



*It is our belief that all young people should have the opportunity to be safe, healthy, successful, and prepared for the future.*

## All youth are **HEALTHY**

This report is the fourth in a series of data briefs covering the youth development framework indicators developed by The Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development (ICYD).<sup>1</sup> The framework has been broken down into four broad result areas that can be used as a guide for youth policy, planning activities, and monitoring of youth development outcomes.

1. All youth have safe and supportive families, schools, and communities
2. All youth are healthy and socially competent
3. All youth are successful in school
4. All youth are prepared for a productive adulthood

Mental and physical health are important indicators of overall youth well-being. The indicators used to track healthy youth focus on characteristics and risk taking behaviors that often begin during adolescence. In addition to being harmful in the present, health problems left unaddressed can lead to more serious issues later in life. ICYD has identified five leading indicators as a tool to measure progress in the area of healthy youth.

1. Current Cigarette Use
2. Current Alcohol Use
3. Suicide Attempts
4. Physical Activity
5. Weight Perception

### INDICATOR 1: **CURRENT CIGARETTE USE**

Youth who smoke are more likely to participate in other risky behaviors, more likely to suffer from respiratory and other health problems, and are less likely to be physically fit.<sup>2</sup> The Iowa Youth Survey (IYS) measures current cigarette use through the question: “In the past 30 days, on how many days have you smoked cigarettes?”<sup>3</sup>

Based on responses to the above question, tobacco use has steadily declined in 6th, 8th, and 11th grades from 1999 to 2005 although it continues to be an issue, especially at the 11th grade. On average across three IYS survey administrations, 6th graders are least likely to have smoked one or more days in the past 30 days at 2.3%, followed by 8th graders at 9.0%. A significant percentage of 11th graders report current cigarette use at 25.3%.

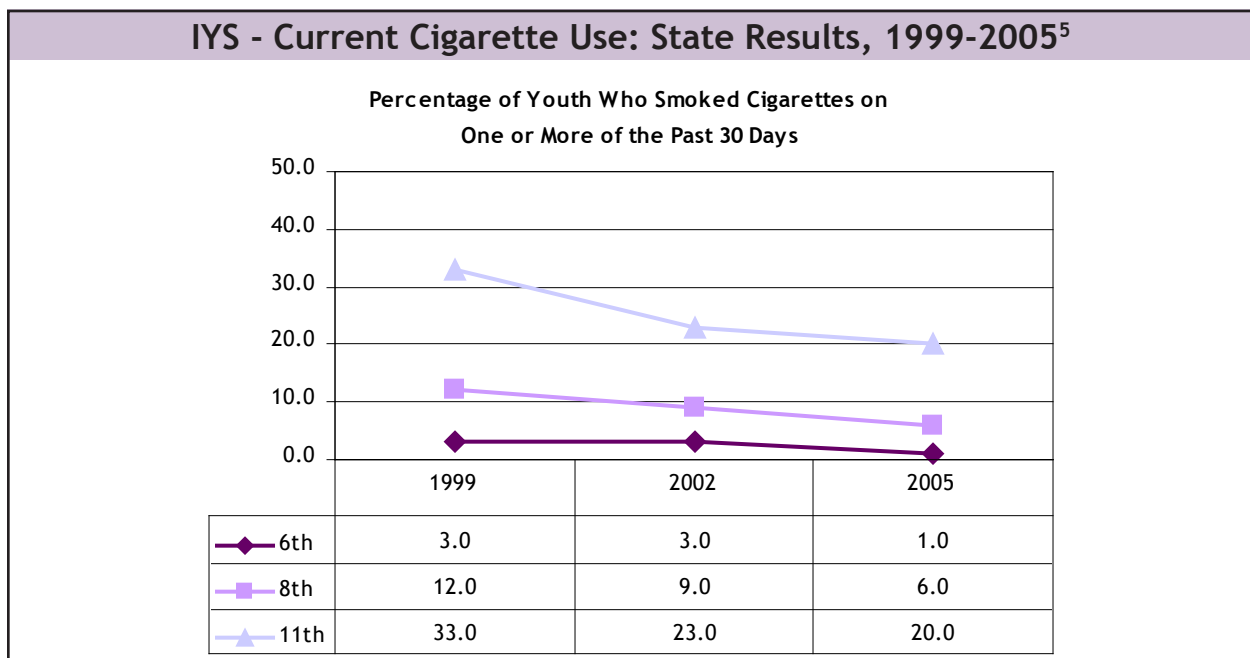
<sup>1</sup> The Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development is a non-statutory network of state agencies committed to improving results among Iowa’s youth. <http://www.icyd.org>

<sup>2</sup> Child Trends Data Bank. <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Youth Survey. <http://www.iowayouthsurvey.org>

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is a national survey sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that includes many of the same topics as the IYS.<sup>4</sup> There are three important differences between the two surveys. First, the YRBS surveys a sample of students in Iowa and the United States every-other year, while the IYS is a census survey administered to students in Iowa triennially. Second, the YRBS is given to students in 9th through 12th grades, while the IYS is taken by 6th, 8th, and 11th graders. Finally, the YRBS allows for comparisons between Iowa and national data. While there is no national equivalent of the IYS, the results are useful because they can be disaggregated down to the community level.

Using the 2005 YRBS as a national comparison to the 2005 IYS results, 11th graders in Iowa are less likely to have smoked in the past 30 days at 20.0% than 11th graders in the nation as a whole at 27.3%.



As indicated in the following map, 15.0% to 24.9% of 11th graders in seventy counties in Iowa reported they had smoked at least one day during the past 30 days. In eighteen counties 25.0% to 36.0% of 11th graders reported current cigarette use in the past 30 days, while in 11 counties between 8.6% and 14.9% did.

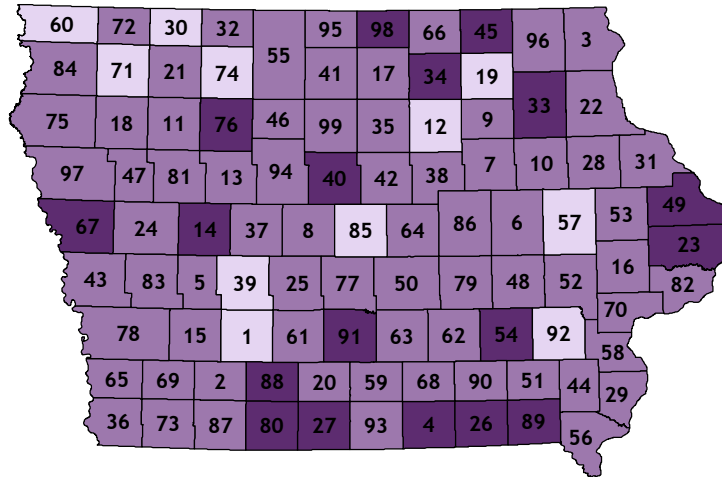
<sup>4</sup> National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/>

<sup>5</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Youth Survey. <http://www.iowayouthsurvey.org>

## IYS - Current Cigarette Use: 11th Grade County Results, 2005<sup>6</sup>

Percentage of 11th Graders Who Have Smoked Cigarettes on at Least One Day in the Past 30 Days

Less than 15.0%
  15.0% to 24.9%
  25.0% or More



### County List

1-Adair	18-Cherokee	35-Franklin	52-Johnson	68-Monroe	84-Sioux
2-Adams	19-Chichasaw	36-Fremont	53-Jones	69-Montgomery	85-Story
3-Allamakee	20-Clarke	37-Greene	54-Keokuk	70-Muscatine	86-Tama
4-Appanoose	21-Clay	38-Grundy	55-Kossuth	71-O'Brien	87-Taylor
5-Audubon	22-Clayton	39-Guthrie	56-Lee	72-Osceola	88-Union
6-Benton	23-Clinton	40-Hamilton	57-Linn	73-Page	89-Van Buren
7-Black Hawk	24-Crawford	41-Hancock	58-Louisia	74-Palo Alto	90-Wapello
8-Boone	25-Dallas	42-Hardin	59-Lucas	75-Plymouth	91-Warren
9-Bremer	26-Davis	43-Harrison	60-Lyon	76-Pocahontas	92-Washington
10-Buchanan	27-Decatur	44-Henry	61-Madison	77-Polk	93-Wayne
11-Buena Vista	28-Delaware	45-Howard	62-Mahaska	78-Pottawattamie	94-Webster
12-Butler	29-Des Moines	46-Humboldt	63-Marion	79-Poweshiek	95-Winnebag
13-Calhoun	30-Dickinson	47-Ida	64-Marshall	80-Ringgold	96-Winneshiek
14-Carroll	31-Dubuque	48-Iowa	65-Mills	81-Sac	97-Woodbury
15-Cass	32-Emmet	49-Jackson	66-Mitchell	82-Scott	98-Worth
16-Cedar	33-Fayette	50-Jasper	67-Monona	83-Shelby	99-Wright
17-Cerro Gordo	34-Floyd	51-Jefferson			

## INDICATOR 2: CURRENT ALCOHOL USE

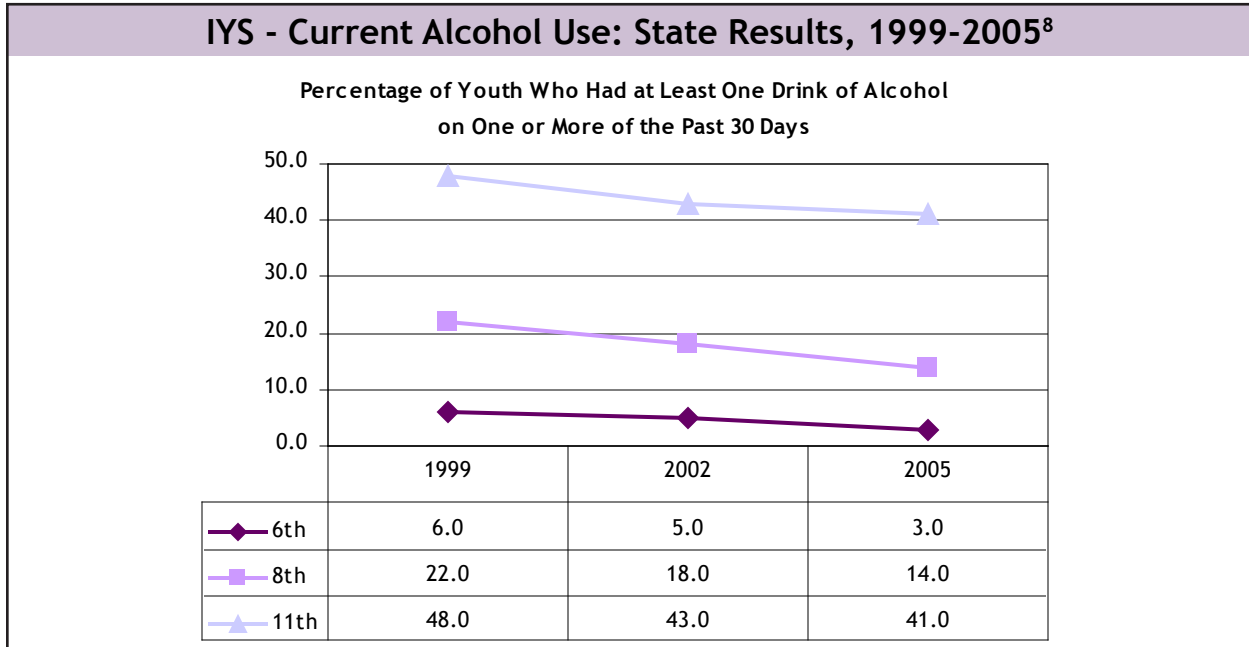
The second indicator used to track the health of youth is current alcohol use. Alcohol is the most widely used substance of abuse among America's youth. The physical consequences of underage alcohol use range from medical problems to death by alcohol poisoning, and alcohol plays a significant role in risky sexual behavior, physical and sexual assaults, various types of injuries, and suicide.<sup>7</sup> The IYS measures current alcohol use through the question: "In the past 30 days, on how many days have you had at least one drink of alcohol (glass, bottle, or can of beer; glass of wine, liquor, or mixed drink)?"<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Youth Survey. <http://www.iowayouthsurvey.org>

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking. <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov>

Although underage drinking continues to be a significant issue in Iowa, alcohol use has declined in 6th, 8th, and 11th grades from 1999 to 2005. On average over three administrations of the IYS, 6th graders are least likely to have used alcohol one or more days in the past 30 days at 4.7%, followed by 8th graders at 18.0%, and finally 11th graders at 44.0%.

Using the 2005 YRBS as a national comparison to the 2005 IYS results, 11th graders in Iowa are less likely to have used alcohol in the past 30 days at 41.0% than 11th graders in the nation as a whole, where 50.2% reported current alcohol use.



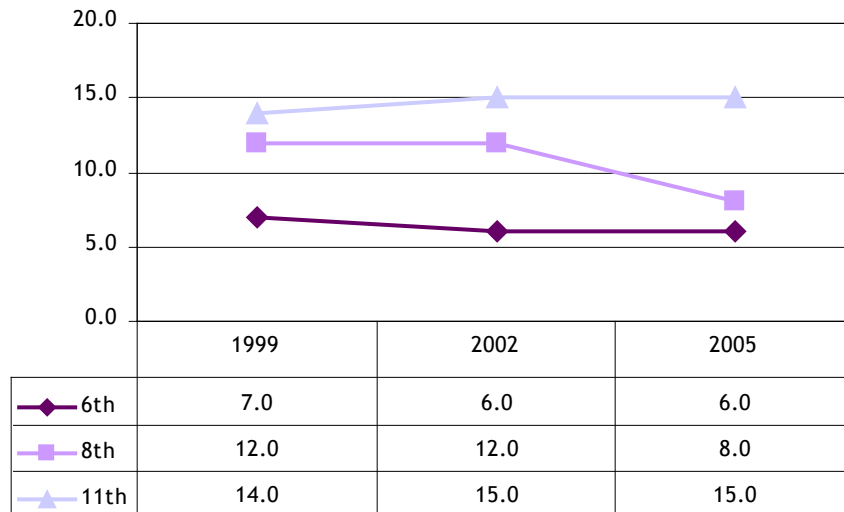
As indicated in the following map, 35.0% to 44.9% of the 11th graders in forty-nine counties in Iowa used alcohol on at least one day during the past 30 days. In twenty-six counties, between 45.0% and 54.8% of 11th graders reported current alcohol use, while in twenty-four counties 24.0% to 34.9% did.

<sup>8</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Youth Survey. <http://www.iowayouthsurvey.org>



## IYS - Suicide Attempts: State Results, 1999-2005<sup>11</sup>

Percentage of Youth Who Have Ever Attempted Suicide

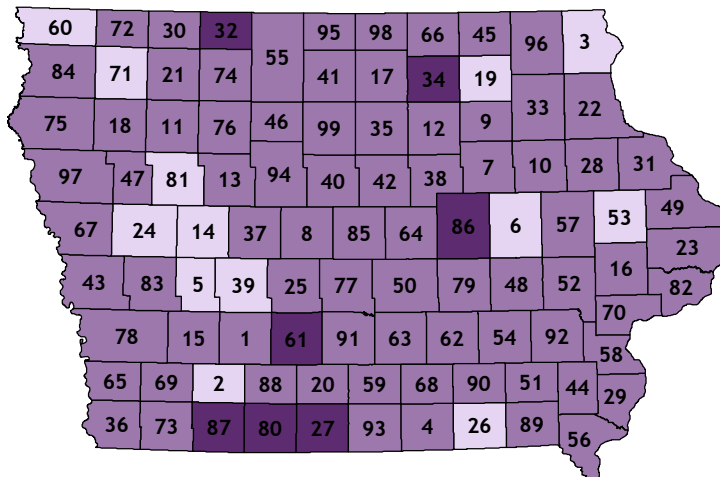


As indicated in the map below, in seventy-nine counties in Iowa, between 10.0% and 19.9% of 11th grade students have attempted suicide. In 13 counties, between 5.6% and 9.9% of 11th graders have attempted suicide, and in 7 counties between 20.0% and 22.0% have.

## IYS - Suicide Attempts: 11th Grade County Results, 2005<sup>11</sup>

Percentage of 11th Graders Who Have Ever Attempted Suicide

□ Less than 10.0%    ■ 10.0% to 19.9%    ■ 20.0% or More



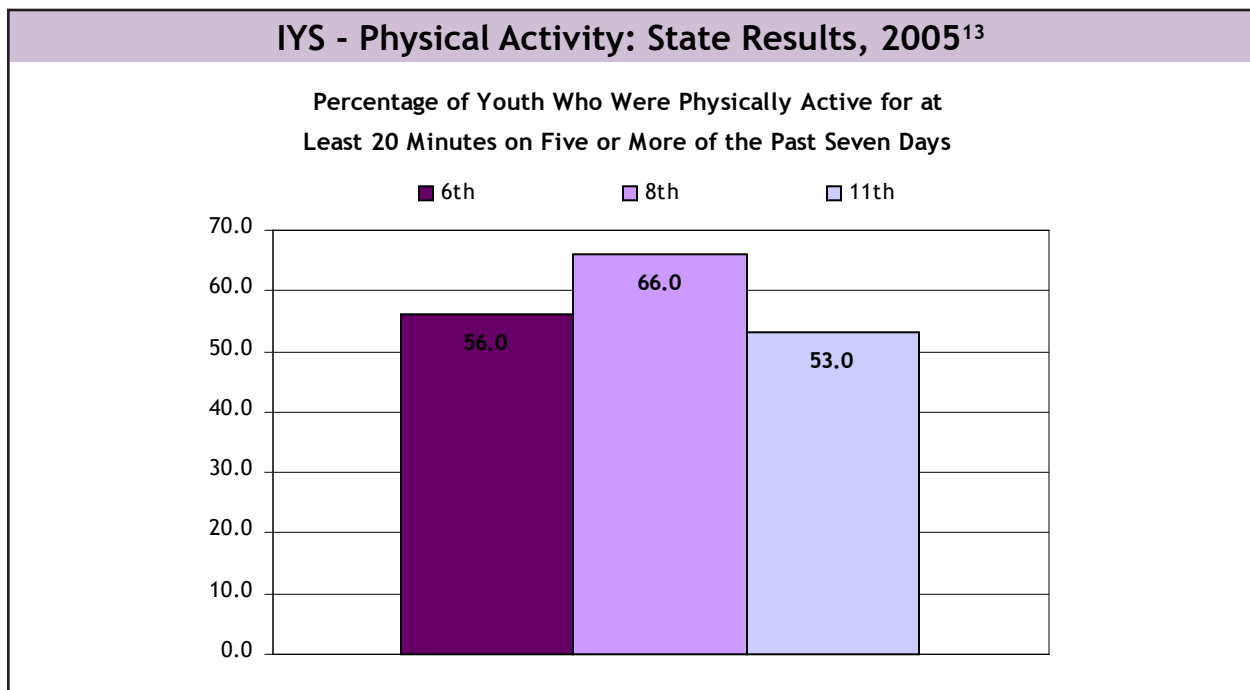
<sup>11</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Youth Survey. <http://www.iowayouthsurvey.org>

## INDICATOR 4: *PHYSICAL ACTIVITY*

The fourth indicator used to assess the health of youth is physical activity. Lack of physical activity is associated with short and long-term health problems, while consistent physical activity has a positive effect on physical and psychological health.<sup>12</sup> The IYS began to measure physical activity in 2005 through the question: “On how many of the past 7 days did you exercise or do physical activity for at least 20 minutes? (For example, running, walking fast, swimming, riding a bicycle.)”.<sup>13</sup>

The following chart represents students who reported that they were physically active for 20 or more minutes on at least five of the past seven days. The students in 8th grade were physically active most often with 66.0% being physically active on at least five of the past seven days. They were followed by 6th graders at 56.0% and 11th graders at 53.0%.

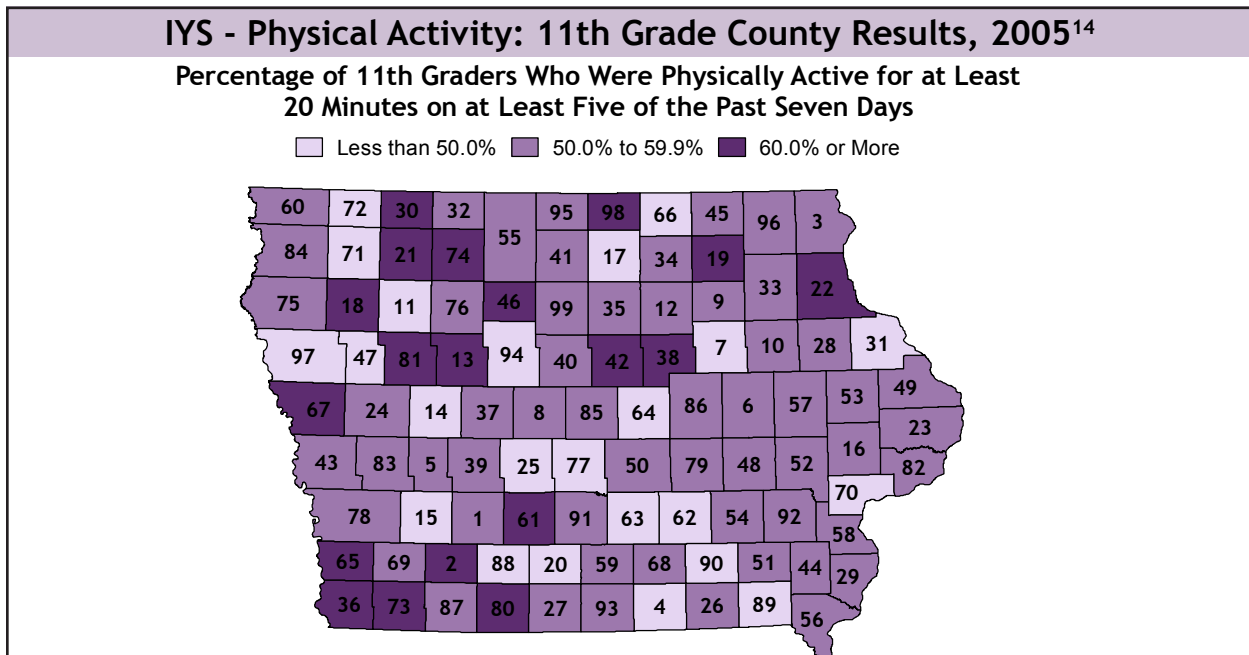
Again, it is not possible to do a direct comparison between IYS and YRBS data because the two surveys do not contain identical questions. While the IYS asks about 20 minutes of physical activity, the YRBS asks about 60 minutes of physical activity. A comparison between the 2005 national high school YRBS data and the Iowa high school sample YRBS data is possible. In this case, 34.1% of high school students in Iowa reported that they were physically active for at least 60 minutes on five of the past seven days, compared to 35.8% of high school students in the nation as a whole.



<sup>12</sup> Child Trends DataBank. <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/>

<sup>13</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Youth Survey. <http://www.iowayouthsurvey.org>

The following map shows the rate of physical activity by county in Iowa for 11th graders. Fifty-seven counties in Iowa had between 50.0% and 59.9% of 11th graders reporting they were physically active for 20 minutes on at least five of the past seven days. Twenty-three counties had between 41.4% and 50.0% reporting they were physically active, and nineteen counties had 60.0% to 73.5%.



## INDICATOR 5: *WEIGHT PERCEPTION*

The final indicator chosen to measure healthy youth is weight perception. The IYS began to measure weight perceptions in 2005 through the question: “I would describe myself as...(very underweight, slightly underweight, about the right weight, slightly overweight, very overweight).”<sup>14</sup> The data gathered from this question may be used to address a range of concerns including childhood obesity at one extreme and faulty weight perceptions and subsequent eating disorders at the other. Both of these concerns can contribute to short and long-term physical and psychological problems<sup>15</sup>.

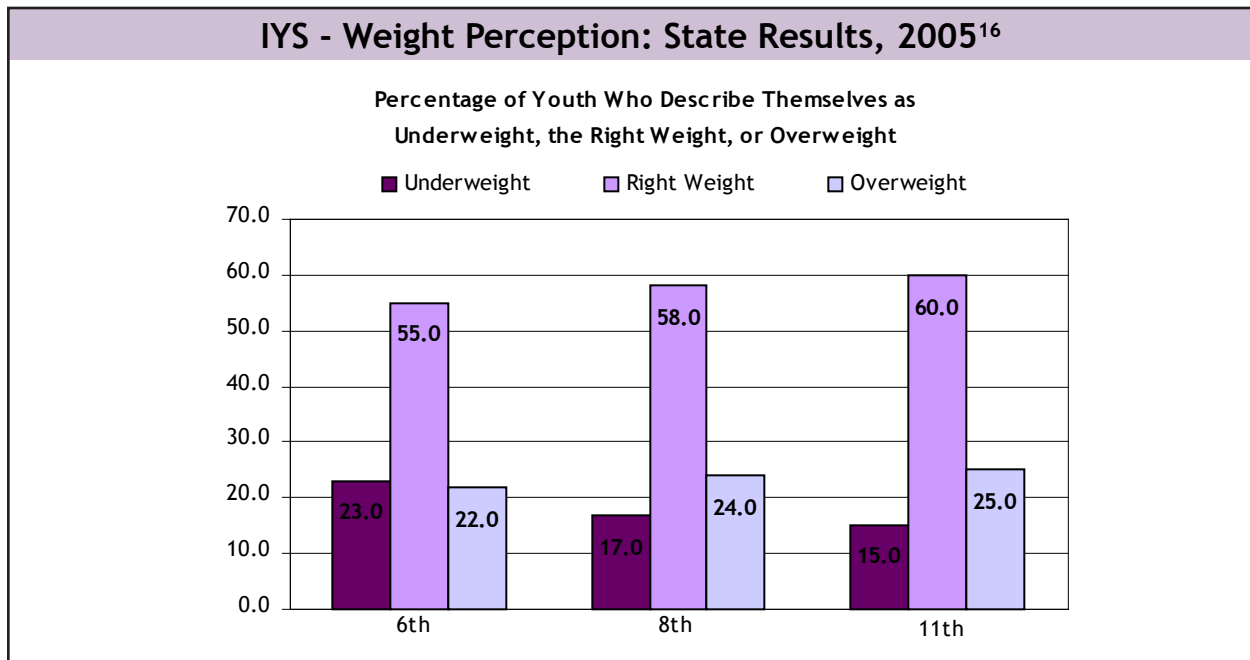
Because we do not know the current weight of the students who answered the IYS question, their responses may indicate their true weight or may indicate faulty weight perceptions. The following chart represents how students described their weight. Notice that the majority of students at each grade-level consider themselves about the right weight, ranging from 55.0% at 6th grade to 60.0% at 11th grade. The percentage of students who consider themselves underweight decreases as the youth get older; 23.0% for 6th graders, 17.0% for 8th graders, and 15.0% for 11th graders. On the other hand, the percentage who consider themselves overweight increases slightly; (22.0% for 6th graders, 24.0% for 8th graders, and 25.0% for 11th graders.

<sup>14</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Youth Survey. <http://www.iowayouthsurvey.org>

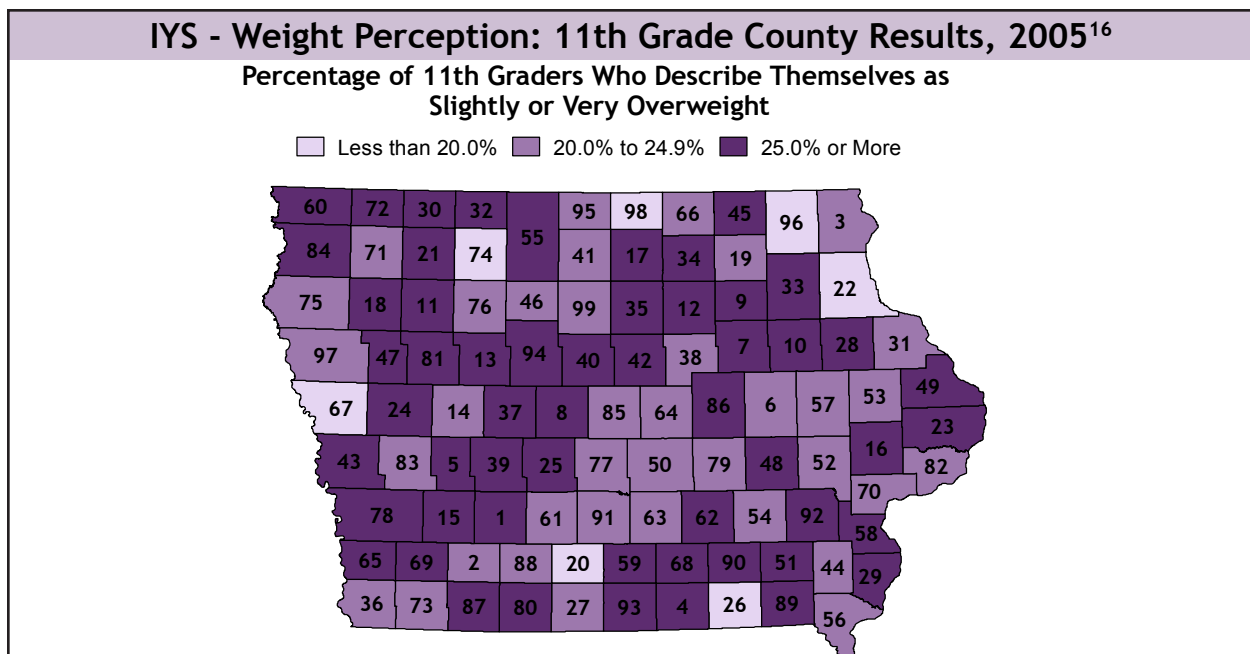
<sup>15</sup> Child Trends DataBank. <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/>



Using the 2005 YRBS as a national comparison to the 2005 IYS results, 11th graders in Iowa are less likely to see themselves as overweight at 25.0% than 11th graders in the nation as a whole at 32.6%.

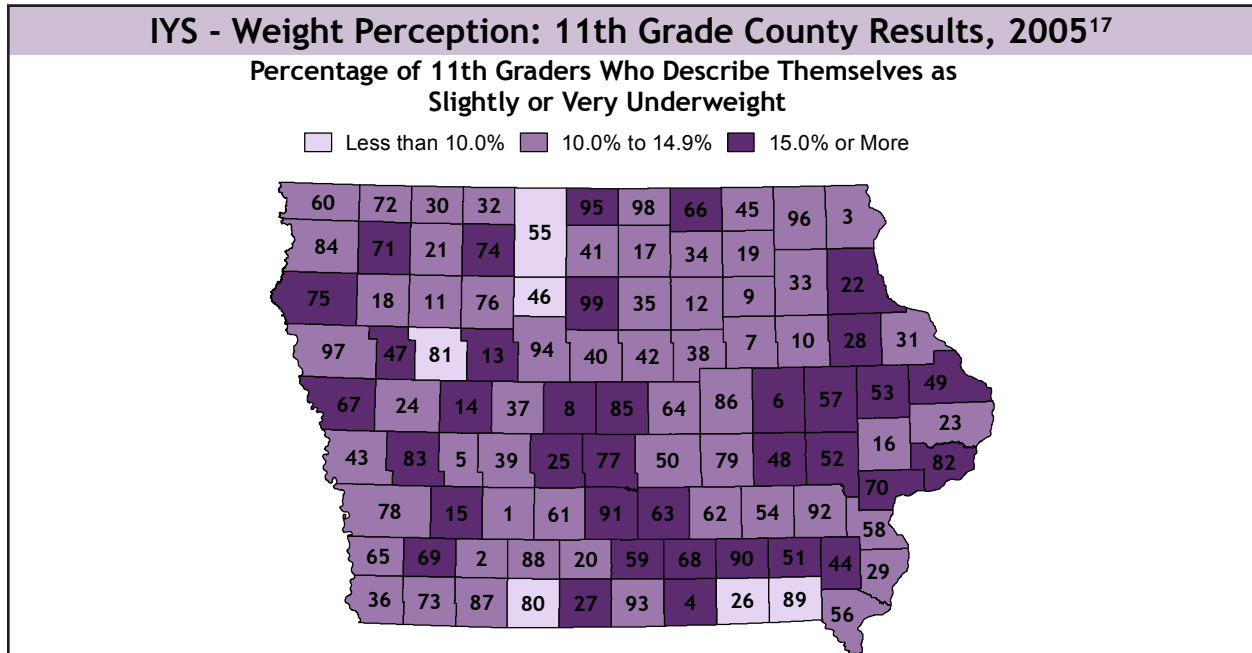


As indicated in the map below, in fifty-five counties in Iowa, 25.0% to 35.8% of 11th grade students described themselves as overweight. In thirty-seven counties, between 20.0% and 24.9% of 11th graders described themselves as overweight, and in seven counties 18.3% to 19.9% did.



<sup>16</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Youth Survey. <http://www.iowayouthsurvey.org>

As indicated in the map below, in thirty-six counties in Iowa, 15.0% to 19.6% of 11th grade students described themselves as underweight. In fifty-seven counties, between 10.0% and 14.9% of 11th graders described themselves as overweight, and in six counties 7.0% to 9.9% did.



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- Other data briefs available:
- Youth are in Safe and Supportive Families
  - Youth are Prepared for Productive Adulthood
  - Youth are Socially Competent

FINAL

<sup>17</sup> Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Youth Survey. <http://www.iowayouthsurvey.org>