



# **The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS)**

Parents 2007 Report

Released June 11, 2008

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## MISSION

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America is a nonprofit organization that unites parents, renowned scientists and communications professionals to help families raise healthy children. Best known for its research-based national public education programs, the Partnership motivates and equips parents to prevent their children from using drugs and alcohol, and to find help and treatment for family and friends in trouble.

## THE PARTNERSHIP FOR A DRUG-FREE AMERICA® TODAY

The Partnership began in 1987 with support provided by the American Association of Advertising Agencies. Now in its 21st year, the Partnership helps parents and caregivers effectively address drug and alcohol abuse with their children. The centerpiece of this effort is an online resource center at [drugfree.org](http://drugfree.org), featuring interactive tools that translate the latest science and research on teen behavior, addiction and treatment into easy to understand tips and tools. Research conducted by AP and MTV recently showed that kids see their parents as heroes— at [drugfree.org](http://drugfree.org), parents can connect with each other, tap into expert advice for children of all ages, and find the support they want and need in their role as hero to their kids.

Adding depth to its work on the national level, the Partnership's alliance and affiliate program supports the organization's mission at the local level. Working with state and city governments and locally based drug prevention organizations, the Partnership provides guidance, on-site technical assistance and creative materials necessary to shape anti-substance abuse education campaigns tailored to the needs and activities of any given state or city. To carry out its mission, the Partnership depends on donations and support from individuals, corporations, foundations and the government, while its media campaigns rely on donated media time and space. For more information on the Partnership for a Drug-Free America and its programs, visit the Partnership's Web site at [drugfree.org](http://drugfree.org).

The Partnership is one of only 13 organizations worldwide to receive the prestigious Discovery Health Medical Honors award for extraordinary contributions to world health. The Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance Charity Seal Program officially certified the Partnership for complying with their 20 rigorous charity standards. And, The New York Times says the Partnership is, "one of the most effective drug-prevention organizations in the U.S."

Actors in Partnership ads appear pro bono through the generosity of the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television & Radio Artists.

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## **THE PARTNERSHIP ATTITUDE TRACKING STUDY**

The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS) is an annual study that is the largest drug-related attitudinal tracking study in the country. No other organization in the country – commercial, non-profit or government– has the rich insights into consumers’ attitudes about drugs that PATS has. PATS consists of two nationally projectable samples – a teen sample for students in grades 7 through 12 and a parent sample.

The 2007 PATS parents’ survey has been conducted in homes since 1995. In 2007 the survey was completely redesigned to provide greater information about parents’ attitudes and behavior. In this study, 1,045 parents or caregivers of children ages 10 – 19 (margin of error: +/-3 percent) were surveyed. The study was conducted and analyzed by deKadt Marketing and Research, Inc. The data in this report were collected from August – September 2007. Questionnaires were self-administered in the respondents’ homes. Each respondent was asked to complete a questionnaire and to place it into a sealed envelope which the interviewer collected. Questionnaires were not signed, nor were they identified in any way that might make it possible to associate responses with the individuals who completed them.

## **QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT**

deKadt Marketing and Research, Inc. developed the questionnaires for the Partnership Attitude Tracking Study in cooperation with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America.

## **SELF-REPORTED DATA**

PATS is based on self-reported data which represents the dominant methodology used in the marketplace. Many academic/government institutions use self-reporting data when researching sensitive issues, e.g., Centers for Disease Control (Youth-At-Risk Surveys), University of Michigan (Monitoring the Future Study), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (National Survey on Drug Use and Health).

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The early teen years are not only a turbulent time for kids, but also usher in a period of increased need and insecurity among parents when it comes to preventing teen drug and alcohol use.

Research shows that as kids' transition into their teen years, their parents' need for drug and alcohol information and tools peaks. Parents of middle school children are more aware than parents of elementary school children that their children will be exposed to alcohol and drugs through offers and friends' use. At the same time, parents' confidence in their ability to influence their teens' decisions about drugs and alcohol begins to wane as their children get older.

According to data from the 2007 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS), parents (51 percent), with kids in 6th - 8th grade, feel they lack the tools and information to prevent drug and alcohol use, where just 35 percent of parents of elementary school children feel they need more help.

Parents of middle schoolers are the most likely group of parents – 46 percent – to sense their kids' reluctance to talk to them about drugs and alcohol, and overall, four out of ten parents (37 percent) feel they have little influence over their middle schooler's decision to try drugs. Yet, we know from our research that kids who learn a lot about the risks of drugs at home are up to 50 percent less likely to use.

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# THE PARTNERSHIP ATTITUDE TRACKING STUDY: PARENTS

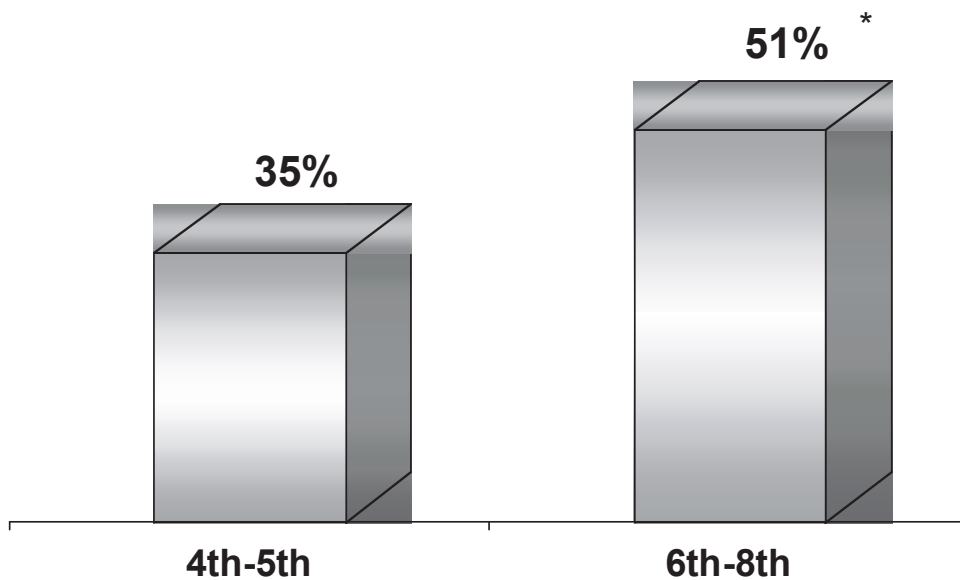
## Transitions

As children transition into their teen years, their parents' feel they lack the tools and information to prevent drug and alcohol use.

While over a third (35 percent) of parents with children in 4th through 5th grades feel that they "don't have enough information and tools to effectively help prevent their child from using drugs," for parents of children/teens in grades 6 through 8 this sentiment jumps to half (51 percent). (See Chart 1)

Chart 1

***I don't have enough information and tools to effectively help prevent my child/teen from using drugs***  
(agree strongly/somewhat)



\*=Significant difference at .05 level

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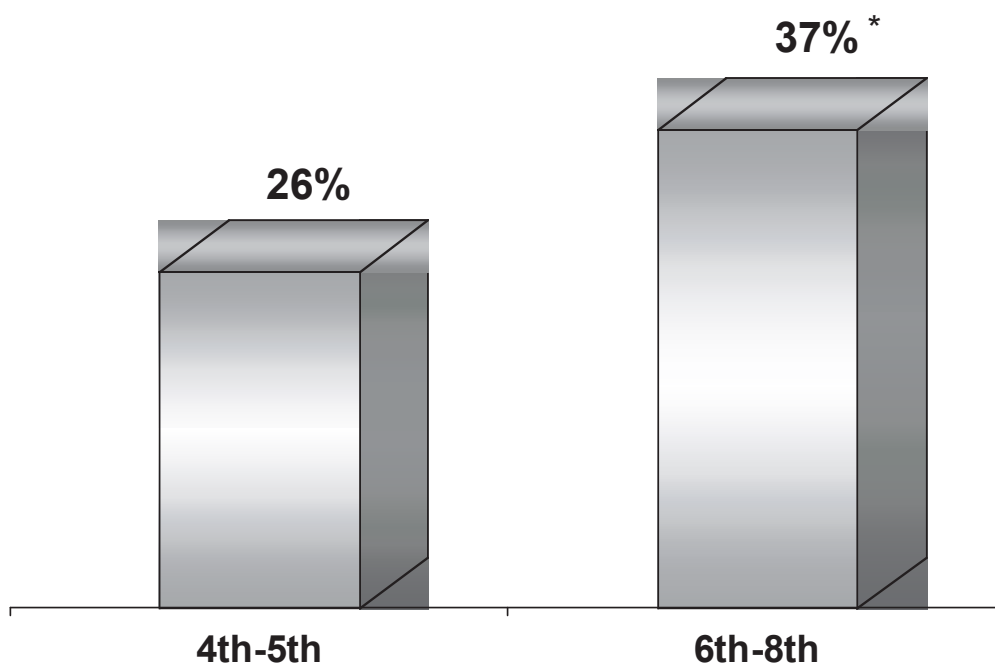
## Self-Efficacy

Parents of children/teens in grades 6 through 8 are more likely to feel that they lack influence over their children's decisions to use marijuana.

Almost 4 out of 10 (37 percent) agree that "what I say will have little influence over whether my child/teen tries marijuana," this compares to about 1 in 4 (26 percent) parents of kids in 4th through 5th grades. (See Chart 2)

Chart 2

***What I say will have little influence over whether my child/teen tries marijuana (agree strongly/somewhat)***



\*=Significant difference at .05 level

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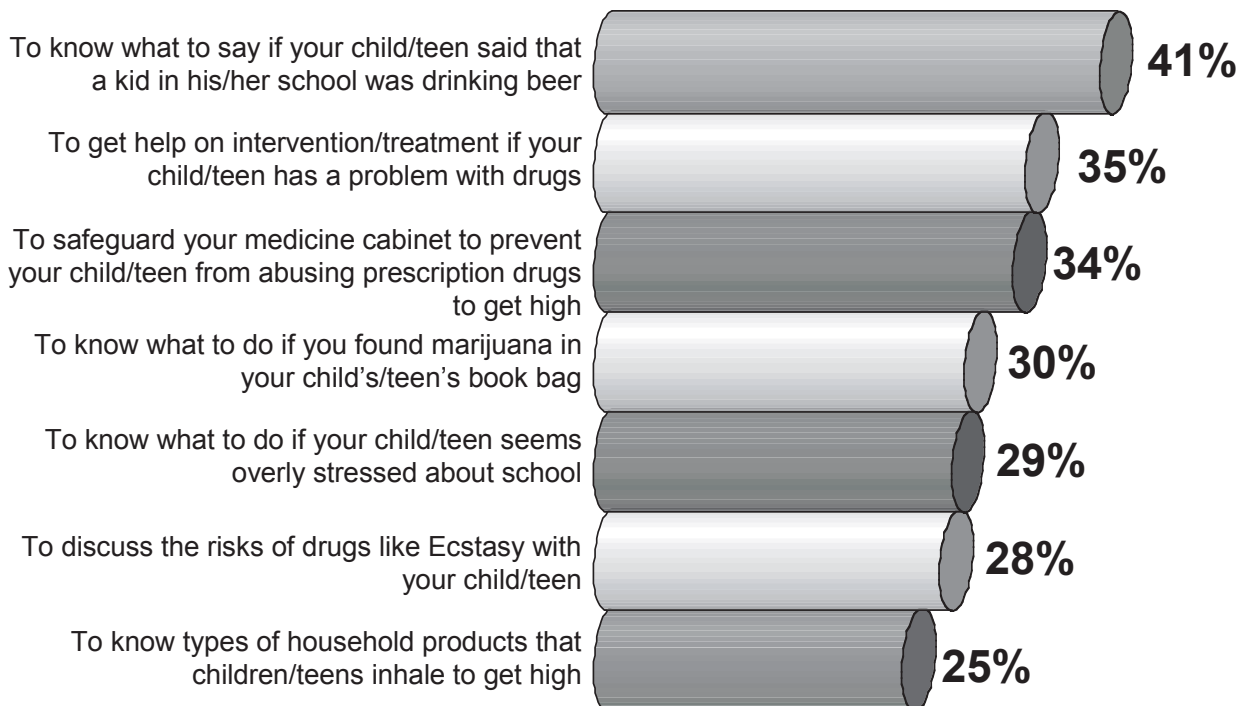
## Self-Efficacy

A majority of parents report not feeling extremely prepared to handle what to say and what to do in various situations relating to their child and alcohol or drug abuse.

Only 1 in 4 (25 percent) feel “extremely prepared to know the types of household products children/teens inhale to get high,” about 1 in 3 (28 percent) report being “extremely prepared to discuss the risks of drugs like Ecstasy with their child or teen,” about 1 in 3 (29 percent) are “extremely prepared to know what to do if your child or teen seems overly stressed about school,” 1 in 3 (30 percent) feel “extremely prepared to know what to do if they found marijuana in their child’s or teen’s book bag.” Only a third (34 percent) of parents are “extremely prepared to safeguard their medicine cabinet to prevent their child or teen from abusing prescription drugs to get high,” a little over a third (35 percent) say they are “extremely prepared to get help on intervention or treatment if their child or teen has a problem with drugs,” and 4 out of 10 (41 percent) say they are “extremely prepared to know what to say if their child or teen said that a kid in his/her school was drinking beer.” (See Chart 3)

Chart 3

### % Extremely Prepared



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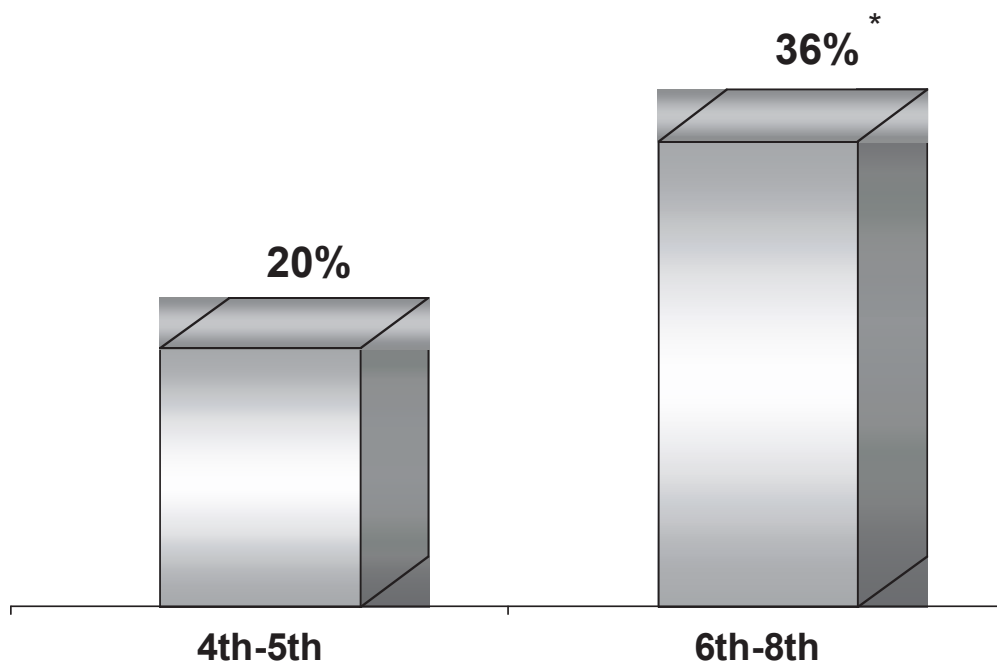
## Child's Friend

Some parents feel conflicted in parenting their teens because they value having a strong friendship with them. Feelings of wanting parental friendship and guilt increase dramatically during the middle school years.

Over a third (36 percent) of parents with children or teens in grades 6 through 8 say that "it is very important to me that my child considers me a friend" compared to 1 out of 5 (20 percent) parents of children in grades 4 through 5. (See Chart 4)

Chart 4

***It is very important to me that my child/teen considers me a friend (agree strongly/somewhat)***



\*=Significant difference at .05 level

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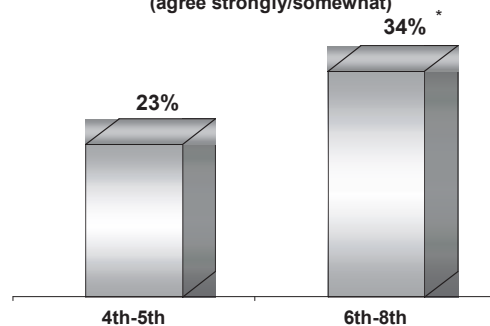
## Freedom and Privacy for Child

As children transition from elementary to middle school, some parents believe in providing greater freedom and privacy than the teen can handle and this may conflict with good parental monitoring behavior.

Over a third (34 percent) of parents with children or teens in grades 6 through 8 agree that “I think my child/teen should be able to have friends over to our house even if there is no adult present” compared to 23 percent of parents with children in grades 4 through 5. (See Chart 5)

Chart 5

***I think my child/teen should be able to have friends over to our house even if there is no adult present***  
(agree strongly/somewhat)

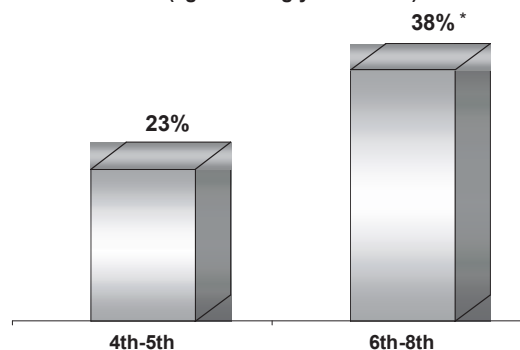


\*=Significant difference at .05 level

Almost 4 out of 10 (38 percent) of parents with children or teens in grades 6 through 8 agree that “I would never go through my child’s teens’ things when he/she was not there” compared to 23 percent of parents with children in grades 4 through 5. (See Chart 6)

Chart 6

***I would never go through my child’s/teen’s things when he/she was not there***  
(agree strongly/somewhat)



\*=Significant difference at .05 level

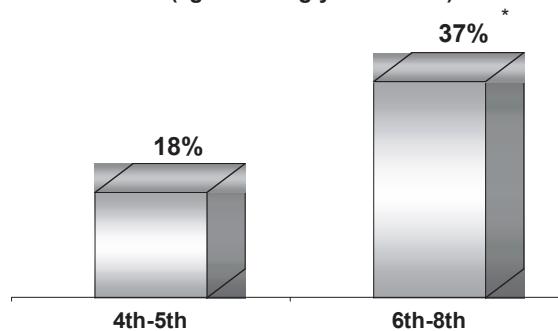
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## Freedom and Privacy for Child

Parents of children or teens in grades 6 through 8 are more likely (37 percent) than parents with children in grades 4 through 5 (18 percent) to agree that “I have a hard time saying ‘no’ to my child/teen when he/she wants to do something or go somewhere I have doubts about.” (See Chart 7)

Chart 7

***I have a hard time saying “no” to my child/teen when he/she wants to do something or go somewhere I have doubts about***  
(agree strongly/somewhat)

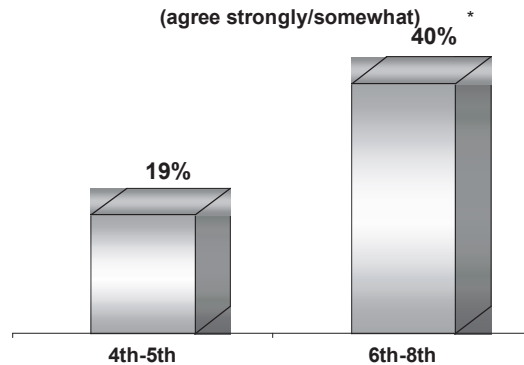


\*=Significant difference at .05 level

Similarly parents of children or teens in grades 6 through 8 are more likely (40 percent) than parents of children in grades 4 through 5 (19 percent) to agree that “it’s hard to tell my child or teen not to do something if all of his/her friends’ parents allow them to do it.” (See Chart 8)

Chart 8

***It's hard to tell my child/teen not to do something if all of his/her friends' parents allow them to do it***  
(agree strongly/somewhat)



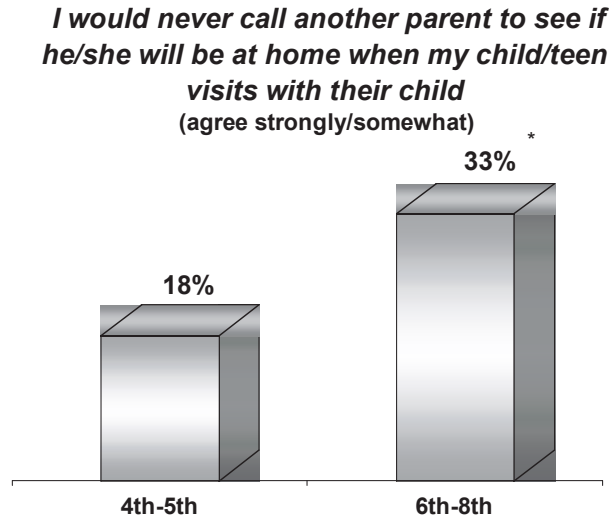
\*=Significant difference at .05 level

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## Freedom and Privacy for Child

Parents of children or teens in grades 6 through 8 are more likely to have a hands-off attitude than are parents with children in grades 4 through 5. A third (33 percent) of parents with children in grades 6 through 8 agree that “I would never call another parent to see if he/she will be at home when my child/teen visits with their child” compared to 18 percent of parents with children in grades 4 through 5. (See Chart 9)

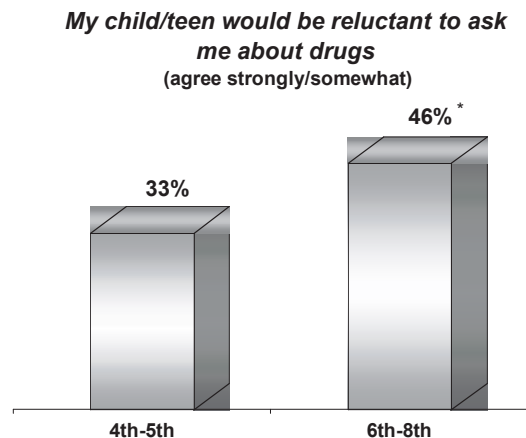
Chart 9



## Discussions

Parents of 6th-8h grades are more likely (46 percent) to believe that “my child or teen would be reluctant to ask me about drugs” than are parents with children in 4th-5th grades (33 percent). (See Chart 10)

Chart 10



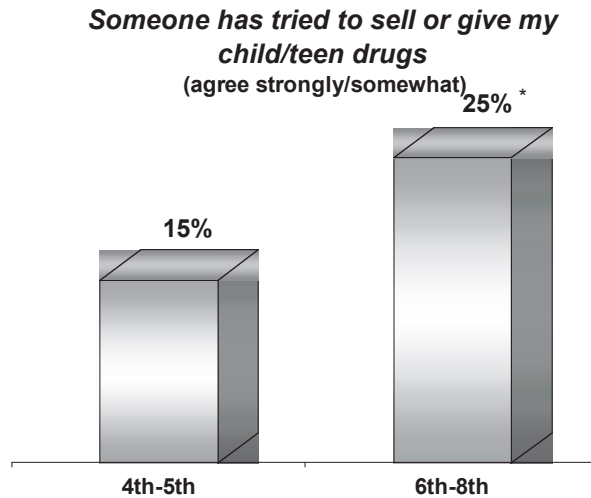
\*=Significant difference at .05 level

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## Exposure to Drugs

Parents of children or teens in 6th-8h grades are more likely to report (25 percent) that “someone has tried to sell or give my child or teen drugs” than are parents with children in 4th-5th grades (15 percent) (See Chart 11)

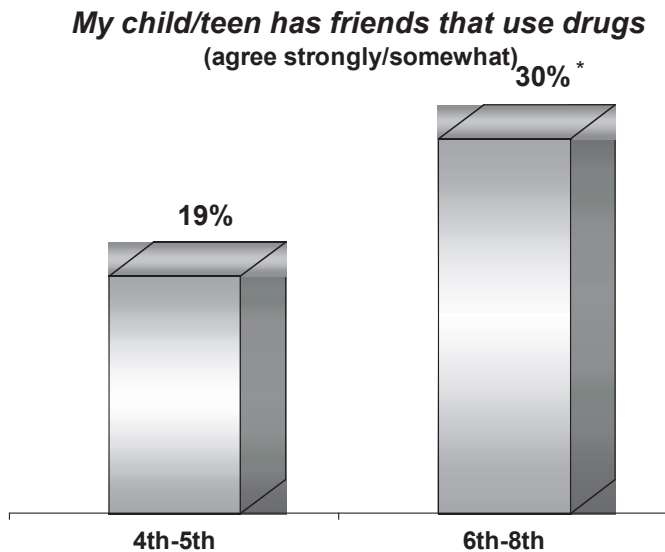
Chart 11



\*=Significant difference at .05 level

Parents of 6th-8th graders are also more likely to say that “my child or teen has friends that use drugs (30 percent) than are parents with children in 4th-5th grades. (19 percent). (See Chart 12)

Chart 12



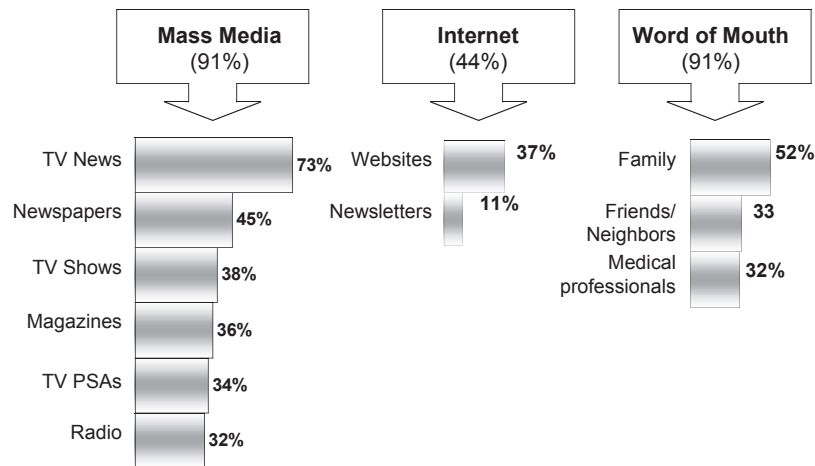
\*=Significant difference at .05 level

## Sources of Information for New Information

Mass media is a major source for providing parents with new information related to drugs. Nine out of 10 parents (91 percent) report getting new information on drugs from TV news, newspapers, TV shows, magazines, TV PSA's, or radio. Over 4 out of 10 (44 percent) get new information from either Web sites or newsletter. Nine out of 10 (91 percent) get new information from personal sources. (See Chart 13)

Chart 13

### Sources Obtain New Information Related to Drugs



## “A Parent Guide to the Teen Brain”

Almost 3 out of 4 parents (73 percent) report that “A Parent Guide to the Teen Brain” would be extremely or very helpful for educating my child or teen about the risks of drugs. (See Chart 14)

Chart 14

### “A Parent Guide to the Teen Brain”

