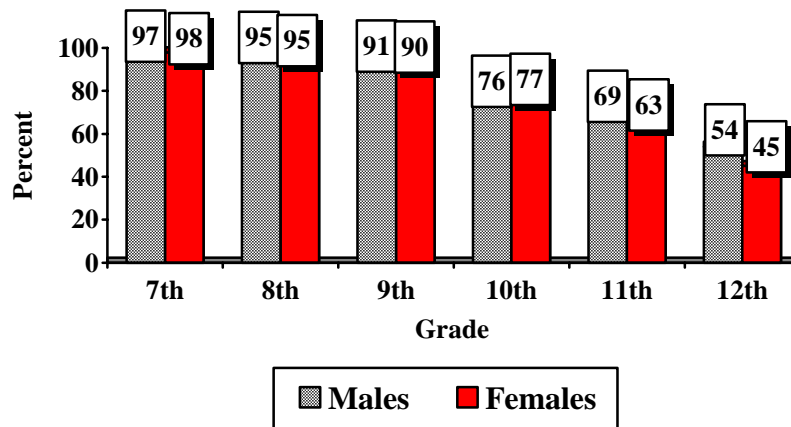


## SWYS 2005 News— Early Support of Sexual Abstinence in Teens is Imperative

Almost four in ten teens (38%) **believe** that it is okay for teens their age to engage in oral sex and/or sexual intercourse. Ninety-three percent (93%) of all 7<sup>th</sup> graders report that low risk/no risk sexual activity is appropriate for peers their age. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of all 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicated “low risk/no risk” sexual activity is appropriate for teens their age. Overall, fifty-nine percent (59%) of teens “*strongly agree*” or “*agree*” that it is against their values to have sex while they are a teenager.

These are among the findings of the Southwest Wisconsin Youth Survey (SWYS) survey conducted by 15 school districts in the Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) District 3. More than 3,700 students in grades 7 through 12 in the school districts of Argyle, Belmont, Benton, Black Hawk, Cassville, Cuba City, Darlington, Fennimore, Iowa-Grant, Ithaca, Lancaster, Platteville, Potosi, River Ridge and Seneca participated the survey in September of 2005. UW-Extension faculty in Crawford, Grant, Lafayette and Richland counties are involved in processing and presenting the findings. The survey was funded by participating school districts and the Grant County Drug-Free Coalition.

### Teens who answered, 'no,' when asked, "have you had sexual intercourse?"



“Overall, seventy-eight percent (78%) of teens surveyed reported that they had **not** engaged in sexual intercourse at the time of the survey,” reports Jessie Potterton, Lafayette County 4-H Youth Development Educator. “Of all of the teens surveyed, younger teens are much more likely to say they have **not** had sexual intercourse than older teens. Nearly ninety-eight percent (98%) of 7<sup>th</sup> grade females and 97% of 7<sup>th</sup> grade males report they have not had sexual intercourse. By 12<sup>th</sup> grade, nearly 46% of males and 55% of females report that they have had sex.”

“Of those teens who have engaged in high-risk sexual behavior (including oral sex and/or sexual intercourse), 62% of teens report very low levels of parental monitoring,” reports

Amy Mitchell, Crawford County 4-H Youth Development Agent. “There are steps that parents can take to help monitor their child’s behaviors more closely, including talking to their child about what they are doing, when, with whom and where.”

“The Centers for Disease Control reports that 14.4% of sexually active teens have had sexual intercourse with four or more partners,” reports Pam Hobson, Richland County 4-H Youth Development Agent. “Among the teens surveyed in the SWYS, 25% of sexually active teens report that they have had four or more sexual partners, while 43% of the sexually active teens report having had just one sexual partner.”

“Of the sexually active teens who report their parents are generally consistent in enforcing family rules, one in four have had four or more sexual partners,” says Tom Schmitz, Grant County Youth Development Educator. “Among sexually active teens who report inconsistent family rule enforcement, one in three have had four or more sexual partners. This suggests a relationship between consistent family rule enforcement and fewer sexual partners among sexually active teens.”

“Parents play an important role in instilling morals and values in their children,” says Bev Doll, Grant County Family Living Agent. “By taking an active role in the sexual education of their children, parents not only make sure their teens get the information they need, but parents also show their children they care about how they behave sexually.”

A full report on the SWYS survey results is due out this summer. Potterton, Doll, Hobson, Mitchell and Schmitz are also giving community presentations on the data. For more information on the survey contact your local school district, Potterton at 608-776-4820, Mitchell at 608-326-0223, Hobson at 608-647-6148 or Schmitz and Doll at 608-723-2125.