

VYP

VERMONT YOUTH PROJECT
positive youth development in Vermont communities

STATEWIDE DATA SUMMARY 2021



What is the Vermont Youth Project?

The Vermont Youth Project (VYP) is a statewide initiative supporting communities with creating a built environment that embraces positive youth development. As the state developer and manager of VYP, Vermont Afterschool helps participating communities with establishing local coalitions centered around positive youth development, creating localized plans to address risk and protective factors of youth, supporting youth voice and engagement, and building cross-sector partnerships and collaboration. Communities that participate in VYP commit to empowering youth and creating healthy accessible spaces for youth to be themselves, engage with peers, learn new skills, and connect with caring adults.

The Vermont Youth Project takes inspiration from Finland's efforts on youth voice as well as the Planet Youth data tool and the Icelandic Model of Prevention. However, ultimately this is a Vermont model designed to support the great efforts already happening in your community. Communities participating in this project have a support system that helps with amplifying, connecting, and refocusing the great programming and efforts already happening in your community as well as identifying new opportunities to provide healthy environments for youth.

Participating communities will each have specific and localized plans that start with access to real-time key data findings so they know what's going on with their youth right now. With these findings, the communities implement local strategies with support and facilitation from VYP staff and consultants.

Contacts:



Holly Morehouse
Executive Director
hollymorehouse@vermontafterschool.org

Robin Katrick
Vermont Youth Project State Lead
robin@vermontafterschool.org
(802) 448-3464

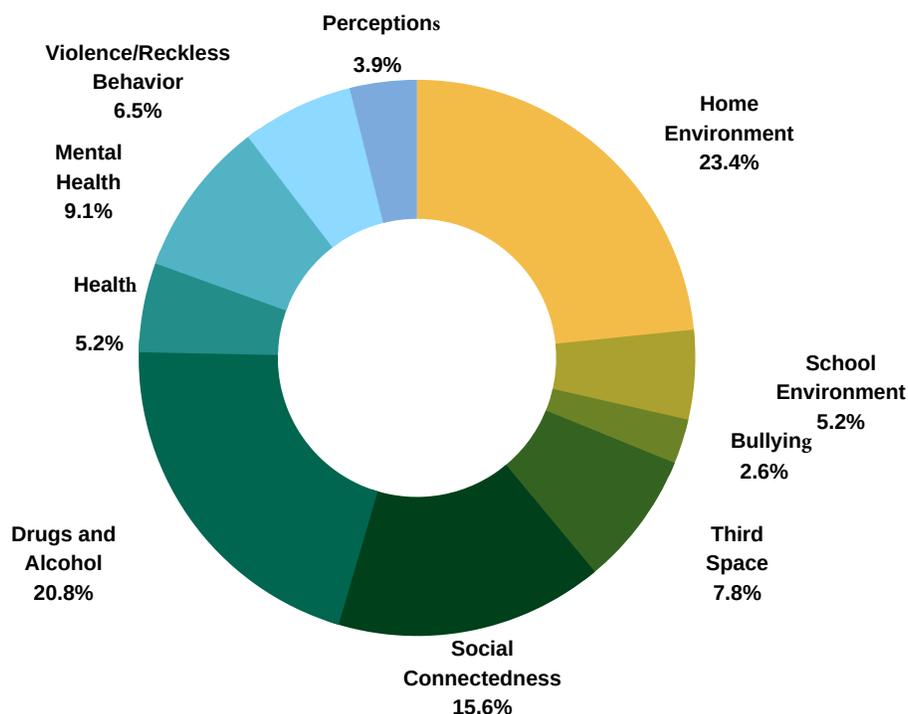
Vermont Youth Project Survey

The Vermont Youth Project uses the Planet Youth data tool, designed and analyzed by researchers at the Icelandic Center for Social Research and Analysis. The survey is used to understand what are the current risk and protective factors in addition to perceptions of substance use. The presence or absence and various combinations of protective and risk factors contribute to the overall health and well-being of youth. Identifying protective and risk factors can help to guide our local prevention and intervention strategies.

What to Know About the Survey

- Taken every year in the fall with data released within 8 weeks
- Two different surveys for middle and high school students
- 71 multiple-choice questions over five major domains:
 - Family
 - Peer group
 - School
 - Out-of-school time or third space
 - Substance use
- Covid-19 questions added in 2020
- Participation is voluntary

Distribution of Topics Covered



What are youth saying?

27%

11th and 12th grade students report staying out past midnight once or more a



15%

High school students report drinking at the house of others

42%

11th and 12th grade students have tried e-cigarettes

28%

11th and 12th grade students reporting they have used alcohol in the last 30 days

27%

Middle students have tried alcohol by the age of 13



31%

11th and 12th grade students report they have ever used marijuana



18%

9th and 10th grade students hang out at a friend's home with no adult present more than once a week



52%

11th and 12th grade students report that Covid-19 has made them feel a bit or a lot more lonely



74%

Middle school students feel safe in their community

45.5%

High school students report that Covid-19 has made their mental health a bit or a lot worse

90.5%

Middle school students report it's easy to receive caring and warmth from parents



73%

High school students report their parents know the parents of their friends



38%

Students report that they felt difficulties were piling up so high they could not overcome them sometimes or often in the past month



46%

Would like to live in the same community in the future



FAMILY TIME

The Planet Youth survey had some really positive findings related to family life and the relationships that our teens have with their parents and caregivers. 90.5% of our middle schoolers and 89% of high schoolers report that it's easy to receive caring and warmth from their parents. Teens report spending a lot of time with their parents and 93% of high school students stated that their parents know where they are in the evenings.

Having shared interests, regular family mealtimes, and family activities creates enjoyable time and space to chat with and listen to our teenagers. As they get older, it is important to maintain good quality communication with them and to stay connected, interested, and engaged in what's happening in their daily lives.

As parents, we are the most important role models for our teens so it is important that we set a good example with our own behaviors.

90.5%
Middle school
students report that it is
easy to get caring and
warmth from their parents.



THIRD SPACE

What happens when youth aren't at home or at school--also known as the third space--really matters in a teen's life. This can be a significant amount of time when you take into account school vacation weeks and summer break.

It is important that young people are encouraged to engage in quality activities during the out-of-school time. Whether it's volunteering in the community, learning new skills, practicing for a performance, or hanging out with friends in a safe place, these programs allow teens to further develop their social skills and build emotional resilience.

Participation in consistent, high-quality third space programs are also a known protective factor against substance use and risky behaviors. In sum, third space programs are an effective primary prevention strategy.

62%

Students report that there is a great deal of social opportunities available in their community.



SUBSTANCE USE

ALCOHOL | The survey showed us that 56% of 11th and 12th grade students have tried alcohol, and 28% have used alcohol in the last 30 days. 27% of middle students report that they drank alcohol for the first time at 13 years or younger.

CANNABIS | According to the survey, 5% of 7/8 students, 15% of 9/10 grade students, and 30% of high school students have tried marijuana. 6% of high school students report that they used cannabis for the first time at 13 years or younger.

VAPING | The survey tells us that 10% of 7/8 grade students, 25% of 9/10 and 42% of 11/12 students have tried e-cigarettes. 4% of 7/8 grade using daily, 13% of 9/10 grade using daily, and 24% of 11/12 grade using daily.

CIGARETTES | 5% of high school students and 6% of middle school students smoked a cigarette for the first time before the age of 13.



15%

High school students report they consume alcohol at the home of others.



Mental Health

Mental health includes emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being. It can include the ability to develop fulfilling relationships, adapting to changes, realizing their potential, having their needs met, life skill development, and using appropriate coping mechanisms. It is normal for youth to experience various types of emotional distress throughout adolescent and it's especially important that young people are supported during the Covid-19 pandemic which has shown to impact youth mental health (source: youth.gov).

32% of students reported feeling sad or blue in the past week sometimes or often. Additionally, 37% of students reported they felt sad and had little interest in doing things sometimes or often in the past week. 41% of students had nervousness sometimes or often in the past week and 35% had sleeping problems.

In the past month 28% of students never felt confident in their abilities to handle their personal problems and 29% of students never felt like things were going their way. 29% never felt that they were on top of things in the past month. 38% of students reported they felt difficulties were piling up so high they couldn't overcome them sometimes or often in the past month.

38%

Students report that they felt difficulties were piling up so high they could not overcome them sometimes or often in the past month.



COVID-19

Many adolescents report their social, emotional, and mental well-being have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Challenges such as changes in routine, school closures and remote learning, missed life events, and loss of security and safety can have a longterm impact on youth. Helping adolescents stay socially connected, recognizing and addressing their fears and stress, following Covid-19 precautions and guidance, and teaching youth the importance of taking care of their health can all support youth well-being during this time (source: CDC).

RELATIONSHIPS | 25% of 9th and 10th grade students report their family relationships have worsened and 34% report their peer relationships have worsened.

EDUCATION| 47% of high school students report COVID-19 has worsened school connections and 57% of 11th and 12th grade students say it hurt their educational experience.

HEALTH| 45.5% of 11th and 12th grade students say their mental health has worsened. 52% of 11th and 12th graders have experienced increased loneliness and 48% feel more anxious. 48% of 11th and 12th graders are often or sometimes worried or stressed about the mental health of those around them and 48% are often or sometimes worried and stressed about the physical health of those around them.

45.5%

**11th and 12th grade
students report
that Covid-19 has worsened
their mental health.**



How to Take Action

How can we make our community be the best place for a young person to grow up?

Let's come together as neighbors, colleagues, parents, and citizens to...

Explore the data

Share our ideas

Make a plan

To make Vermont communities not just the place where we live but a home where we all THRIVE!

To learn more and take action, please visit the Vermont Youth Project website: www.vermontafterschool.org/vyp/



The Vermont Youth Project is supported by Vermont Afterschool, a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring that children and youth in every Vermont community have access to high-quality out-of-school time programs.

www.vermontafterschool.org