.)

1. Tortolero SR, Markham CM, Fleschler Peskin M, Shegog R, Addy RC, Escobar-Chavez SL, et al. (2009). It's Your Game: Keep It Real: Delaying sexual behavior with an effective middle school program. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 46*(2), 1-11.
2. Markham CM, Tortolero SR, Peskin MF, Shegog R, Thiel M, Baumler ER, Addy RC, Escobar-Chaves SL, Reininger B, & Robin L. (2012). Sexual risk avoidance and sexual risk reduction interventions for middle school youth: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 50*(3), 279-288; Markham CM, Peskin MF, Shegog R, Baumler ER, Addy RC, Thiel M, Escobar-Chaves SL, Robin L, & Tortolero SR. (2014). Behavioral and psychosocial effects of two middle school sexual health education programs at tenth-grade follow-up. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 54*(2), 151-159.
3. Potter SC, Coyle KK, Glassman JR, Kershner S, & Prince MS. (2016). It's your game. . .keep it real in South Carolina: A group randomized trial evaluating the replication of an evidence-based adolescent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection prevention program. *American Journal of Public Health, 106*, S60-S69. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2016.303419.
4. Coyle K, Anderson P, Laris BA, Unti T, Franks H, & Glassman J. (2015). Evaluation of It's Your Game: Keep It Real in Houston, TX: Final report. Scotts Valley, CA: ETR Associates.
5. Peskin MF, Coyle K, Anderson PM, Laris BA, Glassman JR, et al. (2019). Replication of It's Your Game...Keep It Real! in Southeast Texas. *The Journal of Primary Prevention, 40*(3), 297-323.
6. Ericksen IH, Weed SE. (2019). "Re-Examining the Evidence for School-based Comprehensive Sex Education: A Global Research Review." *Issues in Law and Medicine, 34*(2):161-182.
7. See: <https://tpevidencereview.youth.gov/EvidencePrograms.aspx>
8. Gottfredson DC, Cook TD, Gardner FEM, Gorman-Smith D, Howe GW, et al. (2015). Standards of Evidence for Efficacy, Effectiveness, and Scale-up Research in Prevention Science: Next Generation. *Prevention Science, 16*(7), 893-926. Retrieved from [http://www.preventionresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Standards-of-Evidence\\_2015.pdf](http://www.preventionresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Standards-of-Evidence_2015.pdf)