

YOUTH SURVEY

FAIRFAX COUNTY

MIDDLE SCHOOLERS in Fairfax County

Self-reported by 8th grade students on the Fairfax County Youth Survey

18% report ever trying alcohol



4% report using painkillers without a doctor's order in the past month



21% report being bullied by someone in the past year



23% report symptoms of depression



4% have had sexual intercourse

4% used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days



What You Need to Know

Middle school is a time of transition. Teens who engage in risky behaviors often had their first experience by age 12. Youth who first use drugs and alcohol before age 15 are significantly more likely to face problems with addiction.

Among 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students who have ever used alcohol, 28% report they first tried it by age 12.

Substance use increases as youth age. The exception is for inhalant use; 2.1% of 8th graders report using inhalants in the past month, compared to less than 1% of 10th and 12th graders.

Twenty-three percent of 8th graders report experiencing depressive symptoms (in the past year, feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more that they stop doing some usual activities) and 13% considered suicide.

Four percent of 8th grade student report that they have had sexual intercourse, and 56% of sexually active 8th graders used a condom at last intercourse.

The percent of students reporting bullying others slightly increases from 7% to 9% between 6th and 8th grade. Two percent of 8th-graders report having ever been in a gang, but of those who have, 66% were involved by age 12.

What Can You Do?

PROVIDE SUPPORT AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **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.
- **Provide caring and support.** Give youth unconditional positive regard, encouragement, and kindness. Celebrate their successes and foster their sense of community belonging.

INCREASE PRO-SOCIAL BONDING

- **Set clear, consistent boundaries.** Provide youth with clear rules on the expectations of behavior and apply appropriate and consistent consequences.
- **Set and communicate high expectations.** Help youth understand they can be successful. Support and encourage goal-setting and educational and vocational endeavors.
- **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 Richardson, Resiliency in Schools. See <http://bit.ly/FCPSresilient>.

Who Can Help?

Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB)
<http://bit.ly/FairfaxCSB>
Entry & Referral 703-383-8500, TTY 711 24-Hour
Emergency Services 703-573-5679, TTY 711

Fairfax County Public Schools
Intervention and Prevention Services
571-423-4020
<http://bit.ly/FCPSspecialsvcs>

Fairfax County Public Schools
Student Safety and Wellness Office
<http://bit.ly/FCPSspecialsvcs>
571-423-4270

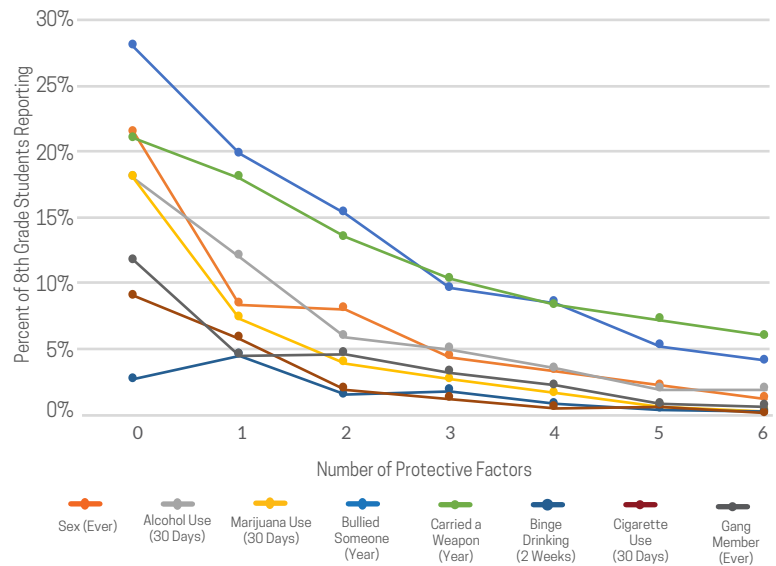
Fairfax County Public Schools
Middle School After-School Program
<http://bit.ly/FCPSms>
571-423-1270

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

Having high personal integrity
Having community adults to talk to
Performing community service

Participating in extracurricular activities
Having teachers recognize good work
Having parents available for help

Past Month Substance Use

	ALCOHOL	MARIJUANA	CIGARETTES	E-CIGARETTES	PAINKILLERS*	RX DRUGS*	INHALANTS
6 TH GRADE	1.4%	0.1%	0.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.8%
8 TH GRADE	3.8%	1.9%	1.0%	4.0%	4.3%	2.6%	2.1%

*Reported use is for non-medical use of these drugs. Sixth grade students were administered a shortened survey which included fewer substance use questions.

Sexual Health

	EVER HAD SEX	EVER HAD ORAL SEX	NO CONDOM USE DURING LAST SEX*
8 TH GRADE	4%	4%	44%

* Among youth who have had sex. Sixth-grade students were administered a shortened survey which did not include sexual health questions.

Aggression

	BULLYING		CYBERBULLYING		RACIAL/CULTURAL HARRASMENT	
	AGGRESSOR	VICTIM	AGGRESSOR	VICTIM	AGGRESSOR	VICTIM
6 TH GRADE	7%	31%	4%	10%	17%	38%
8 TH GRADE	9%	21%	5%	11%	31%	50%

WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fairfax County Youth Survey
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey

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

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

NIDA for Teens
www.teens.drugabuse.gov

SAMHSA Prevention
www.samhsa.gov/prevention

Related Factors

Youth who first used drugs or alcohol at age 12 or younger are:

- More likely to have been depressed.
- More likely to have had sexual intercourse.
- More likely to have skipped school.
- Less likely to have participated in extracurricular activities.

The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the fall semester of 2017.



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
September 2018