

Illicit Drug Use Other Than Marijuana

Headline

In 2006, nearly one in 10 twelfth grade students reported using illicit drugs other than marijuana in the past month. ([Figure 1](#))

Importance

Use of illicit drugs is associated with many harmful behaviors and can cause both short and long-term health problems. Students who use illicit drugs are more likely to engage in risky sexual behavior¹ and delinquency and crime,^{2,3} and to have a drug problem in the future.⁴ Additionally, though causality is complex, students using illicit drugs often have problems in school, including low attendance rates and poor academic performance, and are more likely to drop out or be expelled.^{5,6} Youth who use illicit drugs are more likely to have poor relationships with their families and peers.⁷

There are also many health risks associated with illicit drug use. The physical problems associated with illicit drug use are numerous and vary depending on the type of drug used. Physical problems can include: abnormal heart rates, seizures, kidney failure, respiratory failure, and brain damage.⁸ Additionally, youth who use illicit drugs have higher death rates than do their peers because of increased risk of accidents (such as car accidents), suicide, homicide, and illness.⁹ There are also many mental health problems that are linked to illicit drug use including: depression, anxiety, paranoia, hallucinations, developmental lags, delusions, and mood disturbances.¹⁰

Illicit drugs other than marijuana include LSD, other hallucinogens, cocaine, heroin, other narcotics, amphetamines, barbiturates, or tranquilizers not under a doctor's orders.

Trends

The use of “illicit drugs other than marijuana” in the last month by twelfth grade students declined from 17 percent in 1980 to 6 percent in 1992. It then increased during the mid-1990s, and has stayed fairly constant at around 10 percent since 1997. ([Figure 1](#)) The percentage of tenth graders using illicit drugs other than marijuana increased during the early 1990s. However, between 2001 and 2006, the percentage of tenth graders using illicit drugs other than marijuana decreased from 8 percent to 6 percent. Among eighth graders, the percentage of students using illicit drugs other than marijuana increased in the early 1990s, and has remained fairly constant since then at around 4 or 5 percent. ([Figure 1](#))

Differences by Race

Black students are much less likely than white students to have used illicit drugs other than marijuana in the past month, a gap which increases with age. ([Figure 2](#)) For

example, in 2006 approximately 4 percent of white eighth graders had used illicit drugs within the last month, compared with 2 percent of black eighth grade students; in twelfth grade, however, only 4 percent of black students used illicit drugs other than marijuana, compared with 10 percent of their white peers.

Differences by Type of Drug

In 2006, the most widely used illicit drugs other than marijuana among eighth graders were inhalants (4 percent of eighth graders), amphetamines (2 percent), and tranquilizers (1 percent). (Table 2) Among tenth graders, amphetamines were the most widely used illicit drug other than marijuana (4 percent), followed by tranquilizers (2 percent) and inhalants (2 percent). Similarly, among twelfth graders, other narcotics (which include other drugs that were not under a doctor's order) (4 percent) and amphetamines were the most popular illicit drug other than marijuana (4 percent), followed by barbiturates (3 percent), tranquilizers (3 percent), and cocaine (3 percent).

Differences by College Plans

Students who plan to complete college are less likely than those who do not plan to complete college to have used illicit drugs other than marijuana in the past month. In 2006, 3 percent of eighth graders planning to complete four years of college had used illicit drugs in the past month compared with 11 percent of eighth graders without such plans. As students get older, this gap decreases slightly. (Table 1)

Differences by Parental Education

In eighth and tenth grades, students whose parents did not complete high school are more likely than those whose parents are more educated to have used illicit drugs other than marijuana in the past month. By twelfth grade, however, students are about equally likely to use illicit drugs other than marijuana, regardless of their parents' level of education. (Table 1)

State and Local Estimates

2007 estimates of use for individual illicit drugs are available for selected states and metropolitan areas through the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, available at: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/yrbss>

State estimates of any illicit drug use other than marijuana among 12- to 17-year-olds are available for all 50 states for 2005-2006, are available from the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse at: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k6State/2k6state.pdf> (

NOTE: Estimates of drug use from the National Household Survey of Drug Abuse (NHSDA), used to generate these state-level estimates, are generally lower than estimates generated by the Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF). Since the MTF was the source of the national estimates presented in this indicator, users should not make direct comparisons of estimates made from the two sources. For information on methodological differences in the surveys that may be causing these differences in estimates, see

Harrison, L.D. (2001). Understanding the differences in youth drug prevalence rates produced by the MTF, NHSDA, and YRBS studies. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 31(3), pp. 665-694.

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International Estimates

International estimates of lifetime and 30-day illicit drug use are available from the European School Survey on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) 2003 report, available at: http://www.espad.org/documents/Espad/ESPAD_reports/The_2003_ESPAD_report.pdf

National Goals

Through its *Healthy People 2010* initiative, the federal government has set a national goal to increase the "proportion of adolescents not using alcohol or any illicit drugs during the past 30 days."¹¹

More information is available at:

<http://www.health.gov/healthypeople/document/html/objectives/26-10.htm>

Additionally, since 1988, the Office of National Drug Control Policy has issued a yearly report that includes long-term goals to achieve the ultimate objective of "a drug-free America." The 2002 report outlines a two-year goal for "a 10 percent reduction in current use of illegal drugs by the 12-17 age group" and a five-year goal for a 25 percent reduction for the same age group.

More information is available at:

<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/policy/03ndcs/pdf.html>

Definition

Illicit drug use other than marijuana is defined as students who answered "one or more times" to the question "On how many occasions (if any) have you used any illicit drug other than marijuana during the last 30 days?"

"For 12th graders only: Use of "any illicit drug other than marijuana" includes any use of LSD, other hallucinogens, cocaine, or heroin, or any use of other narcotics, amphetamines, barbiturates, or tranquilizers not under a doctor's orders. For 8th and 10th graders: Use of "any illicit drug other than marijuana" includes any use of LSD, other hallucinogens, crack, other cocaine, or heroin, or any use of amphetamines or tranquilizers not under a doctor's orders. The use of other narcotics and barbiturates has been excluded, because these younger respondents appear to overreport use (perhaps because they include the use of nonprescription drugs in their answers)."¹²

Note: The 1976-2006 estimates may differ from published estimates due to different coding responses for missing data and to small differences between the publicly available

sample weights and those used by Monitoring the Future staff. Additionally, for twelfth graders, Child Trends uses data from the core questionnaire while Monitoring the Future staff also uses data from various forms.

Data Source

Data for 1976-2006 from original analysis by Child Trends of Monitoring the Future survey data.

Data for Types of Illicit Drugs, 2006: (Table 2) Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G. & Schulenberg, J. E. (December 21, 2006). *Teen drug use continues down in 2006, particularly among older teens; but use of prescription-type drugs remains high*. University of Michigan News and Information Services: Ann Arbor, MI. [On-line]. Available: www.monitoringthefuture.org

Raw Data Source

Bachman, Jerald G., Lloyd D. Johnston, and Patrick M. O'Malley. *Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth* (8th, 10th, and 12th-Grade Surveys), 1976-2006 [Computer files]. Conducted by University of Michigan, Survey Research Center. ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor].

ICPSR: <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu>

Monitoring the Future: <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/>

Next Update

November 2008

¹ The Kaiser Family Foundation. "Substance Use and Risky Sexual Behavior: Attitudes and Practices Among Adolescents and Young Adults." February, 2002. Available online at: <http://www.outproud.org/pdf/CASASurveySnapshot.pdf>

² Wilson, JJ (Admin.). "Juvenile Justice Bulletin: Co-occurrence of Delinquency and Other Problem Behaviors." U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. November 2000. Available online at <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojjdp/182211.pdf>

³ Windle, Michael & Mason, W. Alex. (2004). "General and Specific Predictors of Behavioral and Emotional Problems Among Adolescents," *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 12(1): 49-62.

⁴ Office of National Drug Control Policy. "Drug Facts: Juveniles and Drugs." Available online at <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/juveniles/>. Accessed August 30, 2007.

⁵ McCluskey, Cynthia Perez, Krohn, Marvin D., Lizotte, Alan J., & Rodriguez, Monica L. (2002). "Early Substance Use and School Achievement: An Examination of Latino, White, and African American Youth," *Journal of Drug Issues*, 32(3): 921-943.

⁶ *Malignant Neglect: Substance Abuse and America's Schools*. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University: September 2001. Available online at <http://www.casacolumbia.org/pdshopprov/files/80624.pdf>

⁷ Office of National Drug Control Policy. "Drug Facts: Juveniles and Drugs." Available online at <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/juveniles/>. Accessed August 30, 2007.

⁸ Office of National Drug Control Policy. "Drug Facts" Available online at <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/index.html>. Accessed August 30, 2007.

⁹ Crowe, AH. *Drug Identification and Testing Summary*. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. May 1998. Available online at <http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/PUBS/drugid/contents.html>

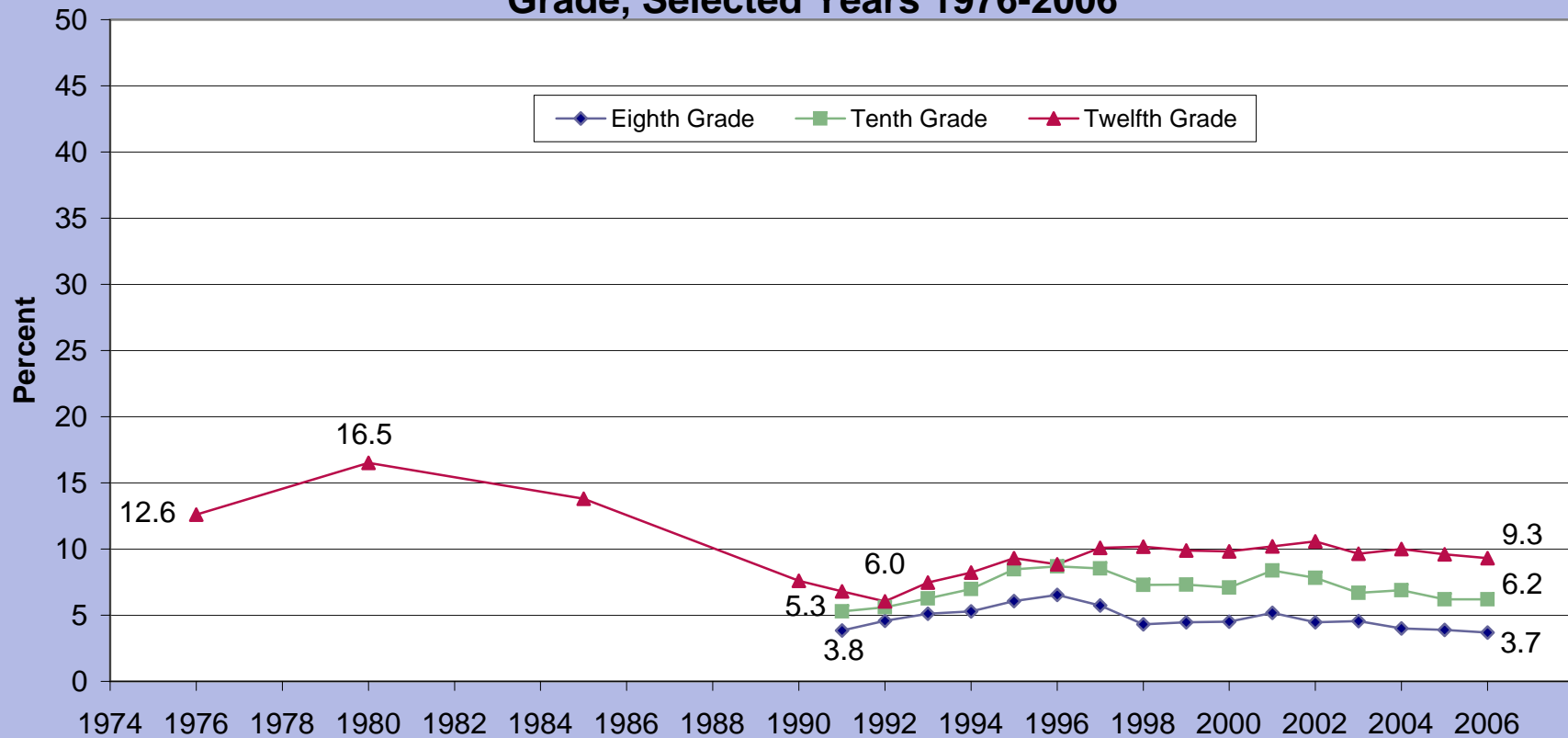
¹⁰ Ibid, and Office of National Drug Control Policy. "Drug Facts: Juveniles and Drugs." Available online at <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/juveniles/>

¹¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Healthy People 2010*. Washington, DC: January 2000. Goal 26-10. <http://www.health.gov/healthypeople/document/html/objectives/26-10.htm>

¹² *Monitoring the Future National Survey Results on Drug Use, 1975-2000. Volume 1: Secondary School Students* (NIH Publication No. 01-4924), Table 2-1 footnote a.

Figure 1

Percentage of 8th, 10th, and 12th Grade Students Who Report They Used Any Illicit Drugs Other Than Marijuana¹ in the Past Month, by Grade, Selected Years 1976-2006

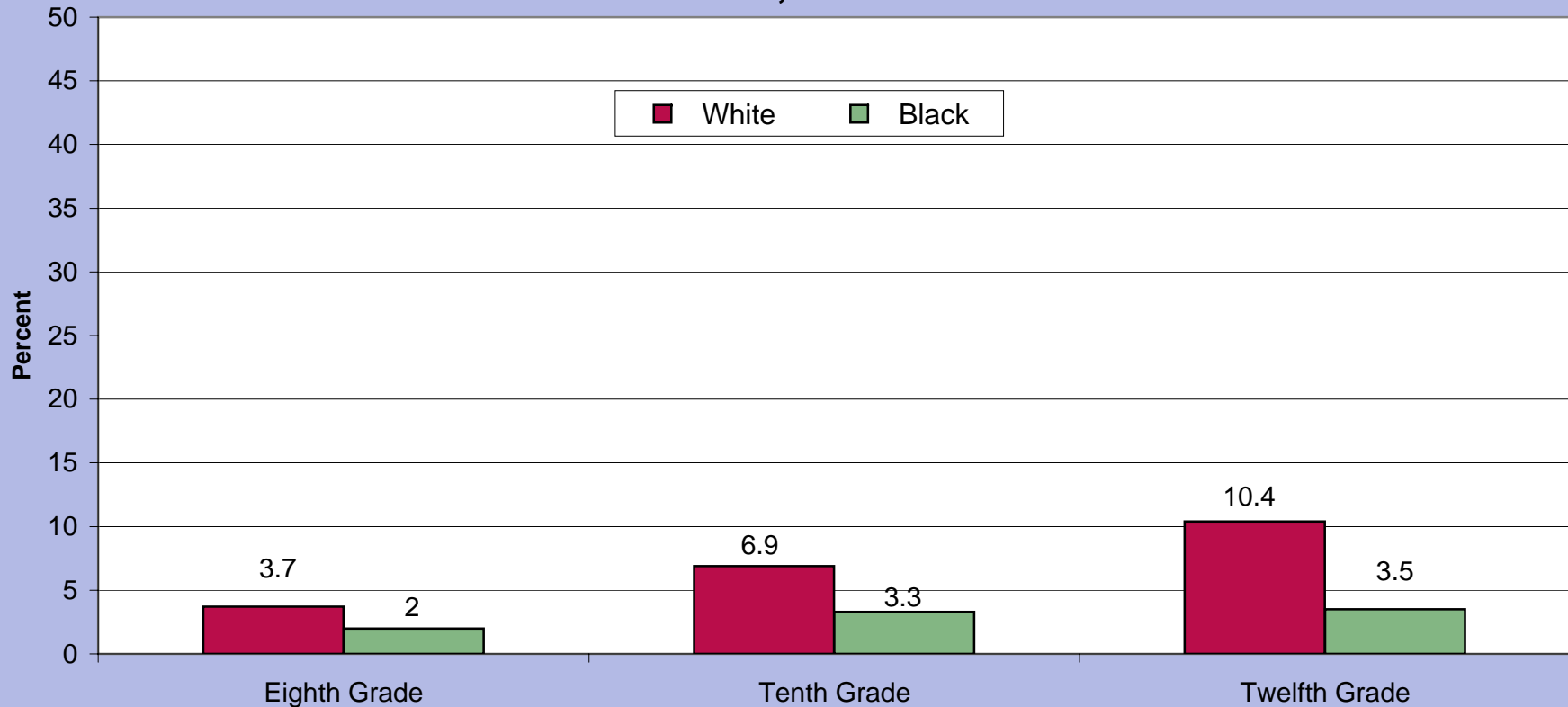


¹For 12th graders only: Use of "any illicit drug other than marijuana" includes any use of LSD, other hallucinogens, cocaine, or heroin, or any use of other narcotics, amphetamines, barbiturates, or tranquilizers not under a doctor's orders. For 8th and 10th graders: Use of "any illicit drug other than marijuana" includes any use of LSD, other hallucinogens, crack, other cocaine, or heroin, or any use of amphetamines or tranquilizers not under a doctor's orders. The use of other narcotics and barbiturates has been excluded, because these younger respondents appear to overreport use (perhaps because they include the use of nonprescription drugs in their answers).

Source: Data for 1976-2006 from original analysis by Child Trends of Monitoring the Future data, Selected Years 1976-2006

Figure 2

Percentage of 8th, 10th, and 12th Grade Students Who Report They Used Any Illicit Drugs Other Than Marijuana¹ in the Past Month, by Race, 2006



¹For 12th graders only: Use of "any illicit drug other than marijuana" includes any use of LSD, other hallucinogens, cocaine, or heroin, or any use of other narcotics, amphetamines, barbiturates, or tranquilizers not under a doctor's orders. For 8th and 10th graders: Use of "any illicit drug other than marijuana" includes any use of LSD, other hallucinogens, crack, other cocaine, or heroin, or any use of amphetamines or tranquilizers not under a doctor's orders. The use of other narcotics and barbiturates has been excluded, because these younger respondents appear to overreport use (perhaps because they include the use of nonprescription drugs in their answers).

Source: Original analyses by Child Trends of data from The Monitoring the Future Study 2006, University of Michigan.

Table 1

Percentage of 8th, 10th, and 12th Graders who Report They Used Any Illicit Drugs Other than Marijuana in the Past Thirty Days by Grade, Selected Years 1976-2006

	1976	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Eighth	-	-	-	-	3.8	4.6	5.1	5.3	6.1	6.5	5.7	4.3	4.5	4.5	5.2	4.5	4.6	4.0	3.9	3.7
Gender																				
Male	-	-	-	-	3.5	3.8	4.4	4.9	5.3	5.3	5.3	3.7	4.1	4.1	4.8	4.0	3.9	3.3	3.3	3.2
Female	-	-	-	-	4.1	5.2	5.8	5.6	6.7	7.4	6.1	4.8	4.7	4.8	5.4	4.7	5.0	4.6	4.4	4.0
Race																				
White	-	-	-	-	3.7	4.5	5.1	5.3	6.5	7.0	6.5	4.4	4.5	4.8	5.5	4.7	4.8	3.9	4.0	3.7
Black	-	-	-	-	2.1	2.5	2.7	3.1	2.9	2.9	1.7	1.5	2.0	1.8	2.2	2.6	2.0	2.7	1.8	2.0
Parental Education²																				
Less than high school	-	-	-	-	6.2	7.6	7.3	7.4	9.8	7.9	7.9	8.0	7.9	7.9	7.0	5.9	6.8	8.1	6.6	7.0
Completed high school	-	-	-	-	4.0	4.6	5.9	5.4	6.9	6.8	6.6	4.6	5.2	5.3	5.8	5.8	5.5	3.9	5.3	4.4
Some college	-	-	-	-	3.8	5.2	5.5	5.6	6.7	7.4	6.5	4.3	4.9	4.6	5.8	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.6	3.9
Completed college	-	-	-	-	3.2	3.4	4.6	4.4	4.5	5.7	4.8	3.6	3.0	3.1	4.4	3.6	4.0	3.8	2.2	2.7
Graduate school	-	-	-	-	3.5	3.7	3.7	4.5	4.6	5.8	4.7	3.5	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.6	3.3	3.0	2.4	2.9
College Plans																				
None or under 4 years	-	-	-	-	8.6	10.5	11.1	10.9	14.3	12.3	13.3	12.3	11.8	12.0	11.5	10.9	12.4	10.0	10.7	10.9
Complete four years	-	-	-	-	3.1	3.7	4.3	4.5	5.0	5.7	4.9	3.4	3.5	3.6	4.5	3.8	3.7	3.3	3.1	3.0
	1976	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Tenth	-	-	-	-	5.3	5.6	6.3	7.0	8.5	8.7	8.5	7.3	7.3	7.1	8.4	7.8	6.7	6.9	6.2	6.2
Gender																				
Male	-	-	-	-	4.8	5.1	6.1	6.6	8.0	8.2	8.1	7.1	7.6	7.3	8.5	7.5	6.2	6.8	6.0	6.1
Female	-	-	-	-	5.7	6.0	6.3	7.2	8.9	9.1	8.8	7.4	7.0	6.8	8.2	8.2	7.2	6.9	6.3	6.1
Race																				
White	-	-	-	-	5.9	6.3	6.8	7.2	9.4	9.7	9.3	8.3	8.1	7.9	9.5	9.2	8.0	7.7	7.1	6.9
Black	-	-	-	-	2.0	1.8	2.0	3.8	2.5	1.9	2.6	2.2	1.7	1.7	2.1	2.7	2.0	2.5	2.2	3.3
Parental Education²																				
Less than high school	-	-	-	-	6.6	8.9	8.7	7.2	12.9	12.0	9.4	10.3	9.3	9.8	9.8	10.8	9.8	9.6	8.2	9.2
Completed high school	-	-	-	-	5.8	5.6	6.5	7.1	9.5	9.4	9.7	8.2	8.2	8.3	10.2	8.7	8.5	8.0	7.2	7.4
Some college	-	-	-	-	5.3	5.7	6.5	7.6	8.6	9.7	9.2	7.5	7.1	7.0	8.1	8.3	7.1	7.4	6.6	6.8
Completed college	-	-	-	-	4.9	4.6	5.2	6.0	7.4	7.1	7.5	5.8	6.9	6.1	7.3	6.7	5.1	5.6	5.4	5.0
Graduate school	-	-	-	-	5.1	5.0	5.5	6.3	6.2	6.9	6.7	6.5	5.9	6.2	7.2	6.3	4.6	5.2	5.2	4.9
College Plans																				
None or under 4 years	-	-	-	-	8.9	10.8	11.6	12.3	14.9	16.4	15.9	14.6	14.0	13.8	16.5	15.2	13.3	13.6	13.0	14.2
Complete four years	-	-	-	-	4.5	4.6	5.2	5.8	7.4	7.3	7.3	6.0	6.2	6.0	7.1	6.7	5.7	5.9	5.3	5.2
	1976	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Twelfth	12.6	16.5	13.8	7.6	6.8	6.0	7.5	8.2	9.3	8.9	10.1	10.2	9.9	9.8	10.2	10.6	9.6	10.0	9.6	9.3
Gender																				
Male	12.9	16.4	14.6	8.4	7.3	6.8	8.1	9.2	10.3	9.9	11.0	11.9	11.4	10.7	11.2	11.3	10.8	11.0	11.1	9.8
Female	12.2	16.5	13.0	6.6	6.1	5.2	6.7	7.1	8.2	7.6	8.9	8.4	8.1	8.8	9.0	9.5	8.5	8.7	8.3	8.6
Race																				
White	13.4	17.8	15.0	8.6	7.7	6.8	8.4	9.3	10.1	9.8	11.6	12.0	11.1	11.0	11.9	12.3	11.3	11.4	11.3	10.4
Black	5.4	6.0	5.4	1.8	2.4	2.3	3.7	2.6	2.3	3.4	3.2	3.2	2.5	3.2	3.2	2.4	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.5
Parental Education²																				
Less than high school	11.7	14.8	12.6	6.6	7.5	6.1	6.8	8.0	9.8	8.3	10.5	10.6	11.2	10.4	9.1	9.6	9.8	8.0	7.2	9.4
Completed high school	12.9	17.0	14.8	7.7	6.9	6.0	7.0	8.7	9.5	9.0	10.0	10.9	9.8	9.7	10.8	11.4	9.4	9.7	10.7	9.9
Some college	12.5	17.1	14.3	8.4	7.1	6.4	8.0	8.6	9.3	8.8	10.0	10.7	10.2	9.6	11.0	11.5	10.4	11.6	10.7	9.8
Completed college	14.0	16.1	13.6	6.9	6.2	5.6	7.3	7.7	9.2	9.1	10.3	9.5	8.9	10.5	9.6	10.1	9.6	9.3	9.4	9.3
Graduate school	14.0	16.3	11.2	7.5	6.4	5.9	7.6	7.4	8.7	8.4	9.9	8.4	10.4	9.1	8.7	9.6	7.7	9.5	8.4	7.6
College Plans																				
None or under 4 years	14.6	20.4	16.5	9.9	8.7	8.6	9.2	10.8	11.6	11.5	13.3	14.9	11.6	12.2	13.5	14.8	13.7	13.7	14.2	13.7
Complete four years	10.0	13.1	11.7	6.4	6.1	5.0	6.8	7.3	8.5	8.0	8.8	8.6	9.2	9.0	9.1	9.4	8.3	8.7	8.5	8.1

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Parental education is calculated by the Institute of Social Research as the average of the mother's and father's education. Child Trends has relabeled these results to reflect the education level of the most educated parent. In those circumstances where the gap between mothers' and fathers' education is more than one level, this results in an underestimate of the most educated parent's education level.

Note: The 1976-2005 estimates may differ from published estimates due to small differences between the publicly available sample weights and those used by Monitoring the Future staff and to different coding responses for missing data. Additionally, for 12th graders, Child Trends uses core data while Monitoring the Future staff use a combination of core and form data.

Source: Data from original analysis by Child Trends of Monitoring the Future data, Selected Years 1976-2006

Table 2

Percentage of Students in Grades 8, 10, and 12 Who Have Used Various Illicit Drugs in the Past 30 Days, by Type of Drug, 2006

	Eighth Grade	Tenth Grade	Twelfth Grade
Inhalants¹	3.9	2.5	1.2
Nitrites	-	-	0.5
Hallucinogens¹	1.0	1.7	1.7
LSD	0.5	0.7	0.6
Hallucinogens Other Than LSD	0.7	1.4	1.4
PCP	-	-	0.5
MDMA (Ecstasy)	0.6	1.2	1.6
Cocaine	0.9	1.3	2.0
Crack	0.6	0.5	0.9
Other Cocaine	0.6	1.1	1.7
Heroin	0.4	0.4	0.4
With a Needle	0.3	0.3	0.2
Without a Needle	0.2	0.2	0.4
Other Narcotics²	-	-	3.8
Amphetamines²	2.0	4.0	3.7
Methamphetamine	0.6	0.4	0.6
Ice	-	-	0.6
Barbiturates	-	-	2.7
Tranquilizers²	1.1	2.6	2.6
Rohypnol	0.3	0.2	-
Steroids	0.4	0.5	1.0

¹Inhalants are unadjusted for underreporting of amyl and butyl nitrites; hallucinogens are unadjusted for underreporting of PCP.

²Only drug use which was not under a doctor's orders is included here.

Source: Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G. & Schulenberg, J. E. (December 11, 2007). "Overall, illicit drug use by American teens continues gradual decline in 2007." University of Michigan News Service: Ann Arbor, MI. [Online]. Available: www.monitoringthefuture.org; accessed 01/13/2008.

