

IT **PAYS** TO KNOW



WEST CHESTER

COMMUNITIES THAT CARE

wcctc.org



WEST
CHESTER
AREA
SCHOOL
DISTRICT

About the Research

The PA Youth Survey (PAYS) is a statewide survey given every two years to students in 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th grades. This survey provides targeted data for communities to design and implement prevention strategies best suited to their own community's needs.

About the Your CTC

Using PAYS data, the Communities that Care (CTC) model was implemented in partnership with West Chester Area School District in 1998. This relationship allows West Chester CTC to study youth behavior trends and perceptions regarding alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, prescription drugs and some mental health topics. This snapshot of the most recent PAYS report offers valuable information with which to have ongoing, intentional conversations with youth about substance use.

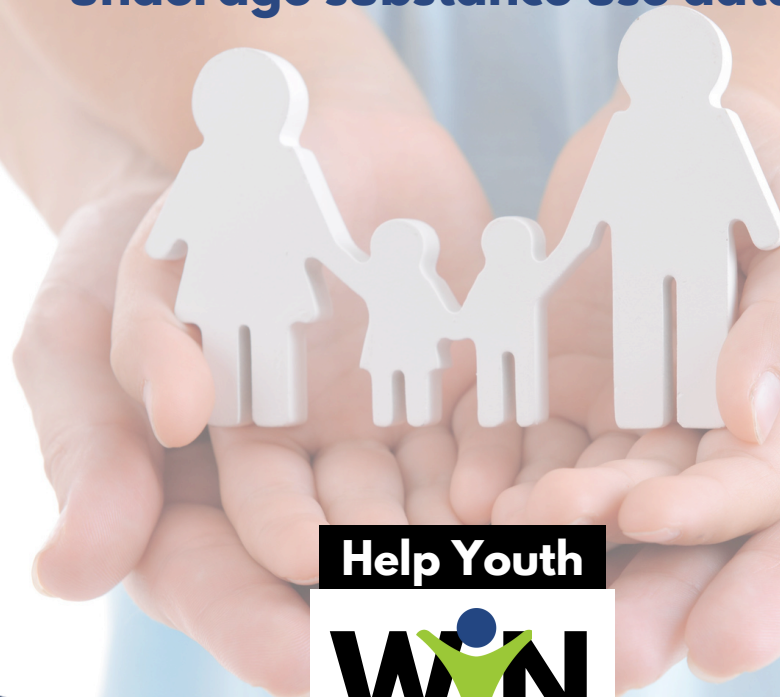
Contact us for more information.

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484-401-9230

KNOW MORE

PA Youth Survey (PAYS) Summary

A PARENT'S GUIDE
to local youth mental health and
underage substance use data



Help Youth



West Chester Communities That Care

IT PAYS TO KNOW THE FACTS



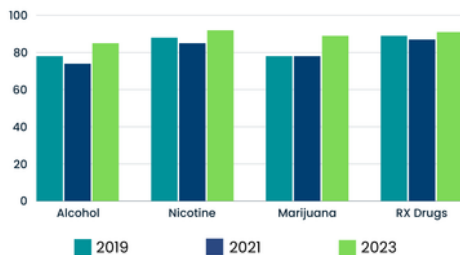
Do our protective factors outweigh our risk factors?

Our community AND each person and household within it are susceptible to many factors which regularly impact our lives. Family bonding, commitment to school, attachment to a community and understanding addiction risks are just a few factors proven by science to steer youth toward lives that are healthy and whole.

Each year West Chester CTC examines our community's risk and protective factors and chooses a path to address the most critical areas. Join us at WCCTC.ORG to learn more.

YOUTH PERCEPTION OF RISK: Knowledge is Power

Source: WCASD PAYS Reports



More than 80% of youth indicate addictive substances as having "moderate or great risk". Share this brochure to help us reach the other 20%.

Whether it's screen use or substance use, getting more sleep or getting outdoors, prevention starts with knowledge.

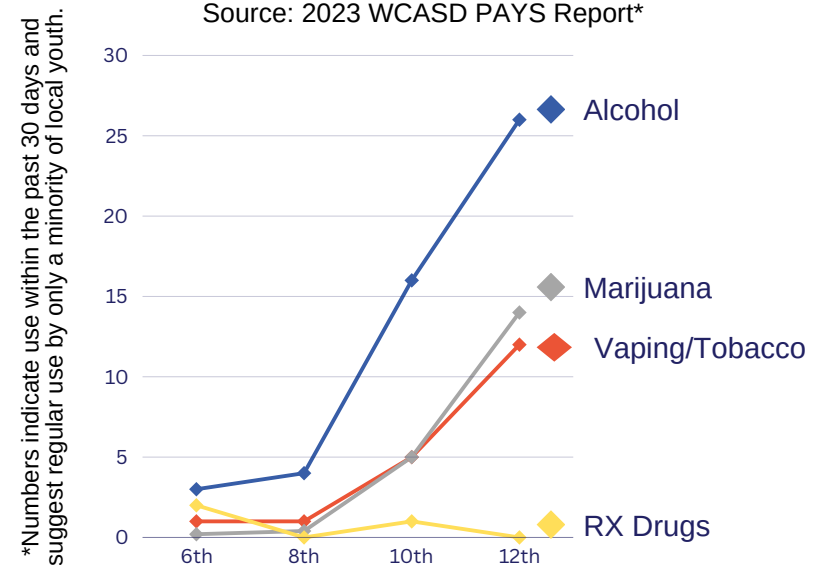
PREVENTION STARTS HERE!

THE GOOD NEWS

According to local, state and national research West Chester area youth are winning the day when it comes to underage substance use. Flip the statistics in the graph below to see that **the majority of youth in our area do NOT use addictive substances regularly**. For example, 74% of 12th graders have not used alcohol in the past 30 days.

YOUTH BEHAVIOR TRENDS

Source: 2023 WCASD PAYS Report*



BRAIN MATTERS

FOMO (fear of missing out) IS REAL. So, young people who think everyone is drinking, vaping, etc. will feel pressure to fit in. Remind your kids that the majority of West Chester area teens do **NOT** drink alcohol or use other addictive substances regularly. ***It helps great kids make great choices.***



Improving outcomes for youth, together.

West Chester Statistics...

...About VAPING - Tobacco and Marijuana

- KUDOS: Only 4% of WCASD teens surveyed report vaping in the last 30 days.
- 76% of teens who do vape now use nicotine instead of just flavoring. That is up from 20% in 2017.
- 36% of WCASD youth who vape are vaping marijuana. This is 2.5 times greater than in 2017.
- teens are more willing to drive after marijuana use than alcohol.
- KUDOS: Over 80% of teens report moderate to great risk associated with regular marijuana use. Understanding risk helps youth make good choices.

Why We Care

- The signature puff of all vapes comes from chemicals that our lungs are not made to handle.
- The most popular vape pen, JUUL, holds 50mg of nicotine, which equals an entire pack of cigarettes.
- Unsuspecting teens are sold drug laced cartridges, increasing their exposure to other drugs and addiction.
- Legalization makes marijuana use seem less risky. However, it is still incredibly risky for teens.
- Addictive THC is sometimes confused with non-addictive CBD, also from the cannabis plant.
- Studies from CA and CO prove that social acceptance leads to increased use and increased related problem behaviors.
- Social acceptance reduces the chance that kids will seek help for themselves or others.



BRAIN MATTERS

Early use of addictive substances greatly increases risk of later addictions.

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IT **PAYS** TO KNOW ABOUT **UNDERAGE SUBSTANCE USE**

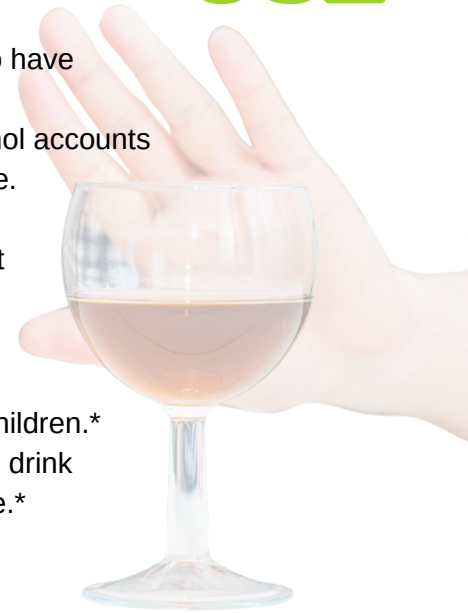
...About ALCOHOL

- 43% of our kids know adults who have gotten drunk or high.
- Home access to drugs and alcohol accounts for the majority of all teenage use.
- Approximately one-third of youth who drink alcohol report getting it directly from their parents.

Why We Care

- Easy access is directly related to substance use by school-aged children.*
- Youth permitted to drink at home drink more heavily outside of the home.*

*Source: National Institute of Health

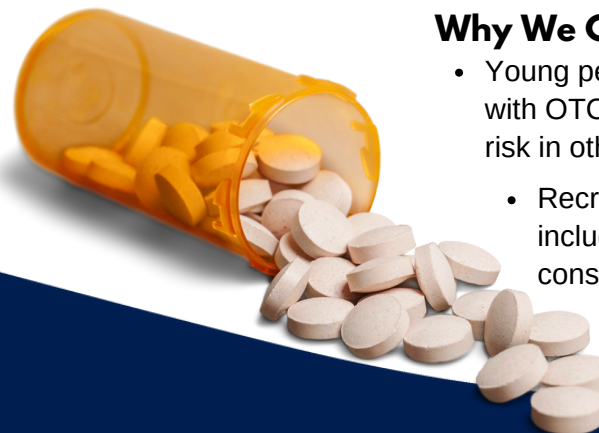


...About PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

- Only 2% of teens report unapproved use of prescription pain relievers or over the counter (OTC) drugs to get high.

Why We Care

- Young people who experiment with OTC drugs often take more risk in other areas too.
- Recreational Rx drug use, including opioids, goes up considerably in ages 18-24.





BRAIN MATTERS

Limits help both young children and teens feel safe and cared for in an uncertain world.

Taking a firm stand against underage substance use is proven to:



reduce how often youth will drink/use

reduce dangerous levels of youth consumption

reduce related problems such as: injury, crime, health issues, unwanted sexual contact, and addiction in later years.

Improving outcomes for youth, together.



IT PAYS TO KNOW TIPS FROM PROFESSIONALS



Pro Tips

- Tell your kids why waiting until 21 is important.
- Guard your language. Phrases like “I need/deserve a drink” suggest that alcohol solves a problem.
- Find healthy ways to celebrate special occasions.
- Keep track of and/or lock up your alcohol.
- Find occasions to turn down alcohol, showing kids that activities don’t require alcohol to be fun.
- In lieu of tracking apps, discuss plans directly with your teen and other parents. This way they’ll see your commitment to them in action.



Pro Tips

- Include marijuana in your discussions about impaired driving.
- Distinguish between non-addictive CBD and addictive THC components of marijuana.
- Remind teens that all addictive substances are harmful for developing brains.



Pro Tips Be vigilant. Remind teens that:

- Vape companies are in the business of selling nicotine.
- Nicotine is highly addictive.
- Vape companies often target youth to gain lifelong customers.



Pro Tips

- Lock up or dispose of Rx medications. To find a safe disposal location nearby, visit chesco.org/2673/Medication-Drop-Off
 - Monitor online purchases which may occur without parent consent.

FAMILY ACCOUNTABILITY PACTS (FAP)

FAPs are great tools to initiate important conversations and establish clear family standards. It's never too late to develop your FAP. Always create them together with youth and if possible, before kids start using technology or substances.

Sample Family Pact

Family Rules on Vaping/Marijuana:

Family Rules on Alcohol:

Family Rules on Technology:

Consequences for breaking a family rule:

I promise to live according to our family rules.

Sign here:

Make your own family pact today!



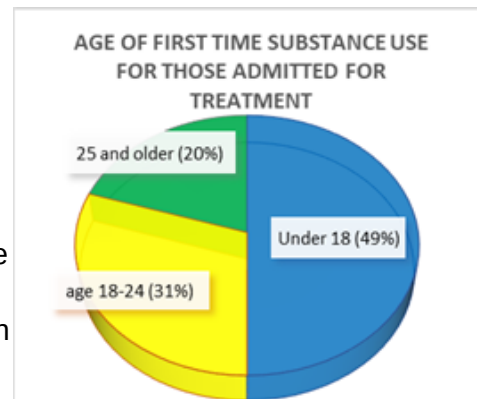
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IT PAYS TO KNOW KEY MEASURES



WAITING is KEY

To prevent dependence or addiction in later years, research proves that delaying use of addictive substances is key. 80% of all people in treatment for substance use began using before age 25 (when brains are fully developed). Almost half of those in treatment started before age 18.



PARENTS are KEY

75% of teens report parents are the leading influence on decisions about drugs, including alcohol.* Clearly stated parental values and clear family rules and consequences are proven to reduce the amount of risk teens take. Your kids are listening.



TALKING EARLY and OFTEN is KEY

Children begin to consider the pros and cons of drinking alcohol at age 8.*

*Source: MADD®



OPPORTUNITY is KEY

Time spent building healthy pathways in our brain is essential.



CONNECTION is KEY

Time spent in community and with other trusted adults develops new skills and relationships that boost confidence and resilience.





BRAIN MATTERS

Human brains remain under construction until our mid-20's. To help youth build emotional wellness skills, emphasize behaviors that promote resilience. Parents and grandparents who prioritize resilience themselves model behavior that children are likely to follow.



*Need inspiration?
Try these ideas on for size.*



Explore More at WCCTC.ORG

- THRIVE Projects for youth
- Resources for parents
- Volunteer opportunities
- T-shirt sales for groups or individuals
- Find handy tips for raising resilient kids at facebook.com/WestChesterCommunitiesthatCare

Improving outcomes for youth, together.



IT **PAYS** TO KNOW ABOUT **YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH**

West Chester Stats

- KUDOS: All forms of bullying are down across all grades.
- 27% of WCASD teens feel sad or depressed most days.

Why We Care

- Anxiety and depression can be precursors for substance misuse or suicide.



BRAIN MATTERS

Repeated actions strengthen neural brain pathways.

Pro Tips:

- **Introduce** your teens to healthy coping strategies like spending time outdoors, journaling, exercise and mindfulness.
- **Model** consistent gratitude. It's shown to have a direct link to overall life satisfaction.
- **Choose** a healthy lifestyle for yourself. Adult actions influence teen behavior.
- **Link** youth to community service that builds skills and develops interests.
- **Engage** with your children, even when you think they've stopped listening. They haven't.
- **Visit** SAVE.org to learn warning signs of suicide ideation.
- **Use kind words** and validation every day. It's a great way to help fabulous teens through difficult years.

