



YOUTH SURVEY

FAIRFAX COUNTY


MILITARY CONNECTED YOUTH in Fairfax County


Self-reported on the Fairfax County Youth Survey by 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students with a family member currently serving in the military


11% of all 8th, 10th, and 12th graders have a family member serving in the military 

17% have used alcohol in the past 30 days 

20% have been the victim of bullying 

57% have changed homes at least 3 times since kindergarten 

21% have had sexual intercourse 

23% Report emotional abuse by a dating partner 

What You Need to Know

Approximately one in nine Fairfax County 8th, 10th, and 12th graders report having a family member who is currently in the military. From deployments to new schools, military children are faced with unique challenges that other youth their age never experience. More than half have moved at least three times since kindergarten, and 15% have moved at least 7 times. Despite the high mobility rate, though, military youth tend to be more similar to than different from their peers.

Military youth report a high level of involvement in their communities. Seventy-four percent report serving as a leader in a group or organization, compared to 70% of their peers. Forty-three percent volunteer for community service at least monthly. And 69% report

participating in after-school activities at twice a month or more. Community service and after-school participation rates are similar for military youth and their peers.

They also have a lot of support from adults. When faced with personal problems, 82% report being able to ask a parent for help. Forty percent report there are lots of adults in their neighborhood they could talk to about something important.

More than a fourth of military youth (28%) report using alcohol or drugs in the past month. Alcohol use is most common; 17% used it in the past 30 days, compared to 16% of non-military youth.

One in five military youth has had sexual intercourse. Among them, 38% first had sex before they were 15, compared to 33% of their non-military connected peers.

Military youth are also slightly more likely than their peers to be involved in bullying. Twenty percent report being a victim of bullying, and 9% report being an aggressor (compared to 15% and 7% of their peers, respectively).

More than one-third (37%) report high levels of stress, while 31% report depressive symptoms. Eighteen percent considered suicide in the past year, while 7% attempted suicide. These rates are all slightly higher, yet comparable to those of their non-military connected peers.

What Can You Do?

UNDERSTAND, ENCOURAGE, LEARN, AND ACT

- Familiarize yourself with your neighborhood school, administrative leadership, and your child's teacher(s); establish good communication with the school staff. Let the teacher know of any special circumstances (deployment, reintegration, and homecoming) that may influence academic or behavioral performance.

- Understand that for some children and youth, relocation does not necessarily get easier with each move and that your child may need

assistance in making connections. Encourage and support participation in school clubs, community activities, and other activities that connect your child to their new community.

- Set clear, consistent boundaries and rules, talk about expectations, and explain the consequences of breaking the rules. Children and youth who believe their parents disapprove of risky behaviors are less likely to choose those behaviors.

- Watch for changes in behavior and engagement in usual activities, and talk with your child about observed changes. Be available to talk with your child.

- Teach life skills by modeling problem solving and healthy choices. Involve your child in family decisions and compliment their good choices.

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

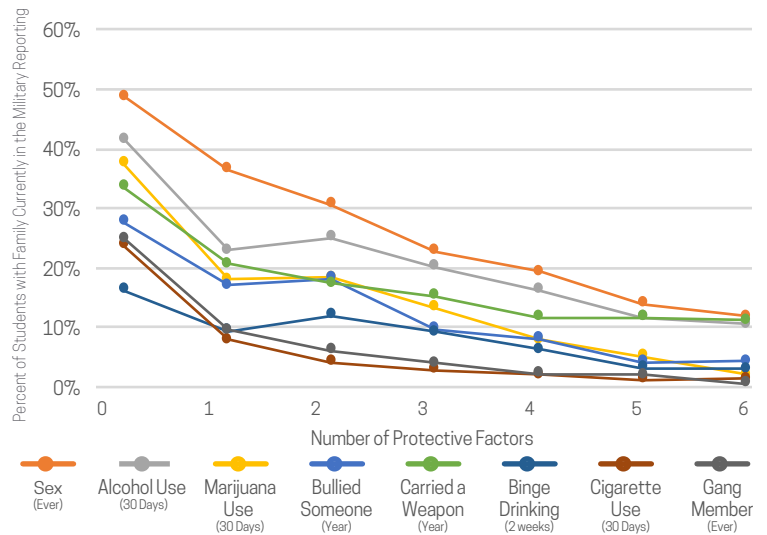
Fairfax County Public Schools
<http://bit.ly/FCPSspecialsvcs>
Intervention and Prevention Services 571-423-4020
Student Safety and Wellness Office 571-423-4270

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.

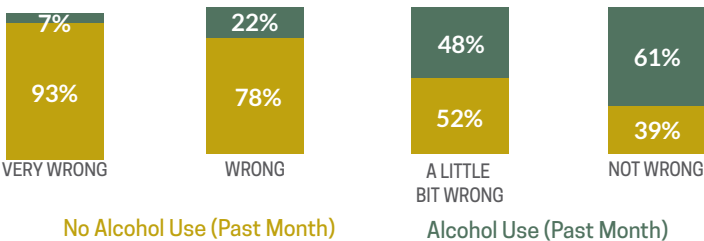
Young people in Fairfax County report positive influences from the people and opportunities in their lives. Take action to be an asset in a young person's life and help to build a stronger, more positive community that benefits ALL children and youth.



What Parents Think Matters

93% of military connected students who report their parents disapprove of them drinking alcohol (Very Wrong) didn't drink in the past month.

39% of those who report their parents were fine with them drinking (Not Wrong) didn't drink.



WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fairfax County Youth Survey
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey

FCPS Resources and Information for Military Families
<http://bit.ly/FCPSmilitary>

Fairfax County Services for Veterans and their Families
<http://bit.ly/FFXmilitary>

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

NIDA for Teens
www.teens.drugabuse.gov

Stop Bullying
www.stopbullying.gov

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

30-Day Drug Use

	MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS	NON-MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS
ALCOHOL	17%	16%
CIGARETTES	3%	3%
E-CIGARETTES	10%	10%
MARIJUANA	10%	9%
PAINKILLERS*	6%	4%
OTHER RX MEDS*	5%	4%

* Reported use is for non-medical use of these drugs

Mental Health and Suicide

	MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS	NON-MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS
HIGH STRESS	37%	36%
DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS	31%	27%
SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUICIDE	18%	14%
ATTEMPTED SUICIDE	7%	5%

Protective Factors

Military connected youth in Fairfax County report they:

- Have parents who they can turn to for help (82%).
- Are involved in family decision making (68%).
- Have much in life to be thankful for (91%).
- Accept responsibility for their actions (77%).

The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the fall 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.



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