



WHAT ARE OUR KIDS SAYING?

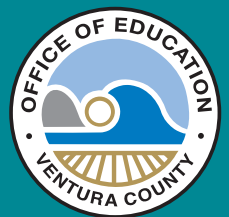


VENTURA COUNTY CALIFORNIA HEALTHY KIDS SURVEY UPDATE

In 2009-10, over 70% of Ventura County students in 5th, 7th, 9th and 11th grade (over 32,000 out of 44,022) took the voluntary California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS). This update presents a snapshot of what kids are saying about:

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY • ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS • HEALTH & TOBACCO • SAFETY & BULLYING

TO FIND YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT'S CHKS REPORT <http://chks.wested.org/reports/search>



SCHOOL & COMMUNITY

ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS

5th grade students

(10–11 years old)
7,058 Respondents

- 56% of 5th graders scored high on the School Connectedness scale¹
- 62% of 5th graders feel close to people at school most or all of the time
- 77% of 5th graders are happy to be at their school most or all of the time
- 82% of 5th graders say the teachers and other adults at school care about them most or all of the time; 89% say that teachers and other adults at school believe they can do a good job at school most or all of the time
- 84% of 5th graders know where to go for help with a problem

- 65% of 5th graders think drinking alcohol is very bad for a person's health
- 78% think using marijuana is bad for a person's health

- 17% of 5th graders surveyed did not know what marijuana is or its health risks
- 4% of 5th graders have used inhalants at least once
- 28% have had one or two sips of alcohol or a full drink at least once (other than for religious purposes)
- 1% have used marijuana

7th grade students

(12–13 years old)
8,883 Respondents

- 51% of 7th graders scored high on the School Connectedness scale¹

- 54% of 7th graders rated themselves high in total school assets²
- 67% of 7th graders rated themselves high in total community assets²
- 58% of 7th graders have an adult at school who really cares about them
- 74% have an adult at school who believes they will be a success

- 15% of 7th graders currently use alcohol³; of those, 39% binge drink⁴
- 7% of 7th graders currently use marijuana³

- 47% of 7th graders state that during their lives, they have ridden in a car with a driver who had been drinking
- 38% of 7th grade students say it is fairly or very easy to get alcohol
- 62% of 7th graders have talked with a parent during the past year about the dangers of tobacco, alcohol, or other drug use

9th grade students

(14–15 years old)
7,917 Respondents

- 50% of 9th graders scored high on the School Connectedness scale¹

- 49% of 9th graders rated themselves high in total school assets²
- 65% of 9th graders rated themselves high in total community assets²
- 56% of 9th graders have an adult at school who really cares about them
- 71% have an adult at school who believes they will be a success

- 24% of 9th graders currently use alcohol³; of those, 58% binge drink⁴
- 17% of 9th graders currently use marijuana³

- 22% of 9th graders state that during their lives, they have driven a car after drinking or been driven by a friend who had been drinking
- 13% have used prescription pain medications to get high
- 22% have used cough or cold medicine to get high
- 61% of 9th graders have talked with a parent during the past year about the dangers of tobacco, alcohol, or other drug use

11th grade students

(16–17 years old)
7,417 Respondents

- 49% of 11th graders scored high on the School Connectedness scale¹

- 52% of 11th graders rated themselves high in total school assets²
- 66% of 11th graders rated themselves high in total community assets²
- 65% of 11th graders have an adult at school who really cares about them
- 73% have an adult at school who believes the student will be a success

- 36% of 11th graders currently use alcohol³; of those, 65% binge drink⁴
- 24% of 11th graders currently use marijuana³

- 30% of 11th graders state that during their lives, they have driven a car after drinking or been driven by a friend who had been drinking
- 20% have used prescription pain medications to get high
- 21% have used cough or cold medicine to get high
- 59% of 11th graders have talked with a parent during the past year about the dangers of tobacco, alcohol, or other drug use

HEALTH & TOBACCO

SAFETY & BULLYING

- **94% of 5th graders think smoking cigarettes is very bad for a person's health**

- **81% of 5th graders feel safe at school**

- 83% of 5th graders ate breakfast on the day of the survey
- 60% of 5th graders exercise, dance or play sports 5 or more days per week
- 16% of 5th graders have been told by an adult that they have asthma
- 15% of 5th graders feel they are too fat; 49% of all 5th graders are trying to lose weight

- 55% of 5th grade students wear helmets most or all of the time when riding their bikes; 16% never wear one
- 12% of 5th grade students get hit or pushed at school by other kids when they are not just playing around
- 14% of 5th graders say other kids at school spread mean rumors about them most or all of the time
- 20% of 5th graders say they have seen another kid with a gun or knife at school

77%
of 5th graders are happy to be at their school most or all of the time

- **7% of 7th graders have smoked a cigarette; 5% of 7th graders currently smoke**

- **64% of 7th graders feel safe at school**

- 69% of 7th graders ate breakfast on the day of the survey
- 27% of 7th graders felt sad and hopeless for 2 weeks or more during the past year
- 70% of 7th graders strongly disapprove of someone their age smoking one or more packs of cigarettes a day
- 33% of 7th grade students believe it is easy to get cigarettes

- 25% of 7th graders were in a physical fight at school in the past year
- 29% of 7th graders have seen someone carrying a gun, knife, or other weapon on school property in the past year
- 10% of 7th graders were threatened or injured with a weapon (gun, knife, or club) at school during the past year
- 18% of 7th graders have had other students spread mean rumors or lies about them on the Internet

47%
of 7th graders state that during their lives, they have ridden in a car with a driver who had been drinking

- **19% of 9th graders have smoked a cigarette; 9% of 9th graders currently smoke**

- **62% of 9th graders feel safe at school**

- 64% of 9th graders ate breakfast on the day of the survey
- 60% of 9th grade students believe it is easy to get cigarettes
- 30% of 9th graders felt sad and hopeless for 2 weeks or more during the past year
- 18% of 9th graders seriously considered suicide during the past year

- 21% of 9th graders were in a physical fight at school in the past year
- 27% of 9th graders have seen someone carrying a gun, knife, or other weapon on school property in the past year
- 8% of 9th graders were threatened or injured with a weapon (gun, knife, or club) at school during the past year
- 22% of 9th graders have had other students spread mean rumors or lies about them on the Internet

22%
of 9th graders have had other students spread mean rumors or lies about them on the Internet

- **29% of 11th graders have smoked a cigarette; 14% of 11th graders currently smoke**

- **67% of 11th graders feel safe at school**

- 62% of 11th graders ate breakfast on the day of the survey
- 74% of 11th grade students believe it is easy to get cigarettes
- 80% of 11th graders think there is significant risk associated with smoking 1-2 packs of cigarettes a day
- 33% of 11th graders felt sad and hopeless for 2 weeks or more during the past year
- 17% of 11th graders seriously considered suicide during the past year

- 15% of 11th graders were in a physical fight at school in the past year
- 13% of 11th graders report seeing someone carrying a gun, knife, or other weapon on school property in the past year
- 7% of 11th graders were threatened or injured with a weapon (gun, knife, or club) at school during the past year
- 21% of 11th graders said that other students spread mean rumors or lies about them on the Internet

30%
of 11th graders state that during their lives, they have driven a car after drinking or been driven by a friend who had been drinking



“While many of the students in Ventura County are on track with their academic development, the California Healthy Kids Survey informs us that we need to pay attention not only to academic data, but also to the extent to which our children and youth report health-risk behaviors, including alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, bullying through electronic media, and sometimes feeling isolated and disconnected. The good news is that many students make healthy personal and social choices and most like coming to school. Still, if even a few of our children and youth are involved with challenging risk behaviors, feel bullied, or think people at school do not care about them, we must reach out to them and work to change those conditions.”

– STAN MANTOOTH
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS



What You Can Do

If you have concerns about your child, first check with your child's health care provider.

PARENT GUIDE TO KIDS ONLINE

www.onguardonline.gov

TO STOP SMOKING

California Smoker's Helpline: (800) 662-8887

Spanish: (800) 456-6386

www.californiasmokershelpline.org

Ventura County Free Quit Assistance Program
(805) 201-7867

www.vchca.org/public-health/call-it-quits.aspx

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Commit to safely disposing of your prescription drugs. Visit your local police department for safe, confidential disposal.

More information: www.VenturaCountyLimits.org/rx

VENTURA COUNTY ALCOHOL & DRUG PROGRAMS

www.VenturaCountyLimits.org

Fillmore Center (805) 524-8644

Oxnard Center (805) 981-9200

Simi Valley Center (805) 577-1724

Ventura Center (805) 652-6919

INTERFACE CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

www.icfs.org

(805) 485-6114

Strengthening children, families and communities to be safe, healthy and thriving.

24 HOUR VENTURA COUNTY INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICE

Dial 2-1-1

From cell phones: (800) 339-9597

www.icfs.org/2-1-1-information-referral.html

SURVEY NOTES

Statistics highlighted in shaded boxes are Performance Indicators that are tracked by the CA Department of Education.

¹ The School Connectedness scale uses five questions to measure the degree to which students feel they are a part of their school, feel close to people at school, are happy to be at school, and feel safe at school.

² Total assets refers to the degree to which students feel they have meaningful opportunities to participate in school or the community and have caring adults with high expectations for them in these settings.

³ Current use is defined as use within the past 30 days.

⁴ Binge drinking is defined as having 5 or more drinks in a row within a couple of hours.

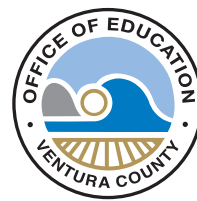
Tips for Parents

How can we encourage kids' strengths and support their healthy growth?

1. **Allow children to do as much for themselves as they can.** Help them when they can't do it themselves. Help them to learn from their own mistakes. Teach children that everyone (even you) makes mistakes. They will believe in themselves and develop confidence when they accomplish things on their own. When young, let them pack their own school bags. When older, they can help with meals and chores and eventually get a job.
2. **Encourage children to participate in school activities.** Don't push children to be involved in more than they can actually manage. Encourage positive activities with family and others.
3. **Spend time together as a family.** Learn to be a good listener. Allow the expression of all emotions, so that kids will feel comfortable reaching out in difficult times. Don't criticize when children talk about their problems. It isn't always necessary to give advice. Encourage them with open-ended questions like, "So what happened next?" "How do you feel about that?" Address conflict openly in the family to resolve problems.
4. **Encourage children to help others.** They can help at home, at school, and in the community, serve as a library aide, volunteer at a hospital or clinic, or tutor younger students after school. Meaningful opportunities to contribute help children see that they can have a positive impact in the world.
5. **Help children learn right from wrong and to be caring toward others.** Help children learn how actions affect others. Teach children the importance of practicing tolerance, cooperation, understanding and respect towards all types of people. Children will live "up" or "down" to our expectations. Children learn by example—be a good role model.
6. **Get involved with your child's school to help plan school policies and school-wide activities.** Offer to share important aspects of your culture with your child's class. Communicate with the teachers.
7. **Help children to learn to deal with stress so they will be better prepared to deal with challenges in life.** Children primarily learn by example. Show them how to deal with stress. All stress isn't bad. Tips to deal with stress: take a deep breath or two; stand up and stretch; go for a walk; talk to someone about it; "sleep on it" over night—every situation has both pros and cons—maybe it will look different in the morning; sometimes we all need to ask for help.
8. **Help children learn that their choices and actions result in certain consequences.** Empower them to learn that they usually have the power to control the outcomes of their decisions. Children with that understanding will be more likely to realize they have the ability to bounce back, to handle situations effectively, and believe in their own abilities.



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www.vcoe.org



ALCOHOL & DRUG PROGRAMS

Ventura County Health Care Agency

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Adapted from the publication by the Orange County Department of Education. Made possible through partial funding from Ventura County Behavioral Health Department, Alcohol and Drug Programs. Design by Idea Engineering.