

about

TEENAGE ALCOHOL USE IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

what you need to know...

Alcohol is the most commonly used substance by Fairfax County teens. Although reported use is high, particularly among 12-graders, alcohol use in Fairfax County continues to be lower than national data for all grade levels.

Over all grades surveyed, youth reporting using alcohol at least once in their lifetime was down three percentage points since 2001. However, use increases significantly by grade level. Ever using alcohol in their lifetime is reported by 28% of sixth-graders and increases to 72% by 12-graders.

Past 30-day use of alcohol has continued its downward trend. Averaged over all grades surveyed, current use has decreased eight per-

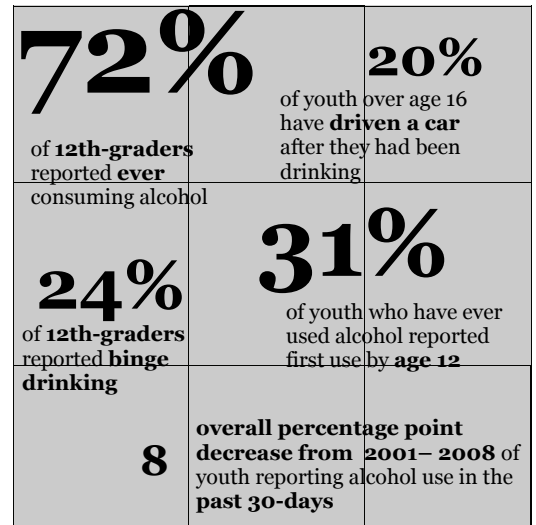
centage points from 36% in 2001 to 28% in 2008.

In the Fairfax County Youth Survey, binge drinking is defined as consuming five or more alcoholic drinks in a row in the past two weeks. While the percentage of youth reporting binge drinking has decreased for every grade level since 2001, 24% of 12th-graders still report this behavior.

In the 2008 survey, 34% of students reported riding in a car with someone who had been drinking and 20% of youth age 16 or older reported driving after drinking.



Fairfax County youth self-reported alcohol use



2008 Fairfax County Youth Survey Report

There is no significant difference, less than three percentage points, in alcohol use comparing boys and girls for any of the surveyed behaviors: past 30-day use, lifetime use, or binge drinking.

what can you do?

if your teen show signs of...

- Problems in school: low grades, poor attendance, recent disciplinary actions.
- Switching friends.
- Lack of involvement in former interests.
- Slurred speech.
- Lack of coordination.
- Memory lapses.
- Mood changes, irritability, and defensiveness.
- Low energy.
- Bloodshot eyes.
- Rebelling against family rules.
- Having a "nothing matters" attitude.

consider this...

- Alcohol has serious consequences on the teenage brain because it is still developing at this age.
- Alcohol affects motor coordination that can include walking and driving a vehicle.
- Drinking lowers one's inhibitions leading to actions that teenagers will later regret.
- Impaired memory and blackouts can occur when too much alcohol is consumed.
- Drinking may lead teenagers to participate in risk-taking behaviors that may cause illness, injury, or death.

if you are concerned...

- Talk to your teens. Listen and try to understand the pressures of their life. Avoid criticism.
- Keep track of where your teens are and what they are doing. Get to know who their friends are.
- Encourage and support involvement in positive, pro-social activities such as sports, school clubs, the arts, community service, and any activity that provides a sense of belonging.
- Reward and congratulate your teens on their successes to build their self-confidence. Notice when your teens make good choices and thank them for doing the right thing.
- Talk to your teens' school counselor or Alcohol and Drug Services (ADS) student assistance program specialist.
- Be a positive role model. Don't misuse alcohol or use illegal drugs. Don't drink and drive.

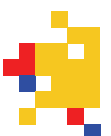
Sources: adapted from www.theantidrug.com and www.family.samhsa.gov/get/warnAlcohol.aspx

who can help?

Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) Alcohol and Drug Services
24-Hour CSB Emergency Services Phone: 703-573-5679 | TTY: 703-207-7737
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/ads

Fairfax County Public Schools Department of Intervention and Prevention
703-423-4020

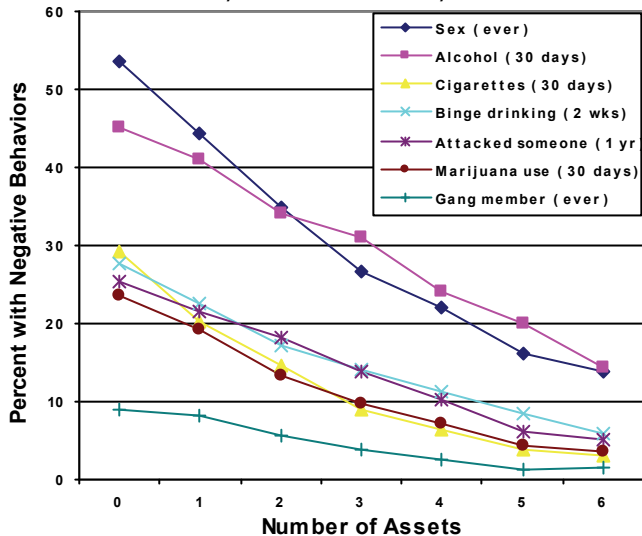
Fairfax County Public Schools Student Safety and Wellness Section
www.fcps.edu/dss/ips/ssaw



THREE TO SUCCEED

Thriving in Fairfax

Fairfax County 2008 Youth Survey



The Three to Succeed concept is based on the youth survey analysis that shows how just having three assets (or strengths) dramatically reduces risk behaviors and promotes thriving youth.

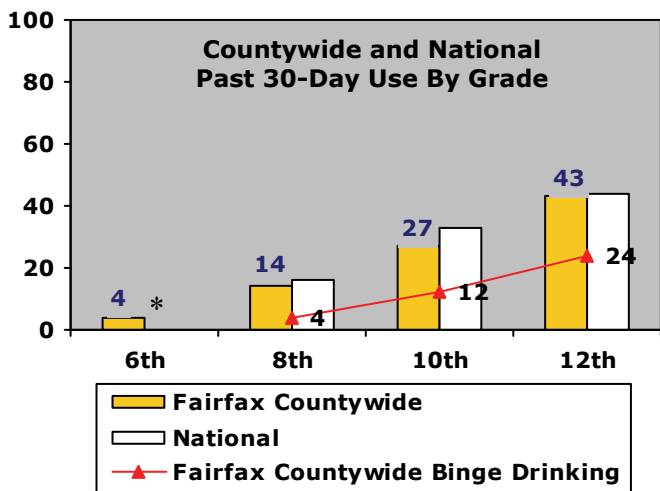
schools, and communities that help them thrive in health, in school and daily life, and in a safe environment.

Young people in Fairfax County report positive influences from their communities, families, schools, and friends demonstrating the benefits of everyone taking a role in ensuring that EVERYONE'S CHILDREN are thriving in Fairfax.

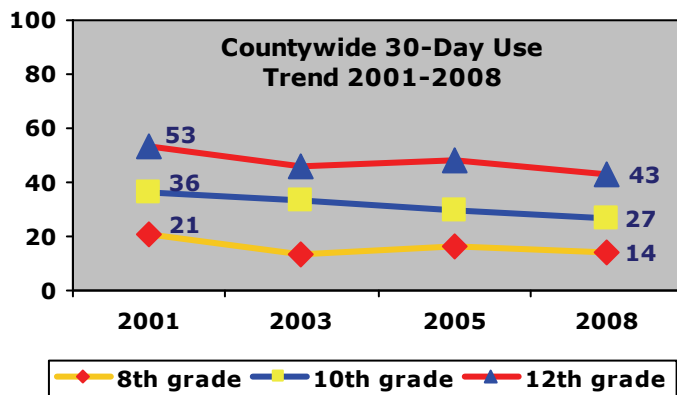
The more assets an individual has in their lives, the fewer risk behaviors. Assets are strengths in young people, their families,

Assets	
Good grades	Parents notice when doing a good job
Involved in decision-making	Involved in extracurricular activities
Adults in my neighborhood to talk to	Involved in community service

PAST 30-DAY ALCOHOL USE



The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the spring semester of 2008 to a randomly drawn, statistically valid sample of students. National comparisons are made to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) administered by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). *YRBS does not include data for 6th-graders.



web sites for more information

Fairfax County Prevention System (*links to Youth Survey*)
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dsm/prevention

Unified Prevention Coalition of Fairfax County Public Schools,
 Countywide Initiative to Reduce Underage Drinking Task Force (CIRUD)
www.unifiedpreventioncoalition.org

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America
www.drugfree.org

Parents, the Anti-Drug
www.theantidrug.com

SAMHSA Family Guide
www.family.samhsa.gov



A publication of Fairfax County, Va., and Fairfax County Public Schools

related factors

Fairfax County youth who have used drugs or alcohol in the past 30 days are...

- More likely to have carried a weapon.
- More likely to report having been depressed or considered suicide.
- More likely to have had sexual intercourse.
- More likely to have been victims of sexual assault.

