# S P I R I T

Missouri School-based Substance Abuse Prevention
Intervention and Resource Initiative

# New Madrid School District
# Sixth Year Report
## 2007 –2008

## Missouri Department of Mental Health
## Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

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November 1, 2008

The Missouri Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse is pleased to present this Sixth Year Report of the Missouri School-based Substance Abuse Prevention Intervention Resources Initiative (SPIRIT). The report, prepared by the Missouri Institute of Mental Health (MIMH), was made possible through the Division's partnership with five school districts: Knox County, Hickman Mills (Kansas City), Ritenour (St. Louis), New Madrid County, and Carthage (Jasper County).

SPIRIT objectives are to delay onset and decrease use of substances, improve overall school performance, and reduce incidents of violence. The report shows positive outcomes and suggests future enhancements.

I hope it gives you a deeper understanding of this exciting project.

Sincerely,

Mark Stringer
Director

The Department of Mental Health does not deny employment or services because of race, sex, creed, marital status, religion, national origin, disability or age of applicants or employees.

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

In 2002, the Missouri Department of Mental Health's (DMH) Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (ADA) launched the School-based Prevention Intervention and Resources IniTiative (SPIRIT). FY2008 marks the sixth year of SPIRIT, a project that proposes to delay the onset and decrease the use of substances, improve overall school performance, and reduce incidents of violence.

To achieve these goals, prevention agencies are paired with participating school districts to provide technical assistance in implementing evidence-based substance abuse prevention programming and screening and referral services as needed. In New Madrid, the schools are paired with Family Counseling Service. A provider implements the PeaceBuilders program with some lessons from Positive Action in the elementary school, and the PE coaches implement Positive Action in the middle school.

Comparisons between this District Report and the SPIRIT aggregate report cannot be made. Particular samples, for example specific grade groupings, that will most clearly report the district's characteristics are selected for each district; these may differ from the aggregate.

## Methods

The SPIRIT evaluation, conducted by the Missouri Institute of Mental Health's Division of Child and Family Mental Health Services Research, uses a variety of data gathered through questionnaires, interviews, observations, and school records. The majority of data is collected from students in a self-report questionnaire or from teacher observations of students (see Measures box below).

All students (n = 487) in SPIRIT schools receive the programming, but only students with parental consent participate in the evaluation. In New Madrid, parental consent was obtained for 88.7% of all participating students. Each consented student is assigned a unique identification code to track their responses and to ensure confidentiality. Baseline data are initially collected for every consented student in Kindergarten, fourth, and sixth grades in the fall semester. Random sampling is used to obtain data from the remaining students wherever possible to ease the burden on schools and to increase the reliability of the results. One hundred students per grade grouping (K-3, 4-5, 6-8), equally represented by sex and grade, were randomly selected to be surveyed when possible. If, as in some grade groupings in New Madrid, there were an insufficient number of students for random sampling, all students were surveyed. The types of evaluation data collected is listed below:

### Measures

- Teacher Behavioral Observation Checklist (K – 3rd grade)
- SPIRIT questionnaire (4th – 5th & 6th – 12th grade versions): student self-report survey
- Student Perception of Program Effectiveness Survey
- Teacher and Provider Perception of Program Effectiveness Survey
- Program Fidelity Forms
- Provider Monthly Reports
- Provider and Principal Interviews
- Program Observations

## Summary Outcome Findings

### Substance Use

| Table 1. New Madrid, SPIRIT, Missouri and National Drug Use Comparison | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | New Madrid[1] | SPIRIT[2] | Missouri[3] | National[4] |
| Cigarettes | Lifetime use | 27.0% | 17.1% | 23.7% | 23.7% |
| | Past month (30-day) | 12.0% | 5.5% | 7.1% | 9.8% |
| | Age of initiation | 11.15 | 11.07 | 11.95 | n/a |
| Alcohol | Lifetime use | 40.0% | 42.3% | 39.4% | 39.4% |
| | Past month (30-day) | 11.0% | 11.0% | 20.5% | 15.9% |
| | Age of initiation | 10.57 | 10.12 | 10.74 | n/a |
| Marijuana | Lifetime use | 10.0% | 8.9% | 16.2% | 16.2% |
| | Past month (30-day) | 3.0% | 2.9% | 3.8% | 6.7% |
| | Age of initiation | 11.90 | 11.56 | 11.10 | n/a |
| Inhalants | Lifetime use | 7.0% | 10.6% | 9.6% | 9.6% |
| | Past month (30-day) | 4.0% | 3.7% | 5.0% | 1.2% |
| | Age of initiation | 12.00 | 10.94 | n/a | n/a |

[1]New Madrid, Spring 2008, 6th – 8th grade, n = 100 (average age = 12.67)
[2]SPIRIT, Spring 2008, 6th – 8th grade, n = 549 (average age = 12.36)
[3] Missouri Student Survey (MSS) 2008, 6th – 8th grade, n = 50,878 (average age = 12.87)
[4] National Statistics on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) 2007, n = 25,241 (12 – 17 years of age)

- Cigarette use is higher in New Madrid than in the SPIRIT, Missouri, or national samples.
- Alcohol use is lower in New Madrid than Missouri and the nation.
- A greater percentage of youth in grades six through eight have used substances in their lifetime. A surprisingly large percentage of 4th – 5th graders (20.0%) reported having had more than a sip of alcohol in their lifetime.
- Alcohol use in the past 30 days among 6th – 8th grade youth is on the rise in the New Madrid and total SPIRIT samples although the difference between Year 5 and Year 6 is not significant.

### Attitudes toward Substance Use

- Around 25% of 6th – 8th graders thought they might drink alcohol when they are older.
- In general, 6th – 8th graders did not indicate positive attitudes toward cigarettes, alcohol, or marijuana. Youth were more likely to indicate that they might drink alcohol when they are older than to smoke cigarettes or marijuana.
- Sixth – 8th graders were less likely to think that teens smoked cigarettes and drank alcohol than 4th – 5th graders, but they were just as likely to think that adults used cigarettes and alcohol.
- The use of all drugs except cigarettes and alcohol were considered to be “very wrong” by approximately 80% of 4th – 8th grade youth.

**Problem Behavior**

- Teachers reported that K-3rd grade children tend to be more reactively aggressive than proactively aggressive, although the majority of children aren't usually aggressive at all.

- Emotionally aggressive behaviors were most common, including making fun of others, being made fun of and having rumors or lies spread about them.

- There was a decrease from Year 5 to Year 6 in the percentage of 6th – 8th grade youth who reported having been in a physical fight in the past three months.

- There was no statistically significant difference between Year 5 and Year 6 in the percentage of youth reporting having received a suspension.

- There was an increase from Year 5 to Year 6 in the percentage of youth in New Madrid reporting having been the victim of physical aggression among 6th – 8th grade youth.

**School Performance**

- There were no unexcused absences during the school year among Kindergarten through 5th grade students. Given that the middle school only provided total absences without unexcused and excused absences reported independently, it is not possible to say whether there were any changes in unexcused absences.

- The majority of children and youth (63.7%) did not receive any disciplinary incidents over the course of the school year.

- No youth were involved in an ATOD related disciplinary incident.

**Program Satisfaction/Effectiveness**

- Youth in the 4th – 8th grades reported that the program was most effective in honing their resistance skills.

- There was no difference from Year 5 to Year 6 in the percentage of youth who liked the program or thought it was effective in helping them say no to harmful things others might want them to do.

**Social Competence**

- Teachers indicated that the majority of children improved in their social competence at least a little by the end of the school year. The majority of the children improved most significantly in self-esteem. Children were least likely to improve in their ability to verbally label emotions and to handle disagreements in a positive way

- The majority of children in grades K-3 were identified as displaying prosocial behavior and regulating their emotions either well or very well.

**Protective Factors**

- Most 4th – 8th grade youth displayed a healthy level of empathy. They were most likely to get upset at seeing an animal being hurt.

- The majority of youth reported good decision making skills either often or all of the time. However, a significant number of youth reported making good decisions sometimes but not often.

- A large majority of youth reported that there were caring adults at both home and school. Youth were more likely to "strongly agree" that there were caring adults at home than at school.

- In general, youth had very positive attitudes toward school. They were especially likely to report that they feel like a part of the school. Around 90% felt safe at school.

**Recommendations**

- Use of cigarettes is higher than use of other substances and exceeds use rates of the Missouri and national samples. Further education on the harmful effects of this drug as well as cessation programming may be necessary.

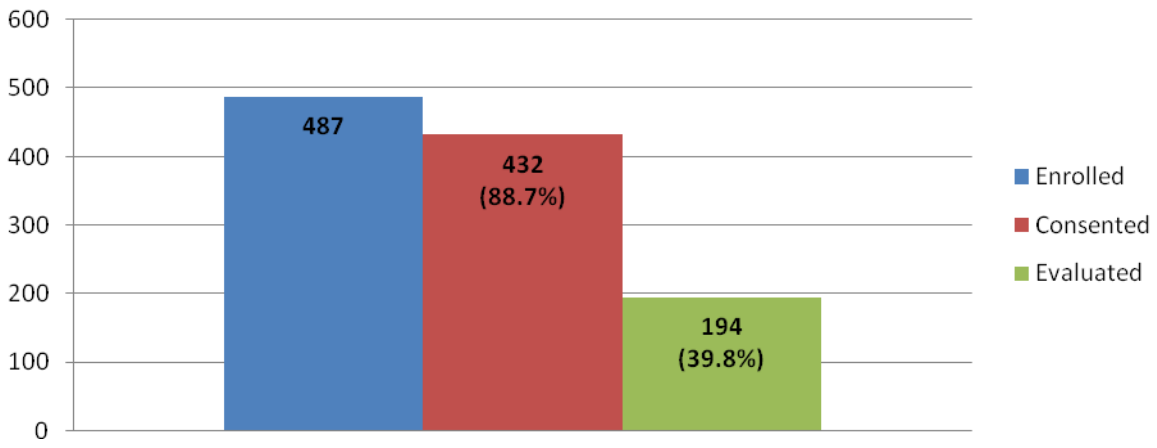
- Alcohol is perceived to be less harmful than all illegal drugs. Further education on its harmful effects is recommended.

- Emotional bullying is a significant issue in the District. New Madrid may want to explore further education of students on the harm stemming from these behaviors.

# Chapter 1: Demographics

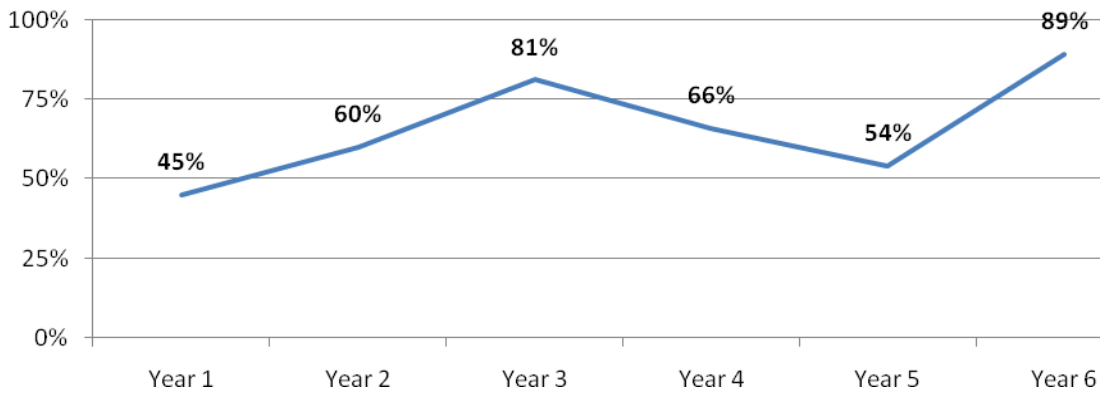
In the sixth year of the SPIRIT project, 487 children and youth participated in SPIRIT from the New Madrid School District. Approximately 89% (432) received parental consent for the evaluation. In Spring of 2008, because of random selection, 39.8% (194) of those enrolled were evaluated.

**Figure 1. Youth Enrolled, Consented, and Evaluated in Year 6**




The rate of consent increased by 35% from Year 5 to Year 6. A large majority (89%) of youth participating in the SPIRIT project received parental consent to participate in the evaluation during this year.

**Figure 2. Consent Rates, 2002-2008**




Females and males represented exactly the same proportion of evaluated participants.

| Table 2. Percentage of Evaluated Participants by Sex | | |
|---|---|---|
| | New Madrid | SPIRIT Total |
| Male | 50.0% | 54.6% |
| Female | 50.0% | 48.4% |

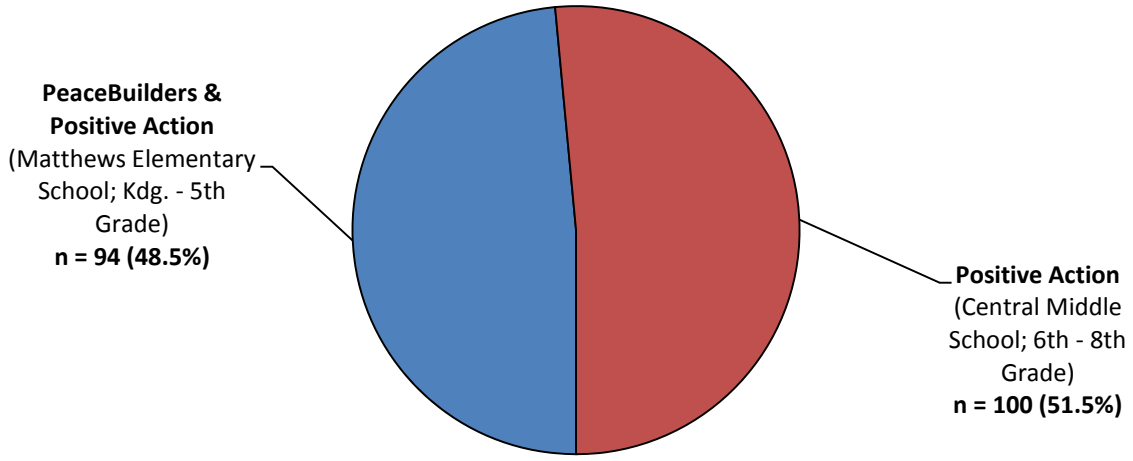
The majority of the evaluated participants were non-Hispanic Whites (67.5%), followed by non-Hispanic Blacks (27.0%), and non-Hispanic Bi-racial Black and White children and youth (4.0%). The New Madrid sample is similar to the SPIRIT total sample in the percentage of Blacks, but has fewer Hispanics, and more Whites. The New Madrid sample has fewer Whites and more Blacks than the general Missouri and US populations.

| Table 3. Percentage of Evaluated Participants by Race/Ethnicity | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | New Madrid | SPIRIT Total | MSS† | US† |
| White/Caucasian (Non-Hispanic/Latino) | 68.5% | 50.3% | 84.0% | 73.9% |
| Black/African-American (Non-Hispanic/Latino) | 24.0% | 26.4% | 11.3% | 12.4% |
| Native American/Alaskan Native (Non-Hispanic/Latino) | 0.0% | 0.2% | 0.4% | 0.8% |
| Asian (Non-Hispanic/Latino) | 0.9% | 2.8% | 1.5% | 4.4% |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (Non-Hispanic/Latino) | 0.0% | 0.9% | 0.1% | 0.1% |
| Other (not otherwise specified; Non-Hispanic/Latino) | 0.0% | 0.4% | 1.1% | 6.3% |
| Black & White (Non-Hispanic/Latino) | 5.6% | 4.3% | n/a | n/a |
| Hispanic/Latino (of any race) | 0.9% | 14.9% | 2.8% | 14.8% |

† U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

The SPIRIT evaluation participants in Matthews Elementary School (Kdg. – 5th grade) took part in both the PeaceBuilders and Positive Action programs. The Positive Action program was taught to Central Middle School students (6th – 8th grade).

## Figure 3. Percentage of Youth in the Evaluation by Program



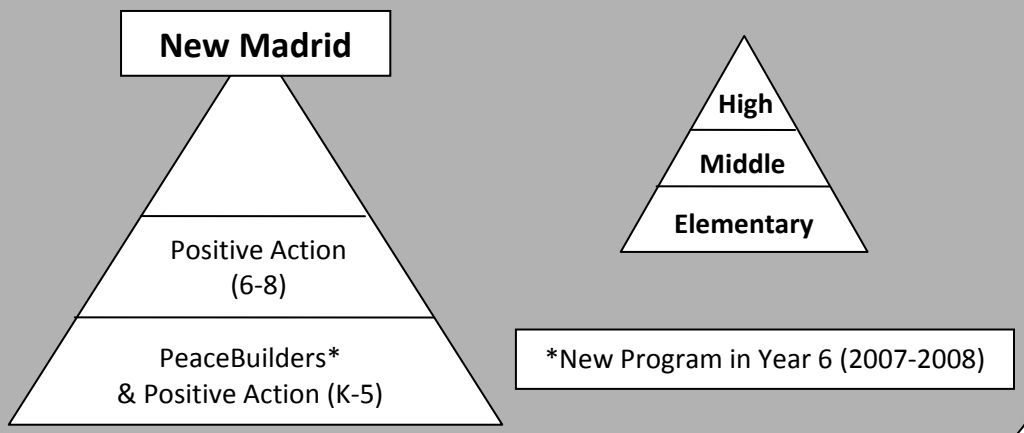
# Chapter 2: The SPIRIT Programs

Evaluators conducted a site visit in New Madrid and reviewed monthly reports submitted by the prevention specialists. Based on these two sources, brief summaries are presented of the prevention programs at the elementary and middle schools in the New Madrid School District.

> "I could count on one hand the number of referrals for fighting and that kind of thing."
>
> --*Elementary Principal*

SPIRIT serves one of three elementary schools and the only middle school in the New Madrid district. PeaceBuilders and Positive Action are offered in the elementary school and Positive Action is offered in the middle school. The provider prevention coordinator introduced PeaceBuilders this year in the elementary school, and the principal and teachers were so impressed with the program and its results that they appealed to the superintendent to have the program implemented in all of the elementary schools next year. During the first semester, PE teachers implemented only the drug curriculum of Positive Action in the middle school. In the second semester, however, they doubled the amount of time allotted to the program in order to comply with fidelity standards and began teaching selected lessons from the regular curriculum. The principal stated that there are few problems in the middle school. Those problems that are seen are primarily of the "he said, she said" variety, and there are no ATOD problems in the school itself. The high school program was discontinued after the first semester because it was not being implemented according to program developer specifications. The prevention coordinator provided many special activities including an anger management program for all of the middle school students, a fun day at the end of the year to wrap up the program in both the elementary and middle schools, and a field trip for children in primary grades to Cape Girardeau. Elementary children wrote notes to the provider, thanking her and telling her what SPIRIT meant to them. One student wrote: "I would rather be in SPIRIT than watch TV!" In addition, the prevention coordinator serves on the school guidance committee and maintains collaborations with several area agencies and committees.

**Figure 4. Program Implementation, Year 6 (2007-2008)**



# Chapter 3: Substance Use

The following chapter presents the percentage of youth who reported the use of substances at any time in their past (lifetime use) and two substance use indicators from the National Outcome Measures (NOMs): (1) age of first use; and (2) 30-day use. These measures of substance use are compared to the total SPIRIT sample and to the most current state and national surveys: the 2008 Missouri Student Survey (MSS) and the 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).

Comparisons between this District Report and the SPIRIT aggregate report cannot be made. Particular samples, for example specific grade groupings, that will most clearly report the district's characteristics are selected for each district; these may differ from the aggregate.

## Lifetime Substance Use

### Comparisons with SPIRIT, Missouri, and US

Cigarette, marijuana, ecstasy, and methamphetamine use are slightly higher among New Madrid youth than in the total SPIRIT sample. However, inhalant use in New Madrid is lower than the Missouri and US samples.

Table 4. Lifetime Substance Use: Comparison between New Madrid, SPIRIT, Missouri, and US data

| | New Madrid[1] | SPIRIT Total[2] | MSS[3] | US[4] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cigarettes | 27.0% | 17.1% | 18.0% | 23.7% |
| Alcohol (more than a sip) | 40.0% | 42.3% | 50.9% | 39.4% |
| Marijuana | 10.0% | 7.1% | 8.9% | 16.2% |
| Ecstasy | 3.0% | 1.5% | n/a | n/a |
| Methamphetamine | 3.0% | 1.3% | n/a | n/a |
| Inhalants | 7.0% | 6.2% | 10.6% | 9.6% |
| Prescription Drugs without Rx | 5.1% | 3.3% | n/a | n/a |
| Alcohol (once or twice a month) | 10.1% | 9.5% | n/a | n/a |

[1]New Madrid, Spring 2008, 6th – 8th grade, n = 100 (average age = 12.67)
[2]SPIRIT, Spring 2008, 6th – 8th grade, n = 549 (average age = 12.36)
[3] Missouri Student Survey (MSS) 2008, 6th – 8th grade, n = 50,878 (average age = 12.87)
[4] National Statistics on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) 2007, n = 25,241 (12 – 17 years of age)

### Lifetime Substance Use by Grade Level

A greater percentage of youth in grades six through eight have used substances in their lifetime. A surprisingly large percentage of 4th – 5th graders (20.0%) reported having had more than a sip of alcohol in their lifetime.

Table 5. Lifetime Substance Use by Grade Level

| | 4th – 5th | 6th – 8th |
|---|---|---|
| Cigarettes | 5.7% | 27.0% |
| Alcohol (more than a sip) | 20.0% | 40.0% |
| Marijuana | 3.0% | 10.0% |
| Ecstasy | n/a | 3.0% |
| Methamphetamine | n/a | 3.0% |
| Inhalants | n/a | 5.1% |
| Prescription Drugs without Rx | n/a | 7.1% |
| Alcohol (once or twice a month) | n/a | 10.1% |

## 30-day Substance Use

### 30-day Substance Use: Comparisons with SPIRIT, MO, and US

A greater percentage of New Madrid youth reported using cigarettes in the past 30 days than youth in SPIRIT, Missouri, and US samples. The use of other drugs was on par with the total SPIRIT sample and slightly lower than Missouri and US percentages.

Table 6. 30-day Substance Use: Comparison between New Madrid, SPIRIT, Missouri, and US data

| | New Madrid[1] | SPIRIT Total[2] | MSS[3] | US[4] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cigarettes | 12.0% | 5.5% | 7.1% | 9.8% |
| Alcohol | 11.0% | 11.0% | 20.5% | 15.9% |
| Marijuana | 3.0% | 2.9% | 3.8% | 6.7% |
| Inhalants | 4.0% | 3.7% | 5.0% | 1.2% |
| Prescription Drugs without Rx | 4.0% | 2.9% | n/a | n/a |
| Other Illegal Drugs | 3.0% | 3.5% | n/a | n/a |
| Binge Drinking (5 or more drinks on same occasion) | 6.1% | 5.9% | 5.6% | n/a |
| Ride in a car with someone who was drunk | 17.2% | 12.5% | 19.8% | n/a |
| Drive a car while drunk | 4.0% | 2.0% | 3.4% | n/a |

[1]New Madrid, Spring 2008, 6th – 8th grade, n = 100 (average age = 12.67)
[2]SPIRIT, Spring 2008, 6th – 8th grade, n = 549 (average age = 12.36)
[3] Missouri Student Survey (MSS) 2008, 6th – 8th grade, n = 50,878 (average age = 12.87)
[4] National Statistics on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) 2007, n = 25,241 (12 – 17 years of age)

### 30-day Substance Use by Grade Level

The only substance used by 4th – 5th grade youth in the past 30 days was cigarettes.

Table 7. 30-day Substance Use by School and Grade Level

| | 4th – 5th | 6th – 8th |
|---|---|---|
| Cigarettes | 2.9% | 12.0% |
| Alcohol | 0.0% | 11.0% |
| Marijuana | 0.0% | 3.0% |
| Inhalants | n/a | 4.0% |
| Prescription Drugs without Rx | n/a | 4.0% |
| Other Illegal Drugs | n/a | 3.0% |
| Binge Drinking (5 or more drinks on same occasion) | n/a | 6.1% |
| Ride in a car with someone who was drunk | n/a | 17.2% |
| Drive a car while drunk | n/a | 4.0% |

## Age of 1st Use

### Age of First Use: Comparisons with SPIRIT and Missouri

Age of first use among New Madrid youth who use substances is very similar, in most instances, to the SPIRIT total sample. Age of first use of ecstasy and methamphetamine are lower in New Madrid than in SPIRIT, and youth started using inhalants at a later age in New Madrid than in SPIRIT.

| Table 8. Age of 1st Use: Comparison between New Madrid, SPIRIT, and Missouri data | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | New Madrid[1] | SPIRIT Total[2] | Missouri[3] |
| Cigarettes | 11.15 | 11.07 | 11.95 |
| Alcohol (more than a sip) | 10.57 | 10.12 | 10.74 |
| Marijuana | 11.90 | 11.56 | 11.10 |
| Ecstasy | 11.33 | 12.88 | n/a |
| Methamphetamine | 11.67 | 12.86 | n/a |
| Inhalants | 12.00 | 10.94 | n/a |
| Prescription Drugs without Rx | 10.80 | 10.47 | n/a |
| Alcohol (once or twice a month) | 11.20 | 11.17 | n/a |

[1]New Madrid, Spring 2008, 6th – 8th grade, n = 100 (average age = 12.67)
[2]SPIRIT, Spring 2008, 6th – 8th grade, n = 549 (average age = 12.36)
[3] Missouri Student Survey (MSS) 2008, 6th – 8th grade, n = 50,878 (average age = 12.87)

## Other Substance Use Indicators

### Extent of Use

Sixth – 8th graders were asked how many cigarettes they smoke per day. Of those who admitted to cigarette use, the majority (92.3%) indicated they smoked 5 or fewer cigarettes a day. The remaining 7.7% of the cigarette users smoked 6-15 cigarettes a day (about ½ a pack). No youth reporting smoking over 15 cigarettes a day.

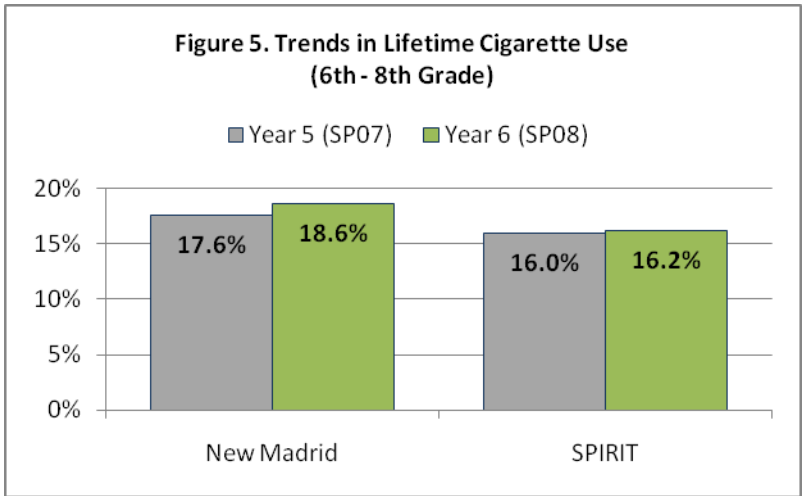
Over half (56.5%) of 6th – 8th grade youth who reported drinking alcohol indicated that they only had one drink a day. Over a quarter (26.1%) of alcohol users drank two to four drinks a day. The remaining 17.4% reported drinking six or more drinks per day on the days that they drink.

## Trends in Substance Use

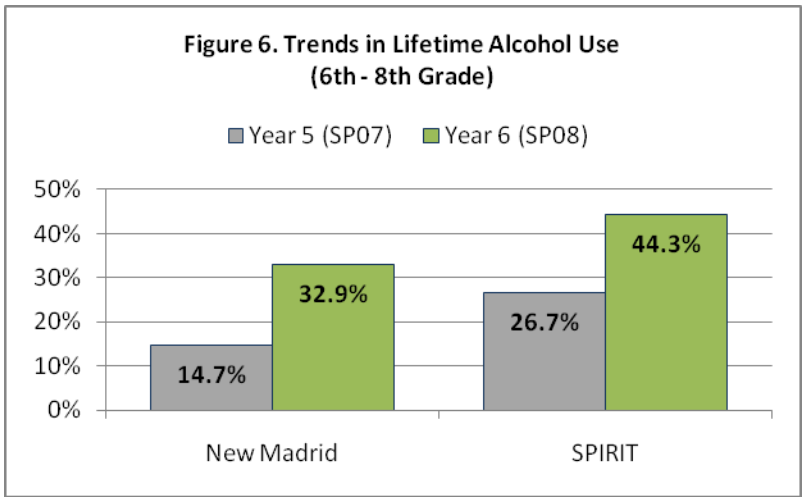
To examine the effects of the SPIRIT project over time youth in the 6th – 8th grades in Year 5 were compared to youth in 6th – 8th grades in Year 6 in both the New Madrid school district and the SPIRIT total sample. This is a modified data set and will not represent numbers already presented in the Year 5 or the general section of the Year 6 report. Comparisons between years should be made with caution as it is natural for fluctuations to occur from year to year.

### Lifetime Use

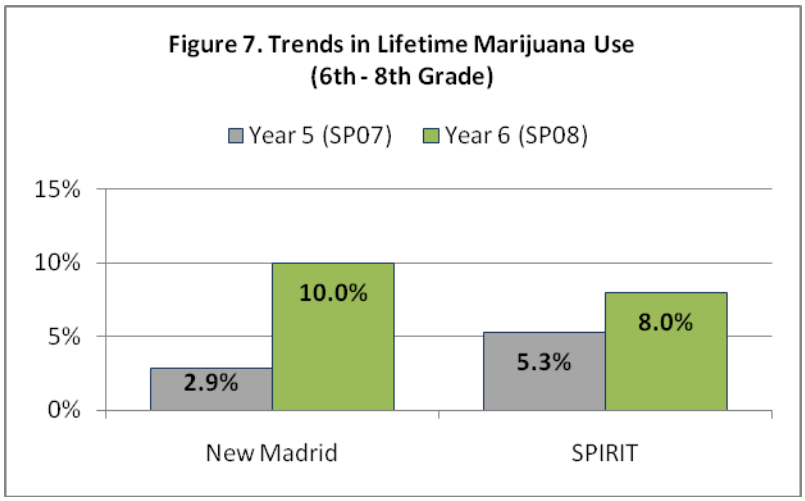
The percentage of 6th – 8th grade youth who used cigarettes in their lifetime did not differ from Year 5 to Year 6 within the New Madrid or SPIRIT samples.



The percentage of 6th – 8th grade students who ever consumed alcohol increased from Year 5 to Year 6 in both New Madrid and the total SPIRIT sample.

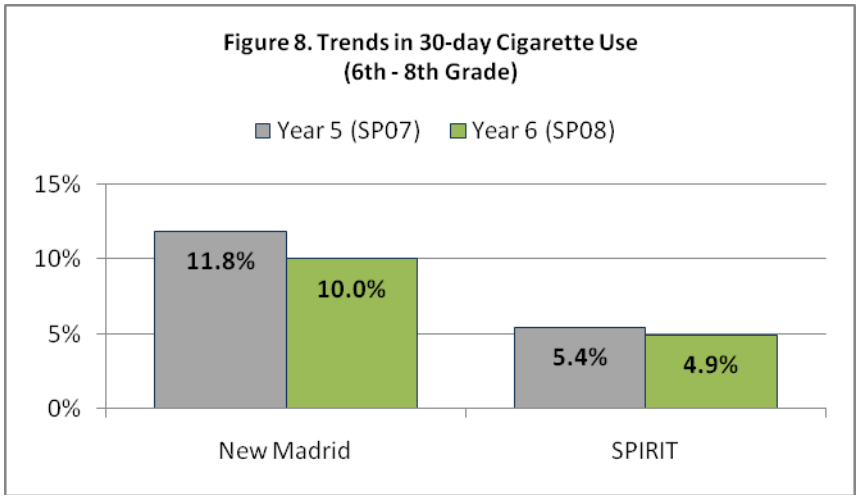



Marijuana use among 6th – 8th grade youth is on the rise in the New Madrid and total SPIRIT sample although the difference between Year 5 and Year 6 is not significant.

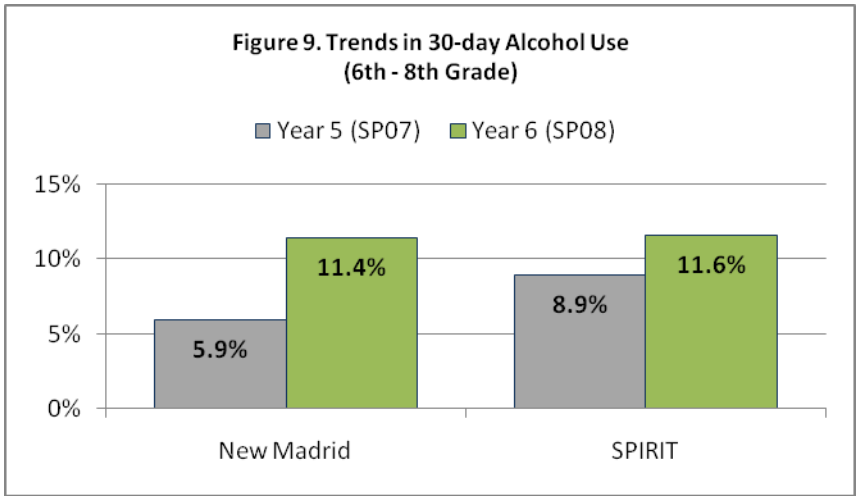



**30-day Use**

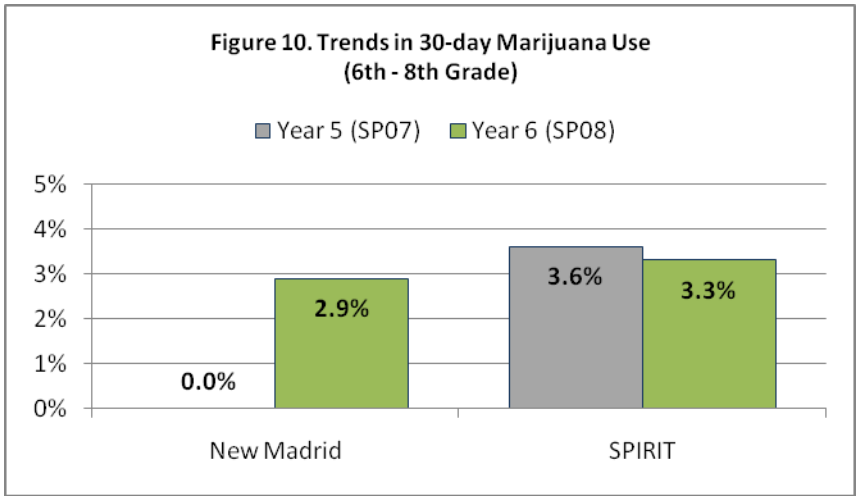
There was no difference between Year 5 and Year 6 in the percentage of 6th – 8th grade youth who used cigarettes in the past 30 days. A downward trend is suggested.



Alcohol use in the past 30 days among 6th – 8th grade youth is on the rise in the New Madrid and total SPIRIT sample although the difference between Year 5 and Year 6 is not significant.




There was no difference from Year 5 to Year 6 in the percentage of 6th – 8th grade youth who used marijuana in the past 30 days.




## Summary

- Cigarette, marijuana, ecstasy, methamphetamine, and prescription drug use are slightly higher among New Madrid youth than in the total SPIRIT sample. However, inhalant use in New Madrid is lower than the Missouri and US samples.

- A greater percentage of youth in grades 6-8 have used substances in their lifetime. A surprisingly large percentage of 4th – 5th graders (20.0%) reported having had more than a sip of alcohol in their lifetime.

- Alcohol use in the past 30 days among 6th – 8th grade youth is on the rise in the New Madrid and total SPIRIT sample although the difference between Year 5 and Year 6 is not significant.

# Chapter 4: Substance Use Attitudes

The following chapter presents youths' attitudes toward substances and two substance use indicators from the National Outcome Measures (NOMs): (1) perceived risk of harm from substance use; and (2) the perception of disapproving attitudes toward substance use.

## Substance Use Attitudes

In general, 6th – 8th graders did not indicate positive attitudes toward cigarettes, alcohol, or marijuana. Youth were more likely to indicate that they might drink alcohol when they are older than to smoke cigarettes or marijuana. Many youth thought that most teenagers and adults smoked cigarettes, drank alcohol, and used marijuana. In fact, 50.4% thought that most teens smoked cigarettes and 65.4% thought most adults smoked.

Table 9. Youth Attitudes toward Alcohol and Other Drugs in Year 6 (4th – 8th Grade)

| | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I might smoke cigarettes when I get older | 79.4 | 11.1 | 8.7 | 0.8 |
| Smoking cigarettes makes you look cool | 92.8 | 5.6 | 1.3 | 0.0 |
| Kids who smoke cigarettes are more grown-up | 88.0 | 6.4 | 4.0 | 1.6 |
| Most teenagers smoke cigarettes | 24.0 | 25.6 | 32.0 | 18.4 |
| Most adults smoke cigarettes | 24.2 | 10.5 | 33.9 | 31.5 |
| I might drink alcohol when I get older | 66.1 | 12.9 | 16.9 | 4.0 |
| Drinking alcohol lets you have more fun | 84.9 | 8.7 | 4.8 | 1.6 |
| Most teenagers drink alcohol | 35.7 | 17.5 | 29.4 | 17.5 |
| Most adults drink alcohol | 27.3 | 11.6 | 28.9 | 32.2 |
| I might smoke marijuana when I get older | 91.1 | 4.0 | 3.2 | 1.6 |
| Most teenagers use marijuana | 34.1 | 27.6 | 26.8 | 11.4 |
| Most adults use marijuana. | 28.2 | 26.6 | 28.2 | 15.3 |

### Substance Use Attitudes by Grade Level

Youth in the 6th – 8th grades were more likely to indicate that they might smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, and smoke marijuana when they are older. Sixth – 8th graders were less likely to think that teens smoked cigarettes and drank alcohol than 4th – 5th graders, but they were just as likely to think that adults used cigarettes and alcohol.

Table 10. Youth Attitudes toward Alcohol and Other Drugs by Grade Level
(Somewhat & Strongly Agree combined Percentages)

| | 4th – 5th Grade | 6th – 8th Grade |
|---|---|---|
| I might smoke cigarettes when I get older | 3.8 | 11.0 |
| Smoking cigarettes makes you look cool | 0.0 | 2.0 |
| Kids who smoke cigarettes are more grown-up | 3.8 | 6.0 |
| Most teenagers smoke cigarettes | 60.0 | 48.0 |
| Most adults smoke cigarettes | 61.5 | 66.3 |
| I might drink alcohol when I get older | 7.7 | 24.5 |
| Drinking alcohol lets you have more fun | 0.0 | 8.0 |
| Most teenagers drink alcohol | 50.0 | 46.0 |
| Most adults drink alcohol | 61.5 | 61.1 |
| I might smoke marijuana when I get older | 0.0 | 6.0 |
| Most teenagers use marijuana | 29.2 | 40.4 |
| Most adults use marijuana. | 30.8 | 46.9 |

## Perceived Risk of Harm from Substance Use

Youth thought cigarettes were the least risky, followed by alcohol; both the use of cigarettes and alcohol were considered to be a "great risk" by less than 40% of 4th – 8th grade youth. Methamphetamine and ecstasy were perceived to be most harmful.

| Table 11. Youth Perception of Risk of Harm from Using Alcohol and Other Drugs in Year 6 (4th – 8th Grade) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No Risk | Slight Risk | Moderate Risk | Great Risk |
| Smoke part or all of a cigarette | 14.4 | 24.8 | 26.4 | 34.4 |
| Drink any type of alcohol | 12.8 | 14.4 | 33.6 | 39.2 |
| Use marijuana | 14.6 | 4.1 | 14.6 | 66.7 |
| Use ecstasy occasionally† | 14.3 | 5.1 | 12.2 | 68.4 |
| Use meth occasionally† | 14.1 | 4.0 | 11.1 | 70.7 |
| Use inhalants† | 15.2 | 5.1 | 18.2 | 61.6 |
| Use prescription drugs in ways for which they were not intended† | 15.2 | 3.0 | 15.2 | 66.7 |

† (6th - 8th only)

**Risk of Harm by Grade Level**

Youth in the 6th – 8th grades were less likely to consider the use of cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana to be of moderate or great risk than 4th – 5th grade youth.

| Table 12. Youth Perception of Risk of Harm from Using Alcohol and Other Drugs Use by Grade Level (Moderate Risk & Great Risk combined Percentages) | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 4th – 5th Grade | 6th – 8th Grade |
| Smoke part or all of a cigarette | 76.9 | 56.6 |
| Drink any type of alcohol | 88.4 | 68.7 |
| Use marijuana | 87.5 | 79.8 |
| Use ecstasy occasionally† | n/a | 80.6 |
| Use meth occasionally† | n/a | 85.9 |
| Use inhalants† | n/a | 84.8 |
| Use prescription drugs in ways for which they were not intended† | n/a | 84.8 |

## Perception of Disapproving Attitudes toward Substance Use

The use of all drugs except cigarettes and alcohol were considered to be "very wrong" by approximately 80% of 4th – 8th grade youth.

| Table 13. Youth Perception of Wrongfulness of Alcohol and Other Drugs Use in Year 6 (4th – 8th Grade) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Wrong at All | A Little Bit Wrong | Wrong | Very Wrong |
| Smoke part or all of a cigarette | 7.1 | 24.6 | 19.0 | 49.2 |
| Drink any type of alcohol | 7.9 | 20.6 | 20.6 | 50.8 |
| Use marijuana | 4.0 | 4.0 | 10.5 | 81.5 |
| Use ecstasy occasionally† | 4.0 | 2.0 | 9.1 | 84.8 |
| Use meth occasionally† | 3.0 | 2.0 | 10.0 | 85.0 |
| Use inhalants† | 3.0 | 6.1 | 10.1 | 80.8 |
| Use prescription drugs in ways for which they were not intended† | 3.0 | 4.0 | 14..0 | 79.0 |

† (6th - 8th only)

**Disapproving Attitudes by Grade Level**

Youth in the 6th – 8th grades were less likely than 4th – 5th grade youth to indicate that the use of cigarettes or alcohol as wrong or very wrong. Regardless of grade level, marijuana use was considered wrong or very wrong by over 90% of the youth surveyed.

Table 14. Youth Perception of Wrongfulness of Alcohol and Other Drugs Use by Grade Level (Wrong & Very Wrong combined Percentages)

| | 4th – 5th Grade | 6th – 8th Grade |
|---|---|---|
| Smoke part or all of a cigarette | 88.5 | 63.0 |
| Drink any type of alcohol | 88.5 | 67.0 |
| Use marijuana | 95.8 | 91.0 |
| Use ecstasy occasionally† | n/a | 93.9 |
| Use meth occasionally† | n/a | 95.0 |
| Use inhalants† | n/a | 90.9 |
| Use prescription drugs in ways for which they were not intended† | n/a | 93.0 |

† (6th – 8th grade only)

## Summary

- Around 25% of 6th – 8th graders thought they might drink alcohol when they are older.
- In general, 6th – 8th graders did not indicate positive attitudes toward cigarettes, alcohol, or marijuana. Youth were more likely to indicate that they might drink alcohol when they are older than to smoke cigarettes or marijuana.
- Sixth – 8th graders were less likely to think that teens smoked cigarettes and drank alcohol than 4th – 5th graders, but they were just as likely to think that adults used cigarettes and alcohol.
- The use of all drugs except cigarettes and alcohol were considered to be “very wrong” by approximately 80% of 4th – 8th grade youth.

# Chapter 5: Aggression & Problem Behavior

The following chapter contains teacher observations of Kindergarten through third grade children's displays of aggression and 4th – 8th grade youths' self-reported participation in problem behavior.

## K – 3rd Grade

### Aggression

Teachers reported that K-3rd grade children tend to be more reactively aggressive than proactively aggressive, although the majority of children aren't usually aggressive at all. Children are most likely to get angry easily when teased and blame others in a fight.

**Table 15. Reactive and Proactive Aggression in Year 6 (Kdg. – 3rd Grade)**

| | Never True | Rarely True | Sometimes True | Usually True | Almost Always True |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Reactive Aggression** | | | | | |
| When this child has been teased or threatened, he or she gets angry easily and strikes back. | 47.1 | 19.1 | 22.1 | 8.8 | 2.9 |
| This child always claims that other children are to blame in a fight and feels that they started the trouble. | 48.5 | 22.1 | 16.2 | 11.8 | 1.5 |
| When a peer accidentally hurts the child (such as bumping into him or her), this child assumes that the peer meant to do it, and then overreacts with anger/fighting. | 61.8 | 22.1 | 10.3 | 5.9 | 0.0 |
| **Proactive Aggression** | | | | | |
| This child gets other kids to gang up on a peer that he or she does not like. | 83.8 | 8.8 | 5.9 | 1.5 | 0.0 |
| This child uses physical force (or threatens to use force) in order to dominate other kids. | 85.3 | 10.3 | 4.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| This child threatens or bullies others in order to get his or her own way. | 83.8 | 7.4 | 8.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

**Aggression by Sex**

Teachers indicated that males are more aggressive than females.

| Table 16. Reactive and Proactive Aggression by Sex (Kdg. – 3rd grade; Usually & Almost Always True combined Percentages) | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Male** | **Female** |
| **Reactive Aggression** | | |
| When this child has been teased or threatened, he or she gets angry easily and strikes back. | 15.8 | 6.7 |
| This child always claims that other children are to blame in a fight and feels that they started the trouble. | 18.4 | 6.7 |
| When a peer accidentally hurts the child (such as bumping into him or her), this child assumes that the peer meant to do it, and then overreacts with anger/fighting. | 7.9 | 3.3 |
| **Proactive Aggression** | | |
| This child gets other kids to gang up on a peer that he or she does not like. | 3.3 | 0.0 |
| This child uses physical force (or threatens to use force) in order to dominate other kids. | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| This child threatens or bullies others in order to get his or her own way. | 0.0 | 0.0 |

## 4th-8th Grade

**Problem Behavior**

Emotionally aggressive behaviors were most common, including making fun of others, being made fun of and having rumors or lies spread about them. Interestingly, while 57.6% of 6th – 8th grade youth reported that someone had spread a rumor about them, only 29.6% reported spreading a rumor about someone else. Also, 48.4% reported hitting or pushing another student and 36.9% reported being pushed, shoved, slapped, hit or kicked by another, however only 24.8% reported having been in a physical fight.

| Table 17. Problem Behavior in Year 6 (4th – 8th Grade) | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Never** | **1 or 2 times** | **3 to 5 times** | **6 to 9 times** | **10 to 19 times** | **20 to 29 times** | **30 to 39 times** | **40 or more times** |
| **Hit or pushed other kids at school** | 51.6 | 31.7 | 11.1 | 2.4 | 1.6 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.8 |
| **Spread mean rumors about other kids** | 70.4 | 20.0 | 4.8 | 4.0 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| **Made fun of other people** | 37.3 | 37.3 | 13.5 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 1.6 | 0.0 | 4.0 |
| **Been in a physical fight** | 75.2 | 15.2 | 4.8 | 2.4 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 0.8 |
| **Been suspended from school** | 92.9 | 4.8 | 2.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| **Been in in-school suspension or detention** | 75.0 | 16.1 | 3.2 | 2.4 | 1.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.6 |
| **Been harassed or bullied** | 69.6 | 16.0 | 6.4 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 1.6 |
| **Been afraid of being beaten up** | 78.9 | 13.8 | 2.4 | 0.8 | 1.6 | 0.0 | 1.6 | 0.8 |
| **Had mean rumors or lies spread about you** | 42.4 | 36.8 | 10.4 | 5.6 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 1.6 | 2.4 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Been made fun of** | 41.9 | 29.8 | 10.5 | 7.3 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 5.6 |
| **Been pushed, shoved, slapped, hit or kicked** | 63.1 | 22.1 | 5.7 | 3.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.6 | 4.1 |
| **Been drunk or high at school†** | 97.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 |
| **Been threatened or injured with weapons†** | 92.0 | 4.0 | 1.0 | 2.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| **Used any weapon to threaten or bully someone†** | 95.0 | 2.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| **Seen someone carrying a gun, knife or other weapon†** | 79.0 | 17.0 | 3.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

† (6th – 8th only)

**Problem Behavior by Grade Level**

Youth in the 6th – 8th grades were more likely than youth in the 4th – 5th grades to hit or push other kids, make fun of others, have rumors spread about them, and be in in-school suspension or detention.

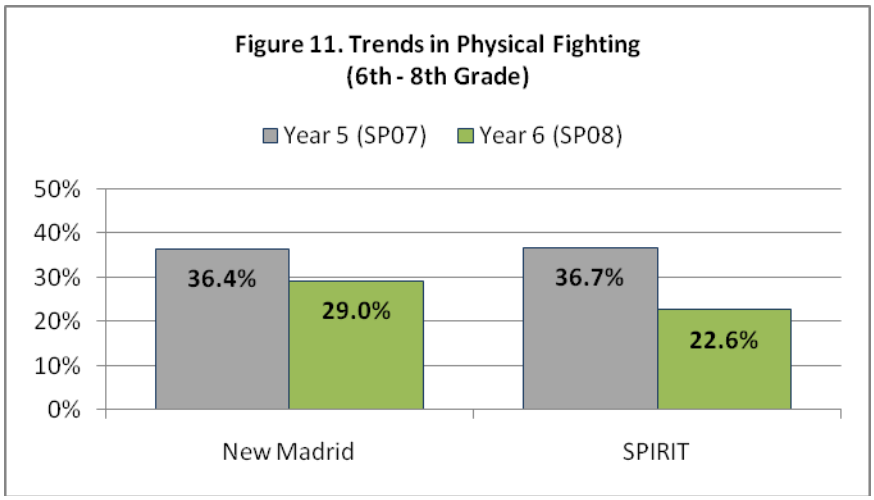
| Table 18. Problem Behavior by Grade Level (1 or more times) | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **4th – 5th Grade** | **6th – 8th Grade** |
| **Hit or pushed other kids at school** | 34.6 | 52.0 |
| **Spread mean rumors about other kids** | 26.9 | 30.3 |
| **Made fun of other people** | 38.5 | 69.0 |
| **Been in a physical fight** | 26.9 | 24.2 |
| **Been suspended from school** | 7.7 | 7.0 |
| **Been in in-school suspension or detention** | 11.5 | 28.6 |
| **Been harassed or bullied** | 34.6 | 29.3 |
| **Been afraid of being beaten up** | 23.1 | 20.6 |
| **Had mean rumors or lies spread about you** | 46.2 | 60.6 |
| **Been made fun of** | 57.7 | 58.2 |
| **Been pushed, shoved, slapped, hit or kicked** | 42.3 | 35.4 |
| **Been drunk or high at school†** | n/a | 3.0 |
| **Been threatened or injured with weapons†** | n/a | 8.0 |
| **Used any weapon to threaten or bully someone†** | n/a | 5.0 |
| **Seen someone carrying a gun, knife or other weapon†** | n/a | 21.0 |

† (6th – 8th only)

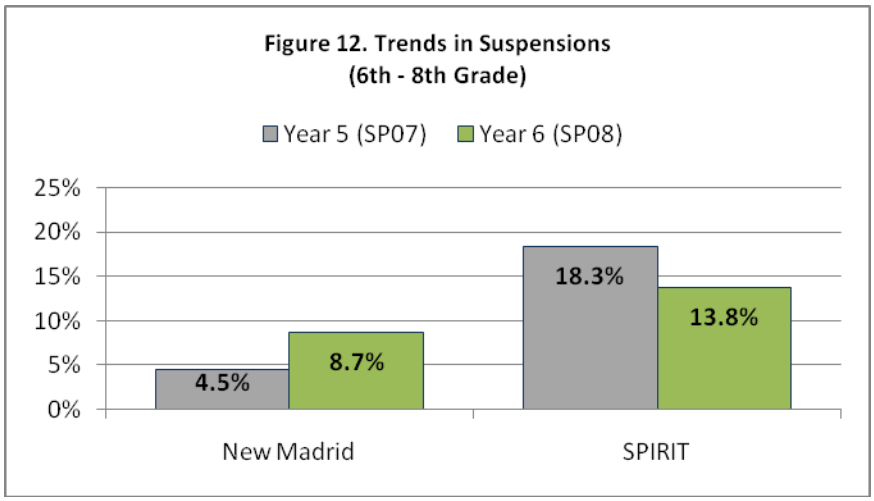
## Trends in Problem Behavior

The first goal of the SPIRIT project is to reduce violent/aggressive behaviors. Three of these types of behaviors are physical fighting, being the victim of physical aggression (having been pushed, shoved, slapped, hit or kicked by another), and suspensions (self-report). The following presents a comparison of Year 5 and Year 6 of the SPIRIT project in New Madrid on these three behaviors. This is a modified data set and will not represent numbers already presented in the Year 5 or the general section of the Year 6 report. Comparisons between years should be made with caution as it is natural for fluctuations to occur from year to year.

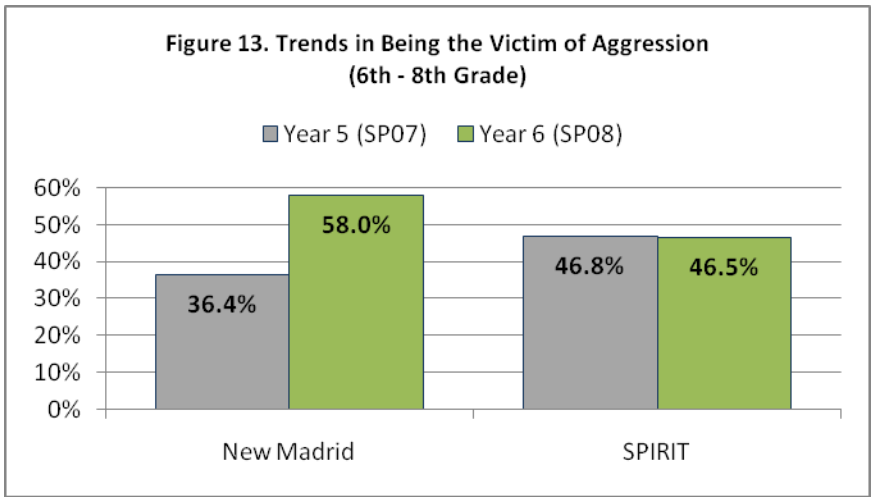
There was a decrease from Year 5 to Year 6 in the percentage of 6th – 8th grade youth who reported being in a physical fight in the past three months in both New Madrid and the total SPIRIT sample.




There was no statistically significant difference between Year 5 and Year 6 in the percentage of youth who reported receiving a suspension.




There was an increase from Year 5 to Year 6 in the percentage of youth in New Madrid who reported being the victim of physical aggression among 6th – 8th grade youth. There was no difference from Year 5 to Year 6 in the total SPIRIT sample.



## Summary

- Teachers reported that K-3rd grade children tend to be more reactively aggressive than proactively aggressive, although the majority of children aren't usually aggressive at all. Children are most likely to get angry easily when teased and blame others in a fight.

- Emotionally aggressive behaviors were most common, including making fun of others, being made fun of and having rumors or lies spread about them.

- There was a decrease from Year 5 to Year 6 in the percentage of 6th – 8th grade youth who reported being in a physical fight in the past three months.

- There was no statistically significant difference between Year 5 and Year 6 in the percentage of youth who reported receiving a suspension.

- There was an increase from Year 5 to Year 6 in the percentage of 6th – 8th grade youth in New Madrid who reported being the victim of physical aggression.

# Chapter 6: School Performance

Each participating school district was asked to provide school performance data for all consented youth. The following chapter presents information on absences, disciplinary incidents, suspension, and grade point averages (GPA) for those youth who were chosen for the evaluation of the SPIRIT project.

## Grade Point Average

Evaluated youth from New Madrid School District (6th – 8th grade; n = 96) had an average GPA of 2.89 at the end of the Spring 2008 semester. Average GPAs were higher for females than males.

| Table 19. Average GPA (6th – 8th Grade) | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Male** | **Female** |
| **Spring 2008** | 2.71 | 3.08 |

## Absences

The district was asked to provide the number of unexcused absences each consented student had accumulated over the course of the 2007-2008 school year. Unexcused absences were provided for children and youth in the Kdg. – 5th grades. No Kdg. – 5th grade children and youth had an unexcused absence. Only a cumulative number of unexcused and excused absences was provided for youth in 6th – 8th grade. Most 6th – 8th grade participants (90.6%) had at least one excused or unexcused absence. Only 14.6% had ten or more absences.

| Table 20. Percentage of Children and Youth with an Absence (Kdg. – 8th Grade; % 1 or more) | |
|---|---|
| | |
| **Sex** | |
| **Male** | 44.8 |
| **Female** | 46.8 |
| **Grade Level** | |
| **Kdg. – 3rd†** | 0.0 |
| **4th – 5th†** | 0.0 |
| **6th – 8th‡** | 90.6 |

† Unexcused Absences
‡ Unexcused and Excused Absences Combined

**Disciplinary Incidents**

Disciplinary Incidents were recorded in two forms: any disciplinary incident and disciplinary incidents related to alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. The majority of children and youth (63.7%) did not receive any disciplinary incidents over the course of the school year. No youth out of all evaluated participants were involved in an ATOD related disciplinary incident.

| Table 21. Percentage of Children and Youth with a Disciplinary Incident (Kdg. – 8th Grade; % 1 or more) | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Disciplinary Incident** | **ATOD related Disciplinary Incident** |
| **Sex** | | |
| **Male** | 47.9 | 0.0 |
| **Female** | 24.5 | 0.0 |
| **Grade Level** | | |
| **Kdg. – 3rd** | 27.9 | 0.0 |
| **4th – 5th** | 19.2 | 0.0 |
| **6th – 8th** | 46.9 | 0.0 |

## Suspensions

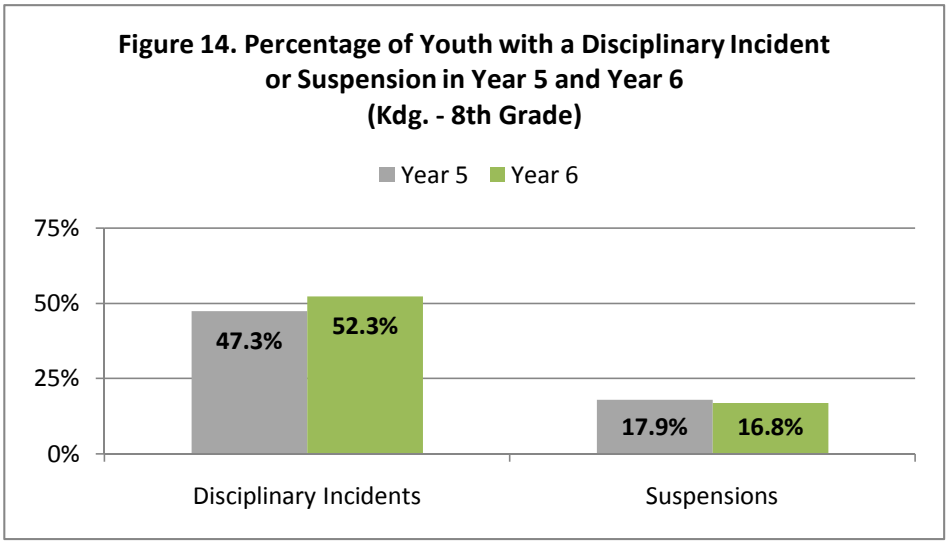
Both in-school and out-of-school suspensions were recorded. The majority of youth (75.8%) did not receive either type of suspension over the course of the school year. Only 21.1% received an in-school suspension and 3.2% received an out-of-school suspension.

| Table 22. Percentage of Children and Youth with a Suspension (Kdg. – 8th Grade; % 1 or more) | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **In-School Suspension** | **Out-of-School Suspension** |
| **Sex** | | |
| **Male** | 24.0 | 3.1 |
| **Female** | 18.1 | 3.2 |
| **Grade Level** | | |
| **Kdg. – 3rd** | 1.5 | 1.5 |
| **4th – 5th** | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| **6th – 8th** | 40.6 | 5.3 |

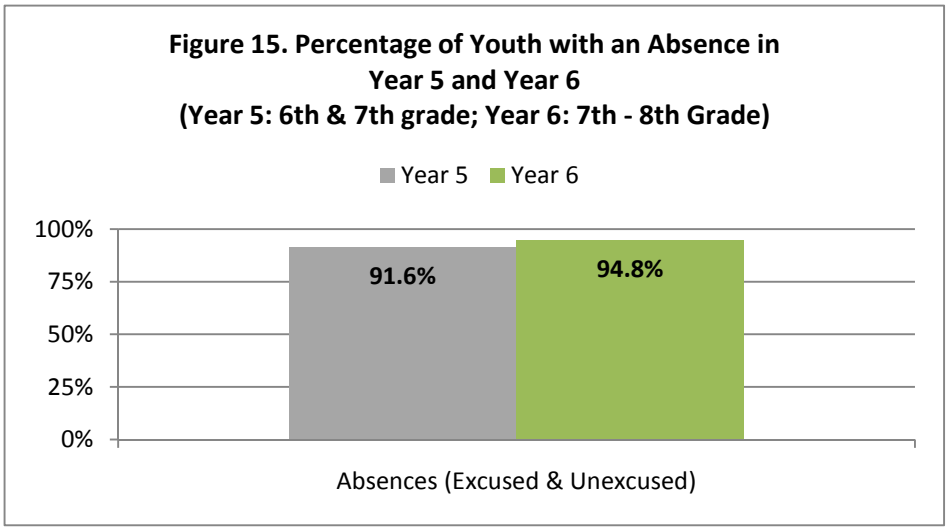
## School Performance Over Time

For this analysis, all youth were included who were consented in both Year 5 and Year 6 and for which disciplinary incident and suspension data were available for both school years (n = 95; 4th – 8th Grade).

There was no difference from Year 5 to Year 6 in the percentage of youth with a disciplinary incident, or a suspension (in and out-of-school combined).



Considering the difference in the reporting of absences depending on grade level, only youth in the 7th – 8th grades (in Year 6) were used for the Year 5/Year 6 absences comparison. The percentage of youth with an absence (excused and unexcused combined) did not change significantly from Year 5 to Year 6.




## Summary

- There were no unexcused absences during the school year among Kindergarten through 5th grade students. Given that the middle school only provided total absences without unexcused and excused absences reported independently, it is not possible to say whether there were any changes in unexcused absences.

- The majority of children and youth (63.7%) did not receive any disciplinary incidents over the course of the school year.

- No youth were involved in an ATOD related disciplinary incident.

# Chapter 7: Program Effectiveness

Children and youth in the 2nd through 8th grades were asked to report their perception of their particular prevention program's effectiveness. Students, on the whole, were satisfied and felt the programs were effective.

Youth in the 4th – 8th grades reported that the program was most effective in honing their resistance skills. Only 52.7% reported that they liked the program and only 61.4% thought the time spent on the program was helpful.

Table 23. Effectiveness of and Satisfaction with SPIRIT in Year 6 (4th – 8th Grade)

| | No, not at all | No, not much | Yes, a little | Yes, a lot |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Did you like the program? | 31.0 | 16.4 | 28.1 | 24.6 |
| Did the program teach you what to do when you are angry? | 24.1 | 21.8 | 25.9 | 28.2 |
| Do you act better because of the program? | 24.4 | 17.9 | 29.8 | 28.0 |
| Did the program help you feel better about yourself? | 26.5 | 18.2 | 29.4 | 25.9 |
| Does the program help you to say no to harmful things other kids might want you to do? | 23.4 | 9.9 | 15.8 | 50.9 |
| Has the program helped you to get along better with other people? | 23.8 | 20.9 | 33.1 | 22.1 |
| Are other kids nicer to you because of the program? | 33.1 | 22.1 | 27.9 | 16.9 |
| Was the time spent on the program helpful? | 25.1 | 13.5 | 33.3 | 28.1 |

**Program Effectiveness by Grade Level**

Children in the 2nd and 3rd grades and youth in the 4th – 5th grades had similar thoughts about the program. However, 4th – 5th grade youth liked the program less than 2nd – 3rd graders, and thought it was less helpful. Still, they were more likely to report that other kids are nicer to them because of the program.

The majority (over 50%) of youth in the 6th – 8th grade reported liking the program and thought it was effective in most areas, however, compared to youth in the other grade levels, their perception of the program was significantly lower.

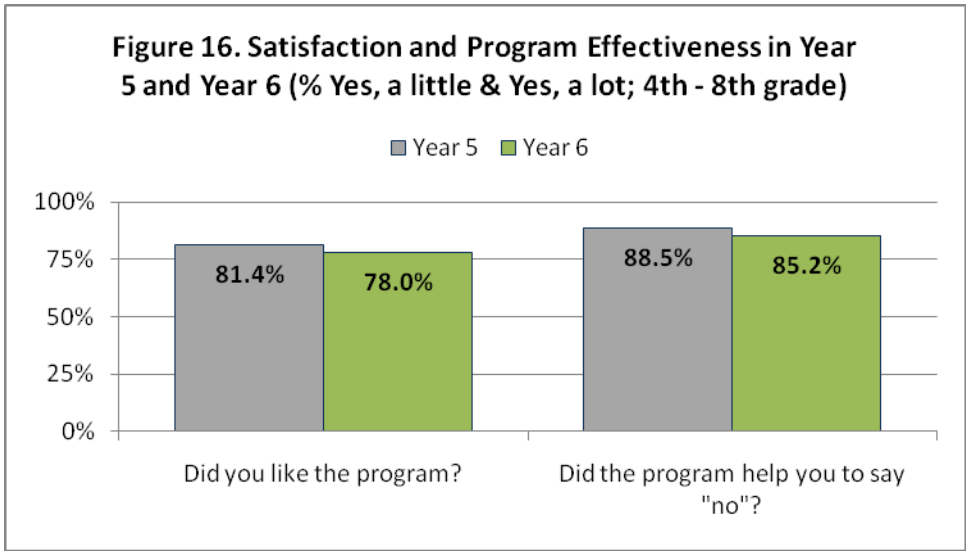
Table 24. Effectiveness of and Satisfaction with SPIRIT in Year 6 by Grade Level
(Yes, a lot & Yes, a little combined Percentages)

| | 2nd – 3rd | 4th – 5th | 6th – 8th |
|---|---|---|---|
| Did you like the program? | 100.0 | 88.2 | 52.6 |
| Did the program teach you what to do when you are angry? | 94.7 | 94.1 | 54.1 |
| Do you act better because of the program? | 94.4 | 91.4 | 57.7 |
| Did the program help you feel better about yourself? | 94.7 | 82.9 | 55.3 |
| Does the program help you to say no to harmful things other kids might want you to do? | 91.9 | 97.1 | 66.6 |
| Has the program helped you to get along better with other people? | 84.2 | 88.6 | 55.2 |
| Are other kids nicer to you because of the program? | 78.9 | 94.3 | 44.8 |
| Was the time spent on the program helpful? | 92.1 | 88.2 | 61.4 |

## Program Effectiveness Over Time

For this analysis, all youth were included who were consented in both Year 5 and Year 6 and for which program effectiveness data was available for both school years (n = 61; 4th – 8th Grade).

There was no difference from Year 5 to Year 6 in the percentage of youth who liked the program or thought it was effective in helping them say no to harmful things others might want them to do.




## Summary

- Youth in the 4th – 8th grades reported that the program was most effective in honing their resistance skills.

- There was no difference from Year 5 to Year 6 in the percentage of youth who liked the program or thought it was effective in helping them say no to harmful things others might want them to do.

# Chapter 8: Protective Factors

The following chapter presents information on factors that help reduce the likelihood of substance use and other problem behavior.

## K- 3rd Grade

### Social Competence: Change over the course of Year 6

Teachers indicated that the majority of children improved in their social competence at least a little by the end of the school year. The majority of the children improved most significantly in self-esteem. Children were least likely to improve in their ability to verbally label emotions and to handle disagreements in a positive way.

Table 25. Social Competence Change from the beginning to the end of Year 6 (Kdg. – 3rd Grade)

| | Much worse | Somewhat worse | A little worse | Not at all | A little improved | Somewhat improved | Much improved |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ability to stop and calm down when excited or upset. | 0.0 | 1.5 | 0.0 | 2.9 | 14.7 | 48.5 | 32.4 |
| Ability to verbally label emotions or self and others. | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 4.4 | 20.6 | 47.1 | 27.9 |
| Ability to show empathy and compassion for others' feelings. | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 19.1 | 45.6 | 35.3 |
| Ability to handle disagreements with others in a positive way. | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.5 | 25.0 | 44.1 | 29.4 |
| Ability to initiate interactions and join in play with others in an appropriate manner. | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 16.2 | 45.6 | 38.2 |
| Ability to provide help, share materials, and act cooperatively with others. | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 11.8 | 51.5 | 36.8 |
| Ability to take turns, play fair, and follow the rules of the game. | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 11.9 | 52.2 | 35.8 |
| Self-esteem. | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.5 | 0.0 | 8.8 | 42.6 | 47.1 |

## Social Competence: Prosocial Behavior & Emotion Regulation

The majority of children in grades K-3 were identified as displaying prosocial behavior and regulating their emotions either well or very well.

| Table 26. Social Competence in Year 6 (Kdg. – 3rd Grade) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not at all | A little | Moderately well | Well | Very well |
| Prosocial Behavior | | | | | |
| Expressed needs and feelings appropriately. | 0.0 | 5.9 | 19.1 | 33.8 | 41.2 |
| Resolves peer problems on his/her own. | 0.0 | 14.9 | 19.4 | 23.9 | 41.8 |
| Is very good at understanding other people's feelings. | 1.5 | 10.3 | 17.6 | 33.8 | 36.8 |
| Is aware of the effect of his/her behavior on others. | 2.9 | 11.8 | 14.7 | 27.9 | 42.6 |
| Works well in a group. | 1.5 | 8.8 | 19.1 | 17.6 | 52.9 |
| Shares materials with others. | 0.0 | 2.9 | 17.6 | 20.6 | 58.8 |
| Cooperates with peers without prompting. | 0.0 | 4.4 | 20.6 | 20.6 | 54.4 |
| Is helpful to others. | 0.0 | 1.5 | 23.5 | 20.6 | 54.4 |
| Listens to others' points of view. | 4.4 | 11.8 | 13.2 | 22.1 | 48.5 |
| Can give suggestions and opinions without being bossy. | 4.4 | 14.7 | 14.7 | 20.6 | 45.6 |
| Acts friendly towards others. | 0.0 | 1.5 | 17.6 | 25.0 | 55.9 |
| Emotion Regulation | | | | | |
| Can accept things not going his/her way. | 2.9 | 11.8 | 23.5 | 26.5 | 35.3 |
| Copes well with failure. | 2.9 | 10.3 | 25.0 | 23.5 | 38.2 |
| Accepts legitimate imposed limits. | 0.0 | 10.3 | 14.7 | 30.9 | 44.1 |
| Thinks before acting. | 2.9 | 11.8 | 20.6 | 30.9 | 33.8 |
| Can calm down when excited or all wound up. | 1.5 | 14.9 | 14.9 | 23.9 | 44.8 |
| Can wait in line patiently when necessary. | 3.0 | 16.4 | 10.4 | 25.4 | 44.8 |
| Plays by the rules of the game. | 0.0 | 5.9 | 22.1 | 16.2 | 55.9 |
| Controls temper when there is a disagreement. | 2.9 | 10.3 | 22.1 | 19.1 | 45.6 |

# 4th – 8th Grade

## Empathy

Most youth displayed a healthy level of empathy. They were most likely to get upset at seeing an animal being hurt.

| Table 27. Youth Capacity for Empathy in Year 6 (4th – 8th Grade) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| It makes me sad if I see someone who is left out. | 4.0 | 12.7 | 52.4 | 31.0 |
| I get upset when I see an animal being hurt. | 2.4 | 7.9 | 38.9 | 50.8 |
| I feel bad when someone else gets their feelings hurt. | 4.0 | 11.1 | 50.8 | 34.1 |

**Empathy by Grade Level**

Youth in the 4th – 5th grades were more empathetic than youth in the 6th – 8th grades.

| Table 28. Youth Capacity for Empathy by Grade Level (Agree & Strongly Agree combined Percentages) | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 4th – 5th Grade | 6th – 8th Grade |
| It makes me sad if I see someone who is left out. | 92.3 | 81.0 |
| I get upset when I see an animal being hurt. | 100 | 87.0 |
| I feel bad when someone else gets their feelings hurt. | 100 | 81.0 |

## Decision Making

The majority of youth reported good decision making skills either often or all of the time. However, a significant number of youth reported making good decisions sometimes but not often. They were least likely to stop to think about their choices before making a decision and most likely to make good decisions.

| Table 29. Youth Decision Making Skills in Year 6 (4th – 8th Grade) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Never | Sometimes but not Often | Often | All the Time |
| How often do you stop to think about your choices before you make a decision? | 1.6 | 37.1 | 46.0 | 15.3 |
| How often do you stop to think about how your decisions may affect others' feelings? | 5.7 | 30.9 | 38.2 | 25.2 |
| How often do you stop to think about all of the things that may happen as a result of your decisions? | 3.2 | 30.6 | 37.9 | 28.2 |
| How often do you make good decisions? | 0.8 | 16.9 | 67.7 | 14.5 |

**Decision Making by Grade Level**

Fewer 6th – 8th grade than 4th – 5th grade youth reported that they think about how their decisions affect others' feelings and that they think about all of the things that may happen as a result of their decisions.

| Table 30. Youth Decision Making Skills by Grade Level (Often & All the Time combined Percentages) | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 4th – 5th Grade | 6th – 8th Grade |
| How often do you stop to think about your choices before you make a decision? | 64.0 | 60.6 |
| How often do you stop to think about how your decisions may affect others' feelings? | 80.0 | 59.2 |
| How often do you stop to think about all of the things that may happen as a result of your decisions? | 76.0 | 63.6 |
| How often do you make good decisions? | 84.0 | 81.8 |

## Caring Adults

A large majority of youth reported that there were caring adults at both home and school. Youth were more likely to "strongly agree" there were caring adults at home than at school.

| Table 31. Youth Perception of Caring Adults in Year 6 (4th – 8th Grade) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| At school, there is a teacher or another adult who I can go to if something is really bothering me. | 4.0 | 5.6 | 41.3 | 49.2 |
| At school, there is a teacher or another adult who listens to me when I have something to say. | 3.2 | 5.9 | 41.3 | 50.0 |
| At home, there is a parent or another adult who I can go to if something is really bothering me. | 4.0 | 2.4 | 24.8 | 68.8 |
| At home, there is a parent or another adult who listens to me when I have something to say. | 2.4 | 5.6 | 27.2 | 64.8 |

### Caring Adults by Grade Level

Fewer youth in the 6th – 8th grades than in the 4th – 5th grades reported that there was a teacher or another adult at school who they could go to if something was really bothering them.

| Table 32. Youth Perception of Caring Adults by Grade Level (Agree & Strongly Agree combined Percentages) | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 4th – 5th Grade | 6th – 8th Grade |
| At school, there is a teacher or another adult who I can go to if something is really bothering me. | 100 | 88.0 |
| At school, there is a teacher or another adult who listens to me when I have something to say. | 96.2 | 90.0 |
| At home, there is a parent or another adult who I can go to if something is really bothering me. | 96.2 | 92.9 |
| At home, there is a parent or another adult who listens to me when I have something to say. | 96.0 | 91.0 |

## School Attitudes

In general, youth had very positive attitudes toward school. They were especially likely to report that they feel like a part of the school. Around 90% felt safe at school.

| Table 33. Youth Attitudes toward School in Year 6 (4th – 8th Grade) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| I feel close to people at this school. | 6.3 | 8.7 | 51.6 | 33.3 |
| I am happy to be at this school. | 4.0 | 8.7 | 37.3 | 50.0 |
| I feel like I am a part of this school. | 4.1 | 5.7 | 34.1 | 56.1 |
| The teachers at this school treat students fairly. | 5.6 | 8.9 | 37.9 | 47.6 |
| I feel safe at this school. | 4.0 | 7.2 | 35.2 | 53.6 |
| I feel safe going to and from school. | 4.0 | 10.4 | 35.2 | 50.4 |

**School Attitudes by Grade Level**

Regardless of grade level, youth were just as likely to report that they feel close to people at their school. Youth in the 6th – 8th grades were less likely to be happy at school, feel like a part of the school, think that teachers treat students fairly, and feel safe going to and from school.

Table 34. Youth Attitudes toward School by Grade Level
(Somewhat Agree & Strongly Agree combined Percentages)

| | 4th – 5th Grade | 6th – 8th Grade |
|---|---|---|
| I feel close to people at this school. | 84.6 | 85.0 |
| I am happy to be at this school. | 96.2 | 85.0 |
| I feel like I am a part of this school. | 95.8 | 88.9 |
| The teachers at this school treat students fairly. | 100 | 81.8 |
| I feel safe at this school. | 96.2 | 86.9 |
| I feel safe going to and from school. | 92.3 | 83.8 |

# Summary

- Teachers indicated that the majority of children improved in their social competence at least a little by the end of the school year. The majority of the children improved most significantly in self-esteem. Children were least likely to improve in their ability to verbally label emotions and to handle disagreements in a positive way

- The majority of children in grades K-3 were identified as displaying prosocial behavior and regulating their emotions either well or very well.

- Most 4th – 8th grade youth displayed a healthy level of empathy. They were most likely to get upset at seeing an animal being hurt.

- The majority of youth reported good decision making skills either often or all of the time. However, a significant number of youth reported making good decisions sometimes but not often.

- A large majority of youth reported that there were caring adults at both home and school. Youth were more likely to “strongly agree” that there were caring adults at home than at school.

- In general, youth had very positive attitudes toward school. They were especially likely to report that they feel like a part of the school. Around 90% felt safe at school.

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