

Fairfield County Youth Behavior Survey
2012
Executive Summary

In comparison to national data of past 30 day use by 12th grade students, overall, Fairfield County students follow national data trends, but are near or below national levels for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and prescription drugs. Nationwide, alcohol has been trending downward since 1996; tobacco downward since 1997 and marijuana use consistently on the rise since 2007. The Fairfield County data illustrates a similar downward trend.

Preventing teen drug and alcohol use takes a full community effort. The Fairfield County Youth Behavior Survey is one of the key elements used by local community-based coalitions and partners in identifying underlying root causes of youth substance abuse and a tool to create systems-level change. The survey is one source of information that can assist in setting the stage for that change.

The results of the bi-annual survey help to plan focused prevention and intervention, target school-based programs, evaluate progress toward reducing youth alcohol and substance abuse, identify trends and emerging issues. In addition, the access to current data assists in obtaining funding to support needed services.

The 2012 Fairfield County bi-annual Youth Behavior Survey was implemented in all public schools and one parochial school in May 2012. A total of 2,690 students in grades 10 and 12 from ten (10) schools participated in the 2012 survey. The results of the surveys provide a benchmark for alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) use as well as an indication of negative and problematic behavior among our youth. These behaviors are self-reported. Concurrently, the survey also assesses the risk factors that are related to these behaviors and the protective factors that guard against them.

Key Findings of 2012 Youth Behavior Survey

Results of the study suggest that after a period of declining use reported in 2008 and a slight tick upward in 2010, frequent drug use among Fairfield County twelfth graders is beginning to trend downward again for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and illegal prescription drugs.

- The study shows that frequent alcohol use (30 day) among twelfth graders has decreased from a low of 34.7% in 2010 to 21.1% in 2012.
- Frequent marijuana use has also decreased in 2012, down to 16.4% from 20.3% in 2010.
- Frequent use of all tobacco products has decreased to an all-time low of 14.1%, slightly lower than the national average of 18.7%.
- Frequent illegal use of prescription drugs continued to decline in 2010 to a new low of 2.4%.

Frequent Use (30 day use) of Selected Substances	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Seniors %					
Alcohol	37.9	34.9	31.2	34.7	21.1
Cigarettes	24	23.0	23.5	22.5	14.1
Marijuana	18.8	14.4	15.8	20.3	16.4
Other People's Prescriptions	9.3	8.5	7.2	5.7	2.4

Age of Onset

The 2012 data also revealed positive findings in the area of *age of onset*. The age at which Fairfield County youth are initiating the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and prescription drugs has returned to a downward trend. This trend is important to monitor because the longer use is delayed, the less likely the individual is to become harmfully involved with substances as they grow older. Youth who start drinking before age 15 years are five times more likely to develop alcohol dependence or abuse later in life than those who begin drinking at or after age 21 years.ⁱ The ages of onset for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and prescription drugs are at their oldest since the Fairfield County study began in 2004.

Average age of first use	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Seniors %					
Alcohol	14.31	14.41	14.58	14.05	14.94
Cigarettes	13.78	13.94	14.34	14.01	14.57
Marijuana	14.63	14.60	14.89	14.65	14.99
Illegal Prescription (Rx) Drugs	14.85	14.59	15.60	14.84	15.08
Synthetics (Bath Salts, K2, Spice)	X	X	X	X	15.56

**2012 is the first time questions regarding synthetic drugs were included in the Fairfield County survey.*

Ease of Access

The 2012 Fairfield County Youth Behavior Survey disclosed that access to alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and prescription drugs has decreased. Access to heroin stayed essentially the same. New information collected regarding synthetic drugs (bath salts, K2, Spice) reveal that access to these substances is similar to that of heroin, nearing that of prescription drugs.

Ease of Access	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Very Easy and Somewhat Easy - Seniors %					
Alcohol	85	84.2	84.2	83.3	79.1
Tobacco	85.5	84.7	75.3	84.3	79.6
Marijuana	69	67.3	66.2	73.1	68.1
Illegal Prescription (Rx) Drugs	49	49	45.3	45.7	35.7
Heroin	15.6	16.2	15.9	30.4	30.3
Synthetics (Bath Salts, K2, Spice)	X	X	X	X	30.7

The issues of binge drinking and attendance at parties where parents have allowed alcohol have been studied by the Fairfield County survey since 2008. Results of the 2012 survey indicated that 45.6% of seniors reported that they have been to a party where parents have allowed alcohol and 29.1% of sophomores report the same. This is a decrease from the 2010 study. In regard to binge drinking, of the high school seniors who report drinking, 37.5% reported that they had consumed 5 or more glasses of any alcoholic beverage within a few hours. This is down from 52.6% in 2010.

Risk and Protective Factors

Just as there are both risk factors and protective factors associated with many human diseases, there are factors that can help protect youth from, or put them at risk for, drug use and other problem behaviors. A youth's behavior is influenced by a complexity of experiences and influences. The 2012 Fairfield County Youth Behavior Survey measures a variety of protective and risk factors. Protective factors, also called assets, are conditions that buffer children and youth from exposure to risk either by reducing the impact of risks or changing the way that young people respond to risks. These are characteristics that are known to decrease the likelihood that a student will engage in problem behaviors.

Protective Factors - Seniors %	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
1. Participation in school activities	55	55.6	58.7	56.7	60.4
2. Participation in organized school sports	42	43.5	47.2	47.6	51.7
3. Good grades	86	85.9	81.6	86.4	89.6
4. Parents/guardians set clear rules	78	81.7	76.7	79	80.5
5. Parents/guardians enforce rules	75	76	76.7	74.2	77.0
6. Parents/guardians talk about harmful effects of drugs and alcohol	59	54.6	53.9	51.7	51.2
7. Parents involved in education (homework, school activities, conferences, etc.)	59	64	60.7	59.1	63.7
Trusted adult at home (% or seniors who answered yes)	84	89.6	85.9	87.6	87.8
Trusted adult at school (% or seniors who answered yes)	66	71.1	68.8	67.8	72.1

** 1 – 7 above: The answers listed above represent the percentage (%) of seniors who reported Always and Often*

Behavioral Issues

In addition to alcohol, drug and tobacco use behavior, the 2012 Fairfield County Youth Behavior Survey also measures other problem behaviors.

Behavior - % Seniors	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Engaging in sexual activity - Ever	71	69.7	71.3	72	68.1
Forced to engage in sexual activity - Ever	13	9	12	9.7	7.0
Thoughts of killing themselves in past month	12	11.3	10.4	9.5	8.2
Tried to kill themselves - Lifetime	5.3	4.3	13	15	11.0
Self-mutilate - Lifetime	20	20.6	20.6	20.4	16.9

Key Points

- Marijuana use and its perception as a risk is a concern
- All indicators for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and prescription drugs are improving.
- Prescription drug use continues to be a concern, but use rates are trending down, similar to national use rates

Progress

- Alcohol, Marijuana and Rx drug use are decreasing
- Parents are becoming more effective in impacting whether or not their children use drugs and alcohol
- Substances are becoming less accessible
- The age of onset is increasing. Youth are beginning to use at a later age.

Concerns:

- Underage drinking remains a strong concern.
- The perception of marijuana as a lower risk activity is troubling.
- 30 day marijuana use is higher than that of tobacco for the first time
- Synthetic drugs (bath salts, K2, Spice) lifetime use is higher than that of prescription drugs.

The 2012 Fairfield County Youth Behavior Survey illustrate that a collaborative approach to prevention works and is needed now more than ever. No one sector of the community can single-handedly address adolescent drug and alcohol use or problem behaviors. The reality is parents, schools, businesses, law enforcement, faith-based organizations, human services and other sectors working together can and do have a significant, long term impact in preventing adolescent substance abuse and related behaviors.

*Data Cleaning: Original 2,978. Eliminated 288 surveys (missing or inconsistent and/or suspicious responses) resulting in final analysis of 2,690 surveys.

** The analysis of the 2012 survey was conducted by the Ohio University Voinovich Center in partnership with the Fairfield County Family, Adult and Children First Council and Prevention Works for a Drug Free Fairfield County. The same statistical software program (SPSS), methodology, frequencies and crosstabs were utilized as in prior years.

*** The 2012 Fairfield County Youth Behavior Survey data can be found at www.facfc.org, the Family, Adult and Children First Council website after October 1, 2012. Prior year data is available at that site as well.

1. ⁱ Office of Applied Studies. The NSDUH Report: *Alcohol Dependence or Abuse and Age at First Use*. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, October 2004. Available at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k4/ageDependence/ageDependence.htm>.