



# 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


12% of all 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders have a family member serving in the military 

18% 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 

20% have had sexual intercourse 

22% Report emotional abuse by a dating partner 

## What You Need to Know

Approximately one in eight 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. Three out of four report serving as a leader in a group or organization, compared to 69% of their peers. Forty-four 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, 83% report being able to ask a parent for help. Forty-two percent report there are lots of adults in their neighborhood they could talk to about something important.

Slightly more than a fourth of military youth (26%) report using alcohol or drugs in the past month. Alcohol use is most common; 18% used it in the past 30 days, compared to 15% of non-military youth.

One in five military youth has had sexual intercourse. Among them, 8% first had sex before they were 15, compared to 5% 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 (35%) report high levels of stress, while 28% report depressive symptoms. Fifteen percent considered suicide in the past year, while 7% attempted suicide. These rates are all 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)  
[bit.ly/FairfaxCSB](http://bit.ly/FairfaxCSB)  
Entry & Referral 703-383-8500, TTY 711 24-Hour  
Emergency Services 703-573-5679, TTY 711

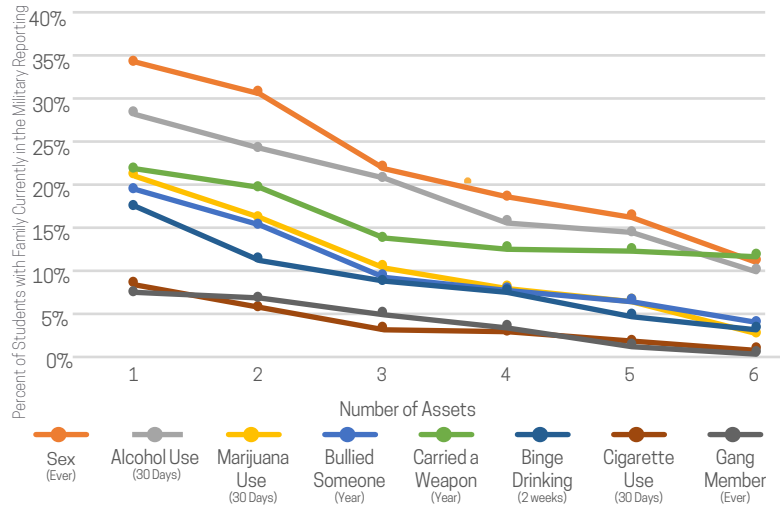
Fairfax County Public Schools  
[bit.ly/FCPSspecialsvcs](http://bit.ly/FCPSspecialsvcs)  
Intervention and Prevention Services 571-423-4020  
Student Safety and Wellness Office 571-423-4270

# 3 Three to Succeed

THREE TO SUCCEED IS BASED ON THE YOUTH SURVEY ANALYSIS THAT SHOWS HAVING JUST **THREE ASSETS** DRAMATICALLY REDUCES RISK BEHAVIORS AND PROMOTES THRIVING YOUTH.

Assets are strengths in young people, their families, friends, schools and communities that help them thrive in health, in school, in daily life, and in a safe environment. The more assets a person has, the fewer risk behaviors they report and the Youth Survey shows that every asset makes a difference.

Young people in Fairfax County report positive influences from the people and other assets in their lives, though there are disparities that make it more challenging for some to thrive. Take action to be an asset in any young person's life and help build a stronger, more positive community that benefits ALL children.



## Assets

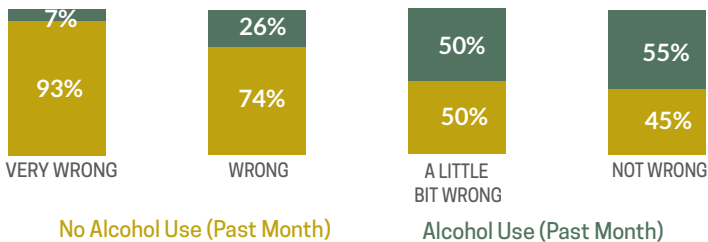
Having high personal integrity  
Having community adults to talk to  
Performing community service

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

## 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.

**45%** of those who report their parents were fine with them drinking (Not Wrong) didn't drink.



## 30-day Drug Use

	MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS	NON-MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS
ALCOHOL	18%	15%
CIGARETTES	3%	2%
E-CIGARETTES	5%	4%
MARIJUANA	9%	9%
PAINKILLERS*	5%	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	35%	36%
DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS	28%	25%
SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUICIDE	15%	13%
ATTEMPTED SUICIDE	7%	5%

## Protective Factors

Military connected youth in Fairfax County report they:

- Have parents who they can turn to for help (83%).
- Are involved in family decision making (71%).
- Have much in life to be grateful for (91%).
- Accept responsibility for their actions (79%).

### WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fairfax County Youth Survey  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey)

FCPS Resources and Information for Military Families  
[bit.ly/FCPSmilitary](http://bit.ly/FCPSmilitary)

Fairfax County Services for Veterans and their Families  
[bit.ly/FFXmilitary](http://bit.ly/FFXmilitary)

Fairfax County Prevention System  
[bit.ly/FairfaxPrevention](http://bit.ly/FairfaxPrevention)

NIDA for Teens  
[www.teens.drugabuse.gov](http://www.teens.drugabuse.gov)

Stop Bullying  
[www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the fall of 2016.



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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