



Kentucky can...



Prevent youth initiation of nicotine products and protect kids from the harmful effects of vaping

Kentucky kids need healthy environments to learn, play, and grow, free from the harmful effects of nicotine products like e-cigarettes and vapes. Despite federal and state legislation to raise the legal purchase age of these products to 21, vaping among youth remains a concern in the Commonwealth.

Vaping among Kentucky youth:

- Kentucky prevalence of youth e-cigarette use continues to be higher than the national average.
- 17% of 10th graders and 24% of 12th graders surveyed reported using e-cigarettes in the past 30 days. When asked how they obtained their vapes, 23.6% said that they bought it from a store or tobacco retailer themselves.
- Despite only a fraction of the retailers in Kentucky receiving compliance checks in 2022, there were more than 400 documented instances of KY retailers selling tobacco to minors, with most only receiving a written warning.

Compliance with tobacco-21 law requires that we know where tobacco and nicotine products are being sold and that retailers comply with all federal, state, and local laws. Ensuring regular compliance checks take place and implementing escalating penalties for noncompliance will help keep these products out of the hands of Kentucky kids.

Evidence shows that states and localities that provide a mechanism to enforce current laws on the sale of tobacco and nicotine products see a reduction in sales to underage youth and see fewer youth initiating tobacco use for both cigarettes and e-cigarettes.

The impact of nicotine on kids and families:

- Nicotine use has been proven to amplify feelings of anxiety and depression.
- Students who use tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, cigarettes, cigars, and smokeless tobacco, are more likely to have lower grades.
- Young people who vape are much more likely to become smokers and are at higher risk for becoming dependent on other substances.
- Youth vaping can impact parent work performance, including reduced productivity and missed work time due to their child vaping.

Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Policy Solution:

Ensure compliance with tobacco-21 law by identifying retailers selling tobacco and nicotine products, requiring annual compliance checks, and penalizing those selling to kids.