

A young boy with dark hair is sitting at a table, smiling and reading an open book. A soccer ball is on the table next to the book. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting.

2002 Child & Adolescent Health Assessment Prince George's County

Executive Summary

Supported in Part by Funding Provided by:
**Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene,
Center for Maternal and Child Health**
Through Project H18 MC-00023-09 From the
Maternal & Child Health Bureau (Title V, Social Security Act)
Health Resources and Services Administration,
Department of Health and Human Services

About This Assessment...

Introduction

As part of this assessment, two independent telephone surveys were implemented: 1) the 2002 PRC *Child & Adolescent Health Survey* among parents and available adolescents to address issues related to health status, behaviors and health needs of the child and adolescent population; and 2) the 2002 PRC *Adolescent Substance Abuse Risk Survey* among adolescent respondents to identify risk and protective factors for the county's youth relative to use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, as well as other high-risk behaviors.

The "community" defined for this assessment is Prince George's County, Maryland. Throughout this summary, findings are examined for each of four quadrants within the County as described in the adjacent map.

2002 Child & Adolescent Health Survey. The sample design utilized for this effort consists of a random sample of 1,000 parents or guardians of children and adolescents aged 0 through 19 within the County, as well as 174 randomly chosen adolescents in the 1,000 households who were available and permitted by parents to participate. In the event that a person under 20 did not live in the household dialed, the interview was terminated and another household was contacted. For statistical purposes, the maximum rate of error associated with a sample size of 1,000 respondents is $\pm 3.1\%$ at the 95 percent level of confidence.

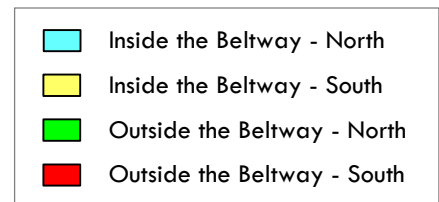
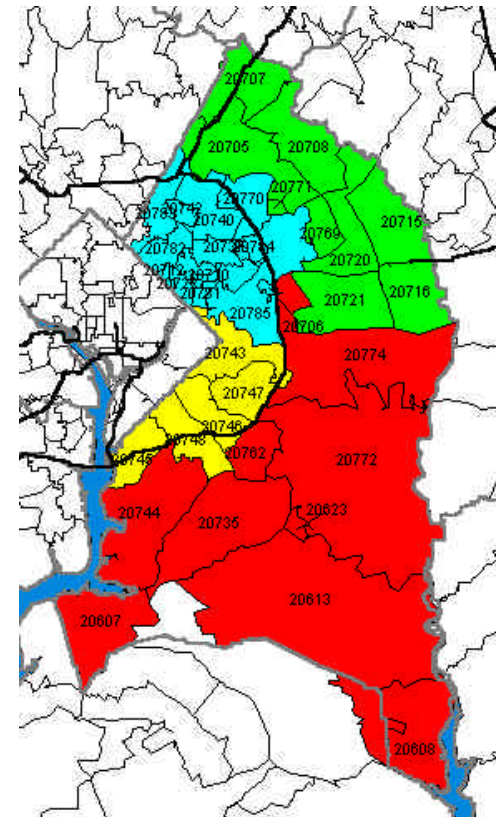
2002 Adolescent Substance Abuse Risk Survey. PRC also administered the 2002 *Adolescent Substance Abuse Risk Survey* for Prince George's County among 600 adolescents aged 12 to 19 to measure risk factors for alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) use. A telephone interview was used for this survey as well.

The survey was customized for Prince George's County, but largely draws on survey questions and risk modeling developed for the *Communities That Care Youth Survey* (CTC Youth Survey) by Development and Research Programs, Inc. (DRP). The DRP survey is one that is often administered in schools as a written survey and measures a comprehensive set of risk and protective factors that affect a community's adolescent population, impacting academic performance and positive youth development.

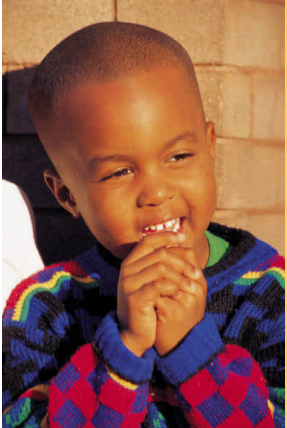
Community Health Panels. Further, as part of this assessment, Professional Research Consultants conducted a series of 10 Community Health Panels (similar to focus groups) among community leaders and service providers in the County, as well as among area parents and adolescents themselves, to identify and explore areas of perceived need.

From these data, this summary highlights some of the key findings relative to: **Children, Adolescents,** and **Substance Abuse Risk Factors.**

Prince George's County, MD



Children



*"I think nutrition education and access to healthy foods in the schools is real important to the health future of these kids."
- Community Leader*

Number-One Health Concern

Obesity/diet/exercise and access to health care are among parents' top health concerns and are areas for which they think current resources are insufficient.

For children under 12 in Prince George's County, parents identified the following as the number-one health concern: **colds** (mentioned by 18.9%); **immunizations** (9.1%); **obesity/diet/exercise** (8.2%); **asthma** (7.0%); and **access to health care** services (5.1%). A total of 28.1% were uncertain or unable to offer a response. Over two-thirds of those mentioning obesity/diet/exercise or access to health care believe that current resources are not available or insufficient to deal with these problems.

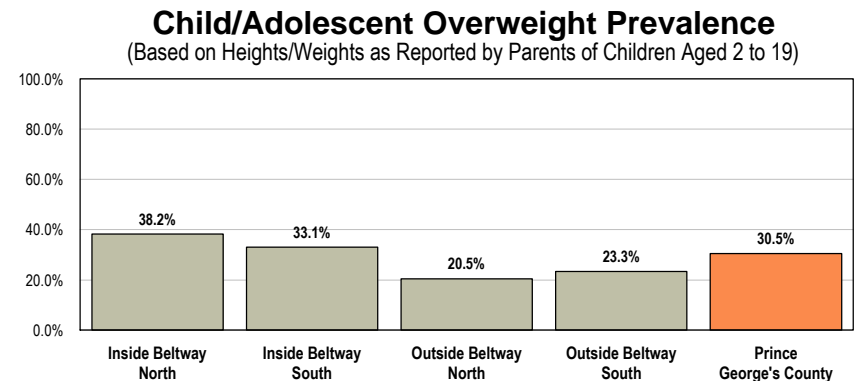
Physical Health Status

Nearly 40% of children aged 2 to 11 are overweight, based on reported heights and weights.

A total of 38.7% of children 2 to 11 are overweight, based on reported heights and weights and calculated Body Mass Index (BMI). Overall, overweight prevalence is more often noted among lower-income families, as well as among Hispanic and African American children and adolescents.

Among children aged 6 to 11:

- 46.3% participate in vigorous physical activity at least five times per week for 20 minutes at a time.
- 26.2% eat the daily recommended 5 or more servings of fruits and/or vegetables.
- 22.2% spend three or more hours watching television on a typical schoolday.
- 13.4% have eaten three or more meals from fast food restaurants in the past week.



Source: 2002 PRC Child and Adolescent Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants

Notes: 1. Overweight in children is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) above the 95th percentile for one's age and gender.
2. Asked of parents with children aged 2 to 19.

Children

*"Asthma and allergy-related illnesses are a real health problem in this area and people really don't understand what it is and what are the long-term consequences. As a community, we need to be trained on this disease."
- Community Leader*

*"My daughter seems to be having a lot of problems ... she needs some counseling because she is very angry. I don't know where to take her to get help."
- Parent*

Over one-third of children suffer from allergies or asthma.

Of the tested health conditions, the most prevalent among children 0 to 11 in Prince George's County include: **nasal/hay fever allergies** (23.8%); **asthma** (16.3%); **other allergies** (13.1%); **speech or language problems** (7.7%); **developmental delays or learning disabilities** (7.2%); and **attention deficit hyperactive disorder or ADHD** (6.8%).

Among children diagnosed with asthma, the average diagnosis was at age 2 years. Roughly one-half currently take medication for his/her asthma. About 60% have been to the doctor for asthma in the past year, 40% have received urgent care, and 30% have received emergency room care for asthma. A total of 7% were hospitalized for asthma in the past year.

Mental Health Status

Nearly 40% of children 6 to 11 are reported to experience one or more "mental health risks."

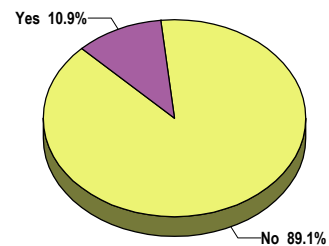
A total of 37.8% of children 6 to 11 are reported to experience one or more "mental health risks," including rebelliousness, anxiety, difficulty sleeping, depression, or lack of an emotional support network. Parents reported the following about children aged 6 to 11:

- 24.7% worry a lot.
- 10.9% have difficulties falling asleep and/or sleeping through the night.
- 2.6% have had two or more weeks in a row in the past year during which they felt so sad or hopeless almost every day that they stopped doing some usual activities.

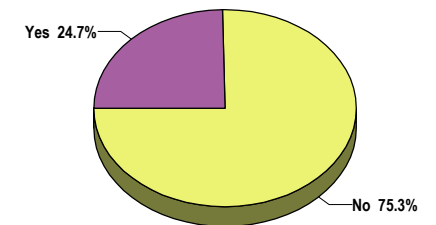
Nearly 90% of children have three or more people who would help them with emotional problems or their feelings (3% have no one).

A total of 41.4% of parents are aware of mental health resources in the community; this is lower inside the Beltway, as well as among lower-income families, African Americans and Hispanics.

Child Has Sleep Difficulties
(Among Parents of Children Aged 6 to 11)



Child Worries A Lot
(Among Parents of Children Aged 6 to 11)



Source: 2002 PRC Child and Adolescent Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Reflects parents of children 6-11.

Children



*"One place that I see we could improve on is after-school programs in all of our schools. When kids get out of school, parents are working and they [kids] don't have any supervision."
- Community Leader*

Child Care & Parenting

While most preschool-aged children are primarily watched by a parent or other family member, over 25% are in formal daycare arrangements.

Child care arrangements reported for children 0 to 5 include: **parent** (46.7%); **licensed family day care** (19.1%); **other family member** (13.4%); **friend/babysitter** (9.3%); **child care center** (8.4%); or other arrangements (3.1%).

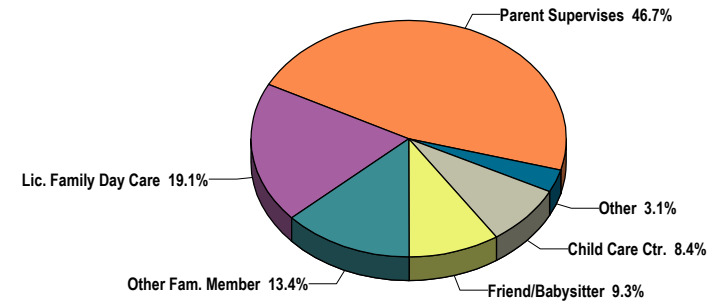
Prince George's County parents and community leaders would like to see more after-school programs available for youth.

After-school arrangements for supervision of children 6 to 14 include: **parent** (54.5%); **other family member** (13.5%); **after-school program** (11.0%); **friend/babysitter** (6.9%); **self-supervision** (6.5%); or other arrangements (7.6%).

A total of 30.9% of children 6 to 11 do not participate in any organized activities after school, such as sports, clubs, scouting, etc. Overall, participation is particularly low among those living in lower-income families.

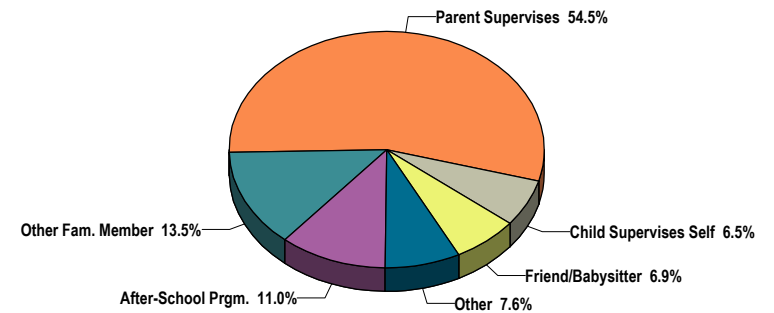
A total of 40.4% of parents of children 0 to 11 say that they are aware of parenting education programs offered in the community. Awareness of these programs is generally lower inside the Beltway.

Child Care Arrangements
(Among Parents of Children Aged 0 to 5)



Source: 2002 PRC Child and Adolescent Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Asked of respondents with children aged 0 to 5 years.

After-School Care Arrangements
(Among Parents of Children Aged 6 to 14)



Source: 2002 PRC Child and Adolescent Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Reflects respondents with children aged 6 through 14.

Children



"I think that the violence issue has an incredible impact on many of our teens, especially in our African American community. Here we are trying to educate a young man about health risk behaviors and he looks at you and says, 'I am not going to live to be 22 so who cares?'"
- Community Leader

Safety & Injury

While most children "always" use child seats or seat belts in a car, only one-half "always" wear a bicycle helmet when riding a bike.

A total of 92.6% of children aged 0 to 11 are reported to "always" use a child safety seat or seat belt (as appropriate) when riding in an automobile. Among children who ride bicycles, however, 47.5% "always" wear a bike helmet; 21.9% "rarely" or "never" wear one.

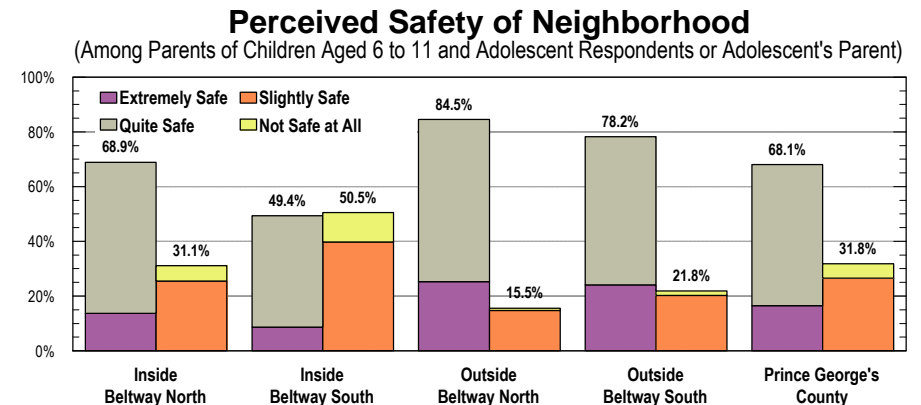
Nearly one-third of children live in neighborhoods that parents do not consider safe.

A total of 31.6% of parents of children 6 to 11 describe their neighborhood as "slightly safe" or "not safe at all." Neighborhoods in the Inside Beltway South area received the least favorable evaluations (see chart).

A total of 2.0% of parents of children 6 to 11 say their child has avoided school in the past month because he/she felt unsafe at school or on the way to or from school.

Other safety and injury findings:

- 12.0% of children under 12 have had an injury requiring treatment in the past two years. The greatest share of these injuries were received while playing. Most consisted of cuts/stitches, broken bones or sprains, and received treatment at the hospital or ER.
- 13.1% of children aged 0 to 11 years live in a home where a firearm is kept.



Source: 2002 PRC Child and Adolescent Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants

Note: Asked of parents of children 6-11, as well as adolescent respondents OR the parent of the adolescent (proxy) if the adolescent was unavailable or if parent did not wish him/her to participate.

Children

*"I think the model we should use is that every year in our school system, the children would be immunized and they would also receive a dental check and a physical once in elementary, middle and high school. I think it would provide healthier adults."
- Community Leader*

Routine Health Care

Nearly all parents of young children in the survey report having a regular doctor's office or clinic for their child's health care needs.

A total of 88.5% of children under 12 have visited a doctor for a routine checkup in the past year.

Parents report an average of 15 minutes travel time to their child's doctor's office, although 34.6% reported travel times longer than 15 minutes. Most parents report that they drive their child to the doctor's office (89.0%), while 4.9% rely on public transportation, and 4.7% rely on a ride from a friend or family member. Reliance on transportation other than self-driving is notably higher (17.3%) inside the Beltway.

Roughly 70% of kids have had dental care in the past year, below the Year 2010 target.

A total of 69.1% of children aged 1 to 11 have received dental care in the past year (the Year 2010 target is 83% or higher). Overall, receipt of dental care is particularly low among those in lower-income households, those living inside the Beltway, African American children and Hispanic children.

- 8.1% of children 1 to 11 have not been able to get needed dental care in the past year, primarily due to cost/lack of insurance or appointment availability.

A total of 76.1% of children 3 to 11 have had an eye exam in the past two years, and 77.9% have had a hearing test.

Two out of three Prince George's County children have been tested for lead poisoning.

Nearly two-thirds (63.4%) of Prince George's County children aged 0 to 6 years have been tested for lead poisoning, ranging from about 60% in the southern part of the County to about 67% in the northern part. Of those tested, 2.4% tested positive.



Children

"Some people just can't afford to pay for insurance and feed their kids. This is a real problem with the working poor; they can't afford adequate day care or health insurance."
- Community Leader

"When you call the doctor for an appointment, you get an appointment for next week. You are forced to go to the ER for care. We need more doctors or urgent care facilities that are opened until 9:00 p.m." - Parent

"[Undocumented] parents are afraid to enroll their kids in the insurance plan MCHP because they are afraid they are going to be reported to INS. They are very afraid of this system."
- Community Leader

Access to Health Care Services

Nearly one out of 10 children is without any type of health care coverage.

A total of 9.2% of children 0 to 11 are currently without any type of healthcare coverage, either through private or public insurance. Overall, uninsured rates are notably higher among lower-income households, as well as African American or Hispanic children.

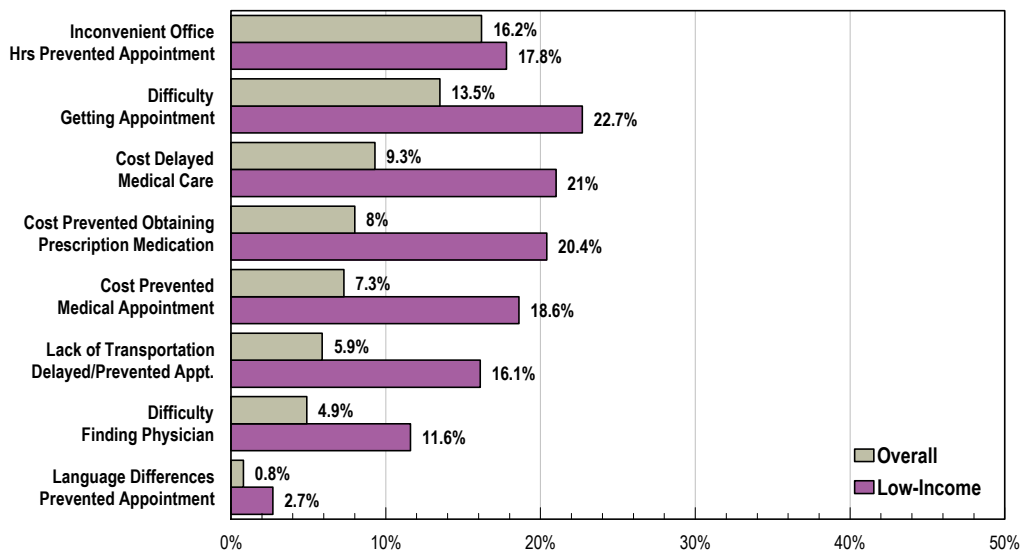
More than one-fourth of parents have had difficulty accessing health care services for their child in the past year.

A total of 28.4% of parents of children 0 to 11 experienced difficulties accessing health care for their child in the past year. Among the most prevalent identified barriers that either prevented or delayed treatment were **inconvenient office hours, appointment availability** and **cost** (of doctor care and prescriptions).

Problems with access are particularly prevalent among families living below the 200% poverty threshold (see chart).

Community leaders in the Community Health Panels also cited particular health care access concerns for the Hispanic and Asian communities, including problems relative to culture, language and documentation.

Barriers Prevented a Child's/Adolescent's Health Care Access in the Past Year
(Among Parents of Children/Adolescents Aged 0 to 19)



Source: 2002 PRC Child and Adolescent Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants

Notes: 1. Asked of parents about a particular, randomized child or adolescent in the household.
2. Percentages represent "yes" responses.

Adolescents



*"When a child is diagnosed with some kind of allergy or asthma, there should be a support group that they are told to attend. Maybe a workshop that they are assigned to go on a regular basis, or maybe they are put on a mailing list to receive information about this disease."
- Community Leader*

Number-One Health Concern

Parents and adolescents alike identified teenage sex, drug use, weight/diet and tobacco use as the most pressing health issues for youth.

For adolescents in Prince George's County, parents identified the following as the number-one health concern: **sexual activity** (24.0%); **illegal drugs** (13.8%); **obesity/diet/nutrition** (6.2%); and **tobacco use** (5.4%). A total of 20.3% were uncertain or unable to offer a response. Over 50% of those mentioning any of these issues believe that current resources are not available or are insufficient to deal with these problems.

Adolescents themselves gave a ranking of problems similar to parents, although a lower proportion mentioned sexual-activity related issues, while higher percentages mentioned tobacco use and obesity/diet/nutrition. Approximately one-half feel resources are not available or are insufficient to deal with these problems.

In the Community Health Panels among adolescents, the two biggest problems mentioned were drugs (primarily marijuana) and sex (middle school students specifically mentioned oral sex).

Physical Health Status

Nearly one-half of adolescents suffer from allergies or asthma.

Of the tested health conditions, the most prevalent among adolescents in Prince George's County include: **nasal/hay fever allergies** (35.0%); **other allergies** (17.6%); **asthma** (15.2%); **developmental delays or learning disabilities** (11.9%); **attention deficit hyperactive disorder or ADHD** (9.6%); **speech or language problems** (8.6%); and **orthopedic or skeletal problems** (8.2%).

Among adolescents diagnosed with asthma, the average diagnosis was at age 5 years. Roughly one-half currently take medication for his/her asthma. About one-half have been to the doctor for asthma in the past year, one-fourth have received urgent care, and just under 10% have received emergency room care for asthma in the past year.

Community leaders in the Community Health Panels called for increased education about asthma and allergy-related illnesses, and increased services and support for children with asthma and their families.

Adolescents

*"Yeah, most of my friends think they're overweight, but they're not."
- 7th-8th Grader*

*"I think there is a lot of pressure to wear certain clothes and shoes for both boys and girls. A lot of pressure to fit in, whatever everybody else is wearing."
- Parent*

*"I noticed that there are a few girls that just sit around during the lunch period and don't eat at all. I noticed more girls than boys doing this."
- Parent*

Nearly one in five adolescents is overweight; nearly one-third of overweight girls perceive their weight as "about right."

A total of 18.8% of adolescents in Prince George's County are overweight, based on reported heights and weights and calculated Body Mass Index (BMI); the national goal for the year 2010 is to reduce this percentage to no more than 5%. Overall, youth overweight prevalence is more prevalent in lower-income households, as well as among Hispanic or African American adolescents.

31.1% of overweight girls and 17.5% of overweight boys perceive their body weight as "about right," rather than as overweight. [In contrast, 16.0% of girls and 6.1% of boys who are not overweight perceive themselves as "overweight."]

Adolescents in the Community Health Panels believe that senior high girls are more concerned about their weight; boys are largely unconcerned. Some high schoolers, however, feel that weight is not as big a concern as wearing the right clothes.

31.2% of girls and 17.7% of boys are currently trying to lose weight. Large shares of those trying to lose weight used diet (39.9%) or exercise (54.4%) in the month preceding the interview; also, 11.4% reported fasting, while 5.4% used diet pills/powders/liquids and 5.4% purged (vomited/used laxatives).

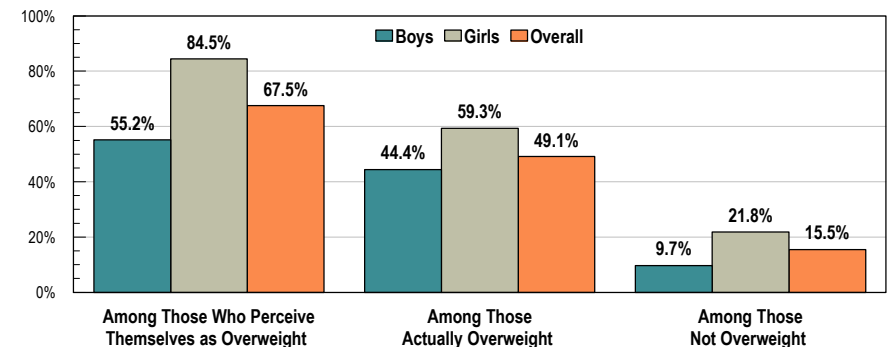
Poor nutrition and lack of exercise contribute to overweight prevalence among youth.

A total of 33.0% of adolescents report eating three or more meals from fast food restaurants in the week preceding the interview. Only 25.5% eat the daily recommended 5 or more servings of fruits and/or vegetables.

Parents in the Community Health Panels feel that school lunches are not very nutritious, and they believe that the schools should offer nutritious breakfasts as well. Many adolescents in the Community Health Panels admitted spending their school lunch money on non-nutritious selections from vending machines, candy fundraisers, etc.

Television watching and video gaming are leading sedentary behaviors in youth. A total of 49.0% of adolescents report watching three or more hours of television on a typical schoolday (Year 2010 target is <25%); 14.9% play computer or video games for three or more hours on a typical schoolday.

Currently Trying to Lose Weight (Among Adolescent Respondents)



Source: 2002 PRC Child and Adolescent Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Asked of adolescent respondents aged 12 to 19.

Adolescents

*"I get stressed with homework and everything to do with school... just about everything everyday - homework, study and projects that are never-ending."
- 9th -12th Grader*

*"Parents putting stress on you... like clean up your room, doing well in school or being like another sibling ... there's a lot of pressure on you."
- 9th -12th Grader*

"I think kids are opening up more and talking more about what is bothering them. The problem is that you have to be there when they are in that talking mood." - Parent

Mental Health Status

Over 40% of adolescents experience one or more mental health risks.

In all, 42.6% of adolescents experience one or more "mental health risks," including rebelliousness, anxiety, difficulty sleeping, depression, or lack of an emotional support network.

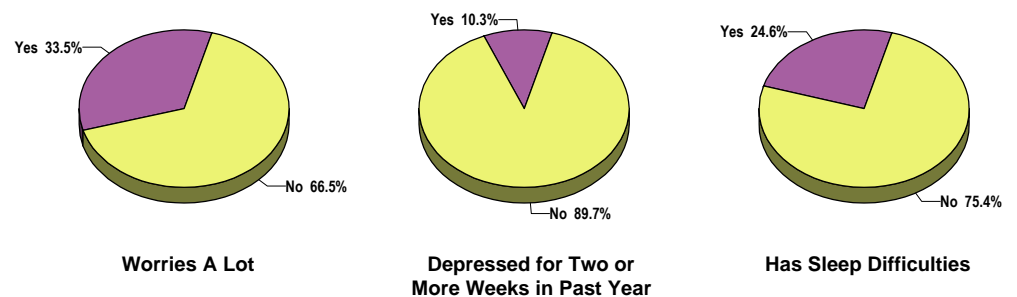
- 33.5% worry a lot. In the Community Health Panels, parents and adolescents alike discussed the stresses of academics, as well as social pressures in teens' lives.
- 24.6% have difficulties falling asleep and/or sleeping through the night. Some parents in the Community Health Panels attributed lack of sleep to busy schedules, homework and early school hours.
- 12.1% believe that they go against the rules "more often" than their friends.
- 10.3% have had two or more weeks in a row in the past year during which they felt so sad or hopeless almost every day that they stopped doing some usual activities. Approximately one-half of these adolescents sought help from a guidance counselor or other adult at school; adolescents in the Community Health Panels revealed that younger adolescents are more likely to go to an adult with a problem than are older adolescents.

A total of 83.4% of adolescents say they have three or more people in their lives who would help them with emotional problems or their feelings.

One-half of adolescents say they are aware of mental health resources in the community. Overall, reported awareness is lower inside the Beltway, as well as among lower-income households, African Americans or Hispanics.

Community leaders in the Community Health Panels discussed shortcomings in the availability and accessibility of mental health services for youth in Prince George's County.

Adolescent Mental Health (Among Adolescent Respondents 12 to 19)



Source: 2002 PRC Child and Adolescent Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Reflects responses among adolescent respondents.

Adolescents



"There need to be alternatives for teens in this area because public transportation is poor ... neighborhood recreation centers for kids to hang out at after school."
- Community Leader

"It is almost like fighting is an acceptable way to resolve problems." - Parent

"One high school was listing all the good points of the school, and the number-one thing was that they had 20 new security cameras. It was not about education, it was about security."
- Parent

Daily Life

One-third of adolescents do not participate in any organized activities after school.

A total of 31.9% of adolescents do not participate in any organized activities after school, such as sports, clubs, scouting, etc. Overall, participation is particularly low among adolescents living in lower-income households.

Most 7th-8th graders in the Community Health Panels do not feel there is a lack of activities available to them; some older teens, however, feel that only sports-minded students have enough activities available. Parents in the Community Health Panels feel there is a need for more recreational centers and other organized activities that are affordable. Community leaders also cite a need for more after-school programs and recreational alternatives for youth.

Safety & Injury

Adolescents report low seat belt usage, and 10% acknowledge riding in the past month with a driver who had been drinking.

A low 73.9% of adolescents say they "always" wear a seat belt when driving or riding in the front seat of an automobile; fewer (49.5%) say they "always" wear a seat belt when riding in the back seat. Responses are particularly low among African American or Hispanic adolescents, and among those living in lower-income households.

A total of 10.1% of adolescents acknowledge riding (in the month preceding the interview) with a driver who had been drinking alcohol. Responses are higher among girls and those living in lower-income households.

Nearly one in four adolescents has been in a physical fight in the past year.

A total of 22.9% of adolescents have been in one or more physical fights in the past year. Of these adolescents, 17.6% say that a weapon was involved; 13.0% say they received an injury requiring treatment.

Parents in the Community Health Panels commented on what they see as escalating violence among adolescents. Some attributed this to increased exposure to violence in the media, others attributed it to a sense of hopelessness and apathy among some youth.

A total of 3.9% of adolescents avoided school in the past month because he/she felt unsafe at school or on the way to or from school.

Adolescents



"I have observed very poor hygiene with the teens, both with boys and girls. No one has ever taught them the importance of good hygiene or what it is, since their moms don't know either. I am talking about both dental and health hygiene."
 - Community Leader

Routine Health Care

Most adolescents have a doctor's office or clinic for routine health care needs.

A total of 93.5% of adolescents have a regular doctor's office or clinic for their health care needs.

- 82.1% of adolescents have visited a doctor for a routine checkup in the past year.

The typical travel time to the doctor's office is 15 minutes, although 41.1% travel more than that. Most parents report that they drive their adolescent to the doctor's office (85.7%), while 6.2% rely on public transportation, and 5.7% rely on a ride from a friend or family member. Reliance on public transportation or friends/family is notably higher among residents inside the Beltway.

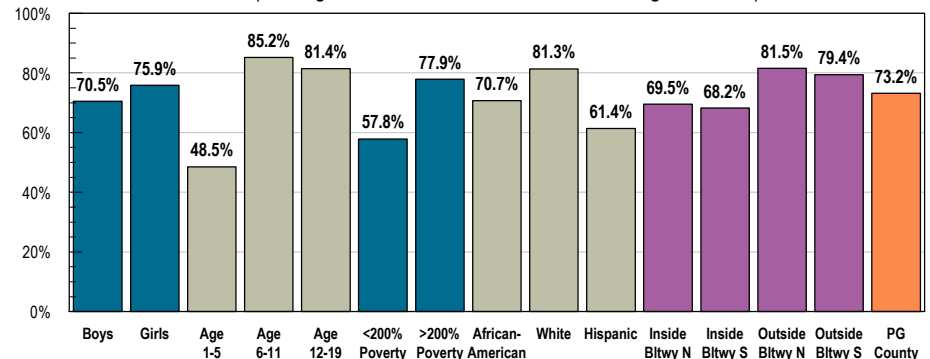
Dental care is notably lower among low-income families, as well as among Hispanic or African American children and adolescents in Prince George's County.

A total of 81.4% of adolescents have received dental care in the past year (the Year 2010 target is 83% or higher).

Overall, receipt of dental care is particularly low among those in lower-income households, those living inside the Beltway, African Americans and Hispanics (see chart).

A total of 84.1% of adolescents have had an eye exam in the past two years, and 72.2% have had a hearing test.

Child/Adolescent Has Received Dental Care in the Past Year
 (Among Parents of Children/Adolescents Aged 1 to 19)



Source: 2002 PRC Child and Adolescent Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants
 Note: Asked of parents about a particular, randomized child or adolescent aged 1-19 in the household.

Adolescents

"We have services not being accessed because people don't know they exist. There needs to be formal coordination, like a clearinghouse or a hotline of all the service agencies in this county."

- Community Leader

"Schools are not good about communicating what programs and services are available. Kids won't bring anything home either."

- Parent

"You really have to have your own transportation in this area if you want to access any of the services or the after school programs for the kids."

- Community Leader

"We need to use community centers in the area ... then maybe we can encourage kids to go to places for help."

- Community Leader

Access to Health Care

One out of 10 adolescents is without any type of healthcare insurance.

A total of 10.3% of adolescents are currently without any type of healthcare coverage, either through private or public insurance. Overall, uninsured rates are notably higher among lower-income households, as well as African American or Hispanic children and adolescents.

41% of parents have had difficulty accessing health care for their adolescent in the past year.

A total of 41.0% of parents experienced difficulties accessing health care for their adolescent in the past year. Among the most prevalent identified barriers that either prevented or delayed treatment were **inconvenient office hours, appointment availability, and cost** (of doctor care and prescriptions). Problems with access are particularly prevalent among families living below the 200% poverty threshold.

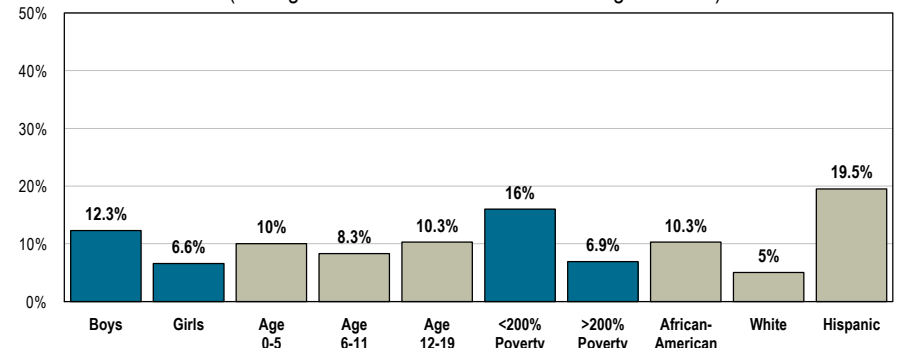
Community leaders in the Community Health Panels cited particular health care access concerns for the Hispanic and Asian communities, including problems relative to culture, language and documentation.

Most parents rely on their family doctor for healthcare information; adolescents primarily rely on their physician or their parents.

A total of 58.7% of parents say they rely on their family doctor as their primary source of healthcare information for their child or adolescent.

Among adolescents themselves, 33.0% say they rely on their doctor, and 17.5% say they rely on their parents.

Child/Adolescent Lacks Health Insurance Coverage (Among Parents of Children/Adolescents Aged 0 to 19)



Source: 2002 PRC Child and Adolescent Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Asked of parents about a particular, randomized child or adolescent in the household.

Substance Abuse Risk Factors



*"The number-one [reason kids drink] is peer pressure and the number-two reason is boredom... and another number-one is a parent."
- 7th-8th Grader*

*"People I know, they go to parties to get drunk... yep, every time."
- 9th-12th grader*

*"Marijuana is the top drug in my school. You don't really hear about alcohol, and nobody ever talks about cigarettes."
- 7th-8th Grader*

Middle school teens say the average age to begin smoking "weed" is 13 years old.

Use of Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs

Nearly one-half of high school students have tried alcohol.

A total of 19.3% of middle school students and 44.6% of high school students have ever had at least one drink of alcohol (excluding wine for religious purposes). The greatest share of these students say that they typically get alcohol at parties or buy it themselves.

- 41.2% of adolescents say one or more of their four "best" friends have tried alcohol without their parents knowledge.

Adolescents in the Community Health Panels described drinking as quite prevalent, especially among 11th and 12th graders. They say younger kids steal alcohol from their parents, while older kids get it at parties or can buy it on their own.

Other than alcohol, marijuana is seen as the most prevalent drug among youth.

Among adolescents in the Community Health Panels, use of drugs is seen as prevalent and widespread, regardless of socio-economic status, race or other differences. Marijuana use is seen as most prevalent, and they believe the average age of initiation to be 13 years old. Use of "harder" drugs is seen as minimal.

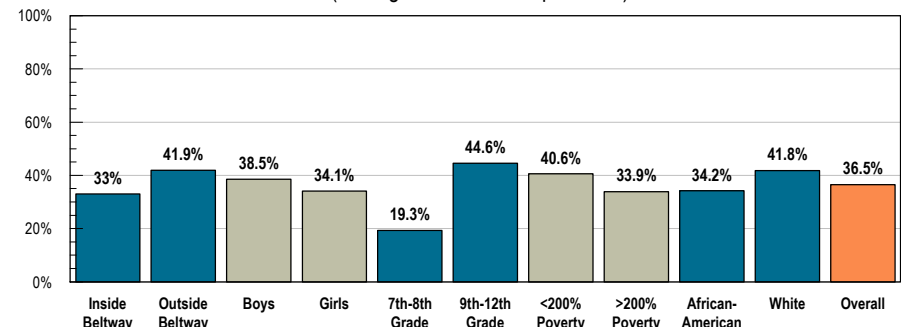
One out of six high school students acknowledges trying cigarettes.

A total of 7.7% of middle school students and 16.1% of high school students acknowledge having ever tried cigarette smoking. The greatest share of students who have tried smoking say they usually buy cigarettes at the store themselves or borrow them.

- 25.3% of adolescents say one or more of their "best" friends have smoked cigarettes in the past year.

A total of 21.8% of parents of adolescents report that at least one member of their household smokes cigarettes inside their home.

Have Ever Had at Least One Drink of Alcohol
(Among Adolescent Respondents)



Source: 2002 PRC Child and Adolescent Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Asked of adolescent respondents aged 12 to 19.

Substance Abuse Risk Factors



"My daughter has told me that there is a lot of peer pressure to drink and smoke marijuana. These are the two big drugs she is faced with at school." - Parent

Community

One out of three adolescents wants out of his or her neighborhood.

Just over one-third (35.8%) of adolescents agree that "I would like to get out of my neighborhood."

Parents report "some" or "a lot" of the following activities in their neighborhoods: **crime** (37.9%); **drug selling** (31.1%); **fights** (21.5%); **gang activity** (11.4%); **abandoned buildings** (9.2%); **graffiti** (7.3%); and **prostitution** (6.6%). Each of these appears more prevalent inside the Beltway (see chart).

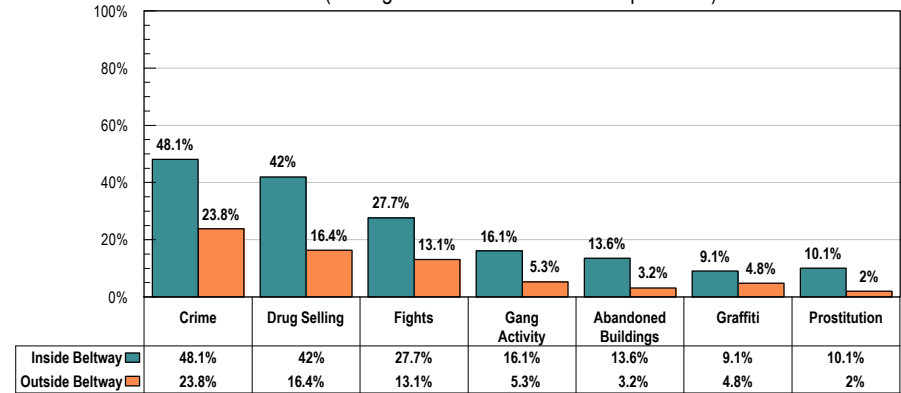
Most parents and adolescents acknowledge positive attributes of their neighborhoods.

Roughly 90% of parents believe their community has church-sponsored activities and sports teams available for teens. About 80% believe there are Boys & Girls Clubs, service clubs/service organizations, scouting and other after-school activities available.

A total of 72.2% of adolescents believe "there are people in my neighborhood who encourage me to do my best."

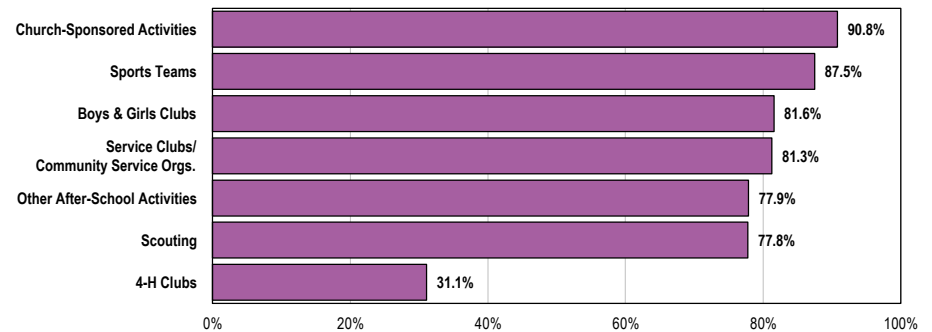
A total of 77.8% of adolescents believe "there are people in my neighborhood who are proud of me when I do something well."

Perceive "Some" or "A Lot" of Undesirable Activities in Own Neighborhood
(Among Parents of Adolescent Respondents)



Source: 2002 PRC Adolescent Substance Abuse Risk Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Asked of parents of adolescent respondents aged 12 to 19.

Community Availability of Activities for Teenagers
(Among Parents of Adolescent Respondents)



Source: 2002 PRC Adolescent Substance Abuse Risk Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Asked of adolescent respondents aged 12 to 19.

Substance Abuse Risk Factors

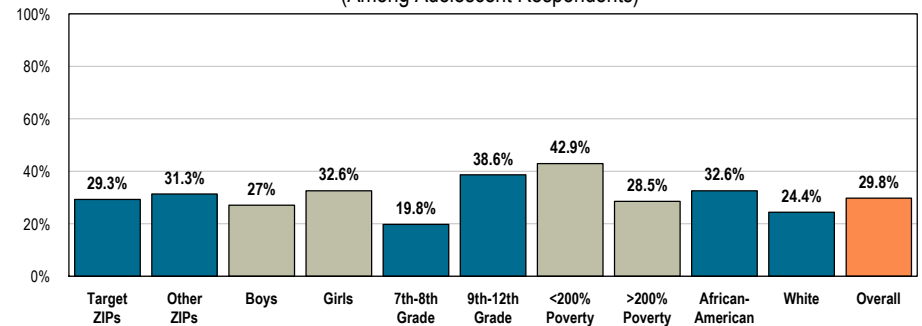
*"If I wanted to [buy marijuana], I could get it from my friends, because they get it from their older siblings. And I don't know where they get it, but that doesn't matter because it just gets passed down from person to person... you don't know where it starts."
- 7th-8th Grader*

Nearly 30% of teens have personally known an adult who has used or sold drugs.

Just under 30% of adolescents have personally known one or more adults who have sold or dealt drugs, or who have used drugs. Over one-half have known one or more adults who have gotten drunk.

These proportions are consistently higher among high school students and among kids in lower-income families.

Have Personally Known One or More Adults Who Have Used Drugs
(Among Adolescent Respondents)



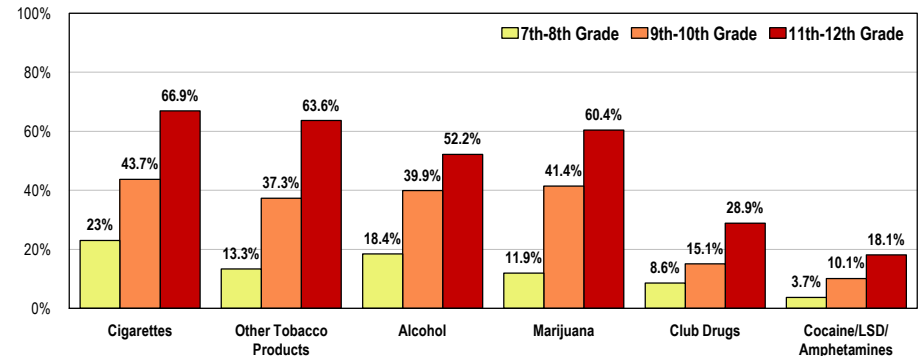
Source: 2002 PRC Adolescent Substance Abuse Risk Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Asked of adolescent respondents aged 12 to 19.

Most high schoolers believe it is easy to get tobacco, alcohol or marijuana.

In all, 40.3% of all adolescents aged 12 to 19 believe it is easy ("sort of easy" or "very easy") to obtain **cigarettes**, and about one-third believe it is easy to obtain **other tobacco products** (32.2%), **alcohol** (32.5%) or **marijuana** (31.9%). These percentages increase considerably among 11th and 12th graders (see chart).

Fewer believe it is easy to get **club drugs** (14.7% overall) or drugs like **cocaine, LSD or amphetamines** (8.8%).

Believe It is "Very" or "Sort of Easy" to Obtain:
(Among Adolescent Respondents)



Source: 2002 PRC Adolescent Substance Abuse Risk Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Asked of adolescent respondents aged 12 to 19.

Substance Abuse Risk Factors



Family

Most adolescents, particularly middle school students, feel close to at least one parent.

A total of 91.3% of adolescents say they feel close to at least one parent (or guardian). Of these, most say they share their thoughts and feelings with this parent. [In contrast, one out of five adolescents either do not feel close to a parent or do not share their feelings with them.]

Further:

- 87.1% of adolescents say that parents notice when they do a good job and tell them.
- 80.5% say that they feel they can go to a parent with a problem.
- 74.5% say that parents offer lots of chance to do fun stuff with them.
- 69.7% say they are involved in family decisions that affect them.

For each of these, responses are higher among middle school students than among high school students.

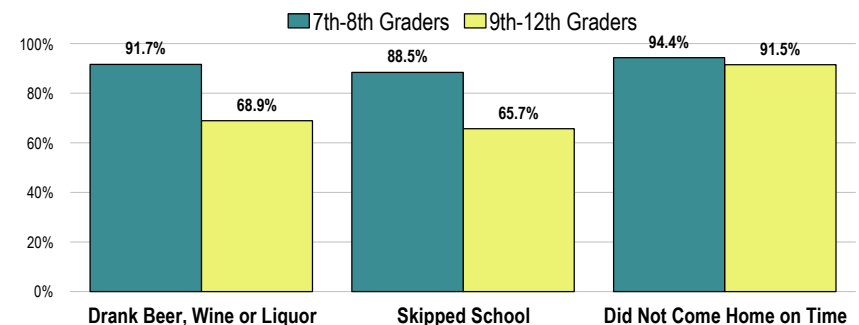
Middle school students, much more than high school students, believe they would be caught by parents if they drank alcohol or skipped school.

A total of 91.7% of middle school students and 68.9% of high school students believe they would likely be caught by parents if they drank beer, wine or liquor.

A total of 88.5% of middle school students and 65.7% of high school students believe they would likely be caught by parents if they skipped school.

*"I think lack of supervision is real problem with this group also. We see boredom and high use of illegal drugs. Marijuana and PCP are very high up on the list."
- Community Leader*

Believe They Would Be Caught by Parents if They:
(Among Adolescent Respondents)



Source: 2002 PRC Adolescent Substance Abuse Risk Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Asked of adolescent respondents aged 12 to 19.

Substance Abuse Risk Factors



"I asked my son openly about drugs because we have family members that are drug addicts and he seems turned off to drugs. Maybe he has seen all the terrible things that drugs have done to his family so hopefully he will stay away from them."
- Parent

"Parents have to pay attention to what their teens are doing away from home. The problem is that so many parents have so many issues themselves that their children are basically raising themselves."
- Community Leader

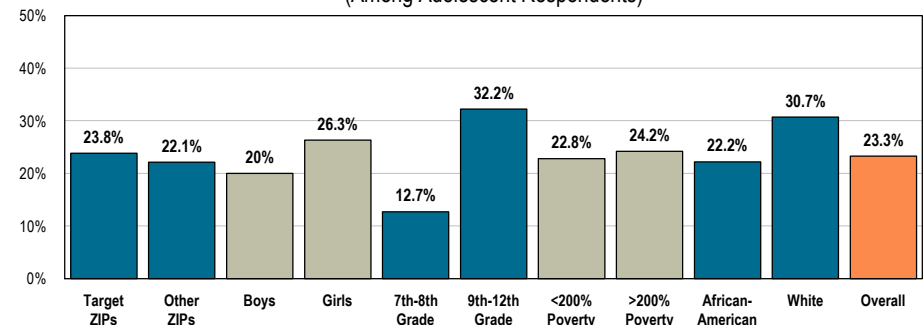
More than one-third of adolescents have a member of their immediate family who has had a problem with alcohol or drugs.

A total of 36.2% of adolescents report that a member of their immediate family has had an alcohol or drug problem. This increases notably among high school students, and among adolescents living at lower incomes. Also, African American adolescents more often report a family history of alcohol/drug problems than do White adolescents.

One out of four teens has a sibling who used alcohol or tobacco as a teenager; one out of seven has a sibling who used marijuana.

Roughly one-fourth of adolescents with siblings report that he or she used alcohol (23.3%) or tobacco (25.1%) as a teenager. A total of 14.8% report a sibling who used marijuana. Reports of these activities increase considerably among high school students.

Siblings' Use of Alcohol While They Were Teenagers
(Among Adolescent Respondents)



Source: 2002 PRC Adolescent Substance Abuse Risk Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Notes: 1. Asked of adolescent respondents aged 12 to 19.
2. Excludes those without brothers or sisters, or with siblings who are too young.

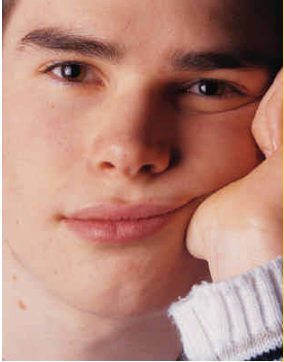
School

Middle school students express better academic commitment than high school students; one-third of all students hate being in school.

A total of 87.2% of middle school students and 75.3% of high school students say that they try to do their best in school "all" or "most of the time." Nearly one-third (32.0%) of all students say they hate being in school.

A total of 73.4% of adolescents report getting mostly As or Bs in school last year; 21.0% got mostly Cs, and 5.7% got mostly Ds and Es.

Substance Abuse Risk Factors



"I think parents expect a lot from the schools. They expect the schools to raise their children and to teach them right from wrong. But I think that is the parent's responsibility. I think the school should be the back up to what parents teach at home." - Parent

Most students believe they have plenty of opportunities to be involved in activities.

Over 90% of adolescents believe there are lots of chances to be involved in school sports, clubs or other activities, and believe that there are lots of chances for them to participate in class discussions and activities.

Most students have an adult at school to whom they could go with a problem.

A total of 83.2% of adolescents have a teacher, coach or other adult at school with whom they feel they could share their feelings or go to with a problem.

One-fifth of adolescents report safety concerns at school or to/from school.

A total of 21.8% of adolescents report having been threatened, intimidated or bullied at school or on the way to or from school in the past year.

In all, 5.8% of adolescents did not go to school on one or more days in the past month because they felt unsafe.

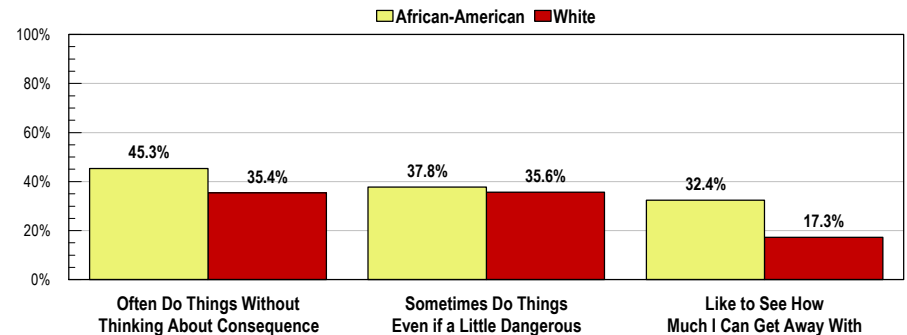
Individual/Peer Characteristics

A significant share of teens acknowledge that they are risk-takers.

Note the following:

- 43.2% of adolescents admit that they often do things without thinking about the consequences.
- 38.5% say they sometimes do things even if they are a little dangerous.
- 28.4% say they like to see how much they can get away with.

Impulsiveness, Sensation-Seeking and Rebelliousness
("Definitely True" or "Mostly True" Responses; Among Adolescent Respondents)



Source: 2002 PRC Adolescent Substance Abuse Risk Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Asked of adolescent respondents aged 12 to 19.

Substance Abuse Risk Factors

*"They have the DARE Program at our school. They talk about drugs and to stay off them. My son really likes the program. He says he will never drink a beer or do any of that stuff."
- Parent*

*"I think it [DARE] is an excellent program because it starts to make them aware as early as 5th grade about the danger of drugs and alcohol."
- Parent*

*"I think that what happened with the DARE Program is that it is getting a lot of negative publicity because they are not showing any success, so people think that it doesn't work. It is very important ... to show what we are doing statistically."
- Community Leader*

Most adolescents associate risks with regular alcohol, tobacco and marijuana use. Fewer students (especially high schoolers) associate risk with trying marijuana once or twice.

Over 70% of adolescents perceive "great risk" of harming oneself by smoking one or more packs of cigarettes per day or by using marijuana regularly. These perceptions are relatively consistent across grade levels.

However, perceived risk of trying marijuana drops sharply as grade level increases, with only 36% of 11th-12th graders perceiving "great risk" associated with trying marijuana once or twice.

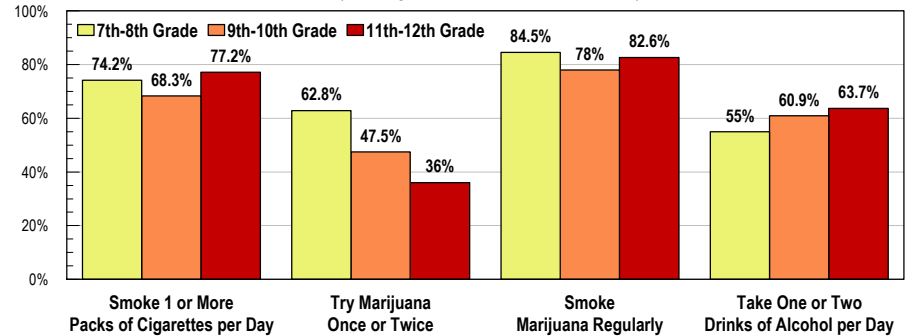
Most teens say that alcohol and drug use is wrong for youth, although this perception deteriorates with grade level.

Roughly 70% of adolescents feel it is "very wrong" for someone their age to use alcohol or tobacco.

Roughly 80% feel it is "very wrong" for peers to use marijuana.

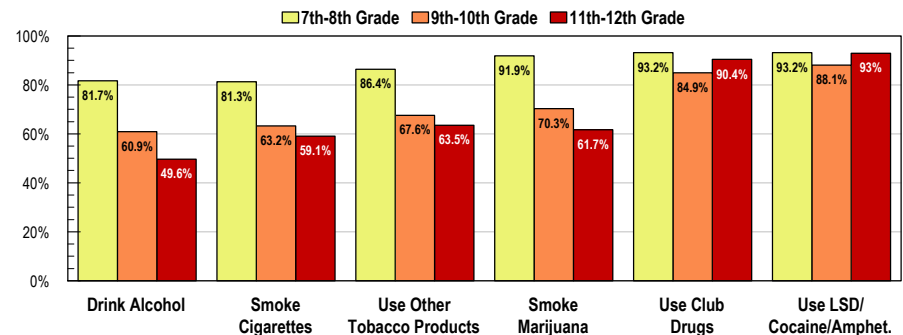
With regard to alcohol, tobacco and marijuana use, these perceptions decrease sharply with grade level (see chart).

Perceive That Someone is at "Great Risk" of Harming Themselves by Substance Use
(Among Adolescent Respondents)



Source: 2002 PRC Adolescent Substance Abuse Risk Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Asked of adolescent respondents aged 12 to 19.

Believe It Is "Very Wrong" for Someone My Age to:
(Among Adolescent Respondents)



Source: 2002 PRC Adolescent Substance Abuse Risk Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Asked of adolescent respondents aged 12 to 19.

Substance Abuse Risk Factors

"I think that engaging in sexual activity is a big peer pressure point. Even from TV, MTV and videos dealing with sex and they are trying to keep up to what is going on around them."
- Parent

"Some of my friends drink on the weekends, or every Friday."
- 7th-8th Grader

"The kids need more adults involved in their lives to set examples on how to behave. I find that a lot of kids don't have anyone to go home to after school. So they hang out with their friends, and sometimes these are the wrong friends and they end up getting into trouble."
- Parent

Over 40% of students have a close friend who they believe is sexually active or has tried alcohol, increasing to more than 60% among 11th and 12th graders.

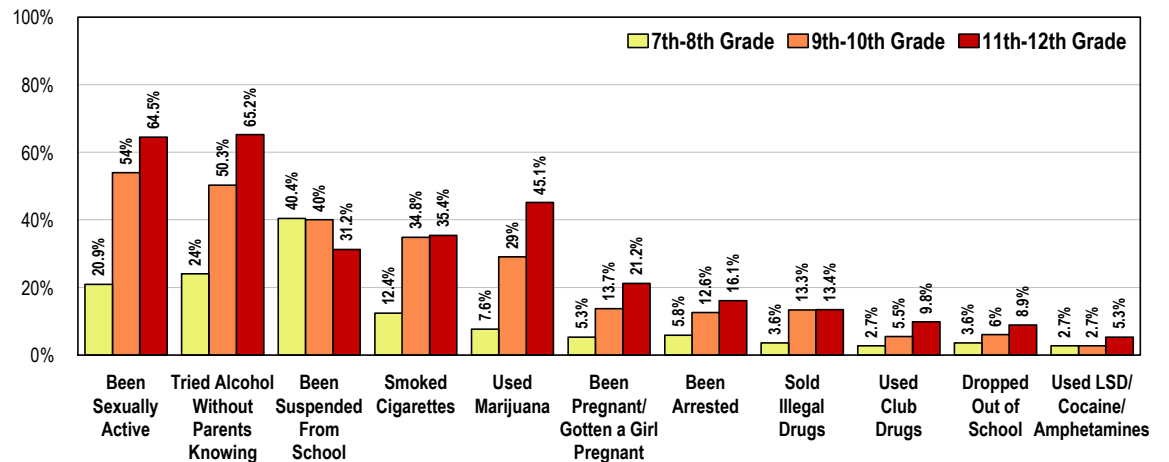
Adolescents report that one or more of their four best friends has engaged in the following behaviors: **sexually active** (42.6%); **tried alcohol without parents' knowledge** (41.2%); **been suspended from school** (36.5%); **smoked cigarettes** (25.2%); **used marijuana** (23.3%).

Reports of these peer behaviors increase sharply with grade level: for example, over 60% of 11th and 12th graders report that one or more of their four best friends has been sexually active or has tried alcohol without their parents' knowledge. A total of 45.1% of 11th-12th graders say one or more friends have used marijuana.

One out of five teens feels they would be seen as "cool" for using tobacco, alcohol or marijuana.

Just over 20% of adolescents perceive at least some chance that they would be seen as "cool" if they smoked cigarettes, began drinking regularly or smoked marijuana.

One or More of My Four "Best Friends" Has:
(Among Adolescent Respondents)



Source: 2002 PRC Adolescent Substance Abuse Risk Survey, Professional Research Consultants
Note: Asked of adolescent respondents aged 12 to 19.