



Youth Substance Use *Resources for Students & Families*



Facts & Data

- Youth behavioral health is influenced by relationships, school experiences, stress, trauma, substance use, social media, and support access.
- According to the 2025 Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) results, 15.4% of Washington 12th grade students reported using alcohol in the past month, and 11.7% of 12th grade students currently use marijuana.
- In 2025, 11.5% of Washington 12th graders reported using vapor products, the most common nicotine amount youth, in the past month.
- According to the Washington State Department of Health, 3,145 Washington residents died from drug overdoses in 2024, with synthetic opioids (primarily fentanyl) involved in 2,295 deaths, the leading driver of overdose fatalities in the state.
- The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) now reports that approximately 5 out of 10 counterfeit pills contain a potential lethal dose of fentanyl. Because counterfeit pills are made illegally it is impossible to know how much fentanyl a pill contains.
- According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), youth are more likely to thrive if they have a trusted adult they can talk to, a sense of belonging at schools, positive peer relationships, opportunities to contribute and succeed, healthy coping skills, access to supportive services when needed, and safe and stable environments.

Action Items

- Store alcohol and other substances in a secure locked location that is difficult to access.
- Avoid using smoke or vapor products around children and consider trying to quit.
- Help your child create an “exit plan” if they are offered alcohol or other substances.
- Be aware of the signs of alcohol and substance use, including trouble concentrating, bloodshot eyes and changes in school attendance, relationships, mood, appetite, weight, and sleep patterns.
- Have frequent conversations and make it clear that you do not think it is okay to use alcohol or other substances.
- Support resilience in your child. Resilience is built by learning to adapt to change and feeling a sense of purpose with strong connections and relationships.
- Contact the [SAMHSA National Helpline](#) to get information and referrals for mental health and substance use treatment.

Conversation Starters

- "What does being healthy mean to you? What helps you feel your best?"
- "What have you heard about alcohol, nicotine, marijuana, vaping, or other drugs?"
- "Why do you think some young people choose to use alcohol or other substances?"
- "Have your friends or classmates ever talked about drinking, vaping, or using other drugs? What do you think about that?" "If someone offered you alcohol, a vape, or another substance, what do you think you would do?"
- "Have you ever felt pressured to try something you didn't want to? How did you handle it?"
- "I've noticed some changes lately, and I wanted to check in. How have you been feeling?" "Is there anything that's been stressful or difficult recently that you'd like to talk about?"
- "Who are the trusted adults you feel comfortable talking to if you're worried, stressed, or have questions?" "Would it help to talk with another trusted adult, like a family member, school counselor, coach, or healthcare provider?"
- "If you ever have questions about alcohol, drugs, or anything else, you can always ask me. I'll listen without judging."

Additional Resources

- [Talk. They Hear You](#): Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National prevention campaign with conversation guides, fact sheets, videos, and tools to help parents talk with children about substances.
- [SAMHSA National Helpline](#): Free, confidential, 24/7 treatment referral and information service for individuals and families facing mental health or substance use concerns. (800) 662-HELP (4357).
- [NIDA Parents & Educators](#): National Institute on Drug Abuse Parents & Educators Science-based information about youth substance use, brain development, vaping, cannabis, opioids, and prevention strategies for families and schools.
- [CDC Substance Use Resources](#): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Substance Use information on youth substance use, prevention, health effects, and risk and protective factors.
- [Start Talking Now](#): Washington State Health Care Authority's prevention campaign with parent resources, videos, and information on talking with youth about substances.
- [You and Your Family](#) | [Washington State Department of Health](#): Information on youth substance use prevention, vaping, cannabis, opioids, fentanyl, and family resources.
- [Washington LCB: What You Can Do](#): Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board Parent guidance on talking with youth, recognizing signs of substance use, and links to Washington prevention campaigns and resources.
- [Washington Recovery Help Line](#): 24/7 statewide support, treatment referrals, and recovery resources for substance use, mental health, and problem gambling.