

Child and Adolescent Health Data

Summarized by Palo Alto Council of PTAs Parent Education, April 2009, in partnership with Challenge Success.

Sleep

Teens need 9.25 hours of sleep each night.

80% of teens don't get the recommended amount of sleep.

At least 28% fall asleep in school and 22% fall asleep doing homework.
(National Sleep Foundation)

A majority of adolescents are averaging 7 hours of sleep per night, and one quarter are getting 6 hours or less. *(Wolfe, P. (2005). Advice for the Sleep-Deprived. Educational Leadership, 62 (7), 39-40.)*

- 5-12 year olds need 10-11 hours,
- 54% of 1st-5th graders sleep just 9-10 hours/night
 - 17% sleep less than 9 hours per night.

Preschoolers need 11-14 hours of sleep each 24 hours

Adults need 8 hours of sleep each night (healthy range: 7-9 hours) *(National Sleep Foundation)*

Impact of not getting enough sleep? By all measures, human functioning declines... impacting memory, attention, mood and/or cognitive performance. *(Dr. Mark Rosekind, , Palo Alto High School PSTA, 2008)*

If you do only one thing, make sure your children and teenagers are getting enough sleep. You too. *(Dr. Madeline Levine, Palo Alto PTA Council Presentation, 2008)*

School

In a national survey, students were asked to use 2 words to describe how they felt in school. The word most often used by students was "bored" followed by "tired."
(Lyons, L. (2004). Most Teens Associate School with Boredom, Fatigue. Gallup Poll.)

Time kids spend doing homework has increased 51% since 1981. *(2004 national survey of more than 2,900 children done by Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.)*

70% of Bay Area parents report their 9-13 year old children experience moderate to high levels of stress. What causes the stress? Parents surveyed said schoolwork & homework.
(Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health. (2005). KidsData.org. New Poll Highlights Parents' Views on Physical, Emotional Health of Children.)

9-13 year olds surveyed said they were more stressed by academics than any other stressor—even bullying or family problems. (*KidsHealth KidsPoll. (2005). How Kids Handle Stress. National Association of Health Education Centers*)

Research shows almost correlation between homework and achievement for elementary school students. (*Cooper, H., Robinson, J.C., Patall, E.A. (2006). Does Homework Improve Academic Achievement? A Synthesis of Research 1987-2003. Review of Educational Research, 76l, 1-62.*)

For middle school students, there is a .7 correlation for middle school students for the first 60 minutes. If middle school students do more than one hour, research found little or no correlation between homework and added achievement. (*Cooper, H., Robinson, J.C., Patall, E.A. (2006). Does Homework Improve Academic Achievement? A Synthesis of Research 1987-2003. Review of Educational Research, 76l, 1-62.*)

#1 Reason Teens Say Teens use drugs: 73% agree it is to deal with the pressures and stress of school . In sharp contrast, only 7 percent of parents surveyed thought that the primary reason why a teen might use drugs is to deal with pressures and stress of school *Partnership for a Drug-Free America Partnership Attitude Tracking Study August 4, 2008*

68% of high school students surveyed nationally said their stress level about the college application process was high or very high, a five percent increase from last year. 2009 survey findings showed more students experiencing high levels of stress since researchers began this annual survey in 2003.

3% of surveyed high school students said their stress level about the college application process was “low/very low.”

60% of parents surveyed nationally said their stress level about the college application process was “high/very high”

4% of parents surveyed said their stress level was “low/very low” about the college application process. *“College Hopes and Worries Survey,” 2009, Princeton Review national survey of 15,722 students and parents from all 50 states.*

The Pressure to Cheat

2/3 of high school students indicated that they had cheated on a test at least once during the school year. *Steinberg, L. (1996). Beyond the Classroom: Why School Reform Has Failed and What Parents Need to Do. Simon and Schuster.*

Adolescents report several reasons why they cheat, including: fear of failure, parents demanding good grades, wanting to keep up with others, wanting to get a good grade, and feeling that the teacher is unfair. *Davis, S.F., Ludvigson, H.W. (1995). Additional Data on Academic Dishonesty and a Proposal for Remediation. Teaching of Psychology, 22 (2), 119-121.*

Down Time, Play Time, Family Time

6-8 year olds spend 33 percent less time playing today than in 1981.

(Hofferth, S. L., & Sandberg, J. F. (2001). Changes in American children's use of time, 1981-1997. In T. Owens & S. Hofferth (Eds.), Advances in life course research series: Children at the millennium: Where have we come from, where are we going? New York: Elsevier Science.)

Kids today have 12 hour less free time each week than they did in 1981.

(Hofferth, S. L., & Sandberg, J. F. (2001). Changes in American children's use of time, 1981-1997. In T. Owens & S. Hofferth (Eds.), Advances in life course research series: Children at the millennium: Where have we come from, where are we going? New York: Elsevier Science.)

According to a large study done by the University of Michigan, family meals are the single strongest predictor of better achievement scores and fewer behavioral problems for children ages 3-12.

(Hofferth, S.L. (2001). How American Children Spend Their Time. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 63, 295-308.)

Emotional and Mental Well-Being

3.2 million kids, ages 7-17 were treated for depression in the past 5 years. This is more than double the number from the previous 5 years. *(Brent, D. (2005). Is the medication bottle for pediatric and adolescent depression half-full or half-empty? Journal of Adolescent Health, 37 (6), 431- 433.)*

Over 25% of adolescents have felt sad or depressed every day for 2 or more weeks at least once during a year's time. *(U-S Centers for Disease Control)*

25% to 33% of surveyed 7th, 9th, and 11th graders in Santa Clara County reporting symptoms of depression (feelings of hopelessness and sadness lasting for at least two weeks during the previous year) *Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health. (2007). KidsData.org. Santa Clara County Children's Report 2007*

Of nearly 95,000 students from public and private colleges surveyed, 44 % students felt so depressed it was difficult to function *American College Health Association Survey, 2006.*

44% of the college students felt so depressed they said it was difficult to function. *American College Health Association Survey, 2006*

Almost half of all students will become seriously depressed during their college career. *"College of the Overwhelmed" 2004, Harvard University, Mental Health Services*

12% percent reported having an anxiety disorder, more than one out of every ten students. *American College Health Association Survey, 2006*

Cornell & Princeton survey found 17 % of students had engaged in behavior known as self-injuries, such as cutting. *Pediatrics Journal, June, 2006*

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for youth ages 15-24 nationwide, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The youth suicide rate nearly tripled between 1952 and 1995 nationwide. (#1 cause: accidents/automobiles, #2: homicide)

8% increase in suicide rates between ages of 10 & 24 in 2004... following a 28% decline in the past 15 years. *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report, 2007 Centers for Disease Control*

Of nearly 2,200 Stanford students surveyed by telephone in 2007-08, nearly 12%--more than one out of 10 students--said they had thought of suicide. *Mental Health & Well-Being Task Force, Stanford University, Oct. 2008*

“A Silent Epidemic”

Stanford University’s Mental Health and Well-being Task Force recently concluded that this generation of students is experiencing what the task force called “**a silent epidemic.**” By many measures—from chronic sleep deprivation, growing rates of anxiety and depression, lack of free time, and more—there is, in the words of the Stanford Task Force, “**abundant evidence that this generation suffers from increased emotional and mental health challenges.**” The task force’s recent report also said “**Many students are succeeding academically, despite being burdened by significant mental health issues... Research demonstrates that students experience these challenges well before they enter college.**”

In response to this wide-ranging health threat, Palo Alto PTA Council Parent Education, in partnership with Challenge Success, created the “**Helping Our Children Thrive**” community education program. Now available across the U-S, this low-cost, high-impact program gives parents and teachers the opportunity to hear from leading child development experts, and then discuss specific challenges and pressures that they experience with the children in their lives. Equally important, participants get the opportunity to discuss and share solutions to lowering unhealthy student stress at home and school.

Here’s what you and your community can do to help!

STEP ONE: purchase a Challenge Success DVD for only \$1.25, plus shipping, at www.challengesuccess.org or www.paloaltopta.org

This acclaimed DVD features leading child development experts: **David Elkind**, author of The Hurried Child and The Power of Play, **Dr. Ken Ginsberg**, author of A Parent’s Guide to Building Resilience in Children, **Denise Clark Pope**, author of Doing School: How We Are Creating a Generation of Stressed Out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students, and **Dr. Madeline Levine**, author of The Price of Privilege: How Parental Pressure and Material Advantage Are Creating a Generation of Disconnected and Unhappy Kids. You can order the DVD by going to www.challengesuccess.org or www.paloaltopta.org

STEP TWO: Go to www.challengesuccess.org to download the DVD Community Education Guide, and our “How Are Our Kids Doing?” Quiz, and this Health Data Summary. These free resources, plus the at-cost DVD, will give you everything you need to put on a community education program that will truly make a positive difference in your own family, and in your school community. Questions? Feel free to contact Palo Alto PTA volunteer Carrie Manley at carrie_manley@yahoo.org or call her at (650) 269-6656, or visit www.paloaltopta.org or www.challengesuccess.org

STEP THREE: Please accept our whole-hearted thanks for joining this broad-based collaborative effort! Family by family, and school by school... together, we can help all our children thrive!

“I watched a video of a recent Stressed Out Students conference at Stanford, and I recommend it to any parent, whether your kid is in preschool, or college.”

Patty Fisher, San Jose Mercury News Columnist.

“That is the best parent education program I’ve ever been to at our school... I was so inspired the other night and I have started a new dialogue with my kids.”

Kathleen Hughes, Past PTA President, Walter Hays Elementary School, Palo Alto