

Oklahoma Abstinence Education Grant Program Evaluation

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Two youth related programs, YW8 and Multi-County Youth Services, provided abstinence-based education using the Choosing the Best curriculum to youth in several Oklahoma schools. Pre and post surveys along with satisfaction surveys were conducted and evaluated. Twenty-four of the thirty questions related to healthy choices and delaying sexual activity showed a statistically significant increase in desired responses. The satisfaction survey also showed an increase in knowledge and beliefs related to delaying sexual activity and preventing STDs.

Evaluation of
two
Community
Programs

Introduction:

In 2013, Oklahoma ranked nationally 47th in the nation for teen births, with 47.8 births per thousand teen girls 15 to 19 years of age.¹ In 2010, the most recent year for which data was available, public spending on teen childbearing in Oklahoma totaled \$169 million.² According to the CDC, prevalence estimates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) suggest that young people 15-24 years of age acquire half of all new STDs, and that 1 in 4 sexually active adolescent females have an STD.³ Additionally, sexually active teens are at higher risk for acquiring STDs when compared with older adults.³

Several abstinence based education curricula exist to help reduce the level of teen births and prevent STDs among teens. One such curriculum, *Choosing the Best*, was implemented in several Oklahoma schools by two programs, YW8 (pronounced 'why wait'), located in Ardmore, and Multi-County Youth Services, located in Clinton. The curriculum encourages students to make healthy life choices while teaching the consequences of sex and reasons to remain abstinent.

Curriculum:

Founded in 1993, *Choosing the Best* is a national leader in abstinence-focused sex and relationship education. It uses a teaching approach that moves students from a cognitive understanding of the facts to a personal awareness that leads to changed behavior.⁴

Middle School Programs:

Choosing the Best WAY

Grade 6. Nearly 1 in 10 kids reports losing virginity before age 13. Early intervention is crucial to lifelong health, and these six lessons teach abstinence as the best way to show respect for yourself and others.

Choosing the Best PATH

Grade 7. One in 5 Americans aged 12 and up contract genital herpes. Assertiveness training in these eight lessons engages students in learning how to say "NO" to premarital sex and "YES" to healthy relationships.

Choosing the Best LIFE

Grade 8. One-fourth of new STDs occur in boys and girls aged 15-19. Eight lessons emphasize the straight facts about health risks — and give students the emotional strength and self-discipline to commit to abstinence until marriage.

Evaluation:

Pre and post surveys were used to determine student demographics and to measure improved knowledge, beliefs, and health outcomes as a result of the abstinence based education program. Student satisfaction surveys were also employed to determine student opinion on the program and the *Choosing the Best* curricula.

Demographics:

In the fall and spring semesters of the 2013-2014 academic year, the program was implemented in 11 schools. Table 1 shows the schools where students participated in the evaluation.

Table 1

School Name	County	Number of Students	Percent of Total
Ardmore Middle School	Carter	561	27.2
Burns Flat Junior High School	Washita	30	1.5
Canute Junior High School	Washita	91	4.4
Cordell Junior High School	Washita	85	4.1
Dickson Middle School	Carter	255	12.4
Hydro Eakly Schools	Caddo	37	1.8
Independence Charter Middle School	Oklahoma	177	8.6
Lone Grove Middle School	Carter	277	13.5
Merritt Junior High School	Beckham	137	6.7
Plainview Middle School	Carter	303	14.7
Sayre Middle School	Beckham	106	5.1

2,059 pre surveys and 1,894 post surveys were completed, which resulted in 1,776 matched pairs. Demographical breakdowns from pre surveys and matched pairs are shown in Table 2. When comparing the matched pairs to the characteristics of all students who took the pre survey, the distributions are very similar. It should be noted that students that participated in this evaluation were not chosen to be a representative sample of their schools or students in the state overall. They are students who voluntarily agreed to participate and whose parent or guardian signed a consent form. Characteristics of study participants were also determined, in part, by the geographic location in which the abstinence education programs were implemented.

Table 2

	Pre Survey		Matched Pairs	
	N	%	N	%
Gender				
Female	1073	52.1	926	52.1
Male	986	47.9	850	47.9
Grade				
6 th Grade	535	26.0	452	25.5
7 th Grade	734	35.6	630	35.5
8 th Grade	790	38.4	694	39.1
Race				
African American (Black)	152	7.4	130	7.3
American Indian/Native American	282	13.7	238	13.4
Asian/Pacific Islander	29	1.4	24	1.4
White	1127	54.7	988	55.6
Multi-Racial	298	14.5	254	14.3
Other	171	8.3	142	8.0

Hispanic/Latino Origin				
Yes	338	16.4	285	16.0
No	1721	83.6	1491	84.0
Free/Reduced Lunch				
Yes	576	28.0	464	26.1
No	795	38.6	712	40.1
Don't know	688	33.4	600	33.8

Results:

Pre and post surveys were matched using a de-identified student ID number (created specifically to match surveys and could not be traced back to the student), which resulted in 1,776 matched pairs. One school, Independence Charter Middle School, varied from the evaluation criteria, resulting in their data being omitted from the pre/post survey analysis. The remaining 1,599 matched surveys were then evaluated using a paired t-test, which is the test statistic commonly used to compare a sample group's scores before and after an intervention. In this analysis, the t-value shows that a difference was observed between pre and post, and a p-value less than 0.05 means the difference is significant.

Questions showing the most significant differences from pre to post asked students about their degree of agreement to the statements 'Being abstinent makes a relationship stronger', 'Being abstinent in a relationship means you have fewer risks and pressures to worry about', and 'If I have sexual intercourse, I could get pregnant or get someone else pregnant'. Additional questions with significant differences asked about true statements regarding HIV/AIDS, the consequences of teenage pregnancy, and whether students had discussed sex, sexual intercourse, STDs, and pregnancy with their parents. See tables in Attachment 1.

Feedback:

Satisfaction surveys were distributed to students at the end of the program period. A total of 1,887 satisfaction surveys were received. Selected results of the student satisfaction survey are listed below. A more detailed list of responses to the student satisfaction survey is located in Attachment 2.

- 70% of students strongly agreed and 27% of students agreed that they would use the information from the program to make healthy life choices.
- 67% strongly agreed and 29% agreed that the lessons in *Choosing the Best* are useful for teens today.
- 25% strongly agreed and 43% agreed that they would talk to their parents about what they've learned in the program.
- On questions where students wrote individualized feedback, the majority of students listed something positive or neutral that they learned from the *Choosing the Best* curriculum. The most common feedback was that teens needed to delay sex and that sex causes STDs. Also frequently listed was that teens should remain abstinent until marriage.

- Included in the satisfaction survey, students were asked if there were any additional topics that should be covered. Some requested topics included dating, bullying, safe use of social media (including cyberbullying and sexting), date rape, and drugs and alcohol.
- When asked about possible changes in the program, students gave feedback that they would like more information, more games, and updated books and videos for the *Choosing the Best* curricula.
- Additional feedback given included that the class was helpful, that it was awkward, that boys and girls should be taught separately, and that the class and various instructors were good.

Summary:

Students in the abstinence education program were predominantly female, white, and in the 8th grade. The majority of survey responses showed a significant increase in healthy choices, willingness to delay sexual activity, and willingness to discuss these topics with parents. As questions 37-40 from the survey show, a significantly higher portion of students were willing to talk to their parents after the program than before.

Based on the student satisfaction survey, the majority of students learned that delaying sex can have value in their lives and how abstinence can prevent STDs.

A more detailed list of responses to the student satisfaction survey follows this report.

Limitations:

As with any survey, we can only track changes in responses between pre and post surveys. This may or may not reflect the actual decisions of teens involved with this program in terms of healthy life choices and the decision to delay sexual activity.

References:

- 1) Oklahoma Teen Birth Rate. *America's Health Rankings*. Retrieved August 11, 2014, from <http://www.americashealthrankings.org/measures/Measure/OK/TeenBirth>
- 2) Oklahoma, *The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy*. Retrieved August 11, 2014, from <http://thenationalcampaign.org/data/state/oklahoma>
- 3) 2012 Sexually Transmitted Diseases Surveillance. (2014, January 7). Retrieved August 11, 2014, from <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats12/adol.htm>
- 4) *Choosing the Best*. *Curricula*. Retrieved August 11, 2014, from <http://www.choosingthebest.com/index.php/curricula>

Attachment 1 – Data Tables of Survey Questions

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total N	t-value	p-value
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Question 11	I have a clear picture of what I'd like to be doing in the future.										
Pre	638	40.0	731	45.8	201	12.6	26	1.6			
Post	759	47.6	682	42.7	130	8.1	25	1.6	1596	6.57	0.00
Question 12	I feel that I have many good qualities.										
Pre	622	39.1	852	53.6	87	5.5	29	1.8			
Post	735	46.2	762	47.9	75	4.7	18	1.1	1590	5.37	0.00
Question 13	My relationship with my family is very valuable to me.										
Pre	1229	77.2	309	19.4	39	2.4	16	1.0			
Post	1250	78.5	285	17.9	38	2.4	20	1.3	1593	0.60	0.55
Question 14	Most teens are not ready to face the problems created from having sex.										
Pre	924	59.0	472	30.1	105	6.7	65	4.2			
Post	1050	67.0	423	27.0	61	3.9	32	2.0	1566	7.11	0.00
Question 15	A boy isn't really a man until he has had sexual intercourse.										
Pre	55	3.5	130	8.3	439	28.0	944	60.2			
Post	46	2.9	67	4.3	328	20.9	1127	71.9	1568	-8.47	0.00
Question 16	A girl isn't really a woman until she has had sexual intercourse.										
Pre	58	3.7	109	7.0	430	27.6	962	61.7			
Post	44	2.8	59	3.8	319	20.5	1137	72.9	1559	-8.16	0.00

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total N	t-value	p-value
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Question 17	Having sex is a good way to impress my friends.										
Pre	20	1.3	33	2.1	274	17.3	1260	79.4	1587	1.06	0.29
Post	23	1.4	53	3.3	250	15.8	1261	79.5			
Question 18	Having sex would be a way for me to show that I love someone.										
Pre	60	3.8	203	13.0	476	30.5	821	52.6	1560	-4.16	0.00
Post	69	4.4	154	9.9	411	26.3	926	59.4			
Question 19	A person should not pressure someone into having sex.										
Pre	1095	69.1	265	16.7	57	3.6	167	10.5	1584	5.03	0.00
Post	1180	74.5	262	16.5	35	2.2	107	6.8			
Question 20	My parents/guardians are okay with me dating.										
Pre	465	29.6	737	47.0	230	14.7	137	8.7	1569	3.03	0.00
Post	503	32.1	721	46.0	231	14.7	114	7.3			
Question 21	It is important to me that I avoid getting a sexually transmitted disease (STD).										
Pre	1301	84.0	140	9.0	23	1.5	85	5.5	1549	2.64	0.01
Post	1352	87.3	118	7.6	11	0.7	68	4.4			

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total N	t-value	p-value
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Question 22	Teens who don't want to have sex can resist peer pressure to have sex.										
Pre	641	43.2	642	43.3	155	10.5	45	3.0			
Post	710	47.9	609	41.1	121	8.2	43	2.9	1483	3.11	0.00
Question 23	I could break up with someone who was pressuring me to have sex.										
Pre	1017	64.5	436	27.7	78	4.9	45	2.9			
Post	1082	68.7	406	25.8	59	3.7	29	1.8	1576	3.68	0.00
Question 24	Even if I have had sex, I can decide to not have sex again until I'm married										
Pre	898	58.7	527	34.5	61	4.0	43	2.8			
Post	992	64.9	474	31.0	43	2.8	20	1.3	1529	5.30	0.00
Question 25	Being abstinent in a relationship means you have fewer risks and pressures to worry about.										
Pre	722	49.9	531	36.7	139	9.6	56	3.9			
Post	958	66.2	393	27.1	64	4.4	33	2.3	1448	10.54	0.00
Question 26	Being abstinent makes a relationship stronger.										
Pre	544	38.5	583	41.3	203	14.4	83	5.9			
Post	861	60.9	404	28.6	104	7.4	44	3.1	1413	14.38	0.00
Question 27	The majority of teens are not having sexual intercourse.										
Pre	114	7.7	446	30.1	639	43.2	281	19.0			
Post	239	16.1	445	30.1	529	35.7	267	18.0	1480	6.46	0.00

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	t-value	p-value
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N		
Question 28	If you have sexual intercourse, you could get pregnant or get someone else pregnant.										
Pre	801	53.4	602	40.2	55	3.7	41	2.7			
Post	1023	68.2	429	28.6	24	1.6	23	1.5	1499	9.53	0.00
Question 29	I can have a romantic relationship without having sexual activity.										
Pre	1100	69.8	408	25.9	45	2.9	23	1.5			
Post	1180	74.9	335	21.3	40	2.5	21	1.3	1576	3.52	0.00
Question 30	The word abstinence refers to all statements listed below, except one										
	A. Postponing sexual activity										
	B. Being absent from school										
	C. Making the choice to not have sexual activity										
	A		B		C						
	N	%	N	%	N	%	Total N		t-value	p-value	
Pre	105	7.0	1143	75.8	259	17.2					
Post	111	7.4	1195	79.3	201	13.3	1507		2.75	0.01	
Question 31	Which of the following is not a characteristic of a healthy relationship										
	A. Communication										
	B. Trust										
	C. Honesty										
	D. Being Possessive										
	A		B		C		D				
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Total N	t-value	p-value
Pre	36	2.3	42	2.7	41	2.7	1416	92.2			
Post	41	2.7	32	2.1	30	2.0	1432	93.3	1535	1.31	0.19

Question 32 Which of the following best describes your plans about having sex in the future?

- A. I plan to wait until marriage before having sex
- B. I plan to wait until after I graduate from high school before having sex
- C. I plan to wait until at least one year from now before having sex
- D. I don't plan to wait before having sex

	A		B		C		D		Total N	t-value	p-value
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Pre	1165	75.2	267	17.2	57	3.7	61	3.9	1550	0.44	0.66
Post	1171	75.5	253	16.3	56	3.6	70	4.5			

Question 33 Have you abstained from sexual activity up until now?

	Yes		No		Don't Know		Total N	t-value*	p-value*
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Pre	1274	80.7	113	7.2	191	12.1	1578	-1.78	0.08
Post	1364	86.4	133	8.4	81	5.1			

*"Don't know" replies not included in analysis

Question 34 If your boyfriend/girlfriend did try to get you to have sex with him/her during the next year, what would you do?

- A. I definitely would not do it
- B. I probably would not do it
- C. I probably would do it
- D. I definitely would do it

	A		B		C		D		Total N	t-value	p-value
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Pre	1078	68.4	314	19.9	140	8.9	43	2.7	1575	-0.46	0.65
Post	1077	68.4	313	19.9	134	8.5	51	3.2			

- Question 35 Which of the statements about HIV/AIDS is true?
- A. HIV/AIDS destroys the immune system's ability to fight off infections and diseases
 - B. You can tell if a person has HIV/AIDS by looking at them
 - C. Wearing a condom will prevent HIV/AIDS
 - D. Sexual activity doesn't put you at risk for HIV/AIDS

	A		B		C		D		Total N	t-value	p-value
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Pre	1187	80.8	62	4.20	174	11.8	46	3.1			
Post	1390	94.6	29	2.0	30	2.0	20	1.4	1469	12.61	0.00

- Question 36 Which of the consequences listed below are faced by pregnant teens?
- A. The mother unable to finish education
 - B. Poor health of the child (low birth weight)
 - C. Child performing poorly in school
 - D. All of the above

	A		B		C		D		Total N	t-value	p-value
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Pre	293	18.8	32	2.1	16	1.0	1216	78.1			
Post	148	9.5	28	1.8	9	0.6	1372	88.1	1557	9.06	0.00

In the past month, have you talked with your parents about the following:

Dating

	Yes		No		Total N	t-value	p-value
	N	%	N	%			
Pre	1006	63.2	585	36.8	1591	3.35	0.00
Post	1074	67.5	517	32.5			

Sex/Sexual Intercourse

	Yes		No		Total N	t-value	p-value
	N	%	N	%			
Pre	409	25.7	1182	74.3	1591	9.96	0.00
Post	615	38.7	976	61.3			

STDs and health problems related to sex

	Yes		No		Total N	t-value	p-value
	N	%	N	%			
Pre	296	18.6	1294	81.4	1590	8.53	0.00
Post	468	29.4	1122	70.6			

Pregnancy

	Yes		No		Total N	t-value	p-value
	N	%	N	%			
Pre	399	25.1	1192	74.9	1591	8.07	0.00
Post	564	35.4	1027	64.6			

Attachment 2 – Summary of student satisfaction survey questions.

Many students listed several items for each question, replied to a question in the space for a different question, or left a question blank; therefore the number of replies will not total the number of surveys received.

Question 4 – What is one thing you learned from the Choosing the Best lessons?

- To be abstinent/stay abstinent/not to have sex until marriage – 857 replies
- About STDs/condom failure rate – 464 replies
- About the consequences of sex (including teen pregnancy or getting an STD) – 250 replies
- How to make healthy choices/how to make good decisions/how to set boundaries – 165 replies
- About healthy relationships/friendships – 55 replies

Examples of responses to Question 4

- Being abstinent is a good thing because it is a low risk that will keep you safe.
- How not to make bad decisions on having sex and understanding consequences.
- I have learned that there are a lot more risks to having sex, not just getting pregnant or getting AIDS.
- I learned why parents don't let you do what you want on your own.
- If you wait, you will be able to have a stronger relationship.
- Respect yourself. Don't have sex until marriage and don't be pressured into doing stuff.
- That there are two different types of diseases viral and bacterial, viral can't be cured/bacterial can.
- What to do if someone pressures you into sex.
- You don't need to have sex to be liked by your friends.

Question 5 – Was there anything that you think should have been covered in this program that did not get covered?

- Bullying – 48 replies
- Social media/sexting/cyberbullying – 48 replies
- Condoms/birth control for sexually active students, how to use them, where to get them – 30 replies
- Dating/dealing with drama from dating – 24 replies
- Drugs or alcohol – 23 replies
- Teen pregnancy/abortion – 21 replies
- Rape/sexual abuse – 19 replies
- Different ways to have sex/how to have sex/the science of having sex – 19 replies
- Dealing with stress/depression/self-harm – 14 replies
- Puberty – 13 replies
- Peer pressure – 8 replies

Examples of responses to Question 5:

- About how if you have sex you shouldn't be ashamed.
- Everything was answered that I wanted to know.

- Facebook, there was no information on social media and online actions, there was no information about sexual on-line predators.
- How to deal with people and friends and/or if someone tries to fight you and no adult is around what to do.
- How to talk to your parents if you got someone or got pregnant and abortion.
- Like self-harming, starving, trying to feel good about yourself.
- Yes because people get bullied on the bus and someone needs to stand up to them.

Question 6 – Are there any changes you would like to see in the Choosing the Best lessons?

- More games/more fun games – 109 replies
- Better/updated/longer videos – 79 replies
- Longer program (more weeks) – 65 replies
- More/better explanations and descriptions/more blunt descriptions – 28 replies
- Give more candy – 26 replies
- Better/updated book – 19 replies
- Less working in books/homework – 19 replies
- Boys and girls in separate classes – 16 replies
- Longer classes – 10 replies
- Don't do the goldfish activity – 9 replies
- Do not force students to answer questions/participate in front of the class – 7 replies

Examples of responses to Question 6

- A bit longer segments. I know they are segments, but still, they're too short. And state what each section is for.
- For it not to make sex look like its gross and can kill you. Don't only show the consequences.
- I don't like the homework. Actually, really nobody likes the homework.
- I think that there should be more times they come so there is more time to go through it
- I think we should do more interacting games like the marriage bed and acting and being assertive.
- I wish the boys and girls were separated because it is a little awkward.
- It's okay to be more graphic for mature people (how you describe)
- Make the class more interesting. Take out awkward things like some "linebackers" and diagrams and activities.
- New video's. The ones we watched seemed like they were filmed in the 80's.
- No, I like it just the way it is, but I do wish it was longer.
- Try getting the program in a computer class so homework can be e-mailed to parents and improve communication.
- Yes, more teenagers telling young kids to stay abstinent instead of adults, to show not to have sex.

Question 7 – Please add any additional comments that you may have.

- Great/liked/loved teacher/how teacher taught – 245 replies
- Great/good/fun/best/loved program/class – 221 replies
- Good/useful/helpful information/learned a lot/learned something – 174 replies
- Liked the activities/games – 135 replies
- Liked the videos – 73 replies

- Liked getting candy – 35 replies
- Thanked the teacher – 28 replies
- Dislike the books – 28 replies
- Disliked this class – 26 replies
- Dislike the videos – 17 replies
- Disliked assignments/homework – 15 replies
- Will be abstinent/will follow the program – 14 replies
- Liked the books – 14 replies
- Liked getting out of another class in order to take this class – 9 replies
- Disliked taking the surveys – 8 replies
- The class is too long – 5 replies

Examples of responses to Question 7

- Everything was good and I am glad I learned this stuff.
- I am grateful you took your time to talk to us about sexual education.
- I did not like you when you put the fish on the table.
- I dislike the homework, but I like the videos. Just wish they talked more.
- I feel if we have a questions, like what is oral sex, it should be answered, not blown over. We deserve to know!
- I find the more fun and embarrassing things the more they are remembered.
- I had someone asking me to have sex and this brought me to see that it isn't right and that I can say no.
- I like how we act out stuff. I dislike how much emphasis they put on your virginity. I wish we learned more of a variety.
- I like how we learned. It was fun and not just boring.
- I like that the videos had real teen's opinions. Not just old people's opinions.
- I like the way of teaching and how things are explained.
- I liked that we covered the different types of STD's and their effects.
- Thanks for being so patient with us! Good job!
- This is a great program. It teaches teens to make the right choices and it makes you stronger about sexual choices.