



# Drugs and Alcohol Information

Get informed, stay smart, stay safe

## Aussie Optimism Program



### Evidence ratings:

This resource is supported by one published study. See our [Help/Q&A section](#) for more details.

**Year:** Year 1–2, Year 3–4, Year 5–6, Year 7–8

**Targeted Drugs:** Alcohol, Drugs (General), Tobacco

**Tags:**

**Time Allocated:** 7 lessons or more

**Links to National Curriculum:**

ACPPS053 (Yr 5–6), ACPPS054 (Yr 5–6), ACPPS072 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS073 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS074 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS075 (Yr 7–8), ACPPS077 (Yr 7–8)

**Origin:** Australian

**Cost:**

Costs Involved

### Developers

Curtin University

### Available

[Access the Aussie Optimism Program](#)

### Format

The classroom-based programs consist of 10 weekly one-hour lessons. Age appropriate materials are available for the following levels:

#### Primary School programs:

- Years 1-3: Feelings and Friends
- Year 4: Positive Thinking
- Years 5-6: Social Life Skills.

#### Secondary School programs:

- Years 7-8: Optimistic Thinking Skills.

#### Parents and Families program (age 11 and onwards):

This self-directed program is designed for families with a developing adolescent who is making the transition to high school and helps parents and families work together to navigate the sometimes tricky path of parenting an adolescent.

### Summary

Children and adolescents often experience stress, for example peer pressure, family conflict, moving from primary school to high school, increased demands of study, performance expectations and body changes. Children and adolescents cannot always be protected from stress, however, they can be provided with the skills necessary to cope with stress and to rise above life's difficulties and challenges.

**Aussie Optimism is a health promotion program for children in primary and secondary school. It takes a positive psychology approach, helping to build core competencies in students, such as how to:**

- Identify and manage feelings
- Make and maintain friends
- Solve social problems
- Think optimistically to promote self-esteem and bounce back from difficulties.

The program is designed to be implemented in weekly lessons over the course of a term, where students learn practical skills and strategies that relate to social and emotional wellbeing. The program utilises empirically validated psychological and pedagogical techniques. The programs are mapped to the national curriculum for Health and Physical Education, and English.

### Training & Costs

In order to implement the Aussie Optimism program, it is necessary to attend a one-day training workshop. These workshops are currently held at Curtin University in Perth, WA. See the program website for information about the **training workshops** and costs for the **program materials**. Training may be subsidised by a mental health fund if employed by a school. For information about training timetable and costs, contact the workshop co-ordinator Nethalie Coswatte (Email: [nethalie.coswatte@curtin.edu.au](mailto:nethalie.coswatte@curtin.edu.au)).

### Benefits

- Reduced likelihood of alcohol use
- Reduced likelihood of tobacco use.

### Evidence

One randomised controlled trial evaluated the benefits associated with combined implementation of the Social Life Skills program (in Year 6), the Optimistic Thinking Skills program (in Year 7) and the Parents and Families program. Benefits were only observed when teachers received training and ongoing coaching while implementing the program.

**Roberts, C., Williams, R., Kane, R., Pintabona, Y., Cross, D., Zubrick, S., & Silburn, S. (2011). Impact of a mental health promotion program on substance use in young adolescents. *Advances in Mental Health, 10*(1), 72-82.**

Benefits associated with the early primary school programs have not yet been evaluated in a published research study.

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