


YOUTH SURVEY


FAIRFAX COUNTY

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS in Fairfax County


Self-reported by 8th, 10th and 12th grade students on the Fairfax County Youth Survey


98% have never been in a gang 

83% of youth have never had sexual intercourse

39% are active five or more days a week 

28% of 12th graders used alcohol in the past 30 days 

11% have been bullied at school 

30% of youth report experiencing depressive symptoms 

What You Need to Know

The Fairfax County Youth Survey is designed to provide information about behaviors, experiences, and other factors, both positive and harmful, that influence the health and well-being of the county's youth.

Risk factors help explain circumstances that may increase the likelihood of problem or unhealthy behaviors.

Protective factors, or assets, can help increase resiliency to problem behaviors such as drug abuse or gang involvement and are believed to buffer youth from risk.

By focusing on protective factors, we foster resiliency; view youth as empowered with strengths rather than confronted by risks; and encourage nurturing young people to help them succeed.

Some protective factors include:

- Opportunities to engage in community activities.
- Strong family support and enjoying time with parents or guardians.
- Positive interactions with teachers and having school-related opportunities.
- Social competencies to make good decisions about substance use or other challenges.

What Can You Do?

HELP YOUTH DEVELOP ASSETS

INCREASE PRO-SOCIAL BONDING.

Ensure youth have positive connections with their peers and adults. Help connect them to extracurricular activities and to caring, trusted, and supportive adults.

TEACH LIFE SKILLS. Provide youth with the independent skills needed to navigate through the challenges of life, including social, problem-solving, and coping skills. Model and encourage healthy behaviors.

SET AND COMMUNICATE HIGH EXPECTATIONS. Help youth understand they can be successful. Support and encourage goal-setting and educational and vocational endeavors.

SET CLEAR, CONSISTENT BOUNDARIES.

Provide youth with clear rules on the expectations of behavior and apply appropriate and consistent consequences.

PROVIDE CARING AND SUPPORT. Give youth unconditional positive regard, encouragement, and kindness. Celebrate their successes and foster their sense of community belonging.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION. Provide youth with the responsibility and chance to demonstrate their competence and eagerness to contribute. Allow them leadership roles and opportunities to collaborate in decision-making.

Adapted from Nan Henderson, *Resiliency in Schools*. See www.bit.ly/FCPSresilient

Who Can Help?

FAIRFAX-FALLS CHURCH COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD (CSB)
www.bit.ly/FairfaxCSB
Entry & Referral, 703-383-8500, TTY 711

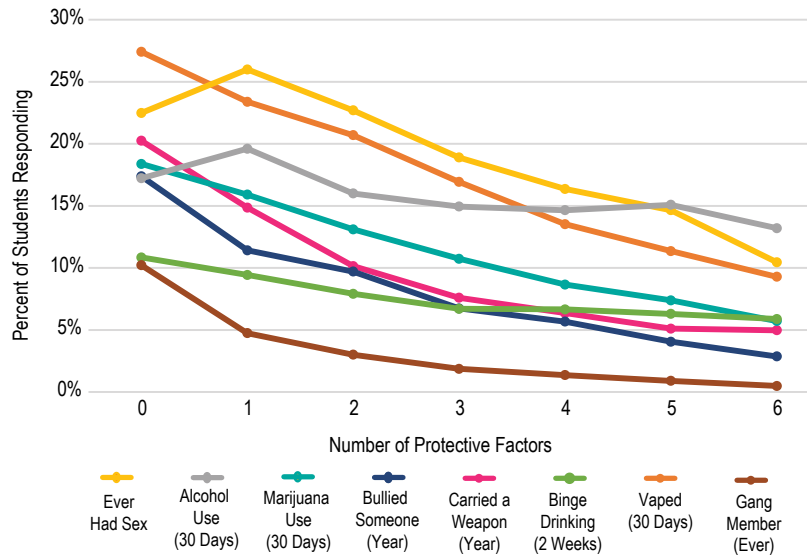
FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
www.bit.ly/FCPSspecialsvcs
Intervention and Prevention Services 571-423-4020
Student Safety and Wellness Office 571-423-4270

3 THREE to SUCCEED

The Factors That Matter

Data from the Youth Survey reinforces decades of research that shows that when youth have protective factors (also known as assets) in their lives, they do better in lots of different areas. **Having just three protective factors dramatically reduces the likelihood that youth will engage in risky behaviors.** The Youth Survey shows that every protective factor makes a difference.

Young people in Fairfax County report positive influences from the people and opportunities in their lives. Take action to be an asset in a young person's life and help to build a stronger, more positive community that benefits ALL children and youth.



Protective Factors

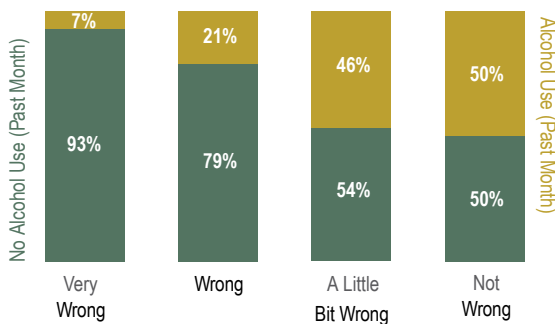
- Accepting responsibility for one's actions
- Having community adults to talk to
- Performing community service
- Participating in extracurricular activities
- Having teachers recognize good work
- Having parents available for help

Parents and Community Adults Make a Difference

WHAT PARENTS THINK MATTERS

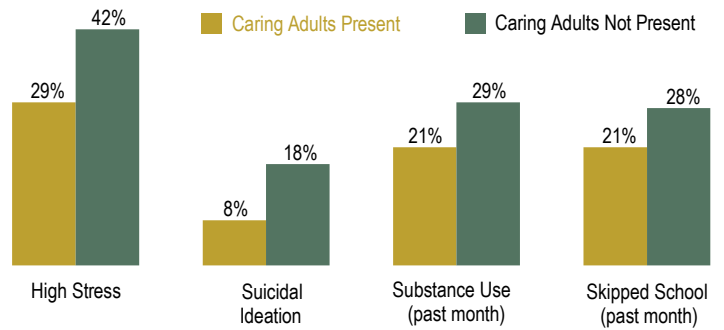
93% of students who thought their parents disapproved of them drinking alcohol (Very Wrong) didn't drink.

Only **50%** of students who thought their parents were fine with them drinking (Not Wrong) didn't drink.



CARING ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY MATTER, TOO

Students who report that "there are lots of adults in my neighborhood I could talk to about something important" are significantly less likely to be engaged in risky behaviors or report poor mental health outcomes.



WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fairfax County Youth Survey
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey

Fairfax County Prevention System
<http://bit.ly/FairfaxPrevention>

Fairfax County Public Schools: Resiliency
<http://bit.ly/FCPSresilient>

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

NIDA for Teens
<https://teens.drugabuse.gov>
 SAMHSA Prevention
www.samhsa.gov/prevention

Protective Factors

Youth in Fairfax County report they:

- Participate in after-school activities (77%), feel safe in school (85%), and have teachers who notice their good work (60%).
- Can ask parents for help (81%) and have parents who involve them in decisions that affect them (69%).
- Believe it is wrong to cheat at school (76%) and find it important to accept responsibility for their actions (76%).
- Volunteer for community service at least once a month (41%).

The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the fall of 2019.



Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For information, call 703-324-4600, TTY 711.



A Fairfax County, Va., publication
 November 2020