Positive Choices
Drug and Alcohol Information
Get informed, stay smart, stay safe

Can alcohol and drug education shape youth futures? Reflecting on 10 years of Positive Choices

10 years of Positive Choices

It's been 10 years since Positive Choices first launched in December 2015! We would like to thank the many school staff, parents, students, and community members who have supported Positive Choices over the years.

At this milestone, we wanted to share a few highlights from the past 10 years as well as the findings from our most recent evaluation.

10 highlights for 10 years of Positive Choices

- Over 4.7 million website users and over 8.6 million page views.
- Resources accessed by people from 221 countries.
- Launch of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Peoples portal in 2017 following development with feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.
- Launch of the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Peoples resources in 2021 with culturally adapted factsheets available in Arabic, Hindi, Simplified Chinese, and Simplified English.
- 34 webinars delivered to help inform parents and train school staff, with over 34,000 views.
- In 2021 launch of the "In the Know" platform to provide evidence informed perspectives on current alcohol and drug topics in Australia.
- Distributed more than 363,000 teacher, parent, and student booklets.
- Development of 79 in-house factsheets providing information on topics from medical stimulants and study drugs to how to talk to young people about vaping.
- A database of 15 recommended programs with proven effectiveness for preventing alcohol and drug use and related harms including for vaping and alcohol.
- In 2021 360Edge conducted an independent evaluation of Positive Choices and praised the rigorous evaluation methods, stakeholder relationships, and community reach.

Evaluating Positive Choices

Since Positive Choices was launched in 2015, we routinely evaluate the website. This helps us make sure the content we share meets the needs of users. It also helps us to identify and respond to emerging needs within the community. The feedback we receive helps us provide more relevant and trustworthy resources to support parents, school staff, and students. In total, we have heard from 1,234 school staff, 1,024 parents, and 305 students. We also welcome feedback and suggestions at any time through ourcontact form. Some of our evaluations have been published in peer-reviewed journals, in2017 and 2022.

At this milestone, we wanted to share the findings from our most recent evaluation. This evaluation recruited participants from May 2024 until April 2025. We used a respected framework for health promotion evaluation called "RE-AIM" which considers the reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation, and maintenance of Positive Choices. See below to learn more about who participated in the evaluation and what we found.

Who were the participants?

Participants were a small sub-sample of Australian school staff (n = 46) and parents and guardians (n = 85).

School Staff n=46

Average age: 42 years

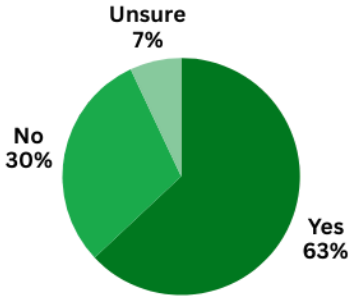
74% female, 25% male

74% from major cities

22% from regional areas

4% from remote areas

Had school staff used *Positive Choices* before?



Parents & Guardians n=85

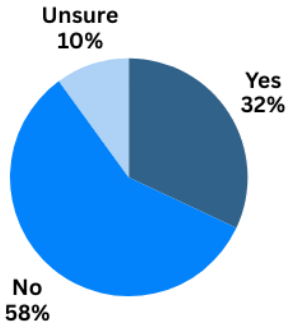
Average age: 42 years

78% female, 21% male, 1% non-binary

80% from major cities

20% from regional areas

Had parents and guardians used *Positive Choices* before?



Reach - how many people access Positive Choices?

During the site evaluation period over 504,000 users used the site, adding up to over 888,000 page views.

Effectiveness – does using Positive Choices increase intentions to implement evidence-based alcohol and other drug resources and practices?

We know there are evidence-based alcohol and other drug prevention approaches that are effective when implemented in schools. You canlearn more about what works in our three-part factsheet series or view our recommended programs.

Likewise, there are things that parents can do to help reduce alcohol and other drug related harms. For example, not supplying alcohol to teenagersmore than halves the risk of them having alcohol use problems at age 19. Similarly, parental monitoring can help to protect teenagers against later alcohol use and related harms.

Positive Choices aims to increase how many people use these evidence-based strategies. This section of the evaluation looks at how effective Positive Choices was at doing that.

We saw that most people who weren't already implementing evidence-based behaviours said they would after accessing the site, across a range of behaviour items.

School Staff:

- The majority (57%) of school staff were already implementing evidence-based alcohol and other drug prevention resources. Among those who were not, 84% intended to after using Positive Choices.
- The majority (70%) of school staff who were already communicating the risks and effects of alcohol and other drugs to their students. Among those who were not, 92% planned to start.
- The majority (61%) of school staff were already correcting student misperceptions about alcohol and other drug use. Of those who were not, 82% intended to commence this after viewing the Positive Choices website.

Parents and guardians:

- Most (62%) parents and guardians said they were already having explicit conversations about alcohol and other drugs with their children. Among those who were not, 88% planned to do so after using Positive Choices.
- About half (54%) of parents were already correcting misconceptions about alcohol and other drug use not being the norm, and among those who were not 85% planned to implement this after using Positive Choices.
- Most (79%) parents and guardians were monitoring their children's whereabouts, and of those who were not already doing so, 67% reported that they will in the future.
- Most parents in the survey were already avoiding supplying alcohol to their children (76%). Of those who were not doing this, 65% reported that they would avoid supplying alcohol after viewing resources on Positive Choices.

- Most parents said they adapted their own alcohol and other drug use to model appropriate behaviour for their children (59%), and of the remaining parents, 51% planned to modify their behaviour after using Positive Choices.

Adoption – what are the barriers to accessing and using evidence-based prevention strategies?

We know sometimes there can be factors which get in the way of accessing or using evidence-based resources like those on Positive Choices. For both school staff and parents, the top barriers faced were a lack of time, competing priorities, and a lack of culturally appropriate resources.

Implementation – is Positive Choices usable?

We used the System Usability Scale (SUS) to see how usable Positive Choices is. Positive Choices was rated as having**good** usability by both school staff (mean score 79.2) and parents and guardians (mean score 73.3). Positive Choices was also rated highly against key website elements including navigation, relevance, and clarity.

Maintenance – will people keep using Positive Choices?

Almost half of the participants were already using Positive Choices (school staff 52%; parents and guardians 44%). Among those who were not, most planned to do so in the future (school staff 81%; parents and guardians 88%).

Planned improvements informed by user feedback

The evaluation helps us know how we can improve Positive Choices and better support you. Some changes we are making include:

- Making the evidence-base clearer
  - All resources on the Positive Choices website are formally evaluated to make sure they meet evidence-based standards.
  - Resources developed by the Positive Choices team use up-to-date research literature and are reviewed by experts. The medal rating system can help you tell the level of evidence supporting a resource.
  - Some resources also have a list of sources in the evidence base section, and we will be adding these to all new resources.
- Addressing barriers
  - New factsheets and blog posts now have an estimated reading time.
  - We look for implementation studies of recommended programs, to see if teachers find them easy to use in their classes and take this into account when recommending a program.
- More culturally inclusive resources
  - Positive Choices has resources available for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse peoples, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
  - We conduct an annual scoping review where we look for new resources to add to the website, including resources that are culturally inclusive.
- New content
  - Based on specific feedback, new content will cover covering myth busting around alcohol supply and allowing children to drink, zero alcohol drinks, and mental health and substance use.

Future evaluations

Thank you again for supporting Positive Choices. If you would like to participate in evaluations in the future, please sign up to our newsletter here.

Sources

1. Fitzgeraldson, E., Russell, A., Devine, E., Garruccio, R., Guckel, T., Chapman, C., Duong, F., Ross, K., Teesson, M., Newton, N.#, Stapinski, L.#(2025). *Evaluating the* Positive Choices *alcohol and other drug prevention initiative using the RE-AIM framework.* Report prepared for the Alcohol and Other Drugs Branch, Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.
2. Stapinski, L. A., Nepal, S., Guckel, T., Grummitt, L. R., Chapman, C., Lynch, S. J., Lawler, S. M., Teesson, M., & Newton, N. C. (2022). Evaluation of Positive Choices, a National Initiative to Disseminate Evidence-Based Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Strategies: Web-Based Survey Study.*JMIR Pediatrics and Parenting, 5*(3), e34721. https://doi.org/10.2196/34721
3. Stapinski, L., Lawler, S., Newton, N., Reda, B., Chapman, C. & Teesson, M. (2017). Empowering young people to make Positive Choices: Evidence-based resources for the prevention of alcohol and other drug use in Australian schools. *Learning Communities: International Journal of Learning in Social Contexts [Special Issue: 2017 30th ACHPER International Conference]*, 21, 152-167. https://doi.org/10.18793/LCJ2017.21.12

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