

# Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

## Arizona Youth Survey 2008 Fact Sheet



Our mission is to sustain and enhance the coordination, cohesiveness, productivity and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Arizona

January 2009

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) in collaboration with the Governor's Office, the Department of Health Services, and the Office of Problem Gambling conducted a statewide survey to assess risky behavior—such as the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other dangerous drugs—among Arizona 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders in 2008. The study is legislatively mandated to measure attitudes, prevalence, and frequency of substance abuse among children in the state. The survey was conducted with technical assistance from Bach Harrison, LLC.

**Table 1: Percentage of Arizona Students Who Have Used Drugs in Their Lifetime**

	8th Grade	10th Grade	12th Grade	Total
Alcohol	47.8	66.2	74.8	59.6
Cigarettes	25.9	39.9	50.8	36
Smokeless Tobacco	7.1	12.9	17.7	11.3
Marijuana	16.2	32.5	43.1	27.4
Inhalants	14.3	12.6	9.2	12.6
Hallucinogens	1.9	5.2	7.9	4.3
Cocaine	2.7	6.8	11.2	5.9
Sedatives	8.3	12.0	13.2	10.5
Methamphetamines	1.2	2.4	4.0	2.2
Stimulants	3.8	7.6	7.9	5.9
Ecstasy	2.2	4.9	7	4.2
Heroin	1.0	2.0	3.1	1.8
Steroids	1.7	2.3	2.4	2.0
Prescription Pain Relievers	12.2	20.5	24.6	17.6
Prescription Drugs	17.1	25.7	28.7	22.4
Over-the-Counter Drugs	9.7	12.9	13.4	11.5

### Substance Use Among Arizona Youth

Alcohol continues to be the most used substance among youth in Arizona across all grades, with 47.8% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 66.2% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 74.8% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reporting having drunk alcohol at least once in their lifetime. For substance use in the 30-days prior to taking the survey, alcohol was the most widely used, with 23.2% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 37.7% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 46.8% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reporting using.

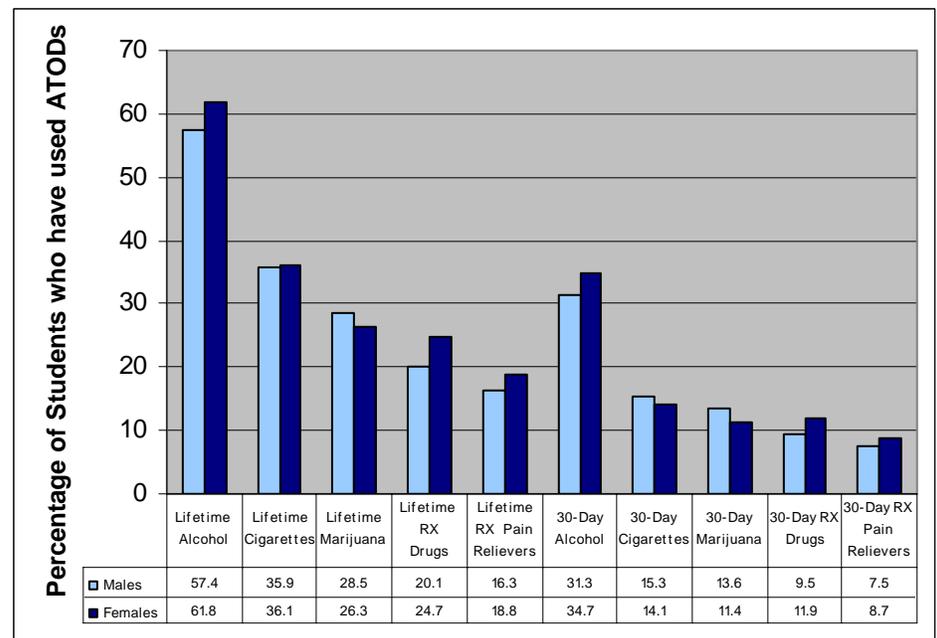
The four substances that have the highest percentages of lifetime and 30-day use are alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, and prescription drugs. Generally, the results show that the rate of substance use among youth tends to increase as a youth's age increases. As can be seen in Tables 1 and 2, the only exception to this pattern are the rates of inhalant use, which actually decreases as youth get older.

Chart 1 shows the usage rates of the five highest used drugs by gender. The rates of substance use for males and females are generally similar to one another. Surprisingly, for some drugs females report slightly higher rates of use than males; marijuana is the only exception for the drugs shown in Chart 1.

**Table 2: Percentage of Arizona Students Who Have Used Drugs in the Past 30-Days**

	8th Grade	10th Grade	12th Grade	Total
Alcohol	23.2	37.7	46.8	33.1
Cigarettes	8.7	16.6	23.9	14.7
Smokeless Tobacco	2.6	4.6	6.8	4.2
Marijuana	7.6	15.1	18.7	12.5
Inhalants	5.4	3.0	1.6	3.8
Hallucinogens	0.8	1.9	2.4	1.5
Cocaine	1.0	2.2	3.2	1.9
Sedatives	3.4	4.5	5.0	4.1
Methamphetamines	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.6
Stimulants	1.6	2.9	2.1	2.1
Ecstasy	0.8	1.5	2.0	1.3
Heroin	0.4	0.7	1.0	0.6
Steroids	0.7	1.0	1.0	0.8
Prescription Pain Relievers	6.0	9.4	10.5	8.1
Prescription Drugs	8.6	12.2	13.1	10.7
Over-the-Counter Drugs	5.6	6.4	5.9	5.9

**Chart 1: Lifetime and 30-Day Usage by Gender**



### Methodology:

The 2008 Arizona Youth Survey was administered in schools representing all 15 counties in Arizona. The 2008 AYS consisted of data from 319 schools and 54,734 students. This is a decrease from 2006 AYS, which was comprised of 362 schools with a sample of 60,401 students.

## Antisocial Behavior

The Arizona Youth Survey also asked students if they participated in several types of anti-social and delinquent behavior in the past year. As a whole, the antisocial or delinquent behaviors students participated in most often were school suspensions, binge drinking and being drunk or high at school. From 2006 to 2008, the percentage of youth reporting antisocial behavior decreased in most categories. The exceptions to this were increases in stealing a vehicle, school suspensions and carrying a handgun.

**Table 3: Percentage of Youth Engaged in Heavy Substance Use and Antisocial Behavior in the Past Year**

	8th Grade				10th Grade				12th Grade				Total			
	2002	2004	2006	2008	2002	2004	2006	2008	2002	2004	2006	2008	2002	2004	2006	2008
<b>Binge Drinking</b>	14.1	16.0	13.4	13.1	26.0	25.1	22.4	22.4	32.2	32.5	28.2	30.2	23.7	22.7	19.9	19.9
<b>Suspended From School</b>	18.1	17.7	19.8	20.2	11.5	12.3	15.5	14.6	8.1	9.3	9.4	10.2	12.9	14.1	16.0	16.2
<b>Drunk or High at School</b>	15.4	13.2	13.0	12.0	20.4	20.8	21.1	20.5	23.8	22.2	21.4	22.2	19.6	17.7	17.6	16.9
<b>Sold Illegal Drugs</b>	5.7	5.0	4.9	4.6	9.9	8.9	9.1	9.8	10.0	9.8	9.8	10.4	8.4	7.3	7.4	7.5
<b>Stolen a Vehicle</b>	3.3	4.8	4.6	3.6	3.6	4.4	4.7	3.7	2.1	2.6	3.1	2.7	3.0	4.2	4.3	3.4
<b>Been Arrested</b>	9.1	8.7	8.3	7.5	8.0	9.1	9.3	9.2	8.2	9.1	7.8	8.7	8.5	8.9	8.5	8.3
<b>Carried a Handgun</b>	6.7	6.5	7.6	7.7	5.0	5.9	7.5	7.2	4.9	5.5	7.0	8.1	5.6	6.1	7.7	7.7

## Gang Activity

Gang data remained unchanged from 2006 to 2008. The majority of Arizona youth, 89.4%, have never belonged to a gang. Only 5.1% of respondents reported belonging to a gang in the past; 3.1% reported currently belonging to a gang; and 1.5% report that they would like to belong to a gang.

## School Safety Issues

With regard to students' perceptions of school safety (Table 4), there has been little change since 2006. The data shows that less than 1.5% of students have carried a gun to school in the past year and 6% have carried a weapon to school in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Rates of being bullied at least once in the past year have increased from 38.2% in 2006 to 40.6% in 2008. Table 4 illustrates that 8th graders have the highest rates of feeling unsafe at or on the way to school, have been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, report being bullied at least once in the past year and have been in a fight at school at least once in the past 12 months more frequently than 10th and 12th graders.

**Table 4: Students' Responses to School Safety Questions**

	8th Grade				10th Grade				12th Grade				Total			
	2002	2004	2006	2008	2002	2004	2006	2008	2002	2004	2006	2008	2002	2004	2006	2008
<b>Carried a Gun to School in Past 12 Months</b>	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.3	0.9	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.3
<b>In a Fight at School at Least Once in the Past 12 Months</b>	21.5	27.6	25.6	23.5	12.4	17.1	15.7	14.8	6.5	9.9	8.9	8.5	14.0	20.2	18	17.4
<b>I Do Not Feel Safe at My School</b>	21.6	25.6	25.3	23.5	13.3	22.2	23.5	22.6	7.3	16.3	17.1	18.2	14.6	22.4	22.8	22.0
<b>Did Not go to School at Least One Day in the Past Month Because Felt Unsafe At School or On the Way to School</b>	5.3	11.3	10.7	10.1	2.3	7.8	7.8	8.9	2.6	5.6	5.0	6.2	3.5	8.8	8.4	8.8
<b>Carried a Weapon to School at Least Once in the Past 30 Days</b>	5.4	6.3	6.9	6.1	5.8	5.6	7.3	6.2	6.8	5.2	6.0	5.6	5.9	5.8	6.8	6.0
<b>Been Threatened or Injured With a Weapon on School Property in the Past 12 Months</b>	10.0	16.1	15.5	12.9	9.0	13.5	13.9	11.6	5.6	10.1	9.5	7.6	8.4	13.9	13.6	11.3
<b>Been Bullied at Least Once in the Past Year</b>	N/A	N/A	38.2	40.6	N/A	N/A	24.5	30.9	N/A	N/A	14.3	17.7	N/A	N/A	28.2	32.3

## Risk and Protective Risk Protective Factors

The Arizona Youth Survey is based on the risk and protective factor model of prevention. The risk and protective factors studied are categorized in four important areas of a youth's life: 1) community; 2) family; 3) school; and 4) within individuals themselves and their peer interactions. An understanding of the risk and protective factors affecting youth allows prevention strategies to target risk factors that are unacceptably high and protective factors that are unacceptably low.

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