

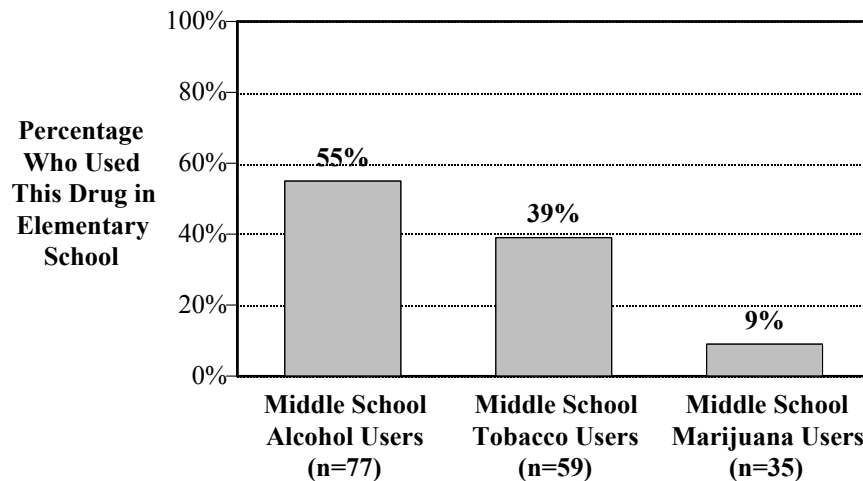
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Many Alcohol- or Tobacco-Using Middle School Students Initiated Use in Elementary School

A large proportion of middle school students who use alcohol or tobacco began using the drug in elementary school, according to the findings of a longitudinal study of students in three states. Overall, 24% of the middle school students surveyed had ever used alcohol, 18% reported ever using tobacco, and 11% reported ever using marijuana. Of these current users, over one-half (55%) had used alcohol and 39% had used tobacco in elementary school. Only 9% of middle school students who reported ever using marijuana had also used marijuana in elementary school. While alcohol and other drug use prevention programs are typically administered in middle school, drug use behaviors and dependence may be well established before exposure to such prevention efforts. Therefore, the authors suggest that “alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use prevention needs must be addressed by elementary school, before these behaviors occur or have become firmly established” (p. 446).

**Percentage of Alcohol-, Tobacco-, or Marijuana-Using
Middle School Students Who Also Used the Drug in Elementary School**



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Wilson N., Battistich V., Syme L., Boyce W. T., “Does Elementary School Alcohol, Tobacco, and Marijuana Use Increase Middle School Risk?,” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 30(6):442-447, 2002. For more information, contact Dr. Nance Wilson at Nance_Wilson@yahoo.com.

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