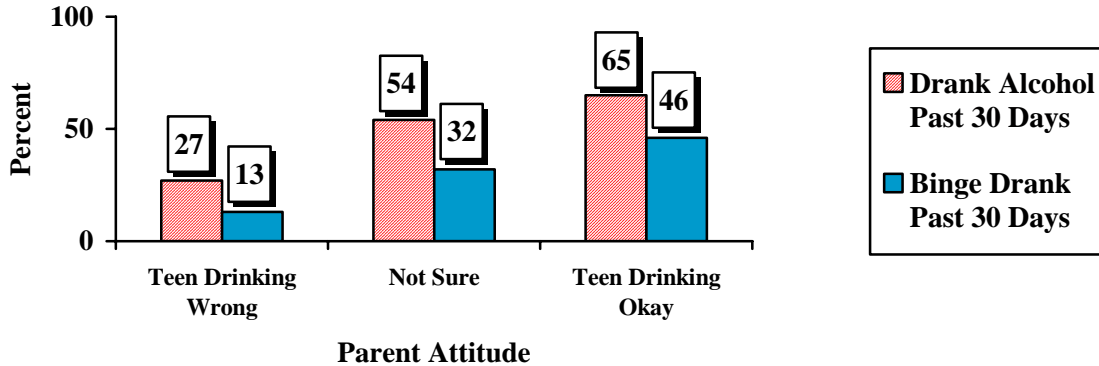


SWYS 2005 NEWS - PARENTS IMPACT TEEN DRINKING

Parent Attitudes and Teen Drinking



Southwest Wisconsin Teens Who Strongly Agree or Agree

Thirty-six percent of 7th through 12th graders in southwest Wisconsin report drinking alcohol in the past 30 days and 22% of teens report drinking on three or more occasions. Of the teens who said that their parents think it is wrong for teens their age to drink, only 27% report drinking alcohol in the past month while 65% of those who say their parents think it is not wrong them teens their age to drink alcohol drank in the past 30 days. The survey also found several ways that parents and families can impact teen alcohol use.

Those 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 as reported by UW-Extension. The school districts of Argyle, Belmont, Benton, Black Hawk, Cassville, Cuba City, Darlington, Fennimore, Iowa-Grant, Ithaca, Lancaster, Platteville, Potosi, River Ridge, and Seneca, surveyed more than 3,700 students 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.

"The survey found that 12% of teens did not know whether their parents thought it was wrong for teens their age to drink alcohol and that these teens behaved much like the teens who say their parents think teen drinking is okay", says Tom Schmitz, Grant County UW-Extension Youth Development Educator. More than half of the teens (54%) that were unsure of their parents' attitudes toward teen drinking drank in the past month.

"We found the same situation when it comes to binge drinking which is defined as having five or more drinks on one occasion", adds Pam Hobson, Richland

County 4-H Youth Development Agent. "Only 13% of the teens whose parents are opposed to teen drinking binge drank in the past 30 days. This compares to 32% of the teens who are unsure of their parents attitudes toward teen drinking and 46% of those whose parents are not opposed to teen drinking."

"Teens whose parents are effective at monitoring them report a lower rate of alcohol use and binge drinking", says Bev Doll, Grant County Family Living Agent. "The study found that two-thirds of the teens with low parental monitoring drank in the past month. Only 30% of the teens who were experiencing high levels of monitoring drank in the past 30 days. Family love and support, eating meals as a family and consistent enforcement of family rules are also linked to lower rates of alcohol use."

One of the many concerns surrounding teen alcohol use is the age at which teens begin drinking. "Just under half of all teens in grades 7-12 report having tried alcohol and of these teens who have tried alcohol 29% of males and 21% of females had their first drink before they reached age 13", reports Jessie Potterton, Lafayette County 4-H Youth Development Educator. "We are also concerned about teen alcohol use and highway safety. We found that nearly one in four 12th graders report drinking and driving in the past 30 days and 24% of all teens report riding with a driver who had been drinking alcohol in the past 30 days."

"Overall 61% of all teens say that it is against their values to drink alcohol while they are a teenager, of these, the teens who strongly agree with this value are less likely teens are to drink", according to Amy Mitchell, Crawford County 4-H Youth Development Agent. "The survey found that 93% of 7th through 12th graders who "strongly agree" that it is against their values to drink as a teen abstained from drinking in the past 30 days while only 72% of those who "agree" were able to abstain. Not surprisingly, only one in four teens who "strongly disagree" that not drinking as a teen was a value they held actually abstained from alcohol use in the past 30 days."

When asked, "where do you usually get the alcohol you drink", one in five teens who drink alcohol say their parents give it to them, one in five get it from an older friend and one in five have someone of legal age buy it for them. About 14% of teens that drink say they usually get alcohol from a same age friend and 8% take it from their parents without their parents' permission.

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

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