

Important Research Findings about Children and Drug Use

- Attitudes among fifth and sixth graders toward tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs—as well as their actual levels of drug use—were highly predictive of their attitudes and drug use levels four years later.
- As early as 4th grade, children begin to feel pressure to use drugs such as tobacco and alcohol.
- Children who use drugs often begin around age 12 or 13. They tend to move from tobacco, alcohol, and inhalants, to the use of marijuana, and then, as they get older, to other drugs.
- Activities associated with lower drug use included sports and exercise, volunteer work, and spending more than two hours per day on homework.
- Most children learn about drugs from their friends and usually are offered drugs the first time at home when no adult is around.
- Few young people see the harm in using drugs. Yet, understanding the harm associated with drugs is important to preventing drug use by youth.
- Elementary children name TV and movies as the major sources of information that make smoking, drinking, and drug use look fun.
- Prevention efforts can work. When children understand the harmful effects of drugs and when they perceive their friends' and families' disapproval, they tend to avoid using drugs.