

Youth Who Feel Unsafe at School

Headline

The percentage of youth who feared attack at school or on the way to and from school decreased substantially from 12 percent in 1995 to 6 percent in 2005. ([See Figure 1](#))

Importance

Fear of attack at school or on the way to and from school causes some students to miss days of school,¹ and is related to stresses that may negatively affect academic performance.² Fear at school can create an unhealthy school environment, may limit student participation or speaking up in class and may lead to more students acting out in negative ways.³

Trends

The percentage of youth who feared attack at school or on the way to and from school decreased significantly between 1995 and 2005, from 12 percent in 1995 to 6 percent in 2005. ([See Figure 1](#))

Differences by Race and Ethnicity

In 2005, non-Hispanic black students and Hispanic students ages 12 to 18 were more likely as non-Hispanic white students to fear attack at school or on the way to and from school (9 percent and 10 percent, respectively, compared with 5 percent). ([See Figure 2](#))

Differences by Age

Students in lower grades are more likely to fear for their safety at school and on the way to and from school than are students in higher grades. In 2005, 10 percent of sixth grade students had such fears, compared with 3 percent of students in the twelfth grade. ([See Figure 3](#)) These students' fears are supported by the fact that younger students are actually victimized at school at a higher rate than older students.⁴

Differences by Location

There has been a large decline in the percent of youth who fear attack at school or on the way to and from school in urban schools; from 18 percent in 1995 to 10 percent in 2005. However, students in urban schools are about twice as likely as students in suburban or rural schools to fear being attacked at school or while traveling to and from school (10 percent among students in urban schools compared with 5 percent among students in both suburban and rural schools, in 2005). ([See Table 1](#))

Difference by Public vs. Private

Students in public school are more likely to fear being attacked at school or while traveling to and from school than students who attend private school. In 2005, 7 percent of public school students feared being attacked compared with 4 percent of private school students.

State and Local Estimates

2005 estimates for a related indicator, whether the student stayed home from school in the last 30 days because he or she felt unsafe, are available for selected states and metropolitan areas from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) at:

Table 15. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/SS/SS5505.pdf>

2005 estimates for how safe 4th, 8th, and 12th grade students reported feeling at school are available through the Nation's Report Card. Users can create tables containing this information at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/criteria.asp>

International Estimates

None

National Goals

None

Definitions

Students were asked if during the last six months they had feared being attacked at school or on the way to and from school.

Data Source

Data for 2005: Dinkes, R., Cataldi, E.T., Kena, G., Baum, K., Synder, T.D. (2006). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2006 (NCES 2007-003/NCJ 214262). U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Table 16.1. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/iscs06.pdf>.

All other data: DeVoe, J.F., Peter, K., Kaufman, P., Miller, A., Noonan, M., Snyder, T.D., and Baum, K. (2004). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2004 (NCES 2005-002/NCJ 205290). U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Table 12.1. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/2005002.pdf>

Raw Data Source

U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey, January-June 1995, 1999, 2001, and 2005.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ncvs1sp.pdf>

Approximate Date of Next Update

December 2007

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *CDC Surveillance Summaries*. June 9, 2000. MMWR 2000; 49(No. SS-5): Table 10.

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss4905a1.htm#tab10>

²Kaufman, P., Chen, X., Choy, S.P., Peter, K., Ruddy, S.A., Miller, A.K., Fleury, J.K., Chandler, K.A., Planty, M.G., and Rand, M.R. *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2001*. U.S. Department of Education and Justice. NCES 2002-113/NCJ-190075. Washington, DC, 2001: 28.

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2002113>

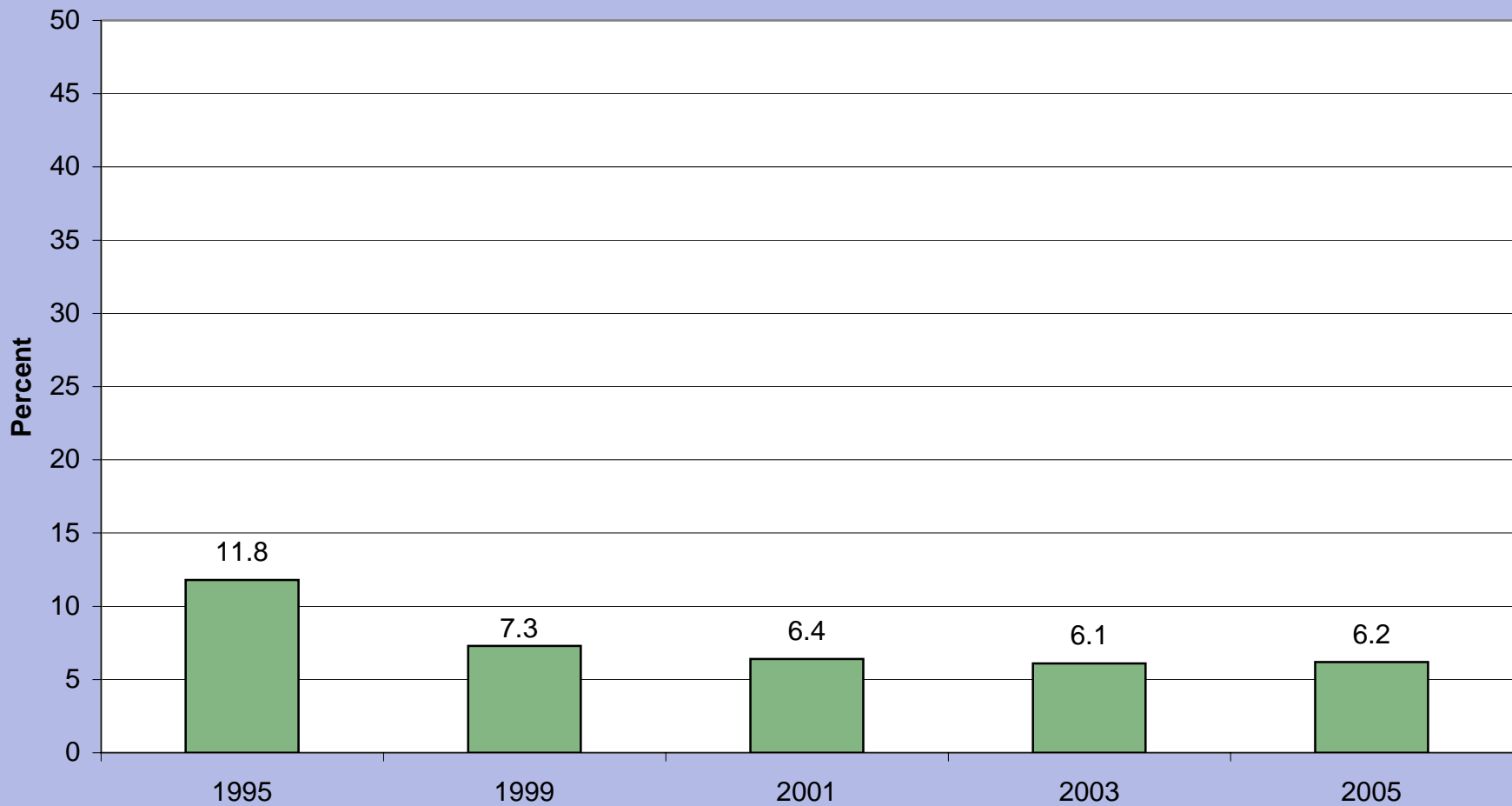
³Hernandez, Thomas & Susan Seem. (2004). "A Safe School Climate: A Systematic Approach and the School Counselor," *Professional School Counseling* 7(4): 1096-2409.

⁴U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, SAMHSA. 2001. *Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Chapter 2. Tables 2.2, 2.4, 6.1.

<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/chapter2/sec12.html#school>

Figure 1

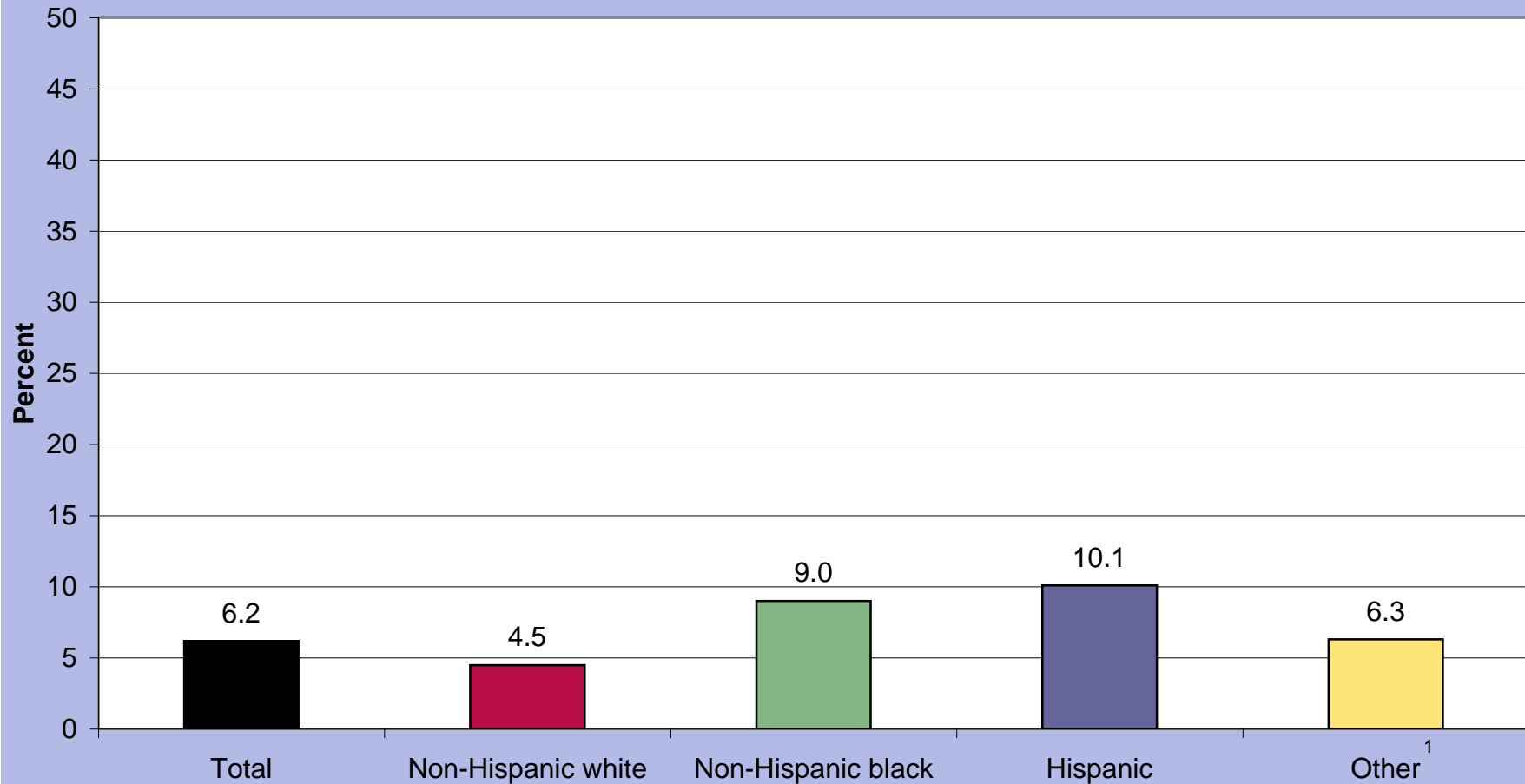
Percentage of Students Fearing Attack At School or on the Way to and from School, Selected Years, 1995-2005



Source: Dinkes, R., Cataldi, E.F., Kena, G., Baum, K., & Synder, T.D. (2006). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2006 (NCES 2007-003/NCJ 214262). U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Table 16.1.

Figure 2

Percentage of Students Fearing Attack at School or on the Way to and from School by Race/Ethnicity, 2005

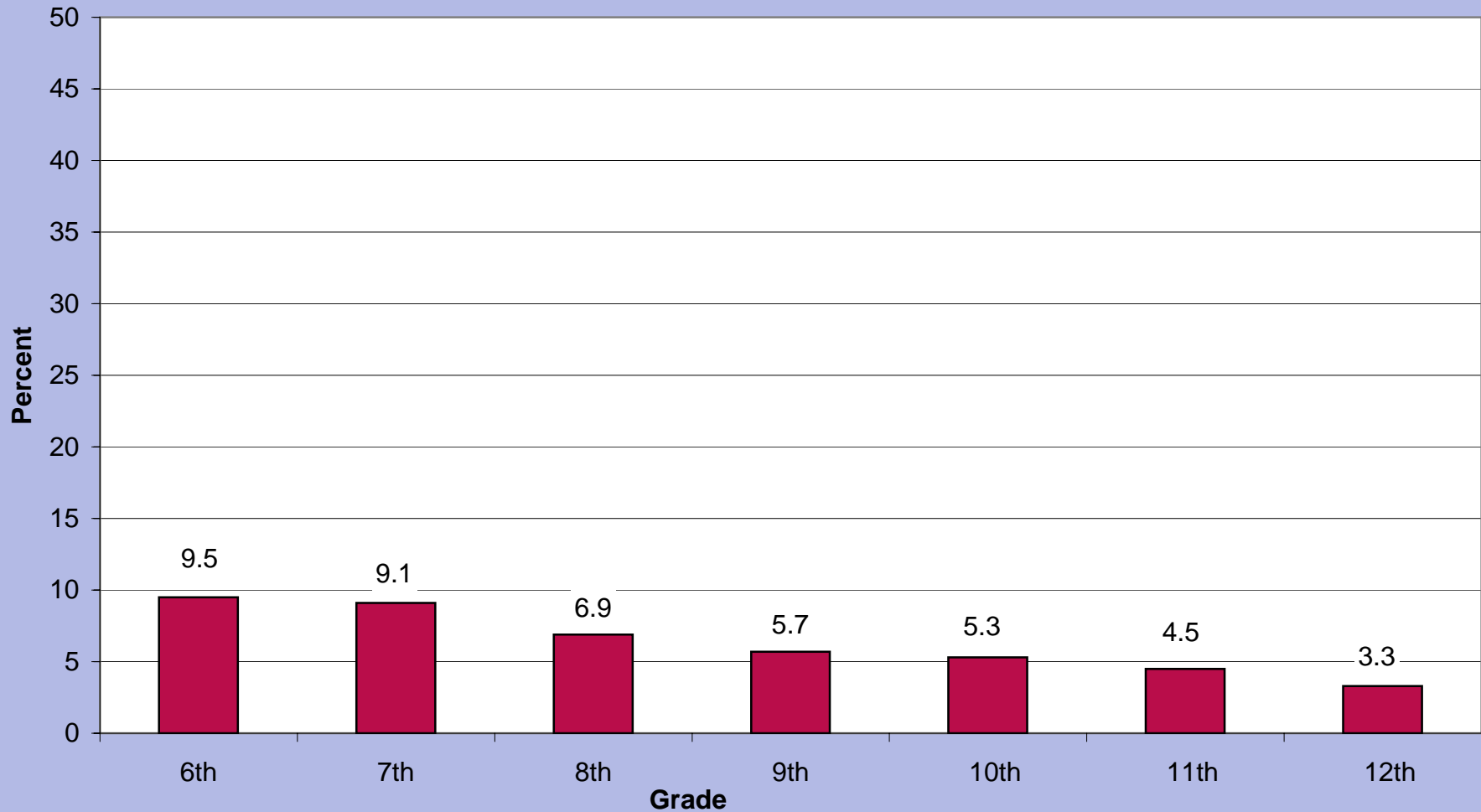


¹ Other includes those students who selected another race or more than one race. Hispanic students are excluded.

Source: Dinkes, R., Cataldi, E.F., Kena, G., Baum, K., & Synder, T.D. (2006). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2006 (NCES 2007-003/NCJ 214262). U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Table 16.1.

Figure 3

Percentage of Students Fearing Attack at School or on the Way to and from School by Grade, 2005



Source: Dinkes, R., Cataldi, E.F., Kena, G., Baum, K., & Synder, T.D. (2006). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2006 (NCES 2007-003/NCJ 214262). U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Table 16.1.



Table 1

Percentage of Students who Feared Attack or Harm at School or on the Way to and from School, Selected Years, 1995-2005

	Feared attack at school or on the way to and from school ¹				
	1995	1999	2001	2003	2005
Total	11.8	7.3	6.4	6.1	6.2
Gender					
Male	10.8	6.5	6.4	5.3	5.9
Female	12.8	8.2	6.4	6.9	6.6
Race/ethnicity					
White, non-Hispanic	8.1	5.0	4.9	4.1	4.5
Black, non-Hispanic	20.3	13.5	8.9	10.7	9.0
Hispanic	20.9	11.7	10.6	9.5	10.1
Other, non-Hispanic²	13.5	6.7	6.4	5.0	6.3
Grade³					
6th	14.3	10.9	10.6	10.0	9.5
7th	15.3	9.5	9.2	8.2	9.1
8th	13.0	8.1	7.6	6.3	6.9
9th	11.6	7.1	5.5	6.3	5.7
10th	11.0	7.1	5.0	4.4	5.3
11th	8.9	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.5
12th	7.8	4.8	2.9	3.7	3.3
Urbanicity					
Urban	18.4	11.6	9.7	9.5	10.2
Suburban	9.8	6.2	4.8	4.8	4.7
Rural	8.6	4.8	6.0	4.7	5.1
Control					
Public	12.2	7.7	6.6	6.4	6.5
Private	7.3	3.6	4.6	3.0	3.8

¹ In 1995 and 1999 students reported fear of "attack or harm" at school or on the way to or from school in the past 6 months. In 2001 and 2003 students reported fear of "attack or threat of attack" at school or on the way to or from school in the past 6 months.

² In 2003, data for 'Other' also include those students who identified as more than one race.

³ Includes students ages 12 through 18.

Source: Data for 2005: Dinkes, R., Cataldi, E.T., Kena, G., Baum, K., Synder, T.D. (2006). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2006 (NCES 2007-003/NCJ 214262). U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Table 16.1. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/iscs06.pdf>. All other data: DeVoe, J.F., Peter, K., Kaufman, P., Miller, A., Noonan, M., Snyder, T.D., and Baum, K. (2004) Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2004 (NCES 2005-002/NCJ 205290). U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Table 12.1.

