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on behalf of the *A Crecer* Study Team

Community Alliance for Safety and Peace
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Research Partners



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Study Aims

The main goal of *A Crecer* is to better understand the factors that affect teen success and challenges during the transition from 8th grade to the early high school years.

- Determine what social and structural factors influence youth development.
- Identify promising directions to promote positive health outcomes and prevent risk among Salinas youth.

Outcomes

1

EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

School
connectedness &
academic
performance

2

FUTURE ORIENTATION

Future
expectations and
hope

3

RESILIENCE

Adapting well
when faced with
adversity, trauma
or significant
sources of stress

4

YOUTH VIOLENCE

(Cyber) bullying,
non-violent
problem solving
strategies, gang
affiliation/exposure

5

SEXUAL HEALTH

Relationships and
behavior,
contraceptive use,
health care access



8TH GRADERS!

Join the **A Crecer** study to share your voice and help us learn about what it's like to be a teen in Salinas.

We need your input to build better programs for youth to make Salinas a safer and healthier place for teens.

What happens if you join?

- You will have one-on-one interviews once every six months for the next two years.
- Interviews will be private and confidential and can be done in English or Spanish. Each interview takes about an hour.
- You will be paid \$20 each visit and get a pocket guide to teen resources in Salinas.

Call or text to talk with one of our team members: (831) 737-4037

Who's leading the study?

This study is conducted by researchers from RTI International in San Francisco and UC Berkeley, in partnership with the Monterey County Health Department and Natividad Medical Center.

Join!

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

LEARN MORE AT:
A-CRECER.ORG

Funded by the National Institutes of Health



¡ESTUDIANTES DEL GRADO 8!

Únete al estudio **A Crecer** y comparte tu voz para ayudarnos a aprender que significa ser adolescente en Salinas.

Necesitamos tu opinión y ayuda para construir mejores programas para jóvenes y hacer de Salinas un lugar más seguro y saludable para los adolescentes.

¿Qué pasa si participas?

- Tendrás una entrevista individual cada seis meses por los siguientes dos años.
- Las entrevistas serán privadas y confidenciales y pueden ser en Inglés o Español. Cada entrevista dura aproximadamente una hora.
- Te pagaremos \$20 por cada entrevista y recibirás una guía de recursos para jóvenes en Salinas.

Llama o envía un mensaje de texto para hablar con un miembro de nuestro equipo: (831) 737-4037

¿Quién esta detrás del estudio?

El estudio está bajo el cargo de RTI Internacional en San Francisco y UC Berkeley, en colaboración con el Departamento de Salud del Condado de Monterey y el Centro de Salud Natividad.

¡Participa!

¡HAZ ESCUCHAR TU VOZ!

PARA APRENDER MÁS VISITA:
A-CRECER.ORG

El proyecto esta financiado por los Institutos Nacionales de Salud.

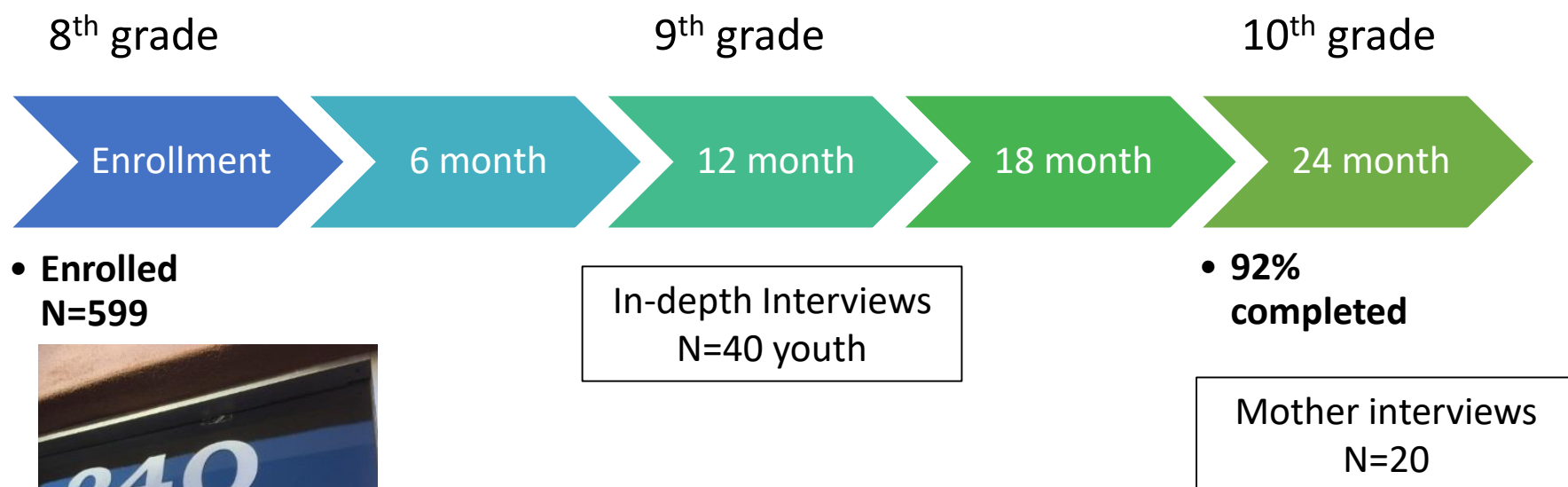




Study Team

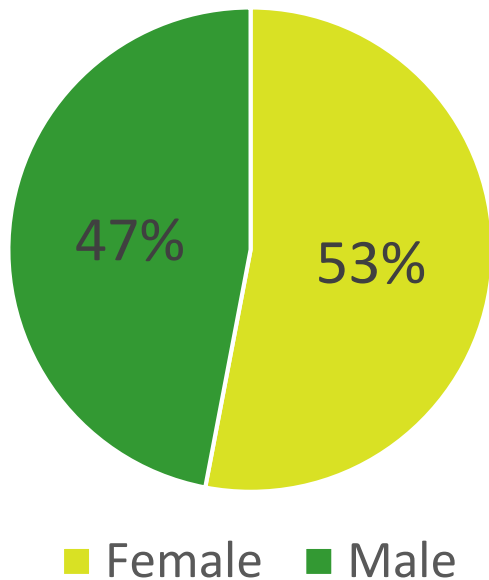


Study Overview

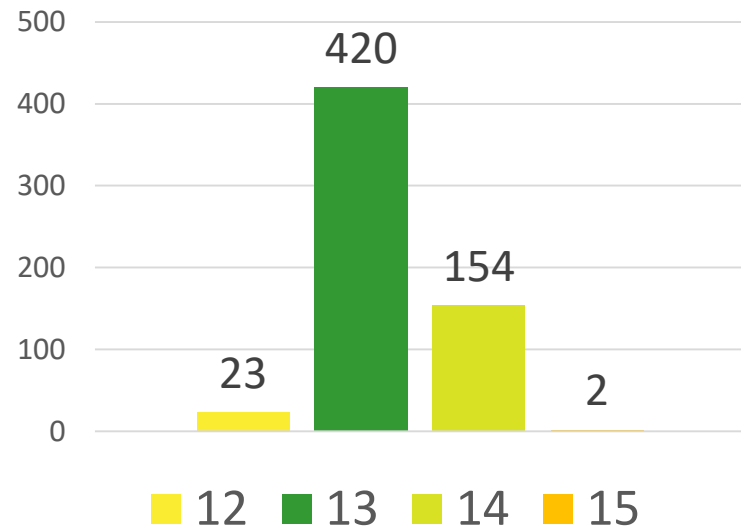


Background Characteristics at Enrollment

Gender



Age



Total number of participants: 599

Background Characteristics at Enrollment

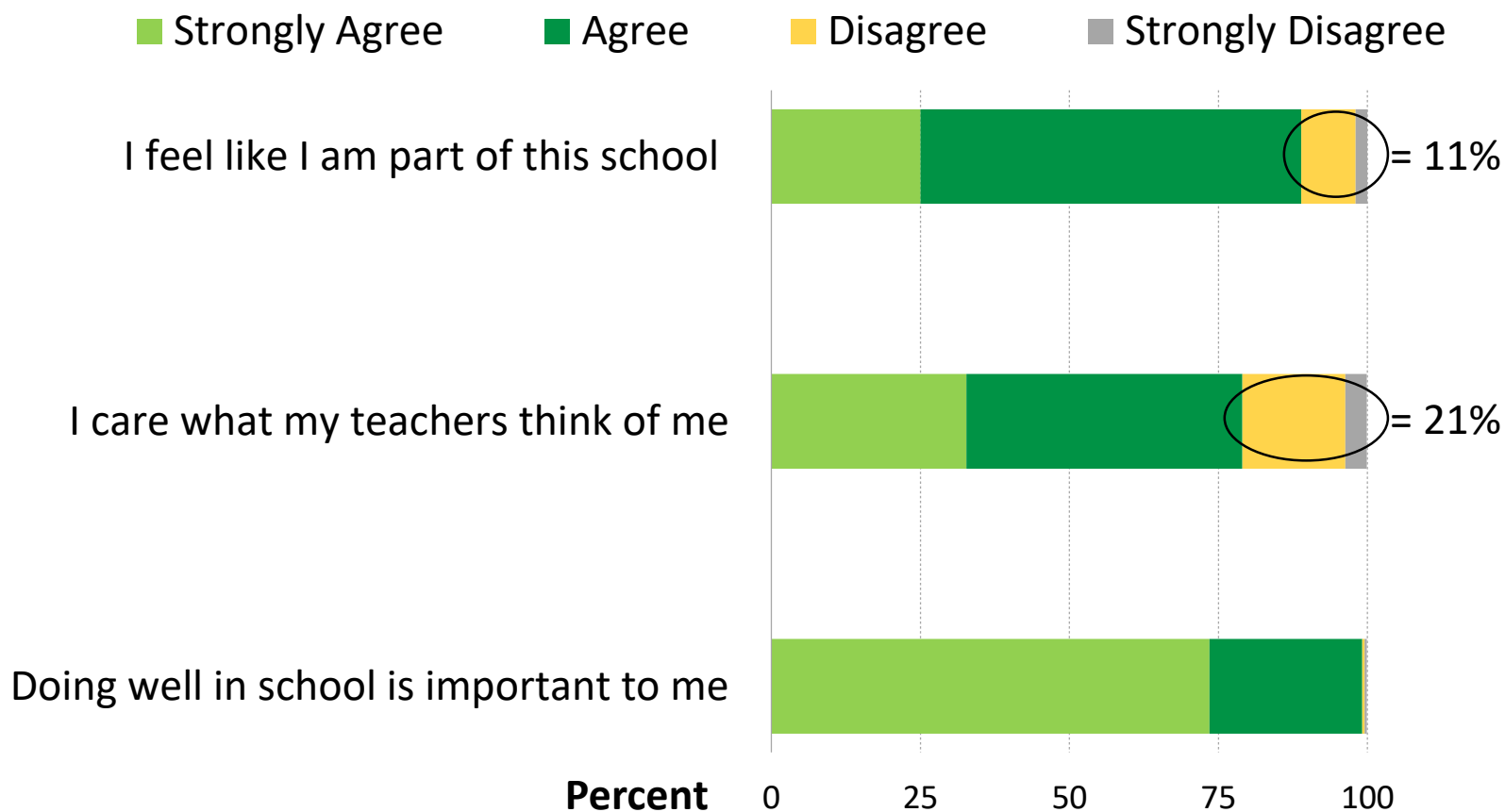
- Nearly all identified as Latino: 95%
- Immigrant Generation:
 - 1st: Born outside the U.S. - 12%
 - 2nd: U.S. born with immigrant parents - 72%
 - 3rd or higher: Both parents and youth U.S.-born - 16%
- Parent works in agriculture: 49%



School Connectedness at 1-year (9th grade)

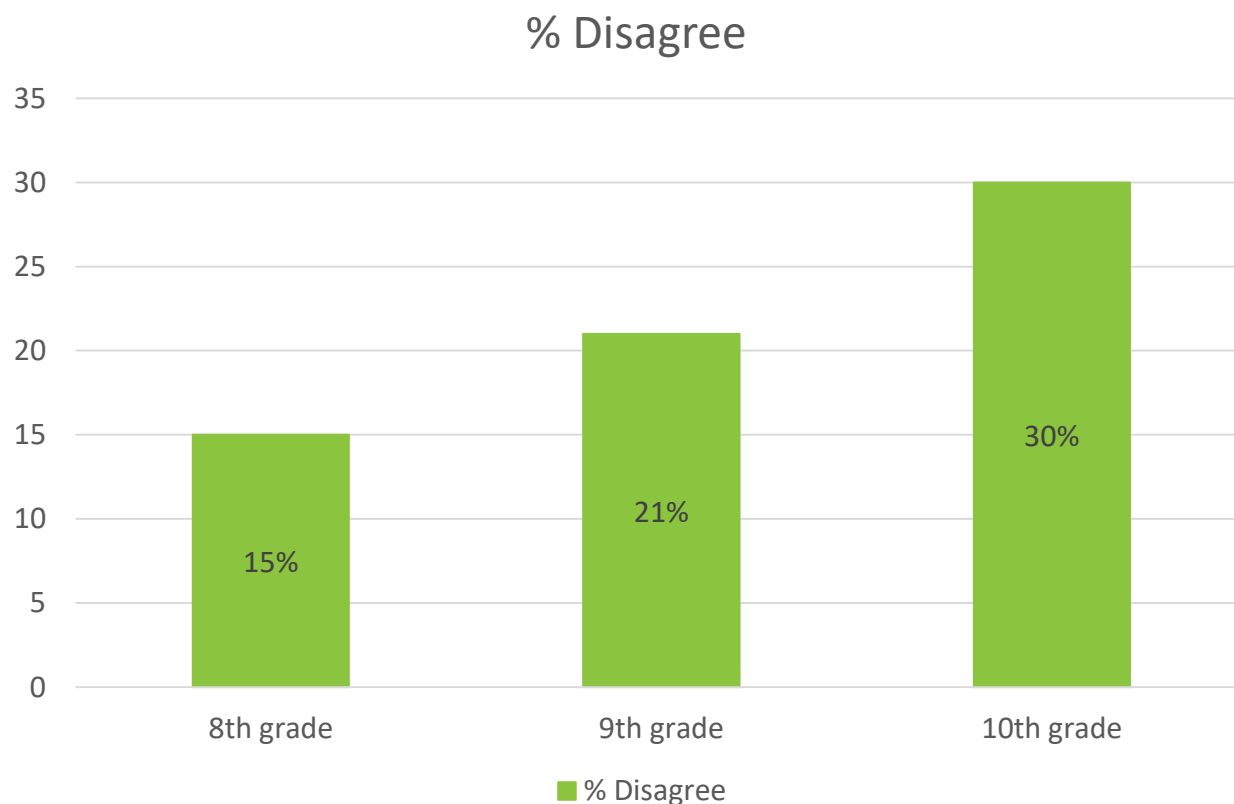
A *Creceer* participants reported **strong connections to their school**.

This was sustained in the transition between middle school and high school.

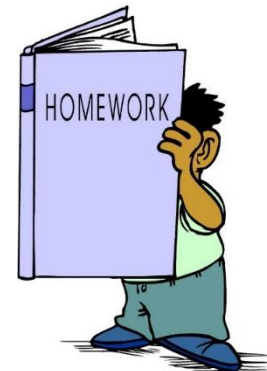


School Connectedness remains high over time but shows signs of lessening

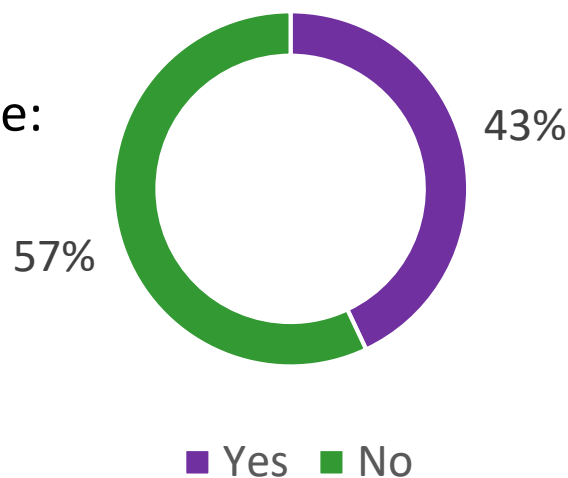
Example: "I care what my teachers think of me."



School Challenges in High School



- 1 in 3 youth reported *at least once a week* they had trouble getting their homework completed.
 - 14% daily or almost every day in 9th grade; slightly higher (19%) in 10th grade.
- Getting in trouble at school *during the past month* (e.g., principal referral or detention for fighting):
 - 24% at least once (9th grade); 20% at least once (10th grade)
- Failed a semester course in 9th grade:



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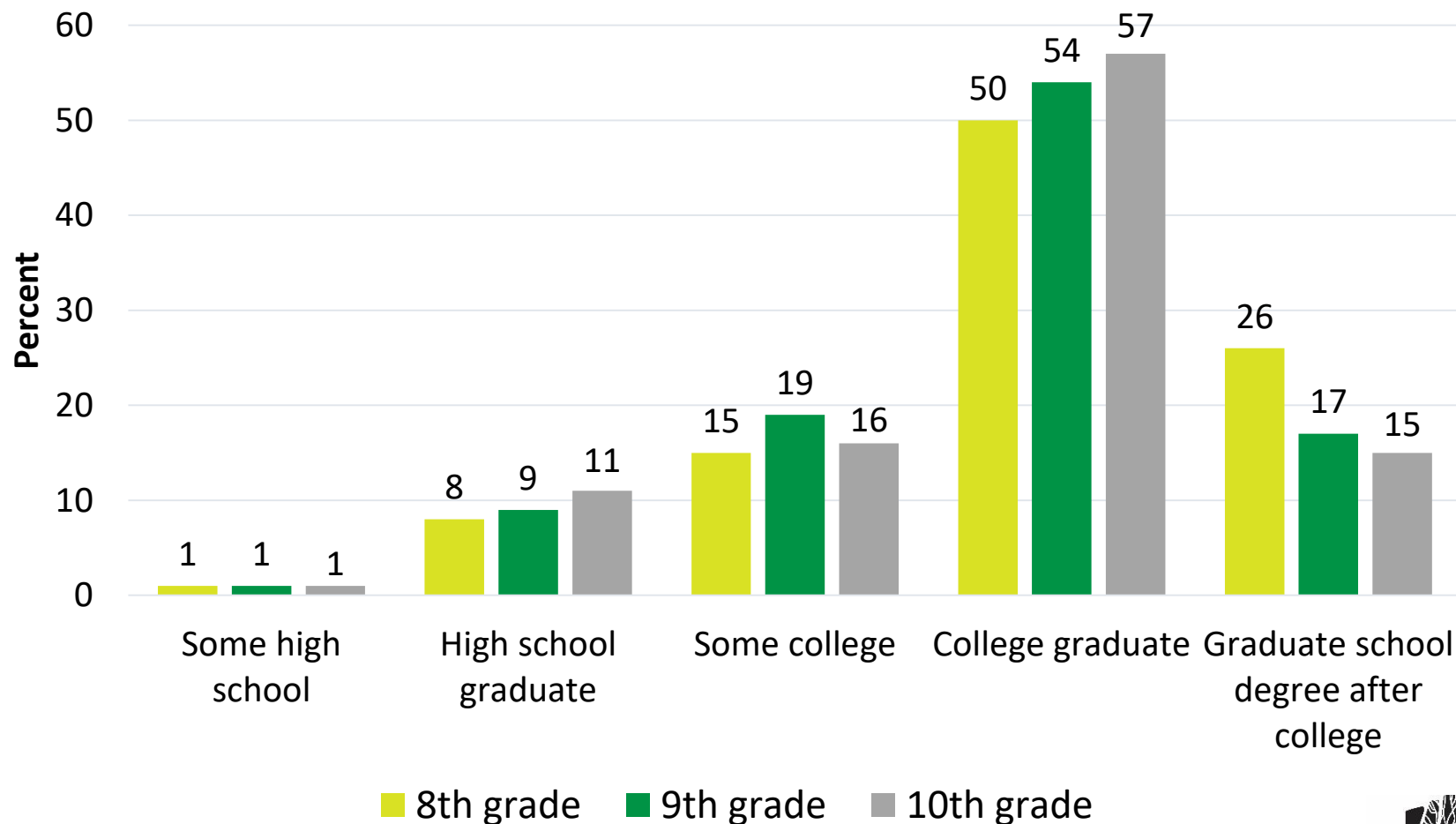
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Educational Expectations Over Time

Question: *How far do you think you will go in school?*



Future Aspirations: key observation #1

- Community and school programs play an important role in helping youth obtain vital information to achieve their goals – to move from an abstract goal to understanding concrete steps to get there.
- These opportunities for support were clearly lacking for some youth.

Interviewer: When achieving your goals, what are your biggest worries?

Participant: Failing a class. I've never failed a class.

Interviewer: Never failed a class, ok. Why are you worried about failing a class?

Participant: Because then I won't, because UC Berkeley only allows a 3.25% GPA and up, they don't allow, well, they'll allow like a 3.0 but that's if you do a lot for your community....if you fail a class it's going to bring you down.

Interviewer: Where did you get all this information?

Participant: Well, I'm in AVID so we do a lot of college projects, and I've been doing Berkeley for two years already. I did one in 7th grade and now I'm doing one in 8th.

Male 8th grader, age 14

Future Aspirations: key observation #2

- Many youth were keenly attuned to the financial realities of their families' lives and the potential that economic hardships could interfere with their ability to achieve their goals.

Interviewer: When you think about achieving your goals, what would you say are your biggest worries that might get in your way?

Participant: Bills.

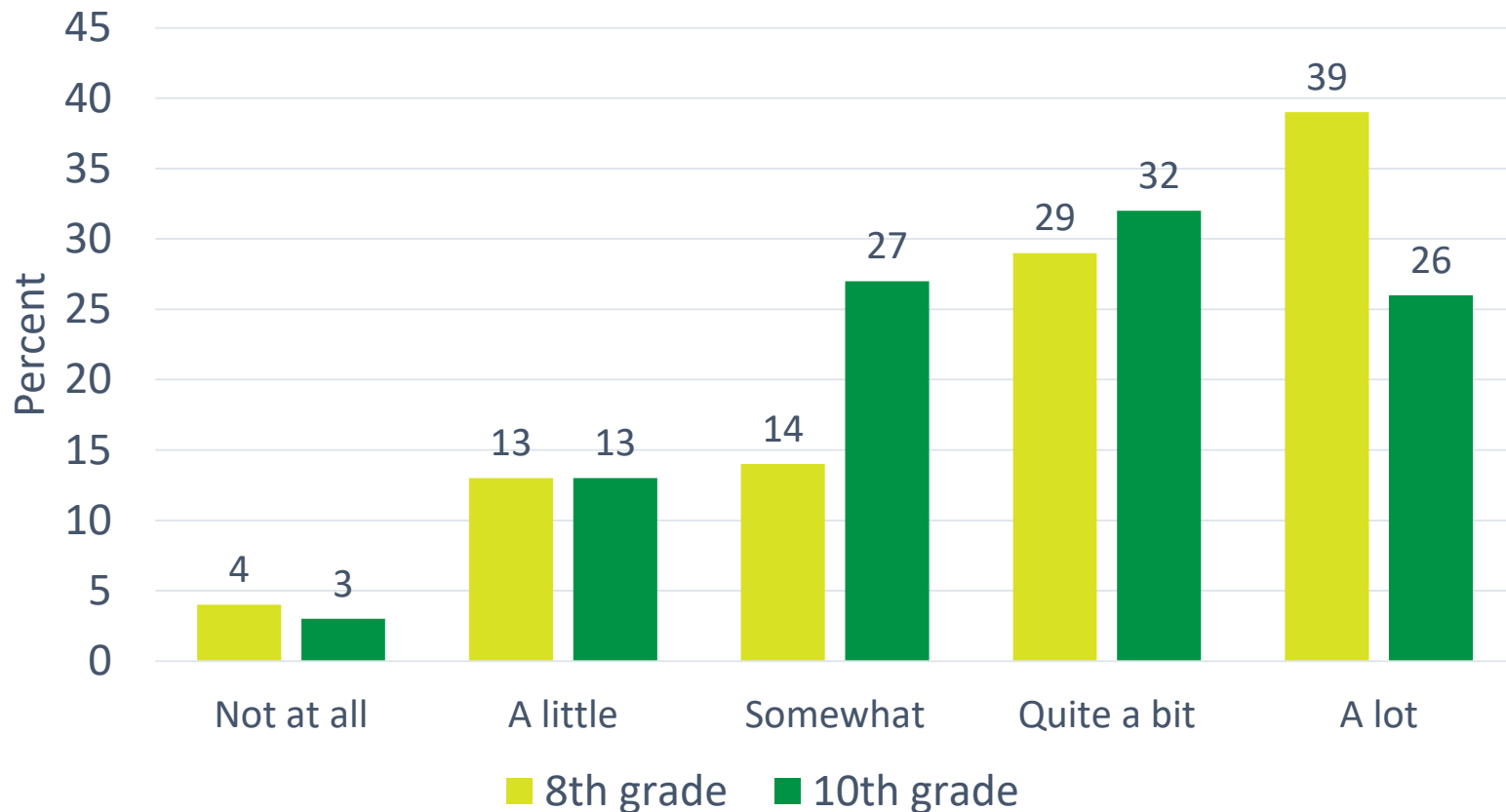
Interviewer: What kinds of bills?

Participant: Like the rent, the water bill, electricity bill. Also, money for gas. Also food.

Female rising 9th grader, age 14

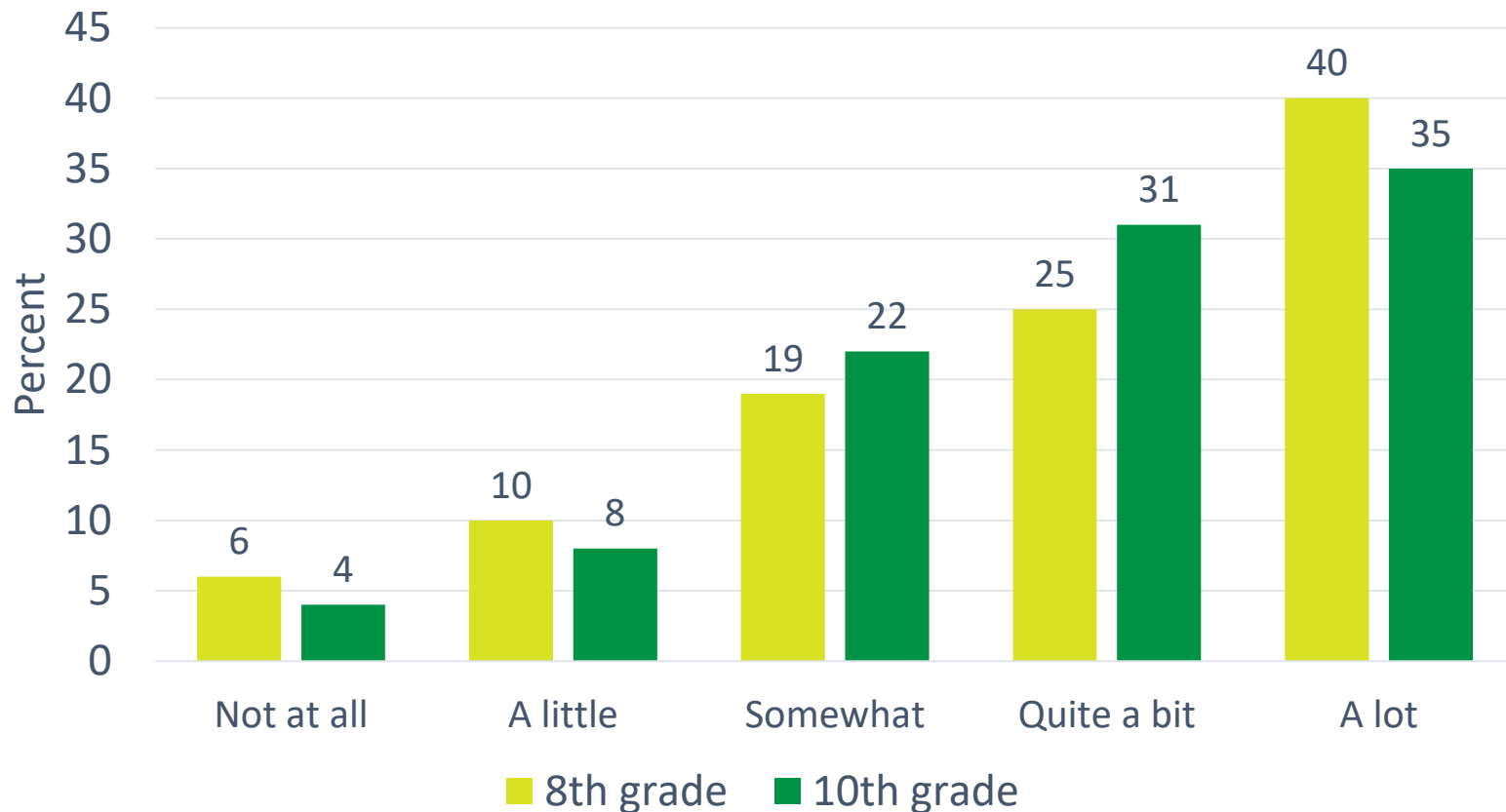
Resilience – Personal Resources in Daily Life

“I have people I look up to”



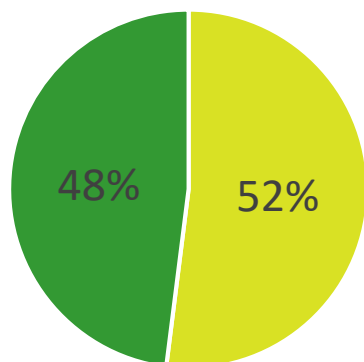
Resilience – Personal Resources in Daily Life

“I know where to go in my community to get help”



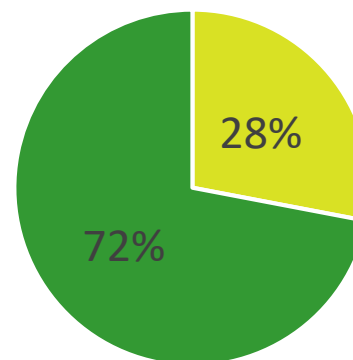
Strong Evidence of Engagement in Salinas and Contributions to Family

Participated in Neighborhood Improvement Actions



■ Yes ■ No

Earned Money to Support Family



■ Yes ■ No



10th grade data

Family

- **Strong bonding relationships.**



8 in 10 youth report
close families and
strong communication.

“I admire my dad, who spends his time working, but at the same time has the time to spend with his family, and he’s given me a lot of advice....He works hard to buy things that I want and just keeps me happy.” – 8th grade male

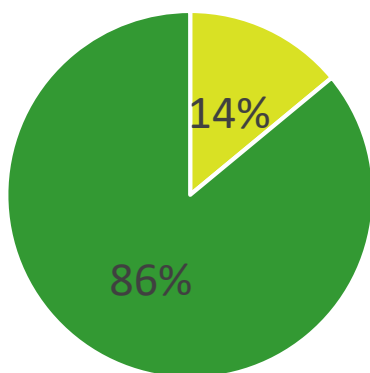
Family connectedness remained consistently high over time.

Adult role models provide bridging to opportunities

- Many teens expressed that parents were not able to provide bridging and linking resources to higher education and career paths.

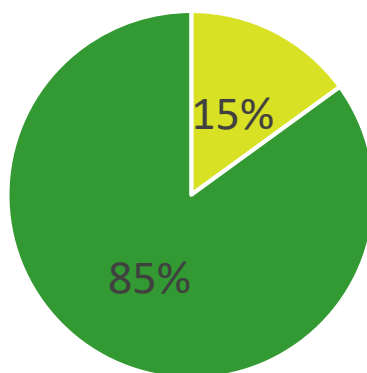
“The only reason [my brother] started being smarter is because of his peers, his teachers. He had friends that were gang members, [who] even told him that he shouldn’t be in this, he’s smarter than that...and he’s doin’ good now. He’s commuting to college.” – 8th grade male

Depression: Percent with current depression is consistent over time



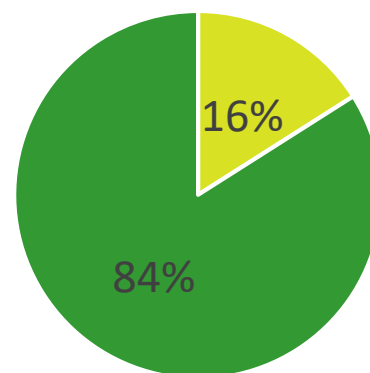
■ Yes ■ No

8th grade



■ Yes ■ No

9th grade



■ Yes ■ No

10th grade

**Depression varied by sex over time:
At 2-years, 20% of females vs. 11% of males**

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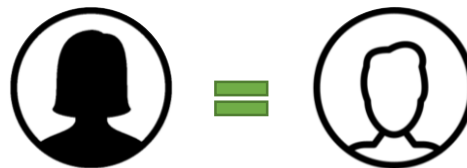
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Cyberbullying

Sample items:

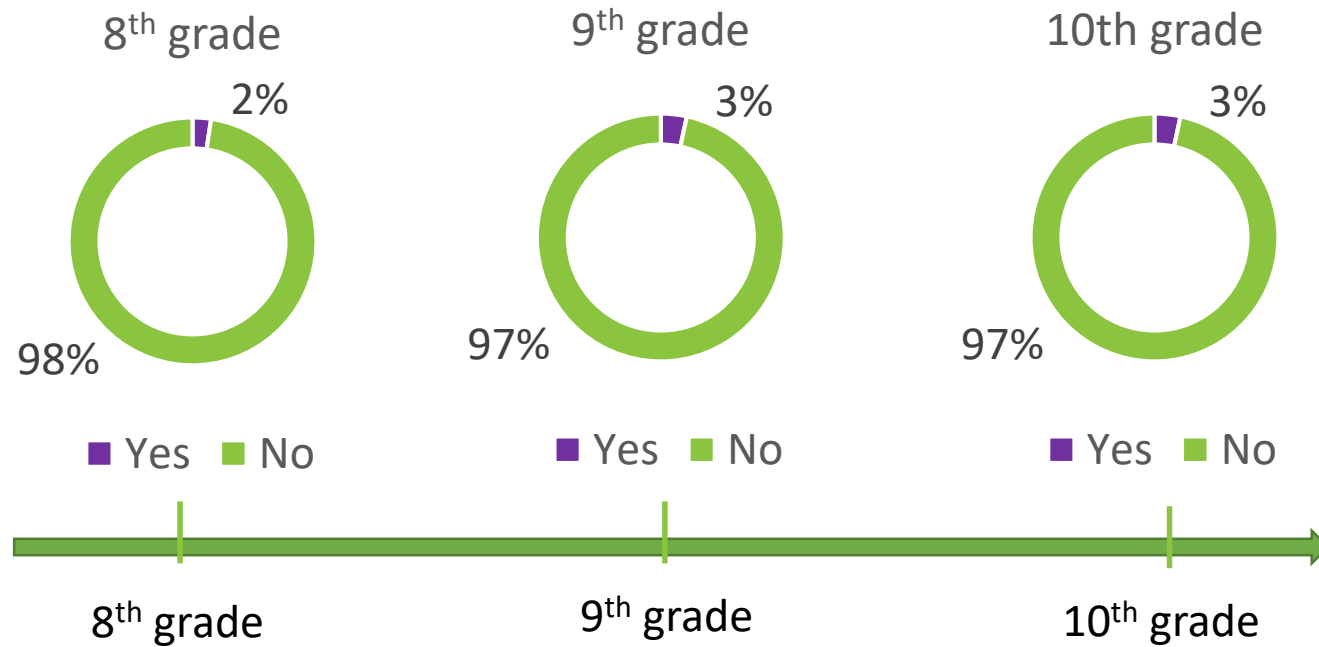
- *People posted mean or rude things about me on the Internet.*
- *I have been embarrassed or humiliated online.*
- *I have been bullied (repeated name calling or harassment) online.*

	Experienced Cyberbullying	Perpetrated Cyberbullying
8 th grade	28%	(not assessed)
9 th grade	33%	14%
10 th grade	27%	11%

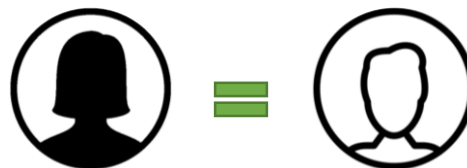
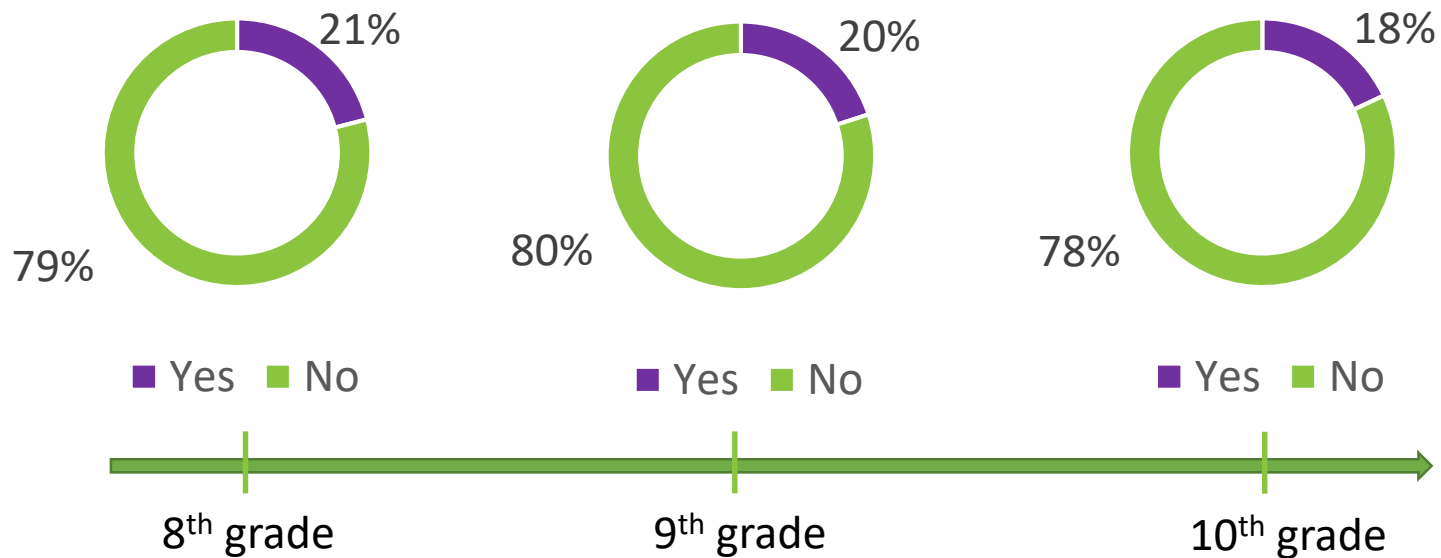


No differences comparing females and males.

Gang membership is low



Gang exposure through friends is more common



No differences comparing females and males.

Illustration of positive sibling influence on gang involvement:

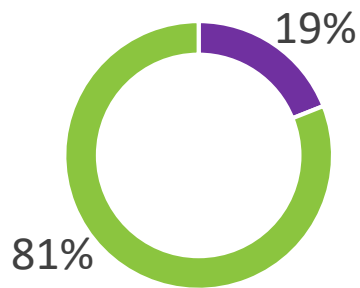
People my age usually hang out with wanna-be gangsters, or just people that want to do drugs or something, just to be cool. And in my opinion, I think that's bad because then they're going off the wrong path and then they could like – like how my sister said once:

“why do you want to be a gangster? You're just dying for a color...just do good in school and then you could be even more rich, and you could travel a lot. And you could have a big house and everything.”

And the other people, they end up being homeless or dead in the streets or getting shot.

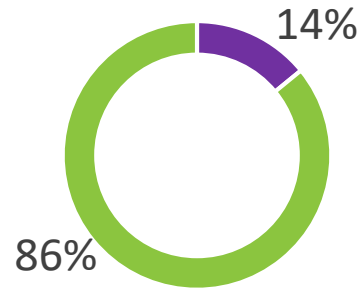
Male participant, age 14 – 9th grade

Gang-affiliated partners: overall percent



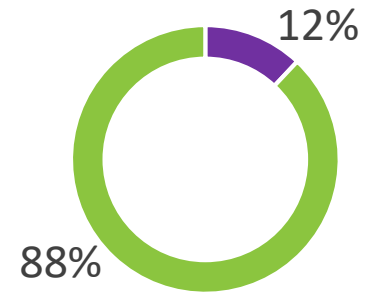
■ Yes ■ No

8th grade



■ Yes ■ No

9th grade



■ Yes ■ No

10th grade



More common for females than for males.

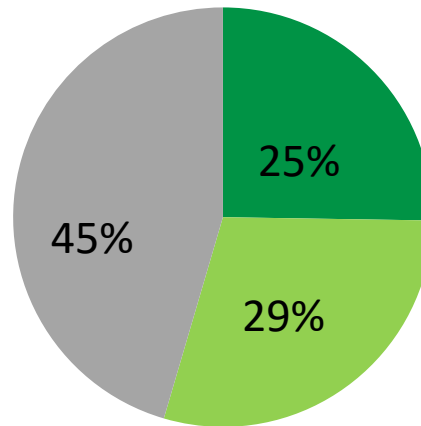


No difference.

Dating Relationships

- Recent relationship experience was common (51%) among 8th graders and over time, more initiated relationships.
- Many described their relationships as providing important emotional support and guidance in problem-solving.

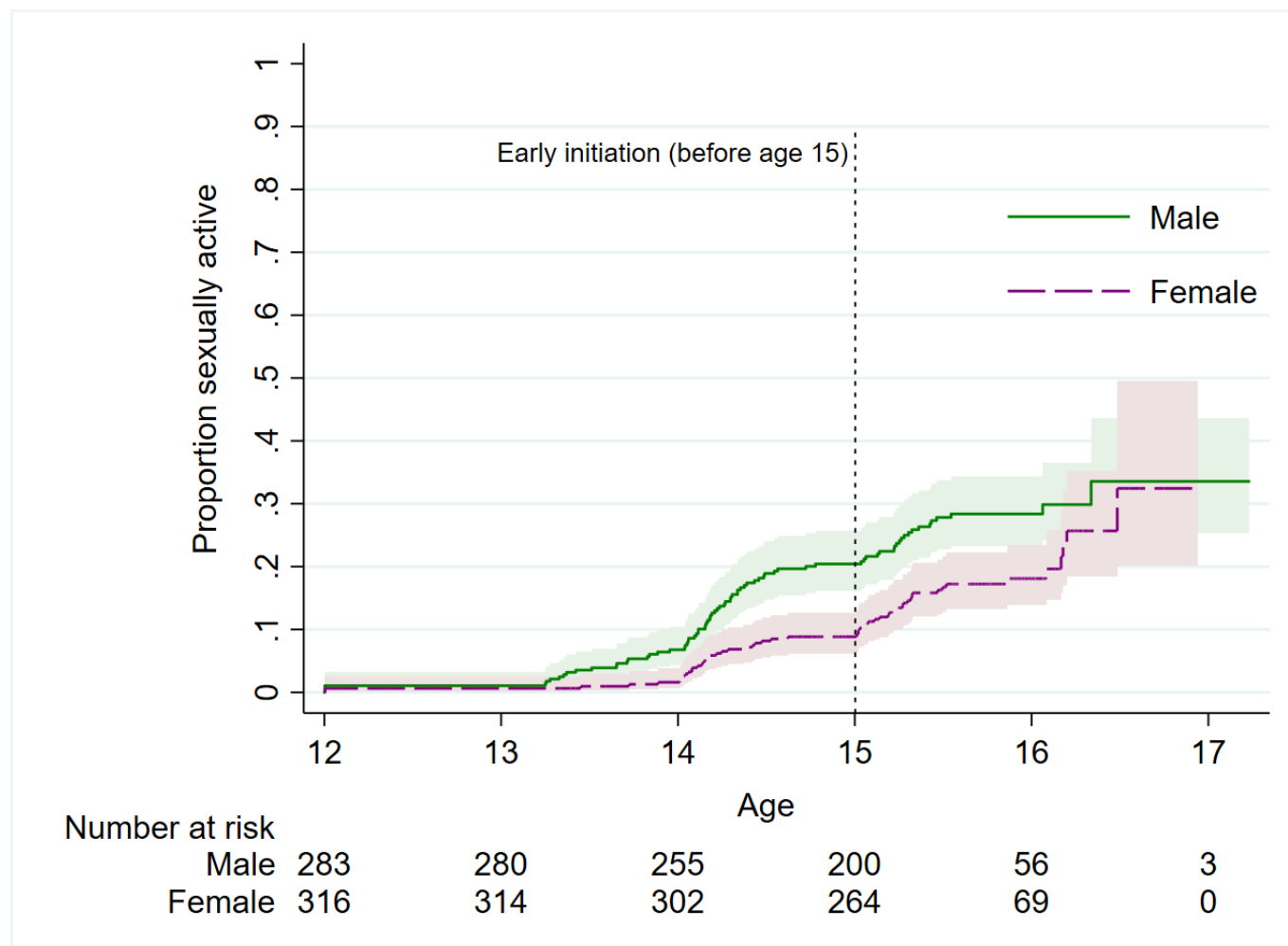
“How often have you turned to your partner for support with personal problems?”



8th grade data

■ A little ■ Somewhat ■ Often

Sexual activity by age and sex



Influence of neighborhood environment on early sexual initiation (< age 15)

Protective and risk factors	Relative Risk	
Social cohesion	0.72	+
School connectedness	0.45	+
Experiences of discrimination		-
None	ref	
Moderate (1-2 occurrences)	1.67	
High (3+ occurrences)	2.14	
Neighborhood disorder events (range 0-11)	1.13	-
Gang exposure in social networks	2.18	-

Relative risks estimated using Poisson regression models with robust standard errors for each measure. All models adjusted for pubertal developmental stage and recruitment school.

N=558

Sexual health behaviors at 10th grade

- Nearly half (47%) of those who reported having had sex, had unprotected sex, at least some of the time.
- Use of sexual health services low.
 - 1 in 3 sexually active youth indicated they had wanted to access services but had not due to a range of barriers.
 - Embarrassment and privacy concerns were key barriers to use.



Summary: Key Messages

- High educational goals expressed in 8th grade persist into high school.
 - Some youth struggled academically in high school and have lower connection to school.
- Family connectedness is an important sources of support.
- Gang participation remains low; however, gang affiliation through close friends and partners is more common.
- Dating relationships are common for early adolescents. Efforts to support youth in building strong, healthy relationships is critical.
- Findings highlight that 8th and 9th grades remain a key time to address health and well-being for youth.

Acknowledgements

- Salinas Union High School District partnership in supporting recruitment of 8th graders into the study.
- Community Advisory Board members.
- Community organizations that welcomed us for conducting study visits.
- Youth advisors.

