

Illinois Youth Survey

Youth Marijuana  
Use in Illinois



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This report includes the facts you need to know about youth marijuana use in Illinois. In the following pages, the report provides information on marijuana use patterns, including where youth get their marijuana, young persons' perceptions about marijuana use and about use among their peers, and parent messaging about marijuana. Use this paper to learn the facts about youth marijuana use and then talk to the young people in your life about their decisions.



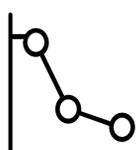
## OVERVIEW

### What is the Illinois Youth Survey?

The Illinois Youth Survey is a biennial survey of 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students. The IYS is a self-report survey administered in school settings and is designed to gather information about a variety of health and social indicators including substance use patterns and attitudes of Illinois youth.

In 2018, the Illinois Youth survey included over 230,000 youth across more than 914 Illinois schools who were surveyed between January and June of 2018. The data in this paper is based on a statewide randomly drawn, scientifically weighted sample of 11,259, selected to represent the state population of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in Illinois' public schools, distributed across the grades as shown below. The sampling design assures that youth in the state sample are representative of the state's diverse community types.

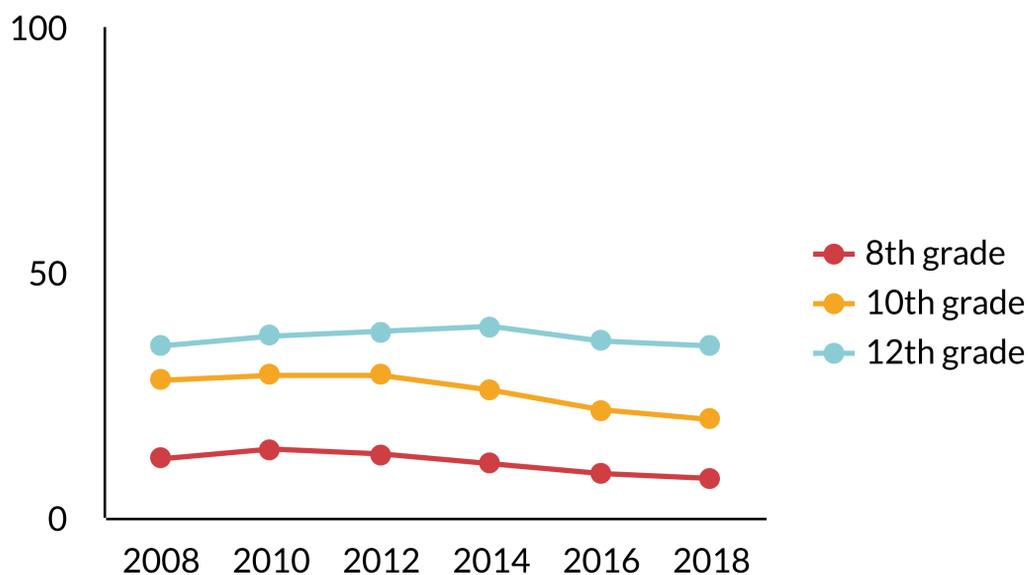
	Weighted Count
8th	3,800
10th	3,885
12th	3,574
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,259</b>



### 10 Year Trend

Past year marijuana use at any grade level has remained stable since 2008. This will be an important indicator to monitor in the future with the changing landscape of marijuana. If recreational marijuana use becomes legal statewide in Illinois, use would still remain illegal for young people under 21.

### Past Year Marijuana Use Trend



Do we expect the number of young people reporting marijuana use to decrease? Increase? Remain about the same? Why?



# 02.

## Marijuana Use Among Teens in Illinois

### Problem

- Youth marijuana use increases dramatically as a young person progresses through their high school years.
- Past 30 day use refers to any level of self-reported use during the past 30 days. While only **1 in 20 (5.2%)** 8th grade students reported use, **5 in 20 (25.6%)** 12th grade students reported using marijuana in the past 30 days.

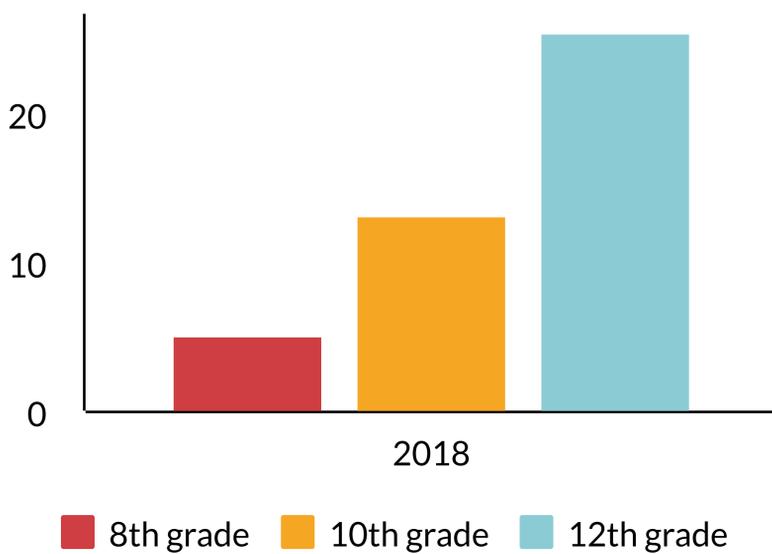
### Breakdown of Use

- There were no real differences in marijuana use patterns between males and females.
- African American teens reported higher past 30 day marijuana use than any other racial category.
- Marijuana use patterns were different among areas of the state with marijuana use reported to be higher within the city of Chicago.

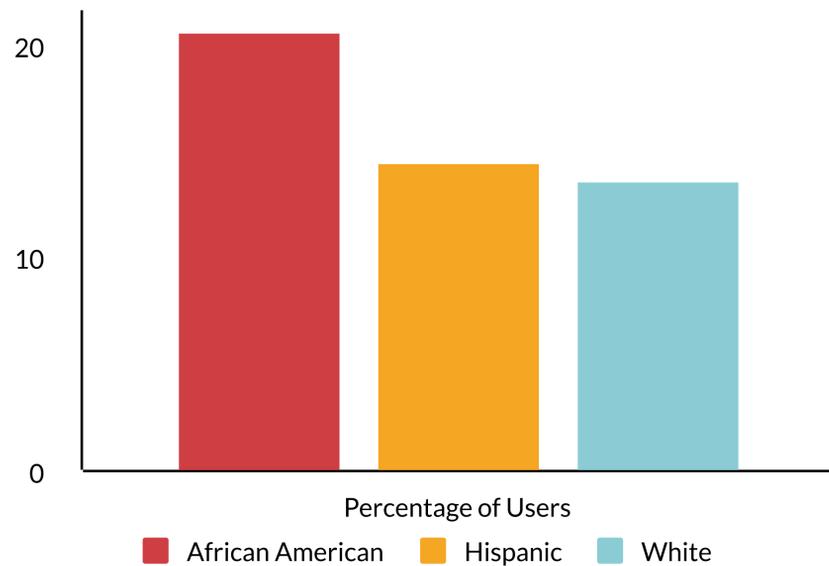
### Method of Use

- The most common means of marijuana use was by smoking it using a joint, bong, pipe or blunt.
- However, other means were also very common among users, including vaping and edible marijuana.
- 48% of 8th grade marijuana users reported eating marijuana compared to 38% of 10th, and 35% of 12th grade users.

### Past 30 Day Use by Grade

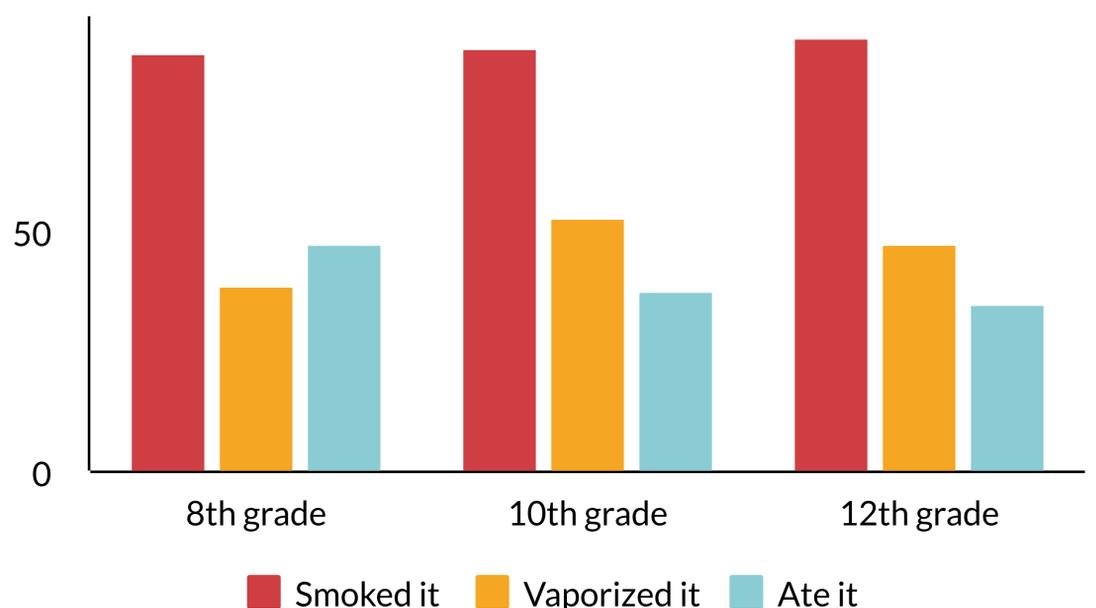


### Racial Categories



- Among seniors who reported use in the past 30 days, 10% reported using marijuana once or twice. 6% of seniors reported using marijuana **more than 20 times** during the past 30 days.

### Method of Use Among Marijuana Users\*



\*those who reported using marijuana at least once in the past 30 days.



# 03.

## Contributing Factors to Marijuana Use Among Teens in Illinois

### Access

#### How easy is it for youth to get marijuana?

- A key question in marijuana use involves understanding marijuana access by teens.
- 38% of Illinois high school seniors think it would be "very easy" to get marijuana.
- Interestingly, only 32% of seniors think **alcohol** would be "very easy" to get.

### Source

#### Where are youth reporting they are obtaining marijuana?

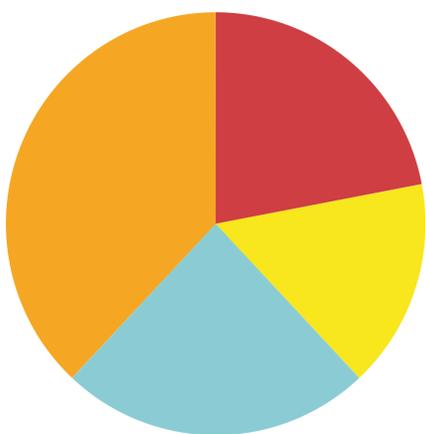
- Friends are the most common source of marijuana.
- The second most frequently reported source is buying it from someone who sells drugs.
- Other sources include parents without their permission and siblings.
- 22% of 8th graders reported taking marijuana from their parents without their permission compared to only 8% of seniors.

### Perceived Risk

#### What is the perception of the risk of weekly use of marijuana among youth?

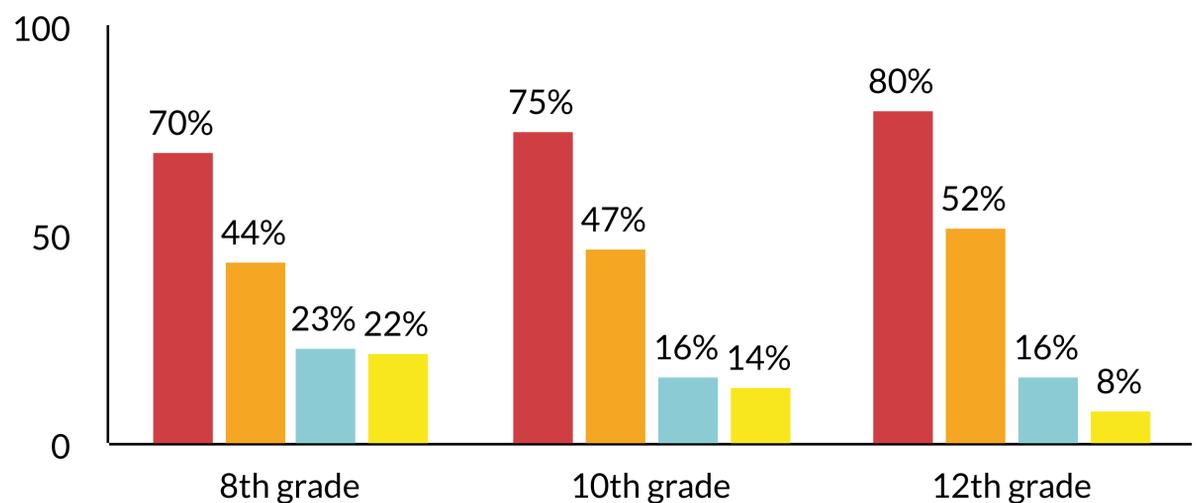
- A contributing factor to youth substance use is their perception of harm associated with using the substance.
- Perceived risk falls substantially from 8th grade to 12th grade.
- More than half (56%) of seniors feel there would be no or slight risk from once or twice weekly marijuana smoking, while more than 4 in 5 (71%) 8th graders feel there would be moderate or great risk.

### 12th Grade Ease of Access



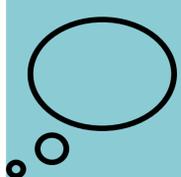
- Very Hard (22%)
- Sort of Hard (16%)
- Sort of Easy (24%)
- Very Easy (38%)

### Supply Source\*



- Friend gave it to me
- Bought it
- Sibling gave it to me
- Took from parents

\*those who reported using marijuana at least once in the past year.



Worth pondering: How might widespread acceptance of marijuana use for medicinal purposes affect youth perceptions of the harm of marijuana use? How might discussions surrounding the effort to legalize recreational marijuana affect perceptions of harm?



# 04.

## Youth Perceptions of Marijuana Use

While rates of marijuana use remain unchanged, norms around marijuana use are continuing to trend in an unfavorable direction.

### Perceived Peer Disapproval

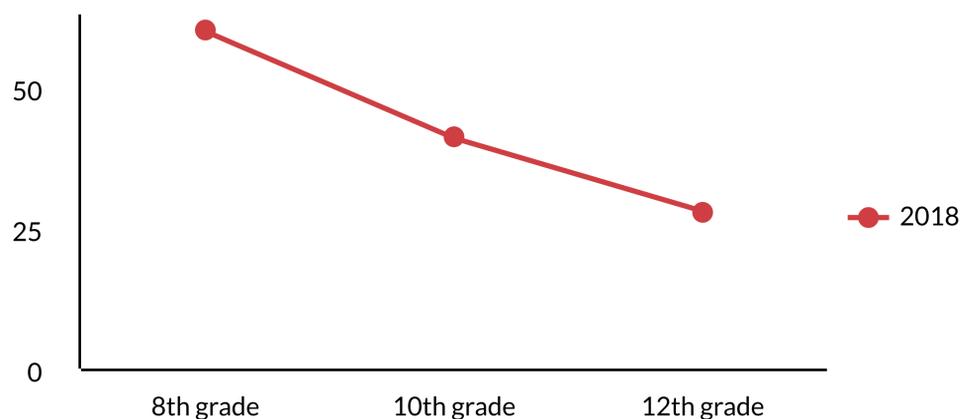
The attitudes of a person's friends can be a powerful predictor of marijuana use. Only 1 in 10 (10%) 8th graders report that their friends feel it would be "not wrong at all" for them to smoke marijuana. This changes dramatically for older youth.

2 out of 5 seniors reported it would not be wrong at all for them to use marijuana.

### Perceived Adult Disapproval

Equally concerning is the decline in how youth perceive the disapproval of their marijuana use by adults in their community.

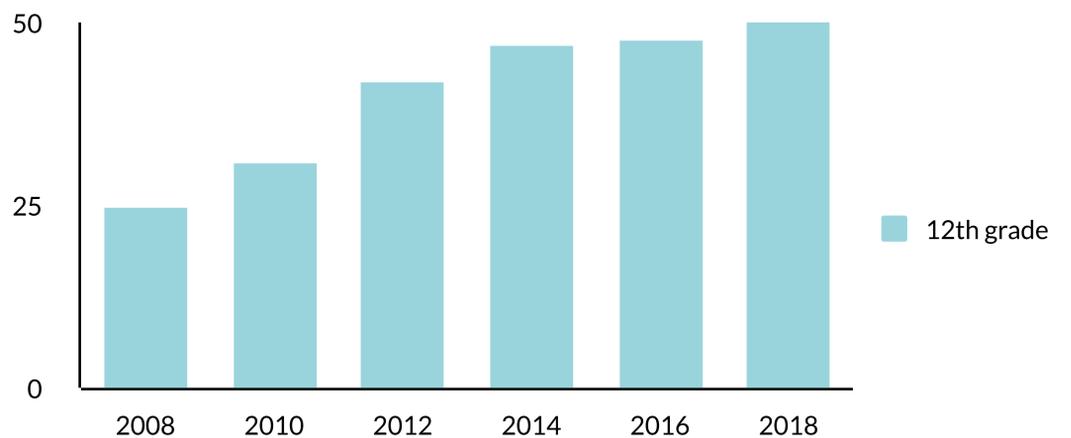
Perceived Adult Disapproval



### Marijuana Users Seen as Cool

Over a 10 year period, senior's perception of whether they would be seen as cool if they smoked marijuana increased from 25% to 50%.

Perceived as cool

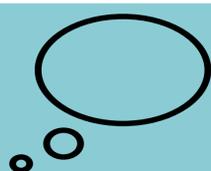


Among all youth, an interesting difference is emerging with young women more likely than young men to feel that they would be seen as cool if they smoked marijuana.

### Perceived use by Peers

Another way to think about how young people perceive marijuana is to ask them to estimate how many of their peers are using marijuana.

Actual marijuana use among seniors was 25.6%. But nearly half of seniors assumed that 70% of their peers were using marijuana.



If youth perceive that far more people use marijuana than actually do, how might this affect their personal use of the substance?



## Implications and Recommendations



## To Sum Up: What We Know About Youth in Illinois

- Youth marijuana use increases during high school years.
- The majority of seniors think marijuana would be easy to get with friends being the most common source.
- Perceived risk of harm falls substantially from 8th grade to 12th grade.
- Seniors perceive adults in their community are more accepting of teen use of marijuana than 8th or 10th graders.
- The perception of being seen as cool among their peers if they used marijuana has increased.

## Learn the Facts

Learn the facts about marijuana and youth marijuana use. Marijuana use today is much different than marijuana use in previous years. This report is only a first step in that direction, but could be used as a tool to begin the conversation with your child regarding marijuana use.

## Marijuana and the Teen Brain

The brain continues to develop through a person's early 20's, which makes the teen brain especially vulnerable to drug use. Studies show that marijuana interferes with attention, motivation, memory, and learning. Compared to those who don't use, students who use marijuana regularly may be functioning at a reduced intellectual level most or all of the time. Regular marijuana use can lower an adolescent's IQ by 8 points. As a result, users tend to get lower grades and are more likely to drop out of high school.





## Center for Prevention Research and Development

As part of the School of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, CPRD concentrates its efforts in the areas of school reform and after-school evaluation, health and human service reform, and prevention science.

## Illinois Youth Survey and State Report

The IYS State Report provides an overview of Illinois Youth Survey data relevant to teen marijuana use. If you are interested in the full data for these substances and other teen behaviors, please refer to the Illinois State Report. To find out more information about the Illinois Youth Survey, to see if your school participated, or to access your county report, please follow our QR codes:



IYS Website

<https://iys.cprd.illinois.edu/>



State Report

<https://iys.cprd.illinois.edu/results/state>



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