



# Childhelp Speak Up Be Safe Prevention Education Curriculum K-8 RCT Research Study Report

**ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**SOUTHWEST INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH CENTER**  
**OFFICE OF EVALUATION AND PARTNER CONTRACTS**

**September 2019**

**Wendy Wolfersteig, PhD, Director**  
**Marisol Diaz, JD, Research Analyst**  
**Diane Moreland, MS, Research Analyst**  
**Grant Yoder, MEd, Research Analyst**  
**Mary Harthun, MA, Curriculum Specialist**  
**Patricia A. Dustman, EdD, Director SIRC Development**

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Background.....	3
Status of Child Maltreatment in the United States.....	3
Foundation and Program Overview.....	4
Methods .....	7
Results .....	12
Kindergarten Findings .....	12
Grade 1 Findings .....	13
Grade 2 Findings .....	14
Grade 3 Findings .....	15
Grade 4 Findings .....	16
Grade 5 Findings .....	18
Grade 6 Findings .....	20
Grade 7 Findings .....	23
Grade 8 Findings .....	26
Conclusions.....	29
References.....	30

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the evaluation results from the implementation of the randomized control trial (RCT) of the Childhelp Speak Up Be Safe (SUBS) Prevention Education Curriculum for grades K through 8. The documented results of the RCT showed overall positive statistically significant differences in knowledge scores between RCT groups by grade level. The RCT, seen as the gold standard in assessing the efficacy of an intervention, found that participants in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 who received the SUBS curriculum showed an increase in knowledge of safety rules and strategies, compared to the youth who did not receive the SUBS curriculum. Figure 1 shows overall RCT results by grade for safety knowledge, safety rules, and RESIST strategies.



“Our greatest strides are in **prevention education** where we dream of getting in front of a crisis **before abuse even starts.**”

--Yvonne Fedderson, Childhelp Founder

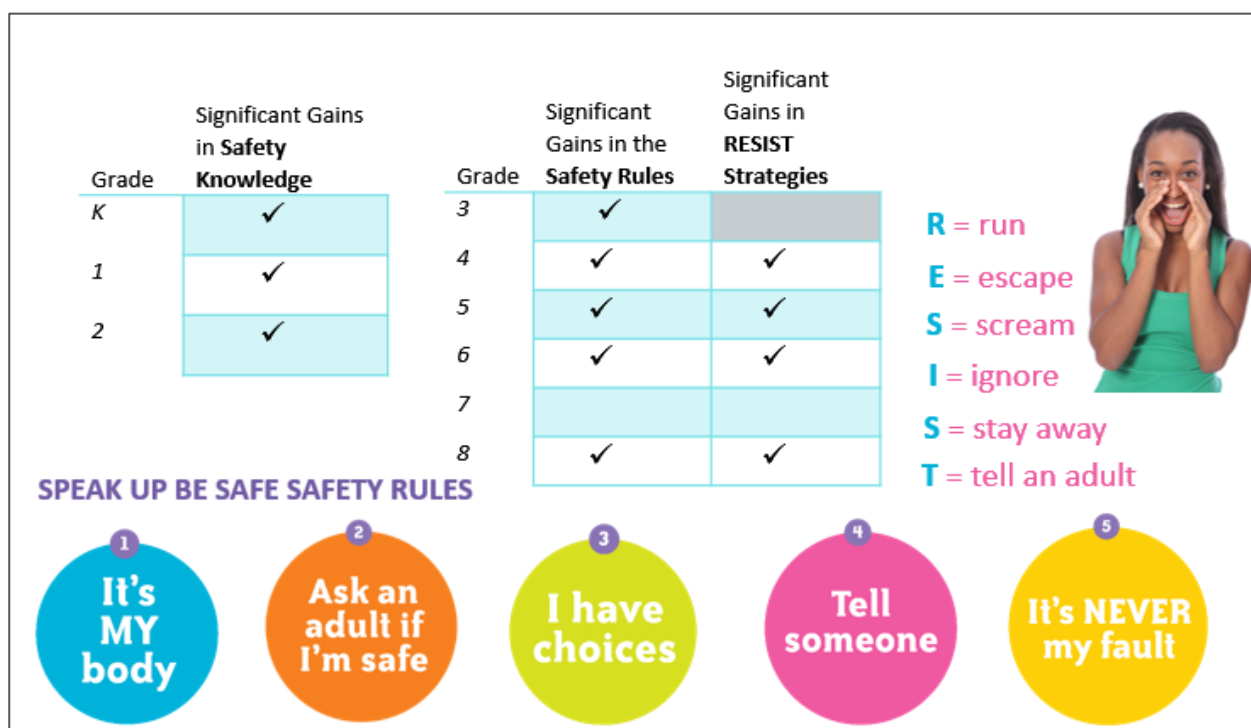


Figure 1. Chart summarizing RCT results with a checkmark denoting significant scores

SUBS is a school-based child abuse prevention program that focuses on child safety. The goal of the curriculum is to provide children with the skills to identify and be able to approach a safe adult should they ever be in a situation in which they or someone they know are in danger. In addition to increasing

knowledge of abusive behaviors and resistance skill-building, there is a focus on creating a responsive safety network with peers, teachers, parents/caregivers, and other adults that the child identifies as safe.

The K-8 SUBS curriculum was tested during the 2018-2019 school year using the RCT research design. The RCT was conducted in an elementary school district in the Phoenix metropolitan area with 13 schools and 2,797 of students. A pre/post/follow-up study design was used to assess student gains. Schools were randomly assigned to either the implementation (SUBS) or control condition. Students in the schools assigned to the SUBS condition received the curriculum and completed three surveys (i.e., pre-, post-, six-month follow-up). Surveys were developed to measure the efficacy of the curriculum in increasing children’s knowledge of safety rules and self-protection strategies. Surveys included questions regarding safety knowledge, safety rules, resistance strategies, and safety scenarios. Demographic and program evaluation items were included as well.

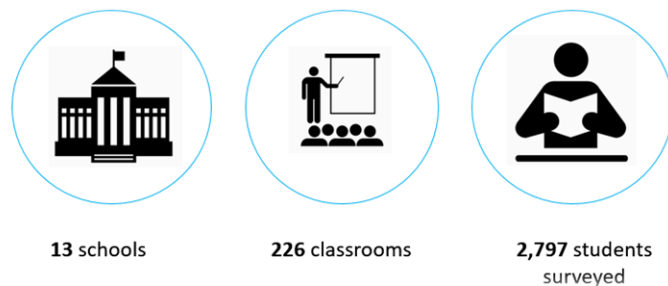


Figure 2: RCT Participants

The preference to implement evidence-based programs to address child maltreatment is becoming the standard for funders as well as a driver of policy development. Although child abuse prevention programming is available, these programs are often single-harm focused (e.g., sexual abuse), tailored to only young children, or not evidence-based. Very few evidence-based and developmentally appropriate prevention programs for elementary, middle school, and high school students exist. The SUBS curriculum is distinct in that it is designed to teach knowledge and skills related to multiple forms of child abuse and neglect and is developmentally appropriate and comprehensive for all school grades.

This RCT research study demonstrated the effectiveness of using SUBS to teach child abuse and neglect information to students at all grade levels across socio-economic status and cultural identities. The results from this evaluation showed that the K-8 students who received the SUBS curriculum identified the skills and strategies emphasized in the program and experienced significant improvements in their comprehension of safety strategies in comparison to the students who did not receive the SUBS curriculum, with the exception of 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Also important is the aspect of implementing an evidence-based curriculum that included validated measures as well as developmentally appropriate materials and information. Many funders of school or organization-based programming that require any curriculum delivered to youth be evidence driven will find Speak Up Be Safe as a positive prevention education option.