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| **Underage Drinking Prevention Strategies** *By Sarah Barton, Sagamore Institute Faith in Communities, 2004* Within the “risk and protective factors” framework of addressing the issue of youth substance, there are a variety of specific prevention strategies. (Additional information about the risk and protective factor model can be found in the section of this toolkit entitled [“Current Prevention Theories and Practices.”](http://www.urbanministry.org/wiki/current-prevention-theories-and-practices))  * + **Community Based Strategies**:  Community based prevention strategies include (1) reducing access to alcohol; (2) establishing community laws and norms that disapprove of underage drinking; (3) increasing awareness about the nature and extent of underage drinking; (4) mobilizing the community to develop neighborhoods where atmosphere, appearance, and safety are important; (5) increasing supervision of young people; and (6) providing opportunities for youth to contribute to the community.

 * + **School Based Strategies**:  School based prevention strategies include (1) policies that encourage an alcohol free life-style; (2) classroom curricula that assist young people in developing good interpersonal skills and social competence; (3) communities and schools working together; (4) positive behavior management; and (5) accurate information on the role or roles of alcohol.

 * + **Family Based Strategies**:  Family based prevention strategies include (1) parent education to influence attitudes and behavior toward underage drinking; (2) addressing family structure and function problems, such as how to set limits in age-appropriate ways; and (3) addressing family conflicts such as substance abuse, violence, divorce and illness.

 * + **Individual/Peer Group Based Strategies**:  Individual and peer group based prevention strategies include (1) building personal competence such as decision-making and people skills; (2) mentoring programs; (3) teaching on the appropriate use of time; and (4) identification of individual reasons for substance use, such as self-medication, testing rules, and others.

 * + **Comprehensive Prevention Programs**:  Comprehensive prevention programs include all of the strategies listed above and involve multiple goals to be accomplished simultaneously.  All segments of the community are involved and work together toward preventing substance use among youth.  Organizations with limited resources will need to determine which strategies they wish to make a priority.

[www.Urbanministry.org](http://www.Urbanministry.org). (Adapted from [*Community How To Guide On Prevention and Education*](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol/Community%20Guides%20HTML/Guides_index.html), National Association of Governors’ Highway Safety Representatives, 2001.) **Characteristics of Effective After-School Prevention Programs***The following elements will help you to determine if your after-school program measures up to best prevention practices.  Does your program:* * + Respond to the needs and interests of youth?
	+ Include a mix of youth (not just at-risk youth)?
	+ Act as part of a comprehensive prevention program that reinforces its lessons and addresses specific factors that influence drug use?
	+ Promote positive development and resilience of youth by enhancing their competence, sense of autonomy and purpose?
	+ Extend the reach of prevention efforts to youth who are at high risk for, or have already tried alcohol or drugs, and teaches the skills needed for success?
	+ Maintain an encouraging, cooperative, supportive, but structured environment that emphasizes participation and collaboration rather than competition?
	+ Involve youth in planning and running the program, and serving as a resource to their peers and their community?

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