

Colorado Safe Schools



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Substance Abuse Prevention: Links to the Future

Substance use, abuse, addiction and the vast problems intertwined with them have an enormous impact on the most critical foundations of our modern life: safety, health, and education. Keeping young people safe and substance-free is fundamental to their ability to learn and thrive. Those who refrain from using tobacco, drugs and abusing alcohol until age 21, are "virtually certain never to do so" according to years of research conducted by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. Yet we know that by age 18, the majority of youth have experimented with alcohol, some of them heavily, and many of them have tried marijuana or other drugs and misused prescription drugs.

At the national level, we've seen a period of decline in the use of both alcohol and illicit drugs among high school students according to *Monitoring the Future* data published by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) in 2010. The trend in marijuana use nationwide has remained steady, however.

The most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data (published in 2010) indicate that nationwide 72.5% of all high school students have tried alcohol at least once. However, in Colorado, 77.3% of girls and 67.8% of boys have tried alcohol at least once. Also nationally, 41.8% had consumed at least one drink within the 30 days prior to the survey. In Colorado, 44.2% of girls and 37.4% of boys had consumed alcohol at least once during the 30 days prior to taking the survey. According to the YRBS Colorado data, 25.1% of high school students in our state consumed five or more drinks in a row within a couple of hours at least one day in the 30 days prior to the survey. This documents the concern for binge drinking behavior among our youth.

The prevalence rate of having used marijuana is 36.8% nationwide for all students. In Colorado the numbers are higher: 40.8% of girls and 44.5% of boys have used it at least once. Nationwide, 20.8% of all students had used marijuana at least once during the 30 days prior to taking the survey. In Colorado, 24.2% of girls and 25.5% of boys had used it during the month prior. Finally, 22.7% of Colorado youth (22.7% nationwide) report being offered, sold or given and illegal substance by someone on school property in the prior 12 months before the survey.

The path from experimentation to abuse to addiction is one that we don't completely understand, but we know that a combination of risk factors from a person's biology, environment and his or her stage in development work together. For instance, the earlier drug use and abuse starts, the more likely an individual will become addicted. While young people may recover quickly from a single or occasional use, repeated use is particularly dangerous for them because it can bring about changes in the brain's frontal lobes, which are still developing during adolescence. This part of the brain is used in making sound decisions and understanding safety. Among young people who repeatedly use alcohol and other drugs, we see an increase in poor judgment that may put them at higher risk for accidents, violence, unplanned and unsafe sex. We also see an increase in the risk for school failure and, suicide and for serious drug use later in life.

**Colorado Safe Schools Regional Training:
Resource Expo
May 5-6, 2011
Vail Cascade Resort
Register now at www.colorado.edu/cspv**

What schools can do

Good prevention work can make a difference! The earlier we intervene when problems arise, the better.

1. Get data to use for your planning efforts

National or statewide data provides only a general overview of the issues. It is recommended that schools obtain school site and/or district data to better understand the particular issues of their students and community. Incident data for alcohol or drug violations at schools is one indicator of trends that may be seen in your own community. However, incident data reflect only cases in which a student is caught and issued a citation. Schools may also measure self-reported drug and alcohol use through anonymous surveys.

Local options include: 1) Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS) which contains items from the YRBS (Centers for Disease Control), and asks about current attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors regarding health related domains, including risk and protective factor scales. Outreach efforts will begin in April for Fall 2011. For more information, please contact OMNI Institute at 1-800-279-2070, x.101, or visit <http://hkcs.omni.org>. 2) Barometers of School Safety, a set of free climate surveys that measure substance use, student health, relationships, and perceptions of safety. The surveys (student, staff and parent) are completed online, offering fast results and reliable data. For more information, please contact Sabrina Arredondo Mattson (Director of the Safe Schools project at CSPV) at 303-735-1633 or visit www.colorado.edu/cspv/safeschools.

Data will support funding requests, implementing district and school wellness policies and programs, and monitoring changes in student behavior.

2. Use evidence-based prevention education, strategies and programs

Excellent school-based programs are available for all ages and range from *universal* (all students) to *selective* (specific to an at-risk group) to *indicated* (designed for those already using alcohol or other drugs) depending on the severity of problem. All children benefit from the skills these programs target: social, emotional, communication, academic skills and as they get older, drug resistance and refusal skills.

3. Train staff and parents in signs, symptoms and warning signs of substance use

School staff, especially in secondary schools, should also be trained in reporting procedures, and strategies to use for intervention with students and families. Parent information and training is also important, as the pre-teen and teenage years can sometimes be a challenge for families facing substance use issues.

4. Know the options for community resources

School staff who are involved in intervention planning with families and students should be familiar with the best resources for referrals to provide assessment of substance use, intensive intervention, and treatment in their own local communities.



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Contact CSPV:
303-492-1032 or 1-866-SAFE790
safeschools@colorado.edu
www.colorado.edu/cspv/safeschools



Contact CSSRC:
303-239-4435
schoolsafetycenter@cdps.state.co.us
www.safeschools.state.co.us

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Spotlight on Substance Abuse Prevention Resources

1. **Blueprints for Violence Prevention** – www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints
2. **Colorado Best Practices** – www.colorado.gov/bestpractices
3. **Healthy Youth Colorado** – www.cdphe.state.co.us/ps/adolschool/healthyyouthcolorado/index.html
4. **National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)** – a part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – www.drugabuse.gov
5. **PACT360 - Police and Communities Together** – The Partnership for a Drug-Free America, with funding from the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance – <http://pact360.org>
6. **Rocky Mountain Center for Health Promotion and Education Prevention Information Center (PIC)** – <http://preventioncolorado.org>
7. **Second Chance - Tobacco Suspension Alternative** – Free Online Colorado Program – www.secondchancetobacco.org
8. **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** – www.samhsa.gov
9. **Tobacco-Free Schools Policy- Colorado Tobacco-Free Schools Policy Checklist Toolkit (2010)** – created by the Rocky Mountain Center for Health Promotion and Education, the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment's State Tobacco Education & Prevention Partnership – <http://safeschools.state.co.us/Resources2.html#e29>
10. **Too Smart to Start** – www.toosmarttostart.samhsa.gov
11. **Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center** – established by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (within the U.S. Department of Justice) – www.udetc.org/index.asp

Parents/Students Resources and Campaigns

1. **Above The Influence Campaign** – created for the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign (a program of the Office of National Drug Control Policy) – <http://safeschools.state.co.us/ps/resources.html#w1>
2. **Underage Drinking Prevention Campaign** – www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov

Higher Ed Resources

1. **College Drinking Prevention** – National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAA) – www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov

Please visit www.safeschools.state.co.us/Resources2.html#p3 for additional substance abuse prevention resources.

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May 5-6, 2011
Vail Cascade Resort

REGISTER NOW!!

www.colorado.edu/cspv

Make reservations at Vail Cascade by **April 13**
to get the guaranteed Colorado Safe Schools
rate by calling 800-282-4183

Presentations and exhibits include:

- Program Development
- Safe2Tell
- School Climate Surveys
- LifeSkills Training
- Project Towards No Drug Abuse
- CASASTART
- The Incredible Years
- Olweus Bullying Prevention

Indepth workshops include:

- Threat Assessment
- Colorado Information Sharing
- Youth Suicide & Schools
- Planning & Conducting Tabletop Exercises

CSPV and CSSRC look forward to seeing you in
May! Please contact either of our offices with
any questions.

Contact CSPV at 303-492-1032 or 1-866-
SAFE790
Contact CSSRC at 303-239-4435

safe²tell
Make a Call. Make a Difference.
1-877-542-SAFE

Is Your School Using
Safe2Tell@?

Anonymous tip line makes it easy and safe for students
or teachers to report concerns.