



What our kids are saying about....

PARENTS' INFLUENCE ON ADOLESCENT DRUG USE

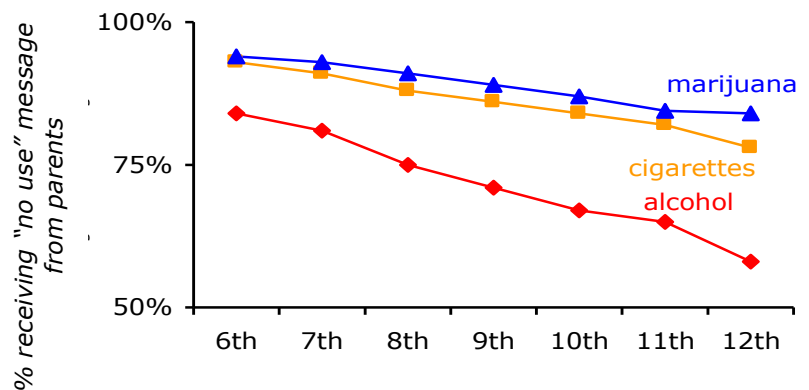
Research Brief #1: October 9, 2007
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**for identification purposes only*

Many parents worry that they have little influence over whether their kids use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. They want to send strong messages to discourage use, but are unsure if it will have any effect.¹ A few parents even allow kids to smoke and drink at home, hoping their children will avoid doing so in more dangerous situations.

What about in Franklin County? What messages are our youth hearing from parents? Are these messages having any effect? What should parents do? Using data from the 2006 PPAAUS survey (see description below), this research brief answers such questions. For more information about these findings, see the Safe and Drug Free Schools Consortium website.

What messages are youth hearing from parents?

- Three-quarters (73%) say their parents give them a clear message that it is not okay to use alcohol. Rates are even higher for cigarettes (87%) and marijuana (89%).
- Most youth who don't get a clear "no use" message, say their parents send mixed messages.
- Parents' messages vary by age and type of drug. From 6th to 12th grade, parents' "no use" messages about alcohol decline the most. (see graph)



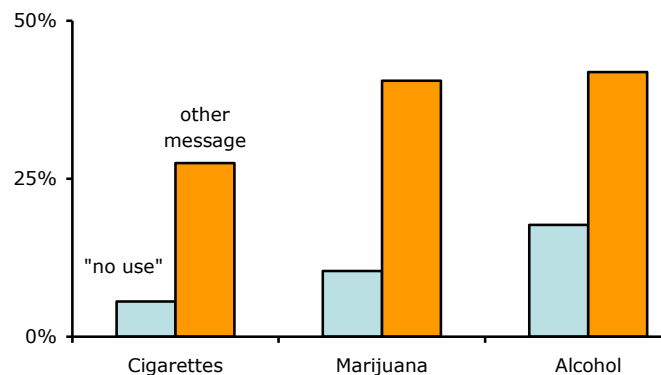
- When making decisions about using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, most youth (52%) say they "always" think about how their families would be hurt or angry. Even in 12th grade, more than half of youth say they "always" or "often" think about their families when making these decisions.
- Parents also send messages by their actions. 22% of teens who smoke say they get cigarettes from their family.

¹ Sieving RE, Maruyama G, Williams CL, Perry CL. Pathways to adolescent alcohol use: Potential mechanisms of parent influence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 2000;10(4):489-514.

Do these messages have any effect?

- **Yes!**
- High school youth who “often” or “always” think their families would be hurt or angry are...
 - Four times less likely to regularly smoke cigarettes or marijuana
 - Three times less likely to regularly drink alcohol
- Middle school youth who do so are...
 - About two times less likely to be willing to try cigarettes and alcohol
 - Three times less likely to be willing to try marijuana
- Youth who get “no use” messages are much less likely to use drugs (*see chart*)
- Allowing youth to use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs at home is a bad idea. Most kids who use drugs at home also do so at parties. Compared to kids who only drink alcohol at parties, youth who drink both at parties and at home are more likely to...
 - Drink heavily
 - Drive drunk
 - Use other drugs
- Compared to other teen smokers, youth who get cigarettes from their families are more likely to...
 - Smoke regularly
 - Feel depressed and angry

Rates of drug use among high school students receiving “no use” versus other messages



What should parents do?

- Don’t be afraid to send a clear message: alcohol, tobacco and other drug use is not okay for teens. That’s what most parents say! Especially for older high school students, keep reminding them they are too young to drink alcohol.
- Never allow teens to smoke or drink at home.
- Don’t be afraid to get help – nothing is more important than parents! If you feel like your teen isn’t listening, contact your school guidance counselor or the Safe and Drug Free Schools Consortium for advice and support.

About PPAAUS

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Consortium has administered the Primary Prevention, Awareness, Attitude and Use Survey (PPAAUS) seven times since 1988. PPAAUS is designed to measure student attitudes and reported use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and provide information on violence and safety issues. Results from the latest survey (2006) are based on responses from 78,333 sixth through twelfth graders in 16 public school districts and 36 non-public schools in Franklin County. For more information visit the PPAAUS website (http://www.edcouncil.org/programs/drugfree/ppaaus_2007/index.htm). Thank you to funders who have made this series of research briefs possible: ADAMH Board, Columbus Medical Association Foundation, United Way of Central Ohio and the US Dept of Health & Human Services/SAMHSA