

Definitions can be found at the [CDC's Adolescent Reproductive Health website](#).

Science-Based Approach

Using *science-based approaches* for teen pregnancy prevention helps ensure that programs have a greater chance of succeeding. A science-based approach includes the following:

- Using demographic, epidemiological and social science research to identify populations at risk of early pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted infections, and to identify the risk and protective factors for those populations.
- Using health behavior or health education theory for selecting risk and protective factors that will be addressed by the program, and guide the selection of intervention activities.
- Using a logic model to link risk and protective factors with program strategies and outcomes.
- Selecting, adapting if necessary, and implementing programs that are either science-based or are a promising program.
- Conducting process and outcome evaluation of the implemented program, and modifying approach based on results.

Science-Based Program

A *science-based program* is one that research has shown to be effective in changing at least one of the following behaviors that contribute to early pregnancy, STD and HIV infection: delaying sexual initiation, reducing the frequency of sexual intercourse, reducing the number of sexual partners, or increasing the use of condoms and other contraceptives. The program was evaluated using a rigorous research design, which includes the following:

- Using an experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation design
- Measuring knowledge, attitude, and behavior
- Having an adequate sample size
- Collecting data from both groups at three months or later after intervention
- Using sound research methods and processes
- Replicating in different locations and finding similar evaluation results
- Publishing results in a peer-reviewed journal

If a science-based program cannot be implemented with fidelity, or cannot be adapted to fit a community's population, then implementing a promising program would be the next best option.

Promising Program

A *promising program* is one that has not been formally evaluated but has most of the characteristics of programs shown to be effective. Dr. Douglas Kirby and colleagues have developed a list of 17 characteristics of effective curriculum-based programs. This list was developed by conducting a systematic review of 83 domestic and international sexuality education and HIV prevention program evaluations. Researchers found that the majority of the effective programs incorporated most of the 17 common characteristics of successful curriculum-

based programs identified in the analysis. The list of characteristics can be viewed [here](#).*

**It is important to note that this list of characteristics applies only to curriculum-based sexuality/HIV education programs. To date there is not a comparable list of characteristics for other types of programs, such as clinic-based, youth development, or parent education programs.*