



Substance Abuse among Children and Youth in Johnson County

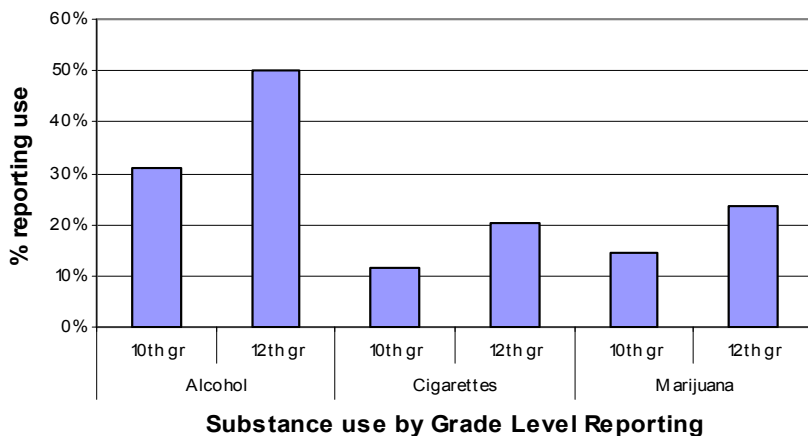
Nationally, levels of illicit drug use among 8th, 10th and 12th grade students have generally remained stable or been declining for several years. Local data reflects similar trends, although Johnson County children and youth differ from their counterparts in Kansas in some critical ways. For example, while local students initiate abuse of many substances later than the state average, by 10th or 12th grade they have often met or surpassed the state average in their likelihood of both reported lifetime use and past 30 day use.

In the 2009-2010 school year, three in four eligible students participated in the Communities That Care (CTC) survey, which asks 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th graders about behaviors and attitudes that are correlated with their risk for substance abuse. Since the 2006-2007 school year, all six Johnson County public school districts have conducted the survey with their students.

Drugs of Choice among Children and Youth in Johnson County

- Alcohol is still the most likely substance to be abused by children and youth, with 41% of 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th graders reporting that they had used alcohol at least once in their lifetime; almost one in four (24%) reported having used in the past 30 days.
- Almost one in five 12th graders and one in eight 10th graders reported having been drunk or high at school at least once in the past year. More than one in ten 12th graders reported selling illegal drugs in the past year.
- Many students are engaged in binge drinking. Overall, 12% of 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th graders reported having consumed five or more drinks in a row within the past two weeks – while 31% of 12th graders reported having done so. Thirteen percent of 12th graders reported binge drinking three or more times in the past two weeks.
- Older high school age students in Johnson County continue to report both greater lifetime usage and use within the past 30 days of marijuana than the state average, with 23% of 12th graders (KS 12th grade average = 17%) reporting that they had used marijuana in the past 30 days. One in 11 reported using it ten or more times in that same time period. While 21% of 12th graders think it is “not wrong at all” for someone their age to use marijuana, 87% indicated that they believe smoking marijuana on a regular basis is harmful.

Reported Use in Past 30 Days



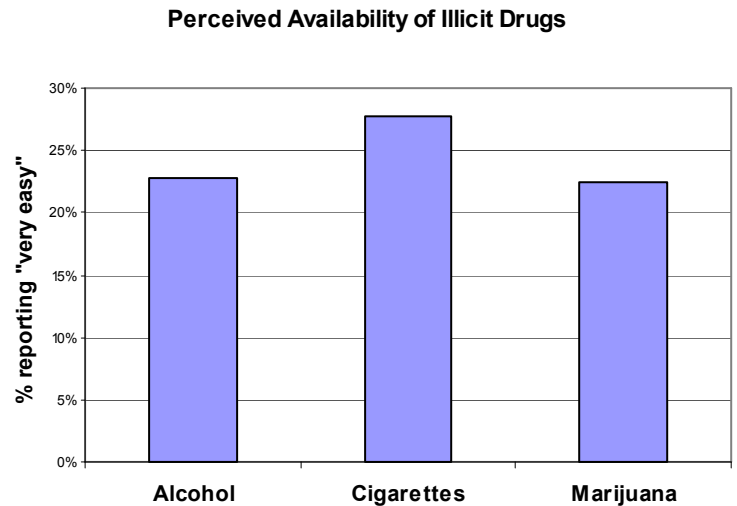
- For the first time, the 2009-2010 CTC survey included specific questions about the non-prescribed use of prescription pain relievers, stimulants and heroin. Prescription drug abuse is of concern to treatment professionals and law enforcement because of the drugs’ addictive qualities and the likelihood of using unregulated drugs such as heroin as a user’s addiction grows.
- More than one in six 12th graders and one in nine 10th graders reported using prescription pain relievers such as Vicodin and Oxycontin not prescribed to them in their lifetime. Similarly, almost one in six 12th graders and one in twelve 10th graders reported using stimulants such as Ritalin or Adderall not prescribed to them.

CONTACT INFORMATION

United Community Services of Johnson County

Factors Contributing to Risk: Perceptions of availability and repercussions for substance abuse

- Johnson County students reported that they thought it was very easy to get access to many illicit substances, including alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana.
- When Johnson County students were asked if they would get caught by police if they drank alcohol or smoked cigarettes, three of five answered “No.” More than half of students (52%) reported that they would also not be caught by police if they used marijuana.
- Students’ confidence that they would not be caught by police or parents escalated with age.



According to the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), an annual survey of U.S. civilians ages 12 and older, 86% of underage drinkers reported that their last use of alcohol in the past month occurred either in someone else’s home or their own. NSDUH also found that underage drinkers were four times more likely to use illicit drugs within two hours of alcohol use than persons who were 21 or older.

Preventing Substance Abuse among Children and Youth – Recommendations from the 2009 Substance Abuse Planning Report

The Drug and Alcoholism Council of Johnson County (DAC), a program of UCS, published a report in 2009 about substance abuse among Johnson County adults and youth and identified priorities for action. The DAC’s primary activity is making recommendations to cities and County government on the allocation of local Alcohol Tax Funds for substance abuse prevention and treatment programs. Following a review of local and state sources of substance abuse related data and the perspectives of local youth, parents, and local treatment and prevention professionals, the DAC focused future funding priorities on those programs and services for which there was an evidence base for effective prevention and intervention. These included:

1. Interventions targeting youth that impact positive social skills and enhance interpersonal relationships, and promote healthy beliefs and clear standards for self and choices related to substance abuse.
2. Interventions targeting schools that promote students’ academic success and commitment to school, and reinforce students’ positive contributions and efforts in school and school-sponsored settings.
3. Interventions targeting parents and families that impact attitudes toward substance abuse and problem behaviors, their own history with substances, and conflict and communication.
4. Interventions targeting law enforcement and the broader community that impact the availability of alcohol and other substances in the community, affect community norms related to substance abuse and its impact, establish common protocols for handling substance abuse related violations, and reinforce and recognize positive contributions by youth.

The DAC also identified priorities for system level improvement that would both prevent substance abuse and better support local treatment needs, including increasing the number of bicultural/bilingual substance abuse providers, offering integrated services for those with co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse, and implementing community-wide policies that reduced alcohol consumption and misuse among youth and adults. The DAC is committed to these priorities as a strategy to prevent substance abuse among all Johnson County residents.

Local data for this fact sheet are based on the 2010 Johnson County Communities That Care Student Survey beta.ctcdata.org. Additional data and analysis were provided by Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.