



West Chester Statistics...

...About ALCOHOL

- 57% of kids know adults who have gotten drunk or high.
- Home access to drugs and alcohol accounts for 2/3 of all teenage use.
- Data shows a 17% spike in parents providing alcohol to their middle schoolers since 2017.

Why We Care

- Easy access is directly related to substance use for school-aged children. *
 - Adolescents who are allowed to drink at home drink more heavily outside of the home. *
- *research published by the National Institute of Health

More than 90% of WCASD kids report clear family rules and parents who know where they are.



KUDOS: Both help protect kids against substance abuse.

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.
- Model responsible behavior. Adult actions influence teen behavior. Period.
- Remind your kids that the majority of West Chester area teens are NOT drinking alcohol.
- 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.

...About VAPING

- WCASD vaping numbers are down from 16% in 2017 to 12.5% in 2019.
- 65% of the teens who vape are using nicotine. That is a 45% jump over the last 4 years.
- 33% of WCASD youth who vape are vaping marijuana. This number has doubled since 2017.

Why We Care

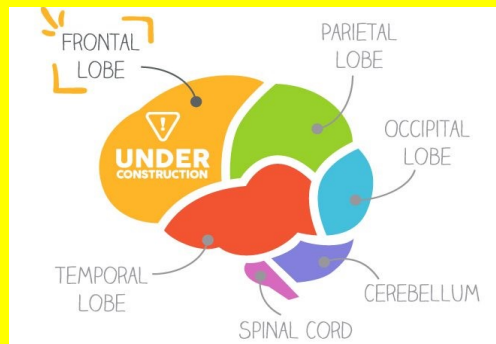
- Large increases in nicotine and marijuana use among teens who vape is worrisome due to the greater risk of addiction that comes with use at an early age.
- The signature puff of all vapes comes from chemicals that our lungs are not made to handle.
- The most popular vape pen, JUUL, holds 50mg of nicotine, which equals an entire pack of cigarettes.
- Unsuspecting teens are being sold drug laced cartridges, increasing their exposure to other drugs and addiction.

Pro Tips

- Continue to 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.

The Teen Brain

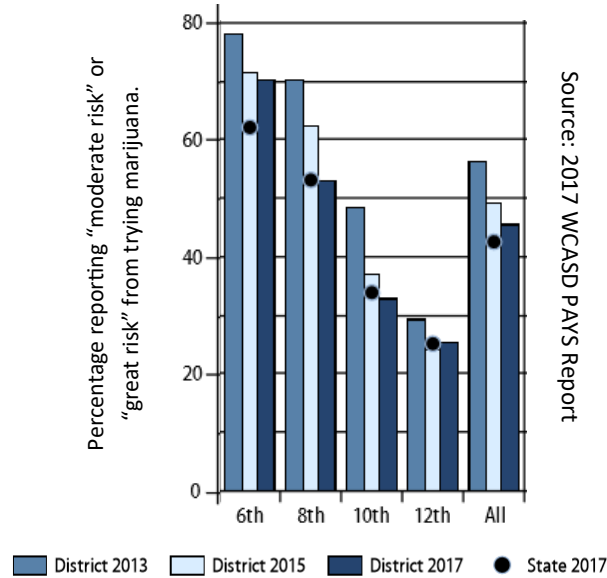
Under construction until the mid-20s



Young brains are more susceptible to addiction.

...About MARIJUANA

- WCASD 12th graders are 2.5x more likely to drive after marijuana use than alcohol.
- The amount of risk WCASD youth associate with marijuana use is steadily declining. It has dropped 12% since 2013.



Why We Care

- 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.

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.

...About PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

- At 3.3%, the number of teens using over the counter (OTC) drugs to get high has nearly tripled in the last 2 years.

Why We Care

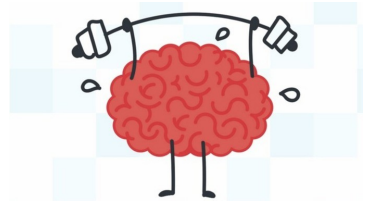
- Young people who experiment with OTC drugs often take more risk in other areas too.
- The rate of recreational Rx drug use, including opioids, goes up considerably in ages 18-24.

Pro Tips

- Lock up or dispose of Rx medications.
- Visit www.chesco.org/2673/Medication-Drop-Off to find a nearby place for safe disposal.
- Monitor online purchases. Teens ordering prescription drugs online is up 55%.

...About MENTAL HEALTH

KUDOS: All forms of bullying are lower across all grades.



Still, 32% of WCASD teens feel sad or depressed most days.

Why We Care

- Anxiety and depression can be a warning sign of substance misuse or suicide.

Pro Tips

- Visit SAVE.org to learn the warning signs of suicide ideation.
- Use kind words and validation every day. It's a great way to help fabulous teens through difficult years.
- Introduce your teens to healthy coping strategies like spending time outdoors, journaling, exercise and mindfulness.
- Teach consistent gratitude. It's shown to have a direct link to overall life satisfaction.



Research shared by MADD® shows that **75% of teens** report parents are the leading influence on their decisions about drugs, including alcohol.

And that children begin to consider the pros and cons of drinking alcohol **at age 8**.

Having clearly stated parental values and clear family rules and consequences is proven to reduce the amount of risk teens take.

Your kids are listening.



Parent/Teen Agreement

Family Rules on Vaping

Family Rules on Alcohol

Family Rules on Marijuana

Consequences for breaking a family rule:

I promise to live according to our family rules.

Sign here.

Need more space? Go ahead and grab another paper.

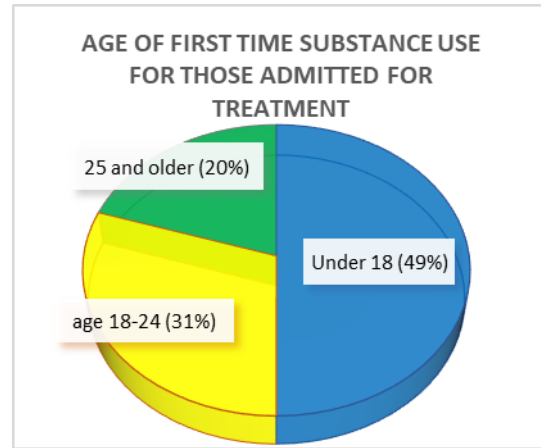
Want to prevent dependence on substances?

Waiting a few years greatly reduces the likelihood of dependence on alcohol and other addictive substances.



Want proof?

The graph below shows that **(80%)** of all people in treatment for substance use began using addictive substances before age 25 (the age our brains are fully developed). **Almost half of those in treatment started before age 18.**

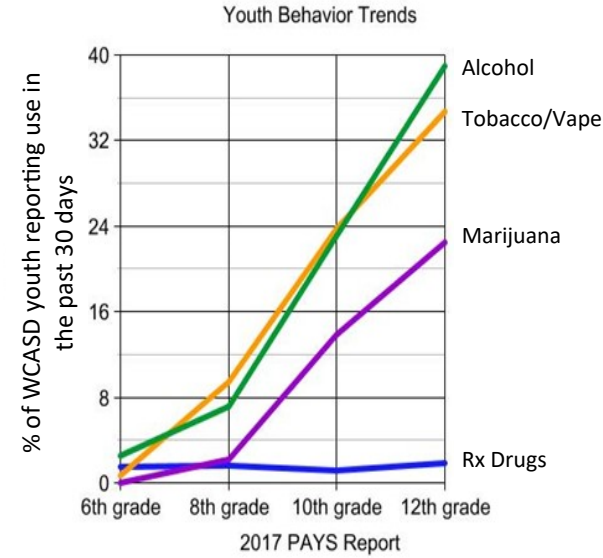


Source: SAMHSA 2017 Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS)

Want to LEARN more or DO more?

- Help youth find their natural highs. Run, jump, climb, go outside, cook, draw, write, create anything, act, sing, dance, be in nature. Try one or try them all.
- Visit us on Facebook for facts, myths and handy tips on raising resilient kids. [facebook.com/WestChesterAreaCommunitiesthatCare](https://www.facebook.com/WestChesterAreaCommunitiesthatCare)
- Link teens to community service that builds on their skills and helps all teens THRIVE. www.wcthrive.org.
- Engage with your children, even through years when you think they've stopped listening. Schedule a Power of Parents® presentation for your local group.
- Strengthen your whole family through local youth, parent and whole family programs.

Contact us at mobilizer@wcctc.org to learn more.



The Good News

Flip the statistics above to see that **76%** of 10th graders are not regularly drinking or using nicotine products. Remind your kids of the facts. Not everyone is doing it.

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 with the intent to provide targeted data for communities to design and implement prevention strategies best suited to their own community's needs.

Using PAYS data, the Communities that Care (CTC) model was implemented in partnership with West Chester Area School District in 1998. This relationship allows CTC to study trends among youth in behavior and perceptions around alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, prescription drugs and some mental health topics.

This snapshot of the PAYS statistics offers valuable information with which to have ongoing, intentional conversations with youth about substance use. Contact us for more information on CTC or the PAYS Data.

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West Chester Area Communities that Care is made possible through grants from Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol and CCRES.

What are your children doing?

It
PAYS
to
KNOW

A Parent's Guide to Prevent Teen Substance Use

