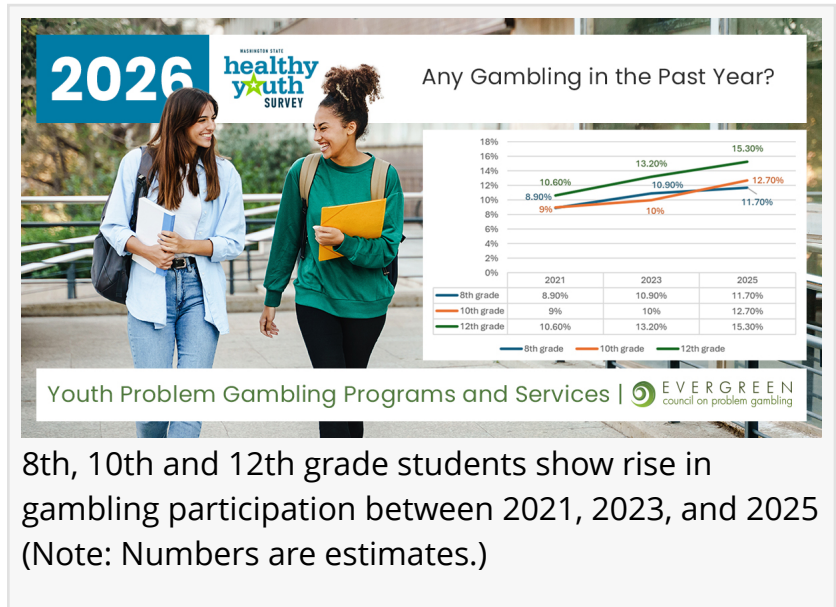


# New data shows increase in youth gambling in Washington; prevention leaders call for stronger safeguards

OLYMPIA, WA, UNITED STATES, June 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Newly released data from the 2025 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) shows an increase in youth gambling from 2023, raising concerns among prevention leaders about the growing accessibility of gambling among young people.

The Healthy Youth Survey, conducted every two years in collaboration with the Washington State Health Care Authority, Department of Health, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Liquor and Cannabis Board, provides insight into the health and behaviors of students across the state. [\[askhys.net\]](https://askhys.net)



8th, 10th and 12th grade students show rise in gambling participation between 2021, 2023, and 2025 (Note: Numbers are estimates.)

“

Young people particularly are targeted. It would be impossible to fully shield a teen from gambling marketing and advertising nowadays.”

*Paulina Zyskowski, Prevention and Community Engagement Specialist*

While many indicators of youth well-being, including mental health and substance use, have remained stable or improved in recent years, findings related to gambling suggest a different trend. [\[doh.wa.gov\]](https://doh.wa.gov)

In 2025,

- 15.3% of 12th graders,
- 12.7% of 10th graders, and
- 11.7% of 8th graders

reported participating in gambling in the past year,

representing an increase from 2021 and 2023 levels amongst grades 12 and 10. Gambling participation in grade 8 went down slightly.

“People should be alarmed by the increase in gambling among youth in Washington,” said Jeremy Whitaker, Problem Gambling Prevention Coordinator at the Washington Health Care Authority. “We’ve seen increases among all age groups surveyed over the past four years, but few communities are taking action to address this emerging threat.”

Expanding Access and Evolving Risks Experts point to the rapidly changing landscape of gambling access as a key driver of these increases. Today’s youth are exposed not only to traditional forms of gambling, but also to new and often less regulated environments, including sports betting platforms, video games that blur the line between gaming and gambling, cryptocurrency, prediction markets, and blind boxes.

Paulina Zyskowski, Prevention and Community Engagement Specialist at the Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling, sees this firsthand. “Regulation cannot keep up with gambling innovation. We are seeing more and more gambling-like mechanics being introduced into the market without the guardrails that regulated gambling has. Young people particularly are targeted. It would be impossible to fully shield a teen from gambling marketing and advertising nowadays.”

#### A Need for Coordinated Prevention Efforts

The Healthy Youth Survey has long served as a critical tool for understanding youth risk and protective factors and informing prevention strategies across Washington. Prevention providers emphasize that addressing youth gambling requires a similar coordinated response.

[askhys.net]

Key priorities identified by prevention leaders include:

- Strengthening safeguards that limit youth access to gambling platforms and features
- Increasing education and awareness for youth, families, and educators about emerging forms of gambling



10th and 12th grade students show rise in problems from gambling between 2021, 2023, and 2025 (Note: Numbers are estimates.)

Problem Gambling Awareness and Prevention

**HEALTHY CHOICES**  
IN GAMING, BETTING, AND BEYOND

Information Sheets for Youth, Young Adults, and Adult Allies

empower-inspire.org | EVERGREEN council on problem gambling

Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling Information Sheets for Youth, Young Adults, and Adult Allies.

- Integrating gambling prevention into broader behavioral health and youth wellness efforts
- Supporting early intervention for youth showing signs of risky behavior

Despite the increase in gambling behavior, the broader 2025 HYS findings underscore the strengths and resilience of Washington youth, including improved mental health indicators and strong connections with supportive adults. [doh.wa.gov]

The HYS has been conducted across the state since 2002. Over 213,000 Washington youth between grades 6-12 participated in 2025. The HYS is always voluntary and does not collect students' names or any codes that could link survey responses to a student.

For more information about the Healthy Youth Survey and to explore data, visit [askhys.net].

The Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to providing services and programs for those affected by problem gambling and gaming – individuals, their families, employers, students, treatment professionals, and the greater community – through gambling addiction treatment support, information and education, advocacy, research, and prevention efforts. Visit: ever

For information about advocacy, youth education, problem gambling workforce development, or treatment and recovery options, please contact info@[evergreencpg.org](mailto:info@evergreencpg.org).

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