



April 26, 2005

This is the first of two articles regarding drug and violence behaviors among students in grades 4 to 12. Next week, the Age of Onset.

What is happening with our youngest students?

Part 1: The 4th Grade

On March 14, a seven-year-old second-grade student in Columbus, Ohio, carried a .45-caliber pistol to school. The handgun went off and the student was shot in the hand. There were about 15 students in the classroom at the time.

School gun incidents involving 7-year-olds are probably rare, according to Pride Surveys national data.

But students as young as 9-years-old are exposed to guns and are beginning to experiment with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, according to the Pride Survey for Grades 4-6.

- ***17% of 4th graders (ages 9-10) said it would be easy to get a gun***
- ***7% said it would be easy to get marijuana***
- ***3% reported using alcohol on a monthly basis***
- ***2% used tobacco monthly or more frequently***
- ***2% tried an inhalant in the past year***
- ***1% used marijuana in the past year***

While the incidence of drug use among 4th graders is infrequent, the second part of this series will demonstrate a dramatic snowball effect once drug use has been initiated.

Pride Surveys, and other research, has demonstrated the deadly nexus of drugs, guns, violence and gangs. For example, among students who carried a gun to school last year, 45% said they had tried cocaine. Among the rest of the student population, just 3% reported cocaine use.

Pride Survey data shows that 4th graders are already inching toward violent behavior.

- ***2% of 4th graders reported they have carried a gun to school***
- ***4% have carried a knife to school***
- ***31% report being threatened by another student at school***
- ***32% have been hit by another student at school***

For more information on our national report for grades 4-6, [click here](#).