

Chapter 9 – Family Relationships

Although studies do show family structure as a risk factor for teens to engage in risky behaviors at an early age, family communication and support are key factors in early prevention. Teens are at higher risk in a non-traditional family because of the stresses of instability in the home.^{1,2} Supportive parents are linked to higher adolescent self esteem; conversely lack of support is linked to substance abuse and delinquent behavior.²

Research has also shown that parents who have good communication, positive mental health, household routines, quality time together, involvement, monitoring and supervision are key in the healthy lifestyles of their children.^{1,3} A study conducted by the institute for Youth Development illustrated that youth need and want direction, discipline, support and love from their parents; they rely on their parents' guidance and support over other supporters in their lives. These connections that are built help protect teens from becoming involved with alcohol, drugs, sex, tobacco and violence. Parental monitoring is one key factor in communication and prevention of those risky behaviors. This includes being physically present at key times, have high expectations, know your teens parents and ask where they are going.^{2,3}

In Wisconsin 88% of you reported they have families who give them love and support.⁴

This chapter examines issues related to parent-child relationships. More specifically highlighting:

- What parenting practices do teens perceive their parents utilize?
- How do these parenting practices relate to teen behavior?
- How often do teens and parents discuss issues of importance to teens?

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration. *U.S. Teens in Our World* Rockville, Maryland: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003.

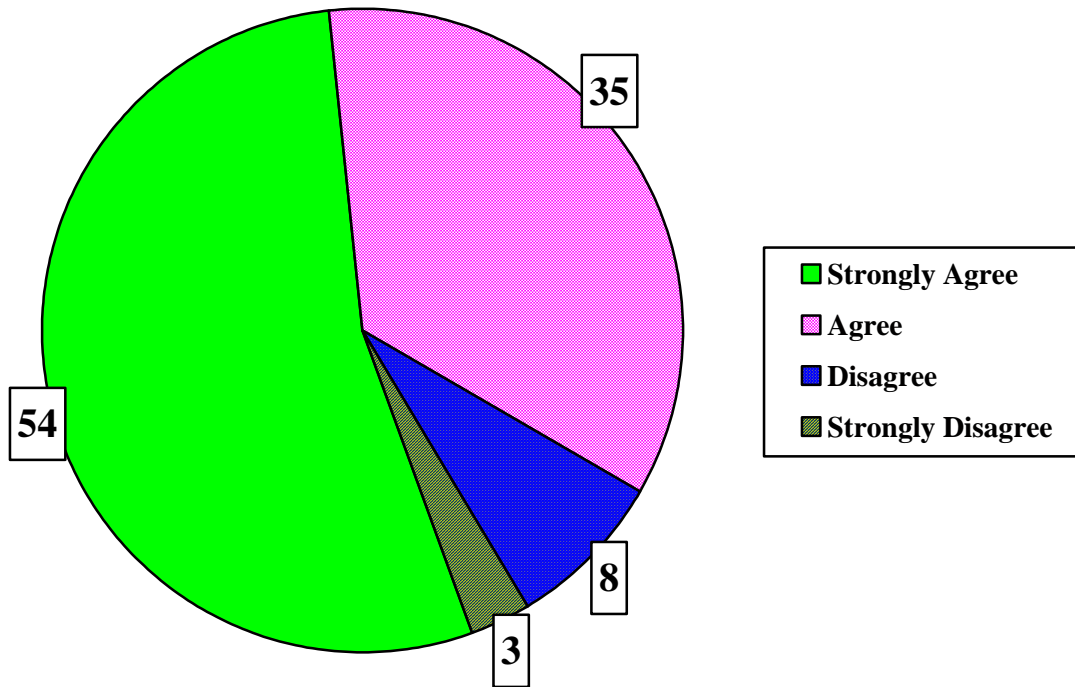
² Parker, Jennifer S. & Benson, Mark J. (2004) parent-Adolescent Relations and Adolescent Functioning: Self-Esteem, Substance Abuse and Delinquency. *Adolescence* 39,519-530.

³ Smith, Shephaer. (2003) Parenting and Youth Risk Behavior. *The Youth Connection* (Nov/Dec) 2.

⁴ Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Executive Summary and Report (2005).

FAMILY LOVE AND SUPPORT

Teen's responses to the statement "My family loves me and gives me support when I need it."



Key Findings:

Fifty-five percent (54%) of teens "strongly agree" with the statement "my family loves me and gives me support when I need it."

Slightly more than one in ten (11%) teens do not agree with the statement, "my family loves me and gives me support when I need it."

Other Notable Findings:

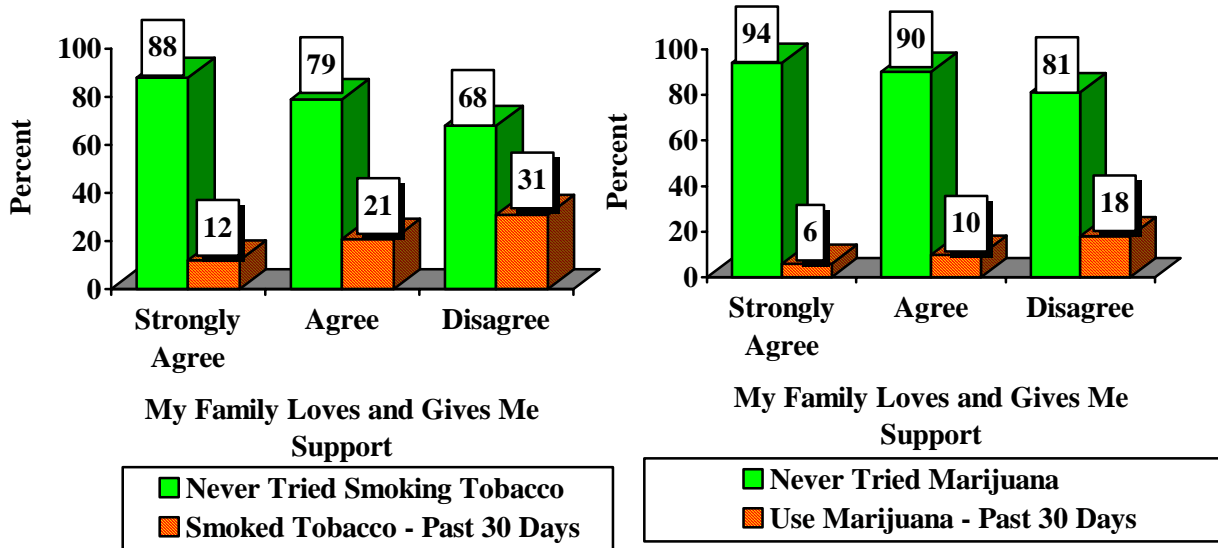
Eleven percent (11%) of females and 10% of males do not agree with the statement, "my family loves me and gives me support when I need it." Thirteen percent (13%) of 10th grade females disagree with the statement.

The percentage of males who "strongly agree" that their family loves them and gives them support when they need it; declines from 63% in 7th grade to 42% in 12th grade.

The percentage of females who "strongly agree" declines from 65% in 7th grade to 49% in 10th grade, and then rises to 55% & 53% in 11th & 12th grades.

FAMILY LOVE AND SUPPORT vs ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUG USE

Teen responses to the statement “*My family loves me and gives me support when I need it?*” compared with tobacco and marijuana experimentation and use.



Key Finding:

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of teens that “*strongly agree*” with the statement “*my family loves me and gives support when I need it*” report that they have never tried smoking tobacco and 94% report never having tried marijuana.

Other Notable Findings:

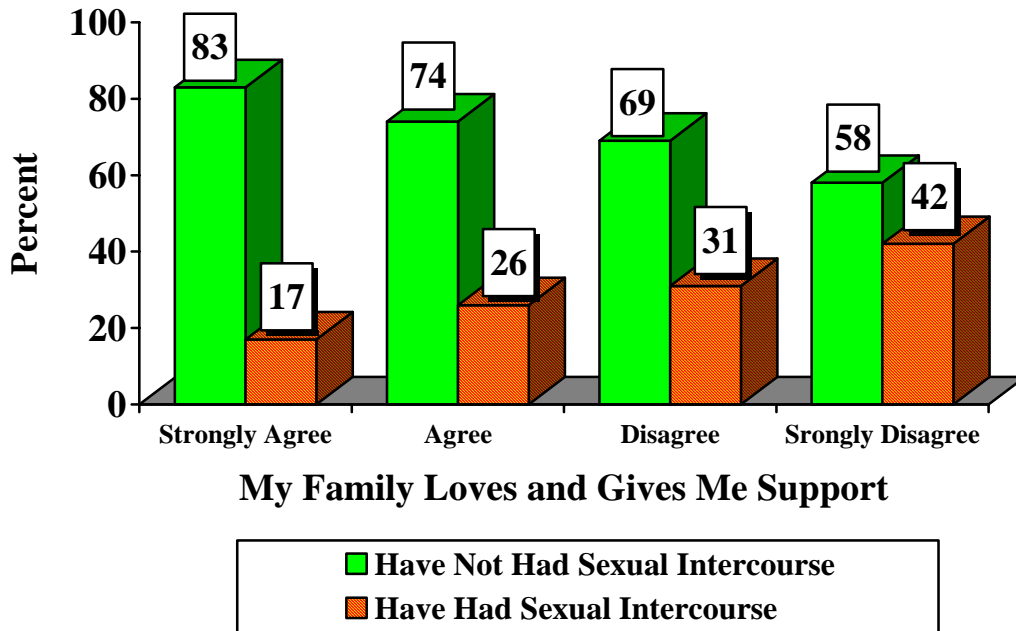
Of the teens who “*strongly agree*” that their families love them and give them support when they need it, 71% had not used alcohol in the past 30 days, and 85% had not binge drank in the past month.

Of the teens who “*agree*” that their families love them and give them support when they need it, 60% had not used alcohol in the past 30 days, and 76% did not binge drink in the past month.

Of the teens who “*strongly disagree*” or “*disagree*” that their families love them and give them support when they need it, 47% had not used alcohol in the past 30 days, and 63% did not binge drink in the past month.

FAMILY LOVE AND SUPPORT vs SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

Teen responses to the statement “*My family loves me and gives me support when I need it*” compared with sexual intercourse.



Key Findings:

Eighty-three percent (83%) of the teens that “*strongly agree*” with the statement “*my family loves me and gives support when I need it*” report that they have never had sexual intercourse.

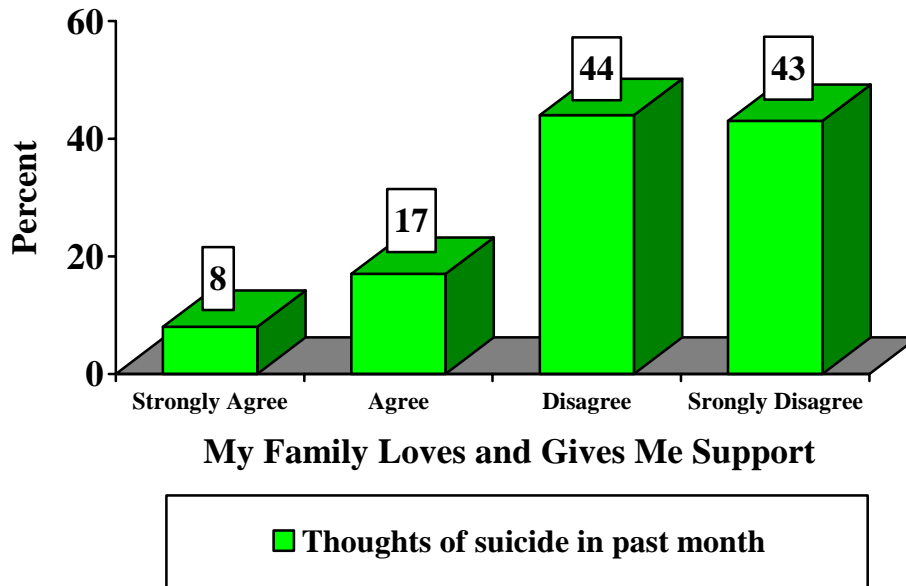
Seventy-four percent (74%) of the teens that “*agree*” with the statement “*my family loves me and gives support when I need it*” report that they have never had sexual intercourse.

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the teens that “*disagree*” with the statement “*my family loves me and gives support when I need it*” report that they have never had sexual intercourse.

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the teens that “*strongly disagree*” with the statement “*my family loves me and gives support when I need it*” report that they have never had sexual intercourse.

FAMILY LOVE AND SUPPORT VS. THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE IN THE LAST MONTH

Teen responses to the statement *“My family loves me and gives me support when I need it”* compared with *“in the past month have you thought about killing yourself once in a while, some of the time, most of the time or all of the time.”*



Key Findings:

Forty-four percent (44%) of teens who *“disagree”* and 43% who *“strongly disagree”* with the statement *“My family loves me and gives me support when I need it”* have *“thought about killing themselves during the past month once in a while, some of the time, most of the time or all of the time.”*

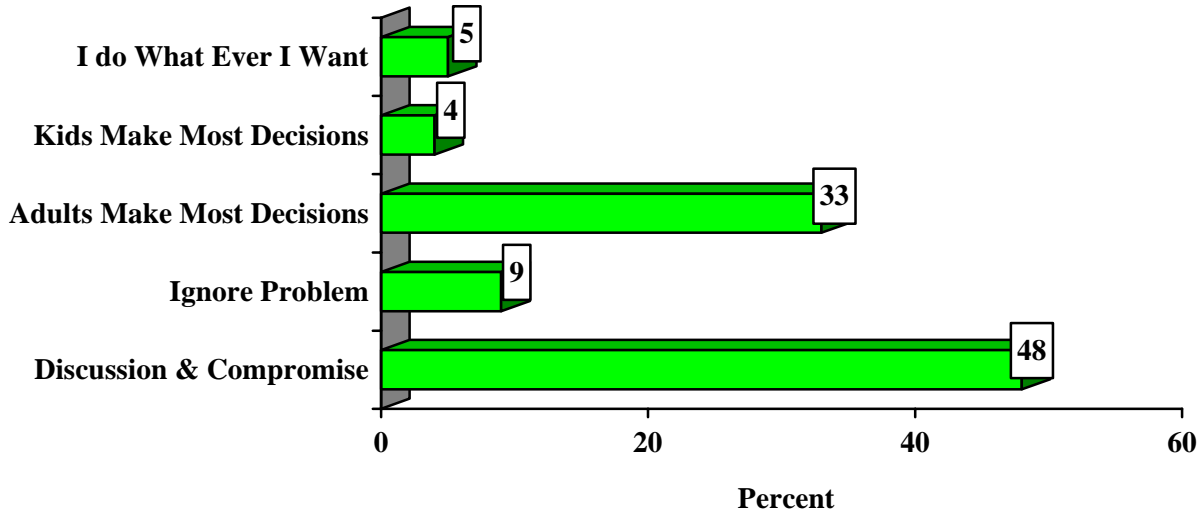
Eight percent (8%) of the teens who *“strongly agree”* with the statement *“My family loves me and gives me support when I need it”* have *“thought about killing themselves during the past month once in a while, some of the time, most of the time or all of the time.”*

Other Notable Finding:

Over half (54%) of teens who *“disagree”* or *“strongly disagree”* with the statement *“My family loves me and gives me support when I need it”* responded they have thoughts about killing themselves during the past month *“all of the time”*.

HOW FAMILIES SOLVE PROBLEMS

Teen responses to the question “*how does your family most often solve problems?*”



How Families Solve Problems

Key Findings:

Almost half (48%) of teens say that family problems are solved through “*discussion and compromise.*”

Nine percent (9%) of teens say that family problems are “*ignored.*”

A third of teens (33%) respond that “*adults make most of the decisions*” when there is a family problem.

Other Notable Finding:

Male (50%) teens are slightly more likely to report that their family solves problems by “*discussion and compromise*” than female (46%) teens.

PARENTAL MONITORING

Teen responses to questions regarding how often the following are true for them:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
My parent(s) know where I am and what I'm doing after school.	6%	5%	11%	77%
If I am going to be home late, I am expected to call my parent(s) to let them know.	9%	6%	13%	72%
When I go out at night, my parent(s) know where I am, and who I going to be with.	5%	6%	16%	72%
My parent(s) know who my friends are.	4%	5%	14%	76%
My parent(s) know the parents of my friends.	6%	9%	26%	57%
My parents(s) know what internet sites I visit.	15%	16%	24%	46%
My parent(s) know how I spend my money.	7%	11%	25%	55%

Key Findings:

Seventy-six percent (76%) teens say their parents “often” know who their friends are.

Seventy-two (72%) of teens say they “often” tell their parents whom they are going out with and where they’re going before they go out, and 77% of teens say their parents “often” know where they are and what they are doing after school.

Fifty-five percent (55%) of teens say their parents “often” know how they spend their money.

Less than 50% of teens say their parents “often” know what Internet sites they visit.

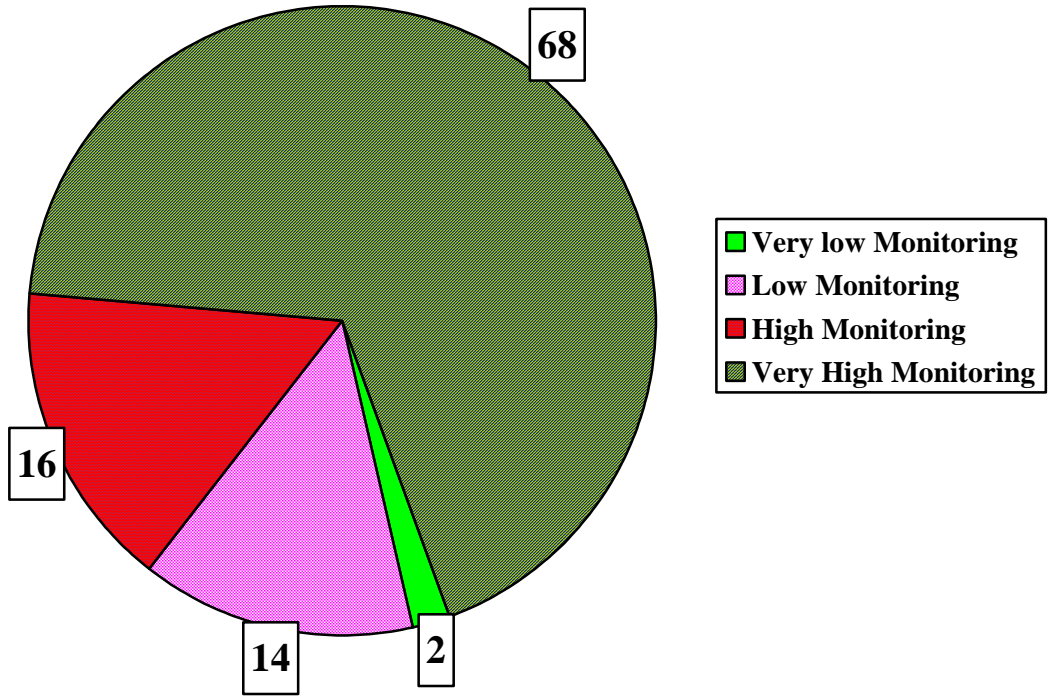
Other Notable Findings:

For each question, a higher percentage of females than males responded “often”.

Ten percent (10%) of 7th grade males and 5% of 7th grade females say their parents never know where they are or what they are doing after school.

PARENTAL MONITORING SCALE

The Parental Monitoring scale summed the responses from the questions found on the previous page. Higher scores correspond to teen’s responding their parents had a greater awareness of the teen’s ongoing behaviors.



Key Findings:

Based on teen’s perceptions, 68% of teens have parent(s) who monitor them at a “*very high*” level and another 16% have parent(s) who practice a “*high*” level of parental monitoring.

The remaining 16% of teens have parent(s) who practice a “*low*” (14%) or “*very low*” (2%) level of parental monitoring.

Other Notable Findings:

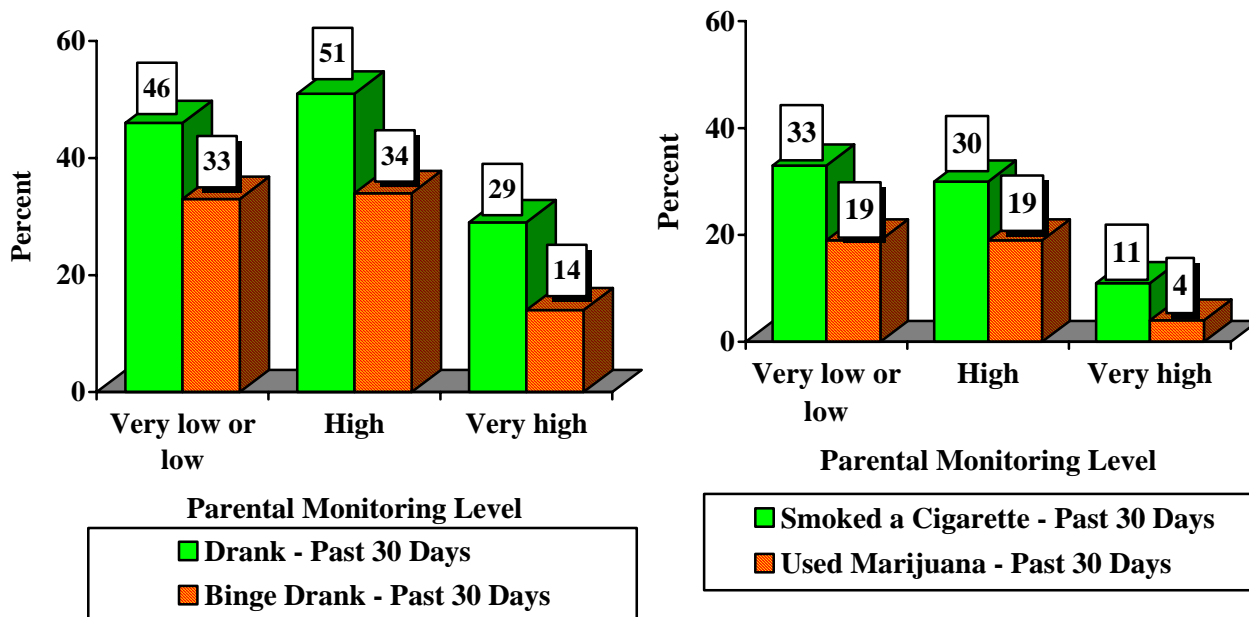
Seventy-three percent (73%) of females and 62% of males have parent(s) who practice “*very high*” levels of parental monitoring.

Three percent (3%) of males and 1% females have parent(s) who practice “*very low*” parental monitoring.

Eighteen percent (18%) of males and 11% of females have parent(s) who practice “*low*” parental monitoring.

PARENTAL MONITORING vs ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUG USE

Parental monitoring scores compared with alcohol, cigarette, marijuana use and binge drinking (five or more drinks on one occasion) in the past month.



Key Finding:

Teens whose parents practice “very high” levels of parental monitoring report significantly lower levels of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs use than their peers.

Forty-six percent (46%) of teens whose parent(s) practice “very low” or “low” levels of parental monitoring report that they drank alcohol in the past 30 days.

Only 14% of teens whose parent(s) practice “very high” levels of parental monitoring report that they binge drank in the past month.

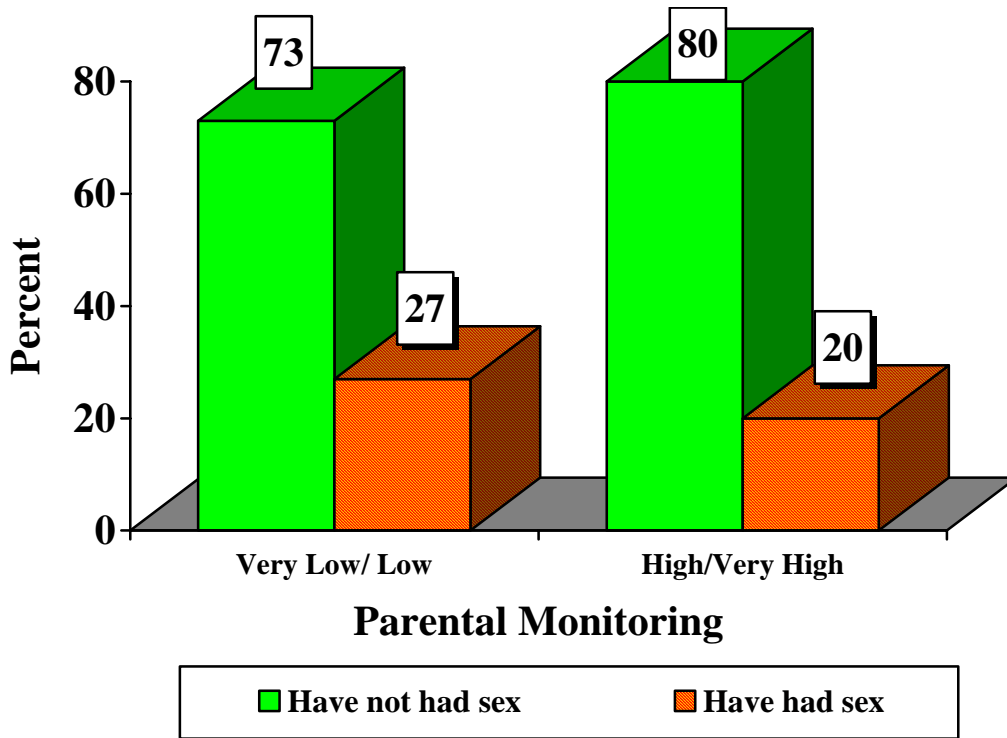
Other Notable Findings:

Eighty-nine percent (89%) of teens who’s parent(s) practice “very high” levels of parental monitoring have never tried smoking tobacco, 96% have never tried marijuana, and 90% have never used someone else’s prescription drug.

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of teens who’s parent(s) practice “very low” or “low” levels of parental monitoring have never tried smoking tobacco, 81% have never tried marijuana, and 80% have never used someone else’s prescription drug.

PARENTAL MONITORING vs SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

Parental monitoring scores compared with sexual intercourse.



Key Findings:

Eighty percent (80%) of teens whose parent(s) practice “*high or very high*” parental monitoring have not had sexual intercourse.

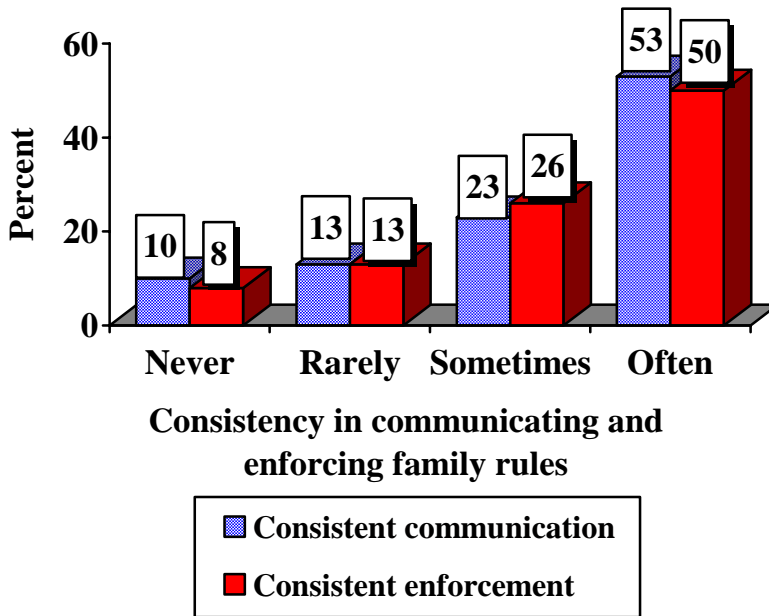
Seventy-three percent (73%) of teens whose parent(s) practice “*very low*” or “*low*” parental monitoring have not had sexual intercourse.

Other Notable Finding:

Eighty-three percent (83%) of teens whose parent(s) practice “*very high*” parental monitoring have not had sexual intercourse.

COMMUNICATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF CONSEQUENCES FOR BREAKING FAMILY RULES:

Teen’s responses to the questions “*How often is the following true – my parents make sure I know ahead of time what the consequences will be if I break one of their rules*” and “*my parents enforce consequences when rules are broken at home?*”



Key Findings:

Fifty-three percent (53%) of teens say their parents “*often*” make sure they know ahead of time what the consequences will be if they break one of their parents rules.

Fifty percent (50%) of teens say their parents “*often*” enforce consequences when rules are broken at home.

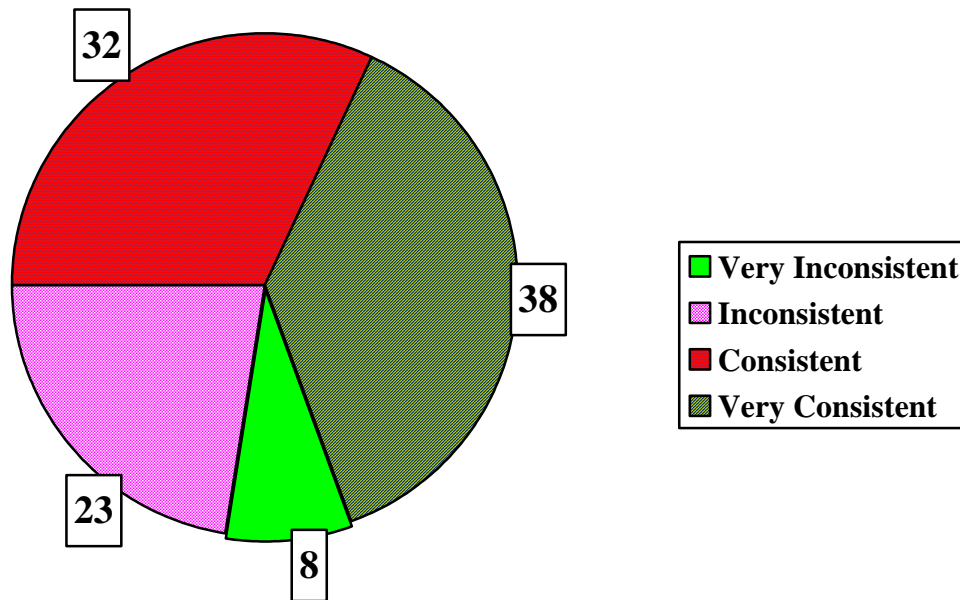
Other Notable Findings:

Sixty-eight percent (68%) of 7th grade males and 67% of 7th grade females say their parents “*often*” make sure they know ahead of time what the consequences will be if they break one of their parents rules. Only 41% of 12th grade males and 47% of 12th grade females say this is true.

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of 7th grade males and 62% of 7th grade females say their parents “*often*” enforce consequences when rules are broken at home. Only 34% of 12th grade males and 47% of 12th females say this is true.

FAMILY RULES SCALE

The Family Rules Scale measured teen’s perception of their parents’ communication and enforcement of consequences for violating family rules. Based on the questions found on the previous page, higher scores correspond to greater consistency in communication and enforcement of consequences for violating house rules.



Key Findings:

Based on teens’ perceptions, 38% of teens have parents who practice “*very consistent*” levels of communicating and enforcing consequences for violating house rules and another 32% practice “*consistent*” levels of communicating and enforcing consequences for violating family rules.

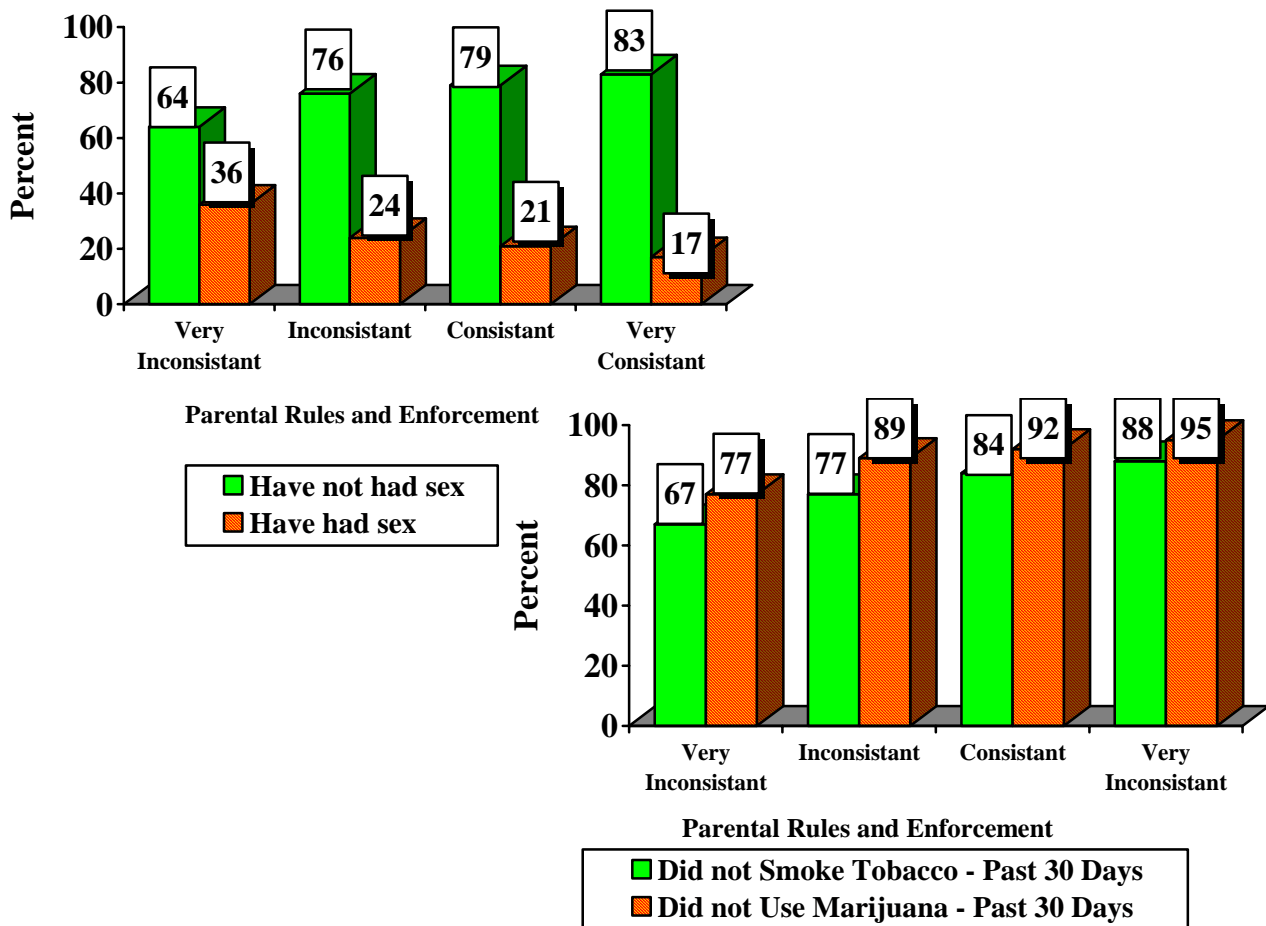
Other Notable Findings:

The percent of males who report their parents practicing a “*very consistent*” level of consistency with family rules drops from 67% in 7th grade to 37% for 12th grade. For females the percent drops from 64% in 7th grade to 47% in 12th grade.

Sixty-four percent (64%) of teens whose parents practice a “*very consistent*” level of consistency with family rules feel their family loves them and gives them support. For teens whose parents practice “*very inconsistent*” rules the percent drops to 39% who feel their family loves them and gives support.

FAMILY RULES vs SELECTED TEEN BEHAVIORS

Scores on Family Rules Scale compared with sexual intercourse, tobacco and marijuana use.



Key Findings:

Eighty-three percent (83%) of teens whose parents practice “*very consistent*” levels of communication and enforcement of consequences for violating family rules have not had sexual intercourse. Eighty-eight percent (88%) did not smoke tobacco in the past 30 days, and 95% didn’t use marijuana in the past 30 days.

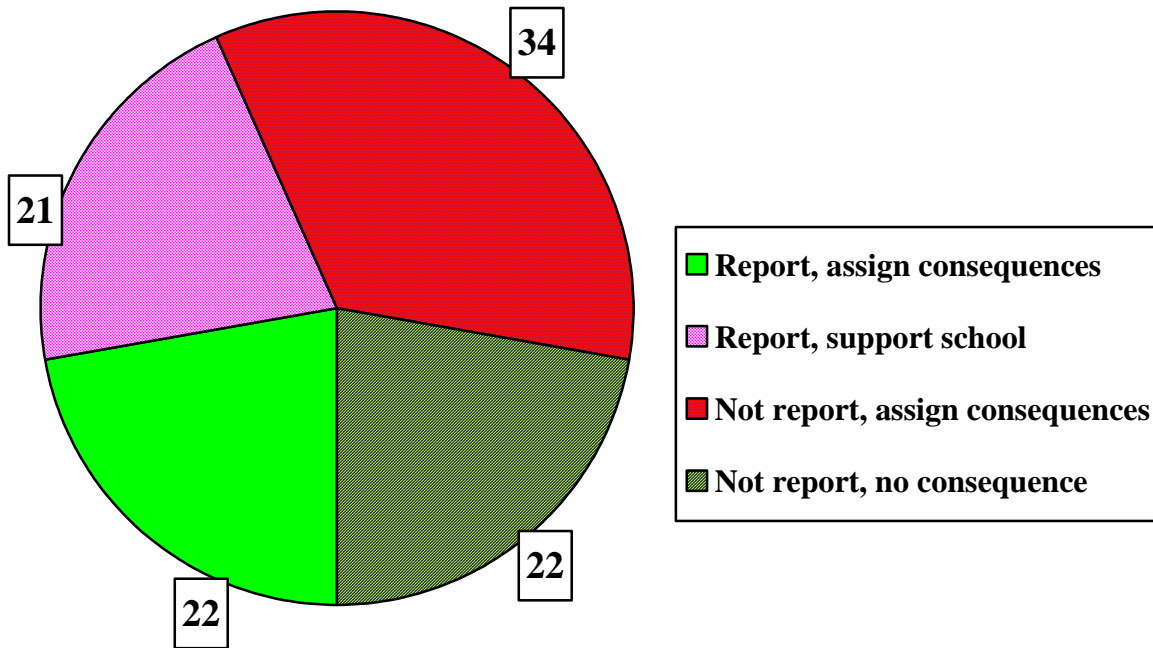
Other Notable Findings:

Ninety-five percent (95%) of teens whose parents practice “*very consistent*” levels of communication and enforcement of consequences for violating family rules have never tried marijuana and 73% have never tried alcohol.

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of teens whose parents practice a “*very inconsistent*” level of communication and enforcement of consequences for violating family rules have never tried marijuana and 50% have never tried alcohol.

PARENTAL REPORTING OF SCHOOL CODE VIOLATIONS

Teen responses to the question “If you violated a school code and your parents found out, what would they most likely do?” by percent.



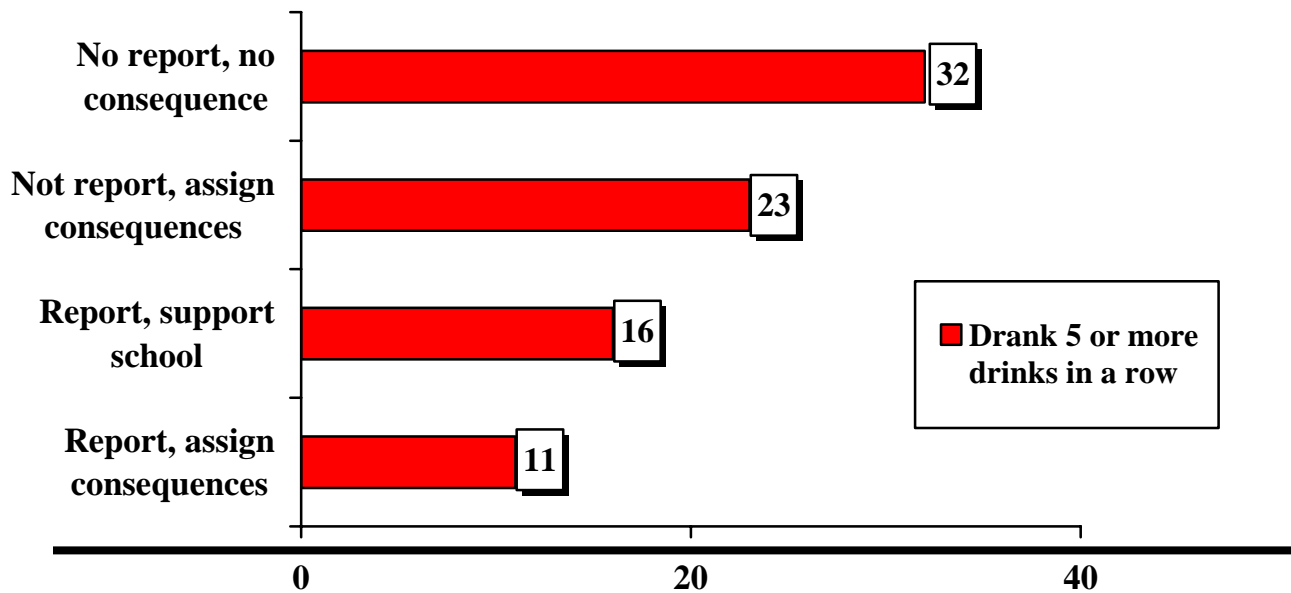
Key Findings:

When asked, “if you violated a school code (behavior, academic, athletic or activity) and your parents found out, what would they most likely do?”

- 22% report their parents would not report them to school officials or assign consequences for their behavior,
- 34% report their parents would not report them to school officials but would assign consequences for their behavior privately,
- 21% report their parents would report them to school officials and support the consequences assigned by the school, and
- 22% report their parents would report them to school officials and assign additional consequences.

REPORTING OF SCHOOL CODE VIOLATIONS vs SELECTED TEEN BEHAVIORS

Parental reporting of school code violations compared with binge drinking in the past month.



Key Findings:

About one in three (32%) teens that say their parents “*would not report them to school official or assign any consequences for their behavior*” if they violated a school code, binge drank in the past month. Twenty-three percent (23%) of teens that say their parents would “*not report them to school officials but would assign consequences,*” binge drank in the past month.

Sixteen percent (16%) teens that say their parents would report them to school officials but not assign consequences for their behavior if they violated a school code, binge drank in the past month. Eleven percent (11%) of teens that say their parents would report them to school officials and assign additional consequences; binge drank in the past month.

Other Notable Findings:

Of the teens that say their parents would “*not report them for school code violations but would assign consequences at home,*” 9% have used marijuana in the past 30 days, and 26% have had sexual intercourse.

Of the teens that say their parents would “*report them for school code violations but would not assign consequences at home,*” 16% have had sexual intercourse.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Teen responses to questions about how often in the past year have they had a good talk with their mother/father regarding the following topics:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Mother – <i>Risks of drinking or taking drugs</i>	39%	25%	22%	11%
Father – <i>Risks of drinking or taking drugs</i>	50%	23%	16%	10%
Mother – <i>Dating & sex, birth control, & dangers & risk of STDs/STIs, AIDS, or HIV</i>	40%	24%	21%	14%
Father – <i>Dating & sex, birth control, & dangers & risk of STDs/STIs, AIDS, or HIV Sex</i>	57%	21%	12%	9%
Mother – <i>Job or education plans after high school</i>	22%	17%	28%	31%
Father – <i>Job or education plans after high school</i>	34%	26%	24%	22%
Mother – <i>Personal problems</i>	33%	24%	23%	19%
Father – <i>Personal problems</i>	49%	22%	17%	10%

Responses include only teens with an adult male/adult female in the home.

Key Findings:

For every topic, a higher percentage of teens report having had “frequent” talks with their mother than with their father in the past year.

Other Notable Findings:

More females than males report having “frequent” talks with their mother in the past year on every topic.

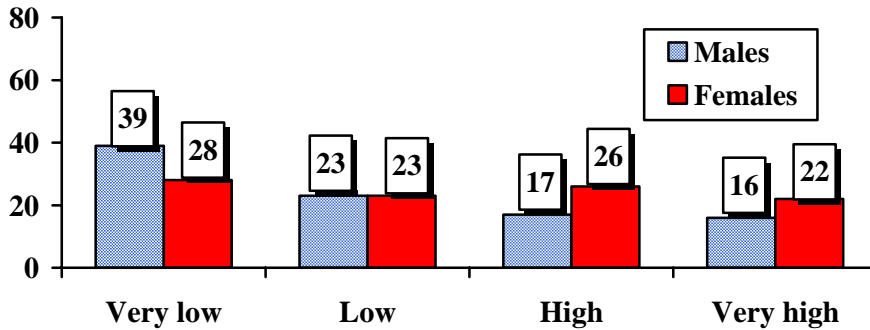
More males than females report having “frequent” talks with their father in the past year on every topic.

More teens report having “frequent” talks “sometimes” or “often” with their mother and father in the past year on plans after High School and personal problems; than issues such as drugs, sex, birth control, or STD’s.

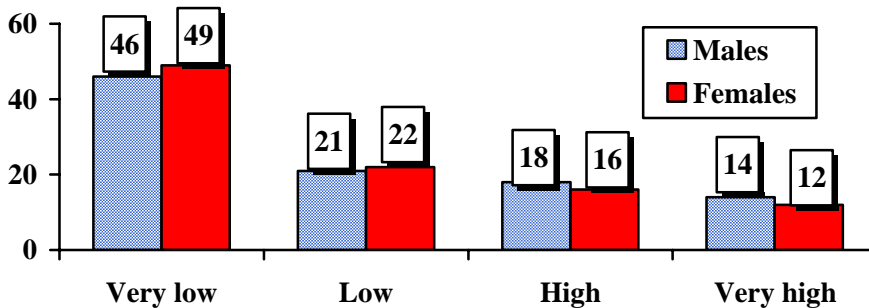
PARENTAL COMMUNICATION SCALES

The overall parental communications scale sums the responses for fathers and mothers using the questions on the previous page. Higher scores relate to higher levels of communication between the parent and teen.

Communication with mother



Communication with father



Key Findings:

Twenty-two percent (22%) of females and 16% of males report “*very high*” levels of communication with their mother and 14% of males and 12% of females report “*very high*” levels of communication with their father.

Other Notable Finding:

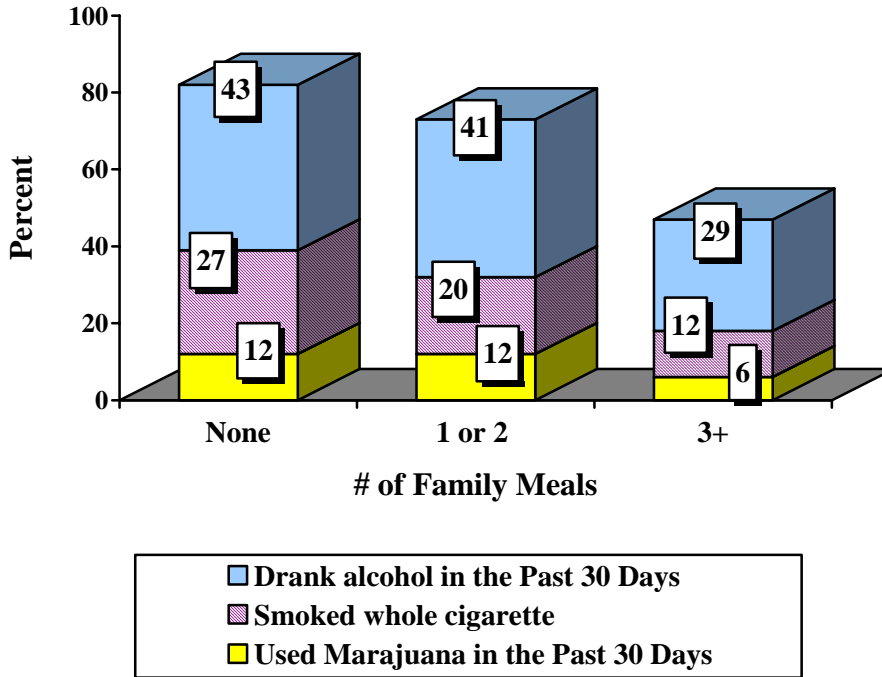
Overall, mothers score higher than fathers on the communication scale.

Overall, 34% of mothers and 48% of fathers rate “*very low*” on the communication scale.

Overall parental communication has increased in comparison to the 2001 SWYS by 7%.

EATING FAMILY MEALS TOGETHER vs. TEEN BEHAVIORS

Teen responses to the question “*how many nights a week do you eat as a family*” compared to selected teen behaviors.



Key Findings:

Of the teens that responded “*none*” to the question, “*how many nights a week do you eat as a family*”: 43% reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days, 27% reported smoking a whole cigarette, 12% reported using Marijuana in the past 30 days.

Of the teens that responded “*3 or more*” to the question, “*how many nights a week do you eat as a family*”: 29% reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days, 12% reported smoking a whole cigarette, 6% reported using Marijuana in the past 30 days.

Other Notable Finding:

Ninety-three percent (93%) of teens that reported “*eating three or more meals as a family*” had not used marijuana in the last 30 days.

Eighty-seven percent (87%) of teens that reported “*eating three or more meals as a family*” had not smoked a whole cigarette in the last 30 days.

Seventh - ninth grade teens (56%) report “*eating three or more meals with their family*” more often than 10th – 12th grade teens (42%).