

Parents • 2003

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Our Mission

Each year in America, millions of children are faced with a decision – a decision about using drugs. Our job is to help children make the right choice.

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America® (PDFA) is a coalition of communications professionals – from advertising, the media industry, public relations, research companies, actors guilds and production companies – dedicated to one mission: *to help kids and teens reject substance abuse by influencing attitudes through persuasive information.* Our mission unfolds primarily in the form of a research-based national advertising campaign, now in its 16th year, created by hundreds of volunteers who comprise the Partnership.

With a diversity of private sector funders supporting our work, the Partnership is beholden to no special interest, has no political agenda and supports no commercial concern. Our singular concern is reducing drug use among children.

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America® Today

A pioneer in the field of consumer social marketing, the Partnership for a Drug-Free America® (PDFA) is perhaps best known for its national advertising campaign. The Partnership's more than 15 years of experience and its national model have become the foundation on which similar and larger issue-oriented media campaigns have been built.

The Partnership is comprised of a small staff and hundreds of volunteers from

the communications industry who create and disseminate the organization's advertising. Advertising agencies create Partnership messages pro-bono; talent unions permit their members to work for free; production professionals bring Partnership messages to life; a network of advertising professionals distribute the group's work to national and local media; public relations firms lend services to various Partnership projects; and media companies donate valuable broadcast time and print space to deliver Partnership messages to millions of Americans.

The organization began in 1986 with seed money provided by the American Association of Advertising Agencies. Today, the Partnership receives major funding from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and support from more than 200 corporations and companies. PDFA accepts no funding from manufacturers of alcohol and/or tobacco products. PDFA's first ad appeared in March 1987; the campaign is now the largest public service media campaign in advertising history.

The Partnership is now participating in an unprecedented public/private marketing effort – the largest ever undertaken in the United States – that is redefining public service advertising. Backed by an average annual appropriation of about \$183 million¹ and with bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign has become the centerpiece of the country's efforts to

¹ 1998 appropriation: \$195 million; 1999 appropriation: \$185 million; 2000 appropriation: \$185 million; 2001 appropriation: \$185 million; 2002 appropriation \$180 million; 2003 appropriation \$170 million.

reduce demand for illegal drugs. Rolled out nationally in July 1998, the effort is taking several directions, but at its core the campaign is tapping into the enormous power of mass media through the Partnership's national advertising campaign. The bulk of federal monies appropriated for this program were specifically earmarked for the one thing that eluded PDFA's campaign in the early and mid-1990s – consistent, targeted and optimal national media exposure for anti-drug advertising.

The Partnership, which receives no funding for its role in this campaign, is the primary provider of advertising to this federally-backed effort. The advertising industry – which is and has been the heart and soul of the Partnership – continues to create our messages for free.

The campaign is being coordinated by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) in cooperation with PDFA. Working with ONDCP and Congress, the campaign is commanding as much exposure as many leading commercial advertisers, and returning outstanding value to U.S. taxpayers. For every dollar the government spends on media exposure, media companies are asked to donate equivalent value through additional advertising exposure, storylines in programming or in other creative ways. To date, the matching component of the campaign has leveraged substantial added media exposure for the campaign.

In addition to its work on the national level, the Partnership has helped create 51 state- and city-based versions of its national advertising campaign through its State/City Alliance Program.

Working with state/city governments and locally-based drug prevention organizations, the Partnership provides – at no cost – the guidance, on-site technical assistance and creative materials necessary to shape a multimedia campaign tailored to local needs.

The Partnership is a prevention organization. Its messages seek to reinforce behavior among teens and pre-teens that do not use drugs; to prevent drug experimentation and initiation; and to persuade non-addicted users to stop. Messages target kids and parents. Ads created for the Partnership are subject to a rigorous approval process, substantiation of scientific claims by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, and final approval by a committee comprised of some of the best creative directors in the advertising industry.

Creating effective anti-drug messages requires talent, passion and dedication. It also requires an understanding of the issue that is firmly grounded in research. The Partnership has the largest body of consumer-based attitudinal research on drugs in the nation. This research provides insights into the minds of young people and helps to ensure our messages will reach and resonate with their intended audiences. Sophisticated consumer research – along with the critically important counsel of our partners in health care, education, government, entertainment and community volunteer organizations across the country – ensure that Partnership ads continue to meet the highest standards of excellence.

(For more information about the Partnership and its programs, download

PDFFA's latest annual report @ www.drugfreeamerica.org/newscenter. or request a hard copy by mail from PDFFA Public Affairs @ 212-922-1560.)

The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study

The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS) is PDFFA's unique contribution to the field of substance abuse prevention. An annual study that tracks the elaborate and complex attitudes consumers have about illegal drugs, this research allows us to understand what our target audiences think and feel about various drugs. This consumer-focused, consumer-based research is the largest drug-related attitudinal tracking study in the country. No other organization in the country – commercial, non-profit or governmental – has the rich insights into consumers and drugs that PATS has captured. The insights gleaned from this study help us develop advertising designed to *unsell* drugs to consumers.

Attitudes drive behavior. According to the University of Michigan's Monitoring the Future study, two critical drug-related attitudes – perception of risk (how risky consumers view a particular drug) and perception of social disapproval (consumer appeal and acceptance of a particular drug) – move in correlation with consumption. Generally speaking, as consumers come to view drug use as more risky and increasingly disapprove of drugs, consumption declines. Similarly, the opposite holds true.

Understanding the vast dimensions of perceptions of risk and social disapproval provides a look into the

consumer mindset on drugs, and offers some insight into the challenges of effectively *unselling* drugs via media communication. It is no easy task. When it comes to drugs and drug taking, consumers define risk in a multitude of ways – physical, emotional, social, aspirational, etc. Each risk category is segmented by specific types of attitudes. The same holds true for social disapproval. Both major categories, and the elaborate array of subcategories and attitudinal measures, are influenced by a multitude of variables – age, gender, race, socio-economic background, geography, peers and other influencers.

PATS consists of two nationally projectable samples – a teen sample for students in grades 7 through 12, and a parent sample. The 2003 PATS is the 16th wave of this research conducted since 1986. Prior to 1993, these studies were conducted by interviews in public locations. Since the 1993 study, PATS has been conducted in schools and in homes. Beginning with the 1995 study, the in-home study was conducted with parents of children under the age of 19, and data from that sample are projected accordingly.

Since 1993 Roper ASW, Inc., a leading market research company, has conducted the studies for PDFFA. PATS is funded, in part, by an organizational grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In the 2003 PATS Parents study 1,228 parents nationwide were surveyed. The margin of error for the entire sample is +/-2.8 percent.

The data in this report were collected from February through April 2003. Parents in households with children

under the age of 19 were questioned with an oversampling of households in African- and Hispanic-American populations. Parents completed self-administered questionnaires under the supervision of Roper ASW's interviewers. The anonymity of all respondents was maintained throughout the study.

For the in-home sample of parents, three samples were drawn independently – a national sample of 50 counties, an African-American sample of 25 counties, and a Hispanic sample of 25 counties. Within each county, four locations were drawn, with two interviews assigned per location.

Significant differences on charts and graphs in this report are indicated only for 2003 results versus 2001-02, unless otherwise noted. Significant differences are noted with an * next to figures.

Questionnaire Development

Roper ASW developed the questionnaires for the Partnership Attitude Tracking Study in cooperation with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America.[®] Survey instruments were based on past PATS questionnaires, with modifications designed to cover new areas of interest, to improve the sensitivity of the existing questions and to produce data that could be directly compared with other existing research.

Self-Report Data

PATS is based on self-reported data. Surveys based on self-reported data collection represent the dominant methodology used in the marketplace. Many academic/government institutions

use self-reporting data when researching sensitive issues, i.e., Centers for Disease Control (Youth-At-Risk), University of Michigan (Monitoring the Future study), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (National Household Survey on Drug Use).

Self-reported data have strengths and limitations. Researchers can take preparatory steps to ensure collection of self-reported data is done properly and produces the most accurate answers possible. For example, questionnaires are not signed, nor are they identified in any way that might make it possible to associate responses with the individuals who gave them.

Key Findings

Summary of Key Findings

Findings from the 2003 PATS Parents survey show a continuation of trends in the way parents handle the issue of drugs with their children.

As we have seen in prior surveys, there is a great disconnect between parent perceptions of teen exposure to and use of drugs and teens' actual exposure to and use of drugs. Parents overestimate their child's perception of risk in drug trial and underestimate their drug use, mistakenly believing their child is not at risk.

Further, while parents feel talking to their children about drugs is important, they seem to fall short in taking this action. Fewer than half of parents speak to their teens frequently about drugs or talk about specific drugs other than marijuana.

The gap between teen trial of Ecstasy and parents who think their teen has tried Ecstasy shrunk slightly in 2003, though neither change was significant. Three percent of parents of teens think their teen has tried Ecstasy and eleven percent of teens report trying Ecstasy, compared to one percent and 12 percent in 2001-2002. Parents are also significantly more likely to see "great risk" in the regular use of Ecstasy than they were in 2001-02 (90 percent compared to 85 percent).

As in previous years, parents who see or hear anti-drug advertising frequently are more likely to thoroughly educate their children about drugs than parents who see commercials less frequently.

I. Parents & Societal Drug Issues

Parent attitudes about societal drug issues are relatively stable in 2003.

Talk about legalization has fluctuated over the past six years, possibly due to a number of marijuana initiatives on the state ballots. In 2003, one quarter (23 percent) of parents report hearing more talk about the legalization of marijuana, a significant increase over 2001-02 (17 percent).

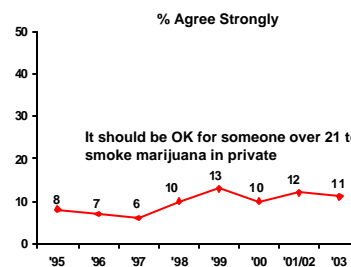
Attitudes

% Agree strongly	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	01/02	'03
In My Child's School, Most Kids Don't Smoke Marijuana	n/a	30	33	34	32	35	36	36
Most People Will Try Marijuana Sometimes	21	18	20	18	26	24	17	20
I Hear More and More Talk About Legalizing Marijuana	12	13	20	18	24	18	17	23*
I Support the Legalization/Decriminalization of M.J.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12	12	14
Smoking Marijuana is OK Sometimes	5	5	4	5	5	6	7	7
There is Nothing I Can Really Do to Help the Drug Problem	6	7	8	5	10	6	6	5
Base: Parents	822	799	815	809	800	810	1219	1228

* Significant difference vs. 2001at .05 level

Belief that "it should be OK for someone over 21 to smoke marijuana in private" appears to be flattening out, with about one in ten parents (11 percent) agreeing strongly with this statement. A significant increase in this attitude occurred between 1997 and 1999.

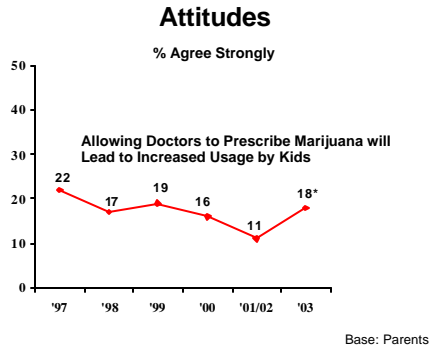
Attitudes



Base: Parents

Parents are also significantly more likely to feel medical marijuana will lead to

increased usage by kids than they were in 2001-02. Eighteen percent agree strongly with this statement in 2003, compared to 11 percent in 2001-02.



II. Parents & General Attitudes About Children and Drugs

Overall attitudes about children and drugs are strong and stable.

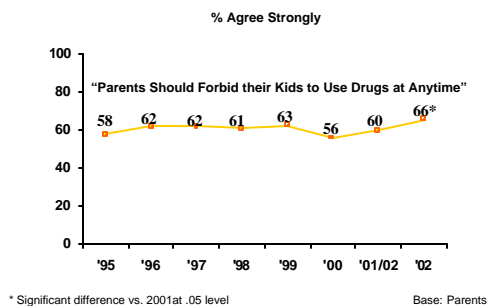
Nearly all parents (93 percent) say it is important to discuss drugs with their children and fewer than one in twenty parents (4 percent) say drug education is best handled by schools, not parents.

Attitudes about Parenting

% Agree Strongly	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	01/02	'03
It's Important That Parents Discuss Drugs With Their Children	89	93	92	94	92	90	93	93
If I Use Marijuana My Child Is Likely To Use It	42	41	42	42	46	43	43	47
It Wouldn't Worry Me If My Child Tried Sniffing Things To Get High, Like Glue	9	15	10	13	14	10	11	14
My Child Would Be Afraid To Ask Me About Drugs	4	7	5	4	7	5	4	5
Drug Education Is Best Handled By School, Not Parents	6	6	5	6	7	5	5	4
Base: Parents	822	799	815	809	800	810	1219	1228

Belief in forbidding children to use drugs increased significantly in 2003. Two-thirds (66 percent) of parents agree strongly that “parents should forbid their kids to do drugs at any time,” compared to 60 percent in 2001-02.

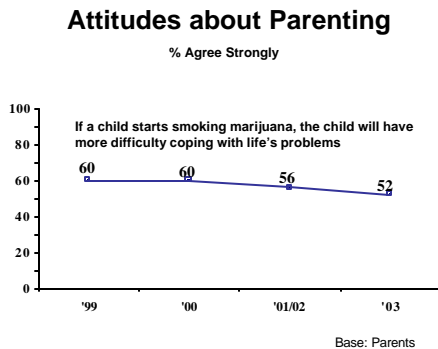
Attitudes about Parenting



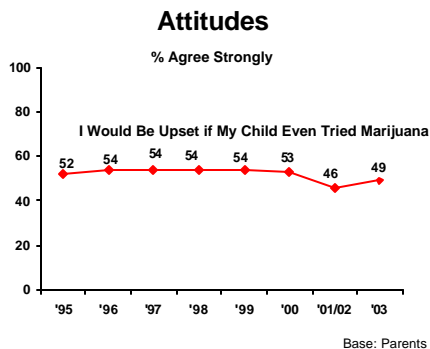
Despite strong attitudes about children and drugs, there are some signs of softening.

Belief that smoking marijuana will interfere with the child’s ability to cope

with life's problems has eroded over the past few years, falling from 60 percent in 1999 to 52 percent in 2003.



There may also be a softening in parent reactions to a child's marijuana use. Before 2001-02, slightly more than half of parents (53 or 54 percent) said they would be "extremely upset" if their child tried marijuana. In 2003, only 49 percent of parents would be extremely upset, which is a significant decrease from 1999.



III. The "Disconnect" between What Parents Think and What Teens Do

While most parents are aware of teen drug use, they tend to think their own kids are safely protected from this risk. They also tend to vastly underestimate their own child's exposure to or trial of drugs, and overestimate the degree of risk their child sees in drug use.

Previous reports from the Partnership have focused at length on this "disconnect." Data from PATS 2003 make clear the "disconnect" and its implications are still very real.

This "disconnect" is a major barrier to the full involvement of parents in anti-drug efforts.

Teen Perception of Risk

Parents correctly estimate that their teen sees "great risk" in regular use of illicit drugs.

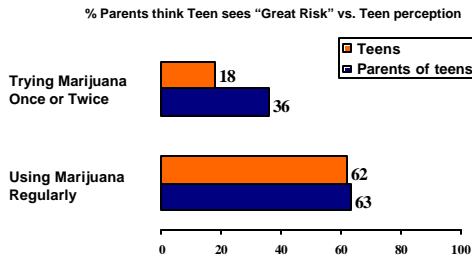
However, while most parents also think their child sees great risk in trying drugs like cocaine or methamphetamine, the majority of teens do not see great risk in trying these drugs. Parents overestimate their teen's perception of risk in drug trial.

Prevention research shows that perception of risk is an important deterrent to drug use. When perceptions of risk increase, drug use generally falls and when perceptions of risk decrease, drug use increases.

With marijuana, 63 percent of parents of teens think their teen sees great risk in

using marijuana regularly; strikingly similar to the 62 percent of teens who do see great risk in regular use of marijuana. Yet while more than one third (36 percent) of parents think their teen sees great risk in “trying marijuana once or twice,” only 18 percent of teens agree.

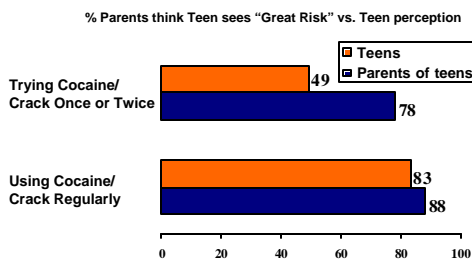
Marijuana Risk Perception



A similar disconnect exists with cocaine and crack and with methamphetamine.

Parents of teens correctly estimate that teens see great risk in using cocaine or crack regularly. However, while the great majority of parents (78 percent) think their teen sees great risk in trying cocaine or crack, only half of teens (49 percent) agree.

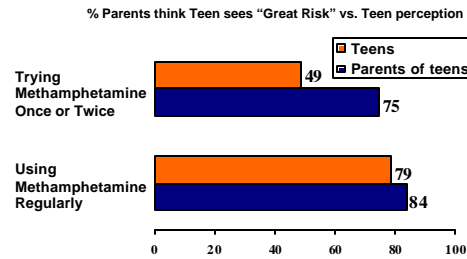
Cocaine/Crack Risk Perception



With methamphetamine, most parents of teens and teens see “great risk” in regular use of the drug. However, while the great majority of parents (75 percent) think their teen sees great risk in trying

methamphetamine, again only half of teens (49 percent) agree.

Methamphetamine Risk Perception



For inhalants, cigarettes and alcohol, parents of teens have historically (and correctly) estimated that their teens see less risk in trying these substances than in using them regularly.

Risk Perception

% Think child sees great risk in the following	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	01/02	'03
Using Inhalants once or twice	59	72	61	63	73	68	62	70
Using Inhalants regularly	76	86	74	81	82	77	78	81
Smoking Cigarettes Once or Twice	30	32	29	37	39	36	29	31
Smoking Cigarettes Regularly	60	60	54	66	66	61	65	57
Drinking Alcohol Once or Twice	27	28	25	31	37	35	21	24
Drinking Alcohol Regularly	65	63	62	59	67	63	62	59
Base: Parents of teens	287	330	283	303	304	282	467	487

Parents who overestimate the amount of risk their teen sees in trying these drugs may be less likely to discuss the risks, thinking the child knows how risky they are.

Specific Risks of Marijuana Use

Parents overestimate their teen’s perception of some specific risks of marijuana use, while underestimating other risks.

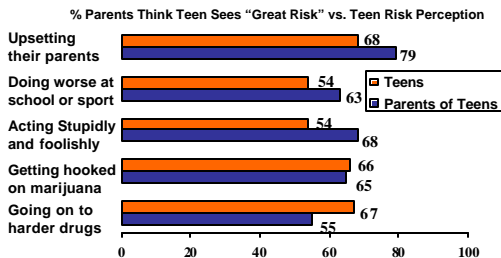
Risks of marijuana use that parents overestimate include:

Upsetting their parents: (79 percent of parents of teens believe their teen sees this as a great risk of marijuana use; 68 percent of teens see it as a great risk)

Acting stupidly or foolishly: (68 percent of parents of teens believe their teen sees this as a great risk of marijuana use; 54 percent of teens see it as a great risk)

Parents underestimate the amount of risk their teen sees in marijuana use of “going on to harder drugs.” Fifty-five percent of parents of teens believe their teen sees this as a great risk marijuana use. In fact, 67 percent of teens say they see “going on to harder drugs” as a great risk. Interestingly, teens are more likely than their parents to feel marijuana’s “gateway” effects are a great risk.

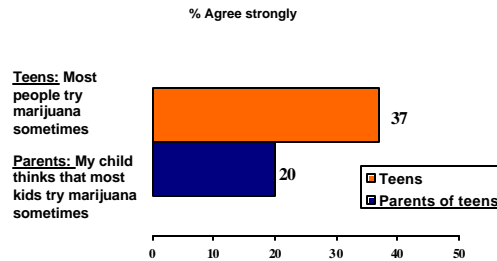
Marijuana: Specific Risks



Teen Attitudes

Parents also underestimate how pervasive their teen thinks marijuana use is in society. One in five parents (20 percent) estimate their teen “thinks most kids try marijuana sometimes. More that one third (37 percent) of teens think “most people try marijuana sometimes.”

Teen’s Attitudes about Marijuana Use



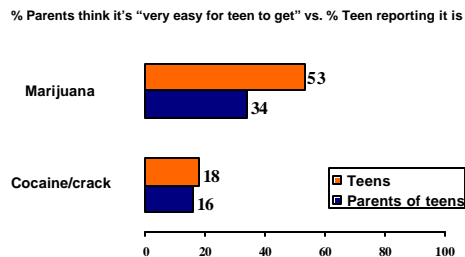
Vulnerability and Exposure

Parents of teens substantially underestimate how vulnerable their child is to marijuana and other drug use.

Most teens are exposed to marijuana, with half saying they can get marijuana very easily and nearly two-thirds reporting they have close friends who use marijuana.

Only one third (34 percent) of parents of teens believe marijuana is “very easy” for their teen to get. More than half of teens (53 percent) report that marijuana is in fact “very easy to get.”

Availability



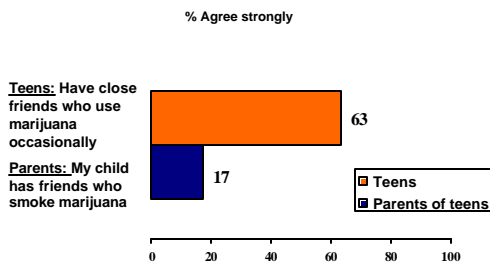
On the other hand, roughly equal percentages of parents and teens (16 percent of parents of teens, 18 percent of teens) believe cocaine or crack is “very easy to get.”

Friends' Use

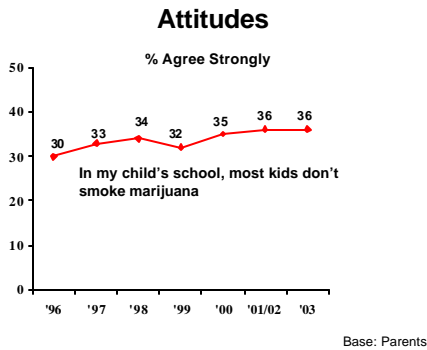
Only 17 percent of parents of teens think their teen has friends who smoke marijuana. In fact, nearly two-thirds of teens (63 percent) report having friends that smoke marijuana.

Friends' drug use is one of the strongest predictors of a teen's drug use.

Friends' Marijuana Use



Parent denial of their child's exposure to marijuana is slowly increasing. Parents are increasingly likely to believe that kids in their child's school do not smoke marijuana.

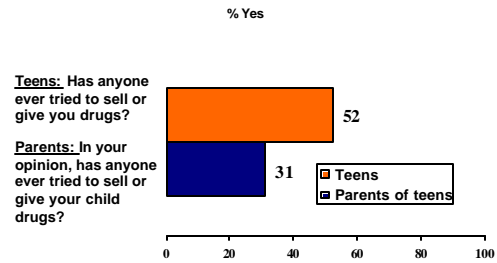


Drug Offers

Less than one third (31 percent) of parents of teens believe their teen has been offered drugs. More than half (52

percent) of teens report they have been offered drugs.

Drug Offers



Perceptions of Teen Drug Trial

Given that parents of teens severely underestimate both the risk their teen sees in trying drugs and their friends' use of drugs, it should not be surprising that very few parents think their teen has tried drugs.

While most teens have not tried drugs, teens are still far more likely to have tried drugs than their parents think.

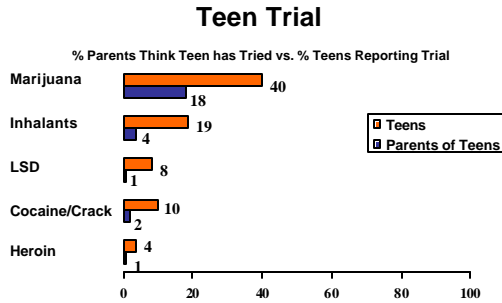
Marijuana: In 2002, 18 percent of parents of teens think their teen has tried marijuana. More than twice that many teens (40 percent of teens) report trial.

Inhalants: Only 4 percent of parents of teens think their teen has tried inhalants. Nearly five times that many teens (19 percent of teens) say they have.

LSD: Only 1 percent of parents of teens think their teen has tried LSD. In fact 8 percent of teens say they have tried LSD.

Cocaine or crack: Only 2 percent of parents of teens think their teen has tried cocaine or crack. Five times as many teens (10 percent of teens) say they have tried cocaine or crack.

Heroin: Only 1 percent of the parents of teens think their teen has tried heroin. Four percent of teens say they have tried heroin.



Alcohol: 47 percent of parents of teens think their teen has tried alcohol.

While PATS does not ask teens about lifetime trial of alcohol, 2002 data show 53 percent of teens have consumed alcohol in the past year and 30 percent have had a drinking binge in the past two weeks.

Tobacco: 36 percent of parents of teens think their teen has tried cigarettes.

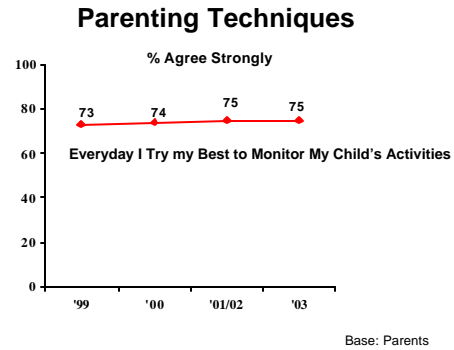
While PATS does not ask teens about lifetime cigarette trial, 2002 data show 28 percent of teens have smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days, i.e. have moved beyond trial and are smokers.

IV. Parenting Skills

As usual, there is strong agreement with the need for monitoring and involvement in a child's life.

Monitoring

Monitoring is keeping track of children's activities and whereabouts on a daily basis by asking where they are going, what they are doing and who they will be with. In 2003, three out of four parents report monitoring. Monitoring has remained stable since PATS began asking this question in 1999.



Research shows monitoring is important in keeping children drug free. "Kids who are not regularly monitored by their parents are four times more likely to use drugs." (Metzler, Rusby, & Biglan in 1999. *Community Builders for Success: Monitoring After-School Activities*. Oregon Research Institute, Eugene).

Parenting Skills

% Agree Strongly	'99	'00	01/02	'03
I try my best to make and enforce rules about my child's behavior	79	75	77	77
Everyday, or nearly everyday, I ask my child how their day went	72	70	76	74
Everyday I ask my child who s/he was with, where s/he went and what s/he did	n/a	n/a	n/a	66
Every day or nearly every day, I praise my child for good behavior	61	60	62	62
Base: Parents	800	810	1219	1228

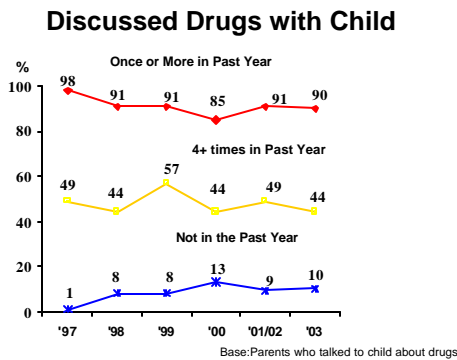
V. Discussion of Drugs with Children

Parent-child discussions about the risks of drugs also help prevent teen drug use. Partnership research shows that children who learn a lot about the risks of drugs at home are up to 50 percent less likely to try drugs than their peers who learn nothing from their parents.

Frequency of Drug Talks

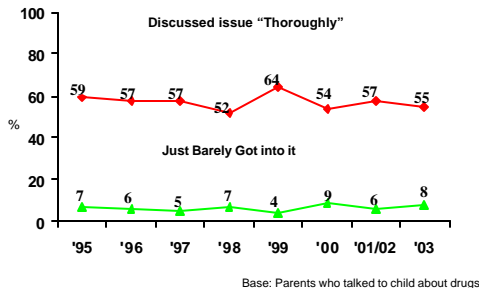
Nine out of ten parents of school-aged children report talking with their kids about drugs at least once in the past year.

Yet fewer than half of these parents (44 percent) discussed drugs four or more times with their child.



Similarly, only slightly more than half (55 percent) of parents who had such discussions report covering the topic thoroughly.

Thoroughness of Drug Discussion



Specific Drugs

When parents discuss specific drugs with their child, they are more likely to discuss cigarettes or alcohol, than marijuana, inhalants or drugs like heroin cocaine and crack. Ecstasy is least likely to be discussed, as it was in 2001-02.

Among parents of school-aged children who have discussed drugs with their child:

Marijuana: Half (53 percent) discussed marijuana “a lot.”

Heroin, cocaine and crack or Inhalants: Over one third discussed drugs like heroin, cocaine and crack or inhalants “a lot” (38 percent and 35 percent respectively).

Ecstasy: Fewer than a quarter (24 percent) discussed Ecstasy “a lot.”

Cigarettes and Alcohol: Two-thirds or more discussed cigarettes and alcohol “a lot” (70 percent and 66 percent respectively).

Drugs in General: Over two-thirds of parents (68 percent) discussed drugs in general.

Specific Drugs Discussed

% reporting "a lot"	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	01/02	'03
Drugs In General	67	64	67	63	75	67	66	68
Cigarettes	60	62	64	62	74	63	69	70
Alcohol	58	58	61	59	71	59	66	66
Marijuana	47	50	52	50	63	47	50	53
Drugs Like Heroin, Cocaine and Crack	42	43	43	41	48	34	39	38
Inhalants	34	34	38	31	42	33	33	35
Ecstasy	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	23	24
Base: Discussed drugs	535	547	567	546	509	524	758	780

Specific Risks of Drug Use

Discussion of specific risks has not changed.

Over two-thirds of parents mention that drugs can mess up your mind (69 percent), your life (68 percent) or your education (67 percent).

Less common are discussions about how drugs can make a child do worse in school or sports (59 percent), or that marijuana is illegal (53 percent).

Discussion of Risks

% Discussed "frequently"	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	01/02	'03
Drugs Can Mess up Your Child's Life	66	67	63	63	74	63	66	68
Drugs Can Mess Up Your Child's Education	64	65	59	58	68	60	64	67
Drugs Can Make Your Child Do Worse In School Or Sports	59	61	58	56	64	57	63	59
Marijuana Is Illegal	56	55	48	55	62	49	52	53
Drugs Can Mess Up Your Child's Friendships	51	49	49	47	58	50	53	52
Base: Have child 6-18 years old	603	594	622	604	557	593	875	901

Since specific drugs are less likely to be mentioned, it makes sense that the health risks attached to specific drugs are also less likely to be discussed. Fewer than half of parents (46 percent) tell their children "inhalants can kill you."

Discussion of Risks

% Discussed "frequently"	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	01/02	'03
Drugs can Mess up Your Child's Mind	67	68	64	61	73	63	67	69
Drugs Can Physically Hurt Your Child's Body	62	62	57	56	64	57	63	61
Sniffing Things To Get High, Like Glue, Gas, Or Sprays Can Kill Them	45	44	46	45	54	44	48	46
Base: Have child 6-18 years old	603	594	622	604	557	593	875	901

Slightly more than half (54 percent) of parents demonstrate refusal skills. Nearly three in ten parents (29 percent) discuss their own personal experiences with drugs with their children.

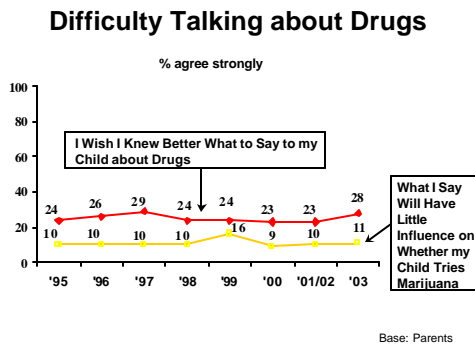
Discussion - Other

% Discussed "frequently"	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	01/02	'03
Ways to Refuse Someone Who Offers/Tries To Sell Drugs	55	61	57	58	60	52	58	54
How Marijuana Messed Up Lives Of People You Knew When You Were Young	35	33	32	35	42	34	31	34
About Your Own Personal Experiences, Like Whether You Used Drugs or Not	34	33	31	35	38	31	33	29
Base: Have child 6-18 years old	603	594	622	604	557	593	875	901

VI. Parent Needs for Discussion

Some parents doubt their ability to talk to their children effectively about drugs, and there are signs that this unease may be increasing.

Over one quarter of parents (28 percent) say “I wish I knew better what to say to my child about drugs.” One in ten parents (11 percent) feel “What I say will have little influence on whether my child tries marijuana.”



Parents are significantly more likely in 2003 than they were last year to need information on “how to feel more comfortable telling your child not to use marijuana.” Twenty eight percent of parents felt this was necessary in 2003, compared to 24 percent in 2001-02.

Information Needed to Discuss Drugs

Information on the dangers of using Ecstasy topped the list, with 52 percent of parents wanting such information.

Parents in 2003 are significantly more likely to need information on the “health consequences of using drugs” in order to talk to their children about drugs. Forty six percent of parents feel they need this type of information in 2003, compared to 38 percent in 2001-02.

Information Needs

% Need additional info on	'97	'98	'99	'00	01/02	'03
Dangers of using Ecstasy	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	46	52
Names/descriptions of drugs	47	41	34	37	45	50
What to do if your child's friends are using drugs	50	47	45	49	48	49
Health consequences of using drugs	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	38	46*
How to tell if your child is using drugs	45	45	40	36	42	43
Dangers of using inhalants	41	37	42	36	41	43
Information about what age kids first try drugs	46	37	38	38	38	42
Base: Parents	815	809	800	810	1219	1228

* Significant difference vs. 2001 at .05 level

Information Needs

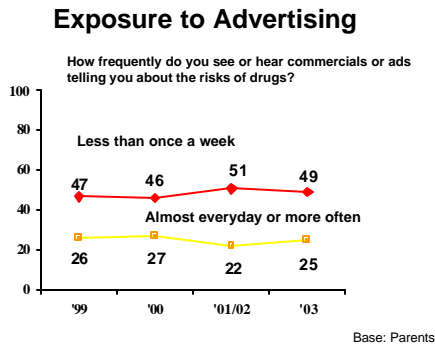
% Need additional info on	'97	'98	'99	'00	01/02	'03
How other parents handle the issue of illegal drugs with their children	39	36	38	33	43	39
Tips on what to say to your kids about drugs	39	34	32	34	36	39
Reasons why kids use drugs	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	34	37
Tips on how to start a discussion about drugs	39	31	29	32	31	37*
Reasons why your child shouldn't use marijuana	32	25	25	24	27	30
How to feel more comfortable telling your child not to use pot	25	23	18	19	23	28*
Base: Parents	815	809	800	810	1219	1228

* Significant difference vs. 2001 at .05 level

VII. Media as a Source of Information about the Risks of Drugs

Parent exposure to commercials about the risks of drugs seems to be leveling off.

After falling in 2001-02, exposure to advertising about the risks of drugs recovered somewhat in 2003. One quarter of parents (25 percent) reported seeing or hearing anti-drug ads frequently in 2003; that is, “almost every day or more often.” Nearly half (49 percent) of parents reported seeing or hearing anti-drug ads infrequently, that is “less often than once a week.”



Discussion by Level of Exposure to Advertising

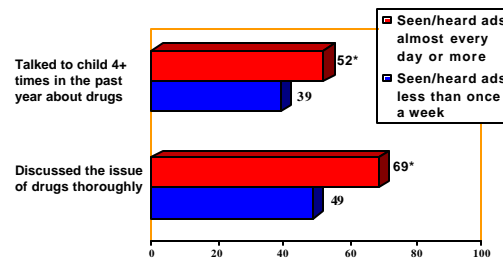
Data show parents who are more exposed to anti-drug advertising are more likely to talk to their child frequently about the risks of drug use. Further, these talks are more likely to be thorough and to cover specific drugs.

In 2003, parents with frequent exposure to anti-drug ads are significantly more likely than parents with infrequent exposure to:

Talk frequently with their child about drugs: 52 percent of parents with frequent ad exposure vs. 39 percent with infrequent ad exposure do so. (Frequently is defined as 4 or more times in the past year).

Discuss drugs thoroughly: 69 percent of parents with frequent exposure to anti-drug ads say they discuss drugs thoroughly with their child, compared to 49 percent of parents with infrequent exposure to anti-drug ads.

Exposure to Advertising and Discussion

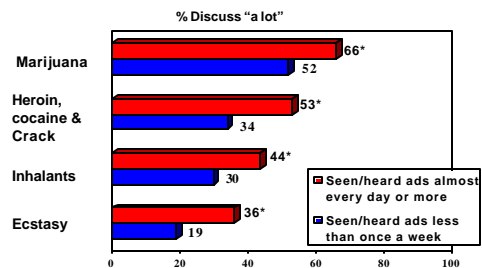


*=significant difference at .05 level

Base: Parents

Discuss Specific Drugs: Parents who are frequently exposed to anti-drug ads are significantly more likely to talk about marijuana, drugs like heroin, cocaine and crack, inhalants and Ecstasy with their child than parents with infrequent ad exposure.

Exposure to Ads and Discussion



*=significant difference at .05 level

Base: Parents

Reactions to Advertising by Level of Exposure

Frequent exposure to anti-drug ads correlates with more positive reactions to the advertising than infrequent exposure.

Parents with frequent ad exposure, as compared to parents with infrequent ad exposure, are more likely to feel the ads have made them:

More aware of the risks of drugs: 45 percent of parents with frequent anti-drug ad exposure agree strongly that the ads have had this effect, compared to 23 percent of parents with infrequent exposure.

Encouraged discussion of drugs with child: Parents who are frequently exposed to anti-drug commercials are more than twice as likely as parents with infrequent ad exposure (51 percent vs. 23 percent) to report the ads have this effect.

Provided new information about drugs: Parents who are frequently exposed to anti-drug commercials are also more than twice as likely as parents with infrequent ad exposure (43 percent vs. 19 percent) to report the ads have this effect.

PATS data indicate anti-drug advertising can have a positive effect on parents' discussions of drugs with their children. This suggests that greater media frequency of anti-drug ads for parents could increase parental awareness of drugs and discussions about drugs with children.

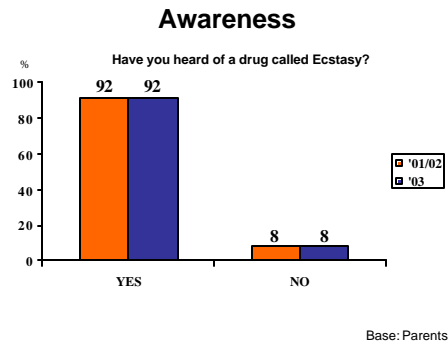
VIII. Parents and Ecstasy

Questions about Ecstasy were added to the parents' survey in 2001-02 due to a 71 percent increase in teen trial, which jumped from 7 percent in 1999 to 12 percent in 2001-02. Data for 2003 show 11 percent of current 12 to 17 year olds have tried Ecstasy, suggesting that use may be leveling off.

Awareness of Ecstasy

As with the previous year, the great majority of parents have heard of the drug Ecstasy. Parental awareness remains stable.

Ninety two percent of all parents report having heard of Ecstasy (MDMA), with parents of teens slightly more likely to have heard of the drug (94 percent) than parents of younger children (89 percent of parents of children in grades 4-6).



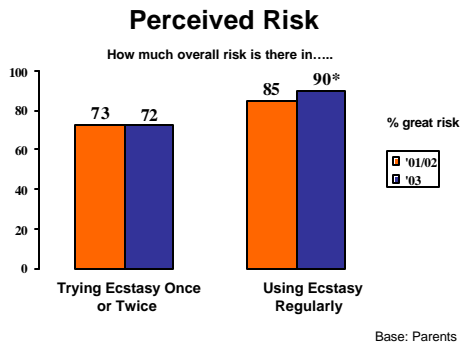
Almost half of all parents in America (48 percent in 2003 vs. 49 percent in 2001-02) do not know the effects of the drug, making it difficult to talk to their children about Ecstasy or recognize someone under its influence. Signs of Ecstasy use include unusual displays of affection, transfexion on sights and sounds, clenching of the jaw/grinding of

the teeth or a sore jaw, dehydration, chills or sweating, confusion, problems sleeping, severe anxiety and/or panic attacks and depression.

In 2003, nearly four-fifths of all parents (seventy nine percent) report that they do not know what is in Ecstasy.

Parent Perception of Risk

Parent perception of great risk in the regular use of Ecstasy increased significantly over the past year, rising from 85 percent to 90 percent in 2003.



Disconnect with Teens

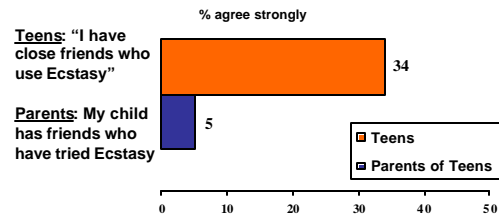
As with all drugs, parents underestimate the level of teen exposure to Ecstasy, while overestimating teen perception of risk associated with Ecstasy use.

Availability: Thirteen percent of parents of teens believe that Ecstasy would be “very easy” for their teen to get. Twenty-two percent of teens say Ecstasy is very easy for them to get.

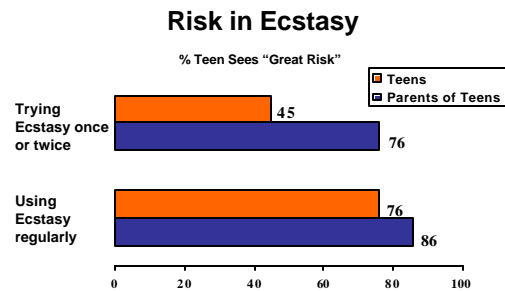
Friends’ Use: Five percent of parents of teens believe their teen has friends who have tried Ecstasy. Nearly seven times as many teens (34 percent) say they have

close friends who use Ecstasy. Friends’ drug use is a strong predictor of teenage drug use.

Teen Exposure to Ecstasy

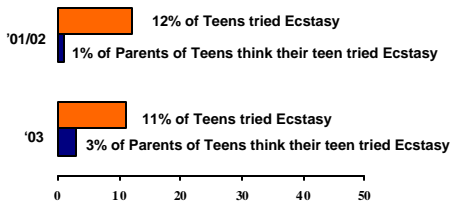


Risk: Teens are far less likely than their parents to associate great risk with Ecstasy trial. Three out of four parents of teens (76 percent) believe their teens see “great risk” in using Ecstasy once or twice; only 45 percent of teens agree.



Trial: In 2003, the gap between parent perception of teen trial and teen reports of trial shrunk slightly, though neither change was significant. Only 3 percent of parents of teens believe their child has tried the drug. Teens are nearly four times more likely to have tried Ecstasy than their parents expect – 11 percent of teens report they have tried Ecstasy.

Think their Teen has Tried Ecstasy



Discussion of Ecstasy

In 2003, Ecstasy was less likely to be discussed by parents with their children than any other illicit or licit drug. The same was true in 2001-02.

One quarter of parents (24 percent) and 29 percent of parents of teens say they've discussed Ecstasy "a lot" with their child. By comparison, 38 percent of parents and 48 percent of parents of teens discuss cocaine/crack and heroin "a lot"; 53 percent of parents and 65 percent of parents of teens discuss marijuana "a lot."

Discussion of the physical risks of Ecstasy fell off slightly but not significantly in 2003, as compared to 2001-02. Thirty-seven percent of parents report frequently discussing that "Ecstasy is a dangerous drug" with their child, compared to 40 percent in 2001-02. Thirty-six percent of parents report frequently discussing "Ecstasy can have serious health risks" with their child, compared to 39 percent in 2001-02.

Discussion of Risks

% Discussed "frequently"	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	01/02	'03
Ecstasy Is A Dangerous Drug	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	40	37
Ecstasy can Have Serious Health Risks	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	39	36
Base: Have child 6-18 years old	603	594	622	604	557	593	875	901

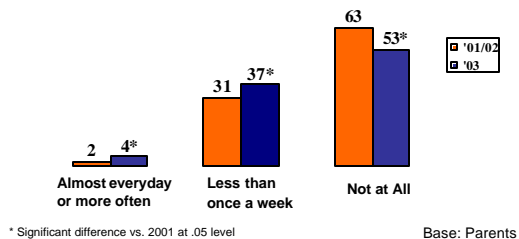
Exposure to Ecstasy Advertising

In 2003 there was a small but significant increase in parent reports of frequent exposure to commercials about the risks of Ecstasy.

Four percent of parents report seeing or hearing such advertising "almost everyday or more often" (up from 2 percent in 2001-02) and a significant decrease among those reporting no exposure (63 in 2001-02 to 52 in 2003).

The Partnership's Ecstasy advertising began airing in donated media space across the nation in February 2002. Interviewing for this survey was February through April 2003 so parents have had a year to be exposed to the campaign.

Exposure of Ecstasy Advertising



Reactions to Ecstasy Advertising

Parent reactions to commercials about the risks of Ecstasy increased significantly between 2001-02 and 2003.

Parents are significantly more likely to say these commercials have both encouraged them to talk to their child about the risks of Ecstasy and given them more information about the drug.

Reactions to Ecstasy Advertising

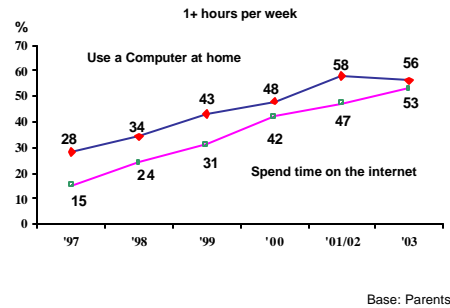
% Agree strongly	'01/02	'03
Made you more aware of the risks of Ecstasy	16	19
Encouraged you to talk to your child about the risks of Ecstasy	14	19*
Given you new information or told you things you didn't know about Ecstasy	13	18*
Base: Parents	1219	1228

* Significant difference vs. 2001 at .05 level

IX. The Internet and Drug Information

Parents are becoming more computer savvy. Slightly more than half (53 percent) of all parents use the Internet one hour or more each week. Similarly, more than half (56 percent) of all parents use a computer at home each week.

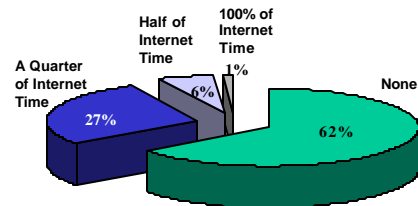
Computer and Internet Use



One third (34 percent) of all parents spend time searching for health and parenting information on the Internet. More than a quarter (27 percent) of all parents report spending a quarter of their Internet time searching for health and parenting information.

Health and Parenting Information

How much (of your time on the internet) do you spend looking for health and parenting information?



Websites about Illegal drugs

Fewer than one in 10 parents (6 percent) have visited a website about the dangers of illegal drugs.

Awareness of Websites

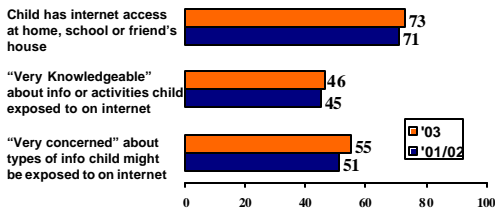
%	'98	'99	'00	'01/02	'03
Did not know of website (about the dangers of illegal drugs)	69	68	58	47	54*
Aware of websites about dangers of illegal drugs, but have not visited one	26	25	31	37	37
Visited Website About Dangers Of Illegal Drugs	2	3	6	14	6*
Base: Parents	809	800	810	1219	1228

*Significant difference vs. 2001 at the .01 level

As expected, children are more likely to use the Internet than their parents. Nearly three-quarters of parents (73 percent) say their child has access to the Internet at home, at school or at a friend's house. Eighty percent of teens report using the Internet.

Parents feel uneasy about what their children are being exposed to on the Internet. Fewer than half (45 percent) of parents say they are "very knowledgeable" about their child's activities on the Internet and more than half (55 percent) of parents are "very concerned" about the types of information their child might be exposed to on the web.

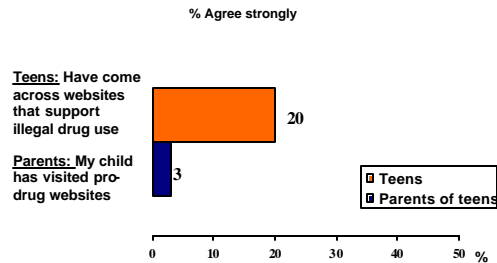
Internet Activities



The disconnect between parent perceptions and teen reality also exists on the Internet.

Parents of teens do not think their child has been to pro-drug websites. Only 3 percent of parents of teens strongly agree their teen has visited such a website. However, twenty percent of teens report they have "come across websites supporting illegal drug use" and 27 percent have searched for information about drug illegal drugs on the Internet.

Pro-Drug Websites



X. Help and Treatment

Parents are moderately confident in the effectiveness of drug treatment programs. Slightly more than half of parents (55 percent) agree strongly that treatment can help children that have drug problems.

Only 14 percent of parents say they would be embarrassed if people knew that their child was in treatment for alcohol or drug problems.

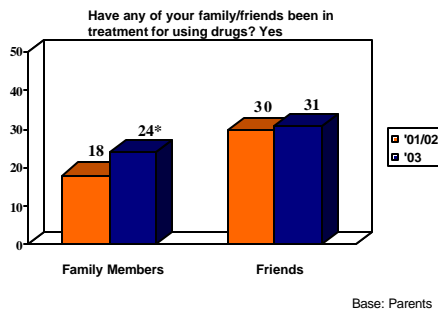
Attitudes about Treatment

% Agree strongly	'03
Treatment can help children that have drug problems	55
I would be embarrassed if people knew that my child was being treated for alcohol and/or other drug problems	14
Base: Parents	1228

Friends and Family in Treatment

In 2003, one quarter of parents report having a family member who has been in treatment for drugs and three in ten report having a friend who has been in drug treatment.

Been in Treatment for Drugs



Help for Child Using Drugs

There may be signs that parents feel less confident in their ability to handle a child who is using drugs.

Parents are significantly less likely in 2003 than they were in 2001-02 to say they would handle the issue themselves. Further, parents are more likely to consult the family doctor than they were in the previous survey.

Primary Source Of Help

If you thought your child was using drugs, where would you go for help?	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	01/02	'03
Treatment Center	18	18	19	18	25	18	20	24
Family Doctor	15	14	18	18	17	19	16	22*
School Drug Counselor	14	16	13	14	12	17	11	14
Clergyman, Rabbi	9	8	8	8	10	7	8	11
Friend	5	5	4	4	3	2	5	5
Psychologist	4	3	4	2	4	4	5	5
Teacher	2	3	1	1	1	2	2	1
Other	3	4	3	1	2	3	3	3
The Internet	n/a	n/a	n/a	-	1	0	1	0
Handle it Myself	26	28	27	29	30	30	30	20*
Base: Have child age 6-18	603	594	622	604	557	593	875	901

* Significant difference vs. 2001 at .05 level

XI. Conclusions and Implications

While parent attitudes about drugs and ways to handle this issue with their children are relatively stable this year, potential weakening in a few areas should be watched.

Slow erosion in the belief that smoking marijuana will impact a child's ability to cope with life's problems (which fell from 60 percent of parents agreeing strongly with this in 1999 to 52 percent of parents in 2003) could have a negative impact.

This is especially important to correct because a study from Yale University by Dr. R. Andrew Chambers suggests that the "changing circuitry of teenager's brains appears to leave them especially vulnerable to the effects of drugs and alcohol." Research suggests that experimentation with drugs has more profound, and sometimes permanent, effect on teens.

As we have seen in previous studies, parents in 2003 are largely unaware – or in denial — of the fact that *their* teenager is at risk of using drugs.

Parents need to understand that their teen probably does not think there is "great risk" in trying drugs, including Ecstasy, cocaine or crack, methamphetamine. Fewer than half of teens see great risk in trying these drugs, while more than three-quarters of parents assume their teen sees "great risk" in trying all these drugs. Only 18 percent of teens think there is great risk in trying marijuana.

Perhaps if parents understood that their teens are not fully aware of the dangers

of trying drugs they would be more likely to talk frequently to their teens about drugs and teach their teens about the risks of specific drugs.

While parents strongly agree that it is important to speak to their child about drugs, parents need to increase their efforts.

Most parents who report speaking to their child about drugs in the past year (56 percent) did so fewer than four times in the past 12 months. And while just over half of parents (53 percent) spoke with their teen about marijuana, fewer than one in four covered drugs like heroin, cocaine and crack, inhalants or Ecstasy.

Yet these conversations are an effective prevention tool. Partnership research shows that teens who learn a lot about the risks of drugs from their parents are up to 54 percent less likely to try drugs.

Parents also need to understand that if their child's friends are using drugs their child is also vulnerable to use. Friends' drug use is a strong predictor of teenage drug use and 67 percent of teens say they have close friends who smoke marijuana. Such knowledge could help parents of teens realize that their child is truly at risk of using drugs and get the conversation going.

This year parents are more interested in learning the health consequences of using drugs, which is a positive sign, given efforts to increase public knowledge that drug trial impacts health and is a serious health issue.

Another important parenting skill that has been promoted as a way to keep

teens from getting involved with drugs is monitoring, the act of keeping track of where they are and what they are doing at all times through asking questions. Since 1999 three-quarters of parents have consistently reported monitoring their children daily.

Finally, research has shown that parents exposed to anti-drug commercials every day or more often are significantly more likely to talk to their child frequently about drugs, and to mention drugs individually, than parents who see or hear such ads less than once a week. However only one quarter (25 percent) of parents reported frequent exposure to these messages in 2003. More frequent exposure to anti-drug commercials may lead to more parent-child discussions about the risks of drugs.