



YOUTH SURVEY


FAIRFAX COUNTY


MIDDLE SCHOOLERS in Fairfax County

Self-reported by 8th grade students on the Fairfax County Youth Survey. Data from the Sixth Grade Youth Survey is reported separately and not included in totals.


19% report ever trying alcohol 

3% report using painkillers without a doctor's order in the past month 

19% report being bullied by someone in the past year 

26% report symptoms of depression 

5% have had sexual intercourse

4% vaped 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, 24% report they first tried it by age 12.

Substance use increases as youth age. The exception is for inhalant use; 3% of 8th graders report using inhalants in the past month, compared to 1% or fewer of 10th and 12th graders.

Twenty-six 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.

Five percent of 8th grade students report that they have had sexual intercourse, and 59% of sexually active 8th graders used a condom at last intercourse.

The percent of students reporting bullying others slightly increases from 7% to 8% between 6th and 8th grade. Two percent of 8th graders report having ever been in a gang, but 58% of all students who have been in a gang report being involved by age 12.

What Can You Do?

PROVIDE SUPPORT AND OPPORTUNITIES AND INCREASE PRO-SOCIAL BONDING

- ▶ **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.
- ▶ **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>.

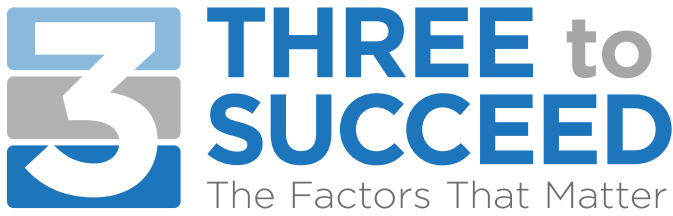
Who Can Help?

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>

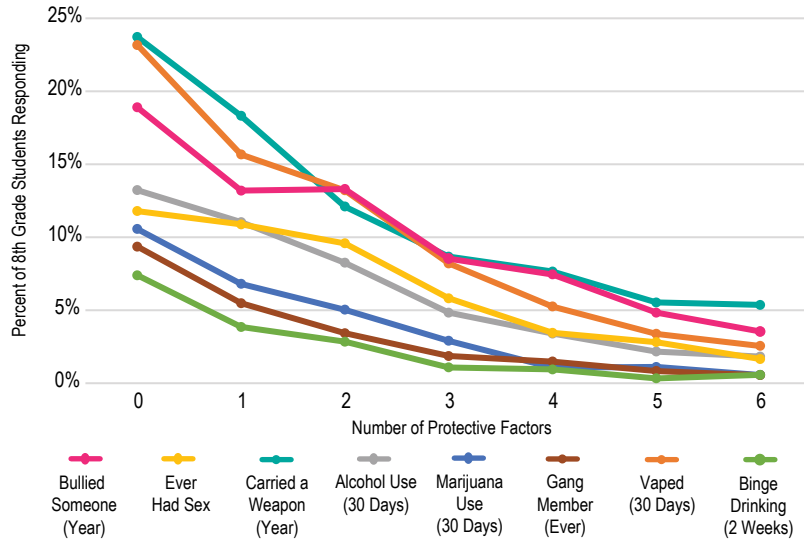
Fairfax County Public Schools Student Safety and Wellness Office
<http://bit.ly/FCPSspecialsvcs>
571-423-4270

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



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

Past Month Substance Use

	ALCOHOL	MARIJUANA	CIGARETTES	VAPING	PAINKILLERS*	RX DRUGS*	INHALANTS
6TH GRADE	1.3%	0.2%	0.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.9%
8TH GRADE	4.5%	2.5%	0.9%	7.2%	2.6%	2.7%	2.8%

*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*
8TH GRADE	5.0%	4.9%	41.5%

* 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 HARASSMENT	
	AGGRESSOR	VICTIM	AGGRESSOR	VICTIM	AGGRESSOR	VICTIM
6TH GRADE	6.9%	29.0%	4.2%	10.9%	15.2%	36.5%
8TH GRADE	8.1%	19.1%	4.8%	10.1%	27.4%	46.4%

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 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.



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