

The NSDUH Report

May 28, 2009

Parental Involvement in Preventing Youth Substance Use

In Brief

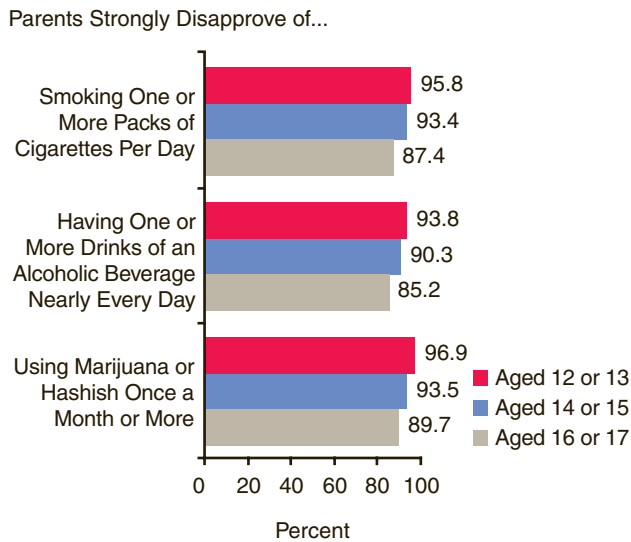
- In 2007, most youths aged 12 to 17 believed that their parents would strongly disapprove of their having one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day (89.6 percent), smoking one or more packs of cigarettes per day (92.1 percent), and using marijuana or hashish once a month or more (93.3 percent)
- The majority of youths indicated that their parents were involved in their day-to-day activities; for example, 86.2 percent said their parents always or sometimes let them know when they had done a good job, and 80.9 percent of those who were in school said their parents always or sometimes provided help with homework
- Youths' perceptions of parental disapproval of their substance use as well as parental involvement generally decreased with age; for example, 95.8 percent of 12 or 13 year olds compared with 93.4 percent of 14 or 15 year olds and 87.4 percent of 16 or 17 year olds thought their parents would strongly disapprove of their smoking one or more packs of cigarettes per day

Preventing youth substance use requires a comprehensive approach involving communities, schools, peers, and families. Research indicates that parents are an influential factor in whether youths use alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs.^{1,2,3,4} Expression of disapproval of substance use and engagement in their children's day-to-day activities are key tools parents can use to help to protect their children against substance use. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) can help to shed light on youths' perceptions of parental disapproval of substance use as well as parental involvement in the day-to-day activities of their children. All findings presented in this report are based on 2007 NSDUH data.

Perceived Parental Disapproval of Substance Use

Most youths aged 12 to 17 believed that their parents would strongly disapprove of their using substances. In 2007, 89.6 percent thought their parents would strongly disapprove of their having one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day, and 92.1 percent thought their parents would strongly disapprove of their smoking one or more packs of cigarettes per day. Also, 93.3 percent thought their parents would strongly disapprove of their using marijuana or hashish once a month or more.

Figure 1. Youths' Perceptions That Their Parents Would Strongly Disapprove of Their Substance Use, by Age Group: 2007



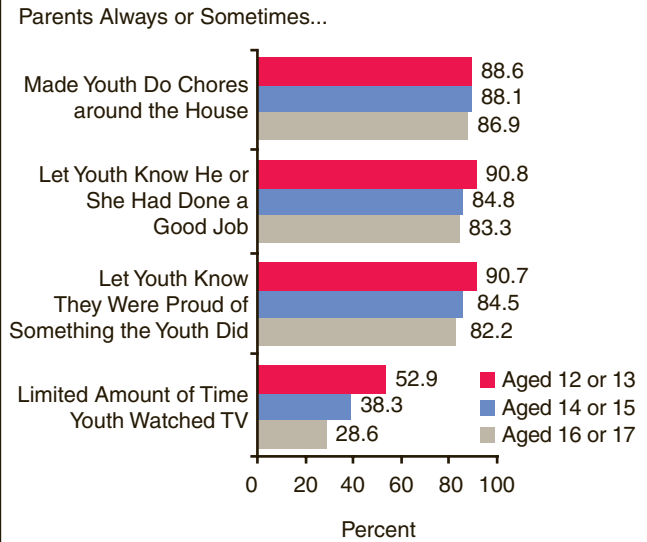
Source: 2007 SAMHSA National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).

Youths' perceptions that their parents would strongly disapprove of their substance use varied by age and gender. Perceptions of parental disapproval generally decreased with age (Figure 1). For example, 95.8 percent of youths aged 12 or 13 thought their parents would strongly disapprove of their smoking one or more packs of cigarettes per day compared with 93.4 percent of those aged 14 or 15 and 87.4 percent of those aged 16 or 17. Females were more likely than males to think that their parents would strongly disapprove of their smoking one or more packs of cigarettes per day (92.6 vs. 91.6 percent) and of their drinking an alcoholic beverage nearly every day (90.4 vs. 88.8 percent). There was no difference by gender in perceptions of parental disapproval of using marijuana or hashish once a month or more.

Parental Involvement

The majority of youths indicated that their parents were involved in their day-to-day activities. Over four fifths (85.7 percent) said that their parents always or sometimes let them know they were proud of something they had done, and 86.2 percent said that their parents always or sometimes let them know when they had done a good job; 87.8 percent said that their parents always or sometimes made them do chores around the house. Fewer youths said their parents always or sometimes limited the amount of time they watched TV (39.7 percent). Among youths enrolled in school in the past year, 80.9 percent said their parents always or sometimes provided

Figure 2. Youths' Perceptions That Their Parents Always or Sometimes Took Part in Specific Behaviors in the Past Year, by Age Group: 2007



Source: 2007 SAMHSA National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).

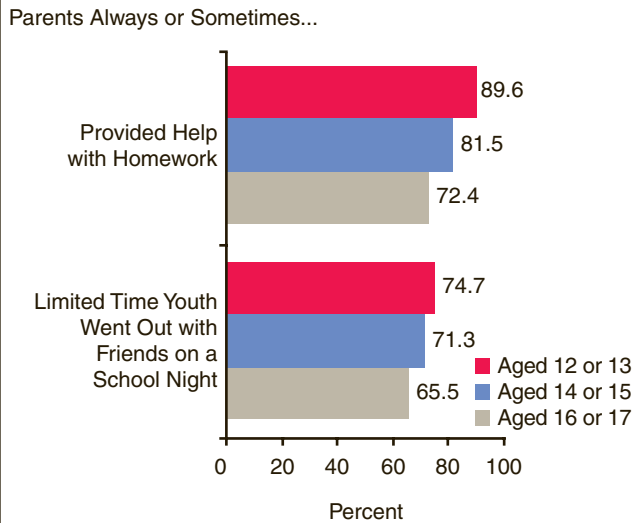
help with homework, and 70.4 percent indicated that their parents always or sometimes limited their time out with friends on school nights.

Perceptions of parental involvement also varied by age and gender. Younger youths were generally more likely than their older counterparts to indicate parental involvement (Figures 2 and 3). For example, 90.7 percent of those aged 12 or 13 felt that their parents always or sometimes let them know they were proud of something they had done compared with 84.5 percent of those aged 14 or 15 and 82.2 percent of those aged 16 or 17. Males were more likely than females to think that their parents always or sometimes let them know they had done a good job (87.7 vs. 84.6 percent) and to let them know they were proud of something they had done (87.2 vs. 84.2 percent) (Figure 4). Among those enrolled in school in the past year, males were more likely than females to report that their parents always or sometimes provided help with homework (82.6 vs. 79.1 percent), but males were less likely than females to report that their parents always or sometimes limited their time out with friends on a school night (68.7 vs. 72.1 percent) (Figure 5).

Discussion

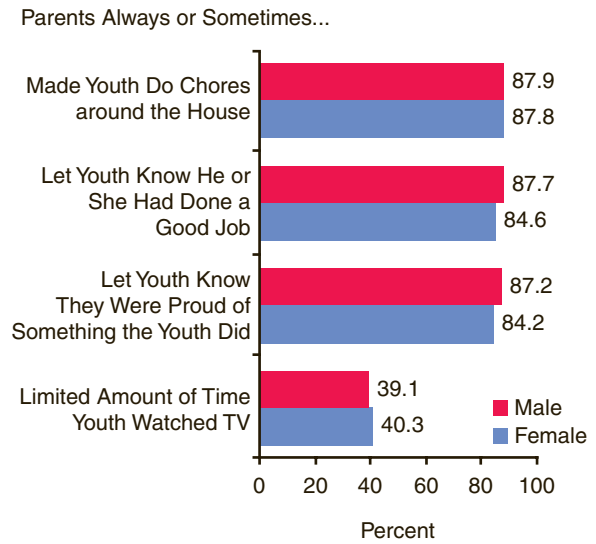
Families, peers, schools, and communities are all key components in substance use prevention among youths. Previous research shows that youths who perceive that their parents disapprove of substance use and who report that their parents are involved in their day-to-day activities are less likely than those who do

Figure 3. Youths' Perceptions That Their Parents Always or Sometimes Took Part in Specific Behaviors in the Past Year among Those Who Were Enrolled in School in the Past Year, by Age Group: 2007



Source: 2007 SAMHSA National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).

Figure 4. Youths' Perceptions That Their Parents Always or Sometimes Took Part in Specific Behaviors in the Past Year, by Gender: 2007



Source: 2007 SAMHSA National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).

not to use alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs.^{1,2,3,4} Parents need to understand that they are an integral and effective part of substance use prevention. Findings in this report suggest that most parents do clearly express their disapproval of youth substance use and are actively engaged in the day-to-day life of their children. However, these data also indicate that perceived disapproval of youth substance use and parental involvement are more prevalent for younger than for older youths.

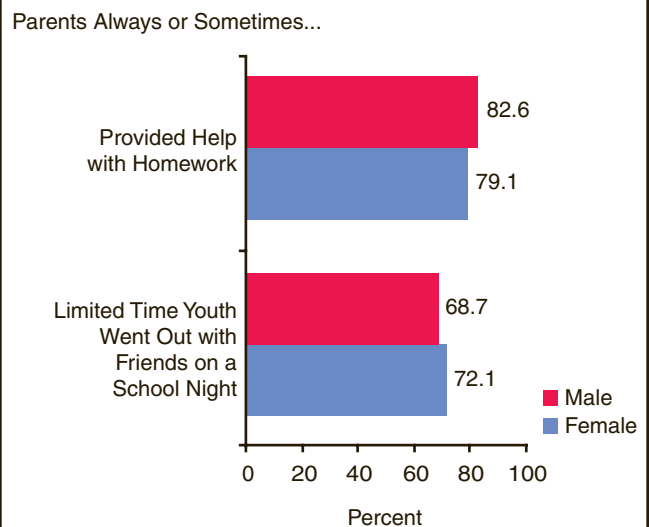
End Notes

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- Sale, E., Sambrano, S., Springer, J. F., & Turner, C. W. (2003). Risk, protection, and substance use in adolescents: A multi-site model. *Journal of Drug Education, 33*, 91-105.
- Guo, J., Hill, K. G., Hawkins, J. D., Catalano, R. F., & Abbott, R. D. (2002). A developmental analysis of sociodemographic, family, and peer effects on adolescent illicit drug initiation. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 41*, 838-845.

Suggested Citation

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Figure 5. Youths' Perceptions That Their Parents Always or Sometimes Took Part in Specific Behaviors in the Past Year among Those Who Were Enrolled in School in the Past Year, by Gender: 2007



Source: 2007 SAMHSA National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH).

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Research findings from the SAMHSA 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

Parental Involvement in Preventing Youth Substance Use

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- The majority of youths indicated that their parents were involved in their day-to-day activities; for example, 86.2 percent said their parents always or sometimes let them know when they had done a good job, and 80.9 percent of those who were in school said their parents always or sometimes provided help with homework
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The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The 2007 data used in this report are based on information obtained from 22,433 youths aged 12 to 17. The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their place of residence.

The NSDUH Report is prepared by the Office of Applied Studies (OAS), SAMHSA, and by RTI International in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. (RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.)

Information on the most recent NSDUH is available in the following publication: Office of Applied Studies. (2008). *Results from the 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 08-4343, NSDUH Series H-34). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Also available online: <http://oas.samhsa.gov>.



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