

# TAKE ACTION

## What Schools Can Do

Schools can implement a range of effective prevention strategies including:

- **Review/Develop school substance policies** and have an overdose response plan
- **Implement evidence-based prevention curriculum** (e.g., life skills, healthy decision-making)
- **Educate** about fentanyl risk (e.g., during classes, special school events, teacher trainings)
- **Allow naloxone** on school grounds and train on naloxone use
- **Educate about proper prescription drug storage and disposal** (e.g., lockboxes, prescription take-back events/boxes)
- **Host drug-free youth coalitions/ youth clubs** providing leadership opportunities and strengthening youth connections to their families, schools, and communities
- **Collect and utilize local data** on students and the community around substance use and its contributing factors
- **Connect students/families** to counseling, treatment, and recovery resources

**99%** of DFC coalitions actively work closely with one or more local schools



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## Implement Evidence-Based Programs

Schools looking to identify and utilize evidence-based programs can find programs certified by Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development. Blueprints maintains a registry of scientifically proven interventions to prevent antisocial behavior and promote healthy development.



## Join / Form a Community Coalition!

Schools are uniquely positioned to promote student health and wellness, but schools do **NOT** have to tackle prevention alone. DFC & CARA coalitions can help schools gather financial and community support and consistently report significant decreases in youth alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and illicit prescription drugs use. These coalitions focus on the range of potential substance use issues, identifying local solutions to local issues.



Scan to access resources and to find an ONDCP-funded DFC or CARA community coalition near you



## What Schools Should Know: Community Coalitions & Fentanyl 101

A collaboration between the **Office of National Drug Control Policy's DFC and CARA Program Office** and **U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Supportive Schools**

## ONDCP Funding for Community Coalitions

Youth, families, schools and communities have all been impacted by substance use including opioid overdoses driven by fentanyl. The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) oversees the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support and CARA Local Drug Crises programs, a crucial part of the Nation's strategy to prevent and reduce youth substance use. These grants fund community-based coalitions to engage multiple sectors of the community in preventing youth substance use by changing the environments in which drug use happens.



### Illicit Fentanyl

Fentanyl is a **powerful opioid** used in medical settings to treat severe pain. Across the US, there has been an increase in counterfeit pills containing illicit fentanyl mixed with other drugs entering communities. In 2020, Over 150 people died every day from overdoses related to illicit fentanyl. **Illicit fentanyl played a role in 84% of youth overdoses from 2019 to 2021.**



Social media, has become the most recent arena for targeting youth to buy illicit pills and increased the risk that youth will access counterfeit pills contaminated with fentanyl. It is difficult to identify real versus illicit pills (in this image from the DEA "One Pill Can Kill" campaign, only the oxycontin on the left is real).

## Students At-Risk

Adolescence is a critical risk period for substance use initiation and related adverse outcomes. Data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) show an escalation of drug use between the ages of 12 and 19. Youth are also increasingly experiencing mental health challenges which contribute to engagement in risky behaviors such as substance use/misuse.

Adolescent drug use may disrupt normal brain development and can result in long-lasting negative consequences, including increased risk of:

- Depression, anxiety,
- Suicide, and
- Substance use disorder (SUD) later in life.



Only 2mg of fentanyl, the amount on the tip of this pencil, can be enough to kill.

- DEA

From Jul. 2019-Dec. 2021, 83.9% of adolescent overdose deaths involved illicitly manufactured fentanyl.

- MMWR

In 2021, **42%** of high school youth felt persistently sad and **29%** reported poor mental health.

- CDC

## Prevention Works: Benefits to Schools, Educators, and Students

**Prevention is cost effective**, saving an estimated \$18 for every dollar invested in effective school prevention **and provides sustained positive, school-related impacts:**

- **Improved academic achievement**
- **Decreased delinquency and violence** which contribute to classroom disruptions
- **Increased time spent in school**, leading to fewer suspensions and dropouts



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### Engage Youth in the Solution

Youth who feel connected to their schools and community are less likely to engage in substance use and have fewer mental health issues overall. Youth prevention coalitions help build these connections, providing youth with **leadership opportunities, mentoring, social support, and education.**

Engaging **youth** in prevention efforts and encouraging **youth leadership:**

- **Informs** more effective prevention efforts.
- **Elevates** youth **voices in advocating for substance use/misuse prevention** within their schools and communities.
- **Builds** stronger schools.