



**THE PARTNERSHIP  
ATTITUDE TRACKING STUDY  
(PATS)  
Parents with children in grades 7-12  
2006**

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The Partnership is extremely grateful to the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** and the **Procter & Gamble Fund** for their support in making this research possible.

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## Mission

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The Partnership for a Drug-Free America is a nonprofit organization uniting communications professionals, renowned scientists and parents. Best known for its national drug-education campaign, the Partnership's mission is to reduce illicit drug use in America.

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## The Partnership for a Drug-Free America® Today

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The Partnership began in 1987 with support provided by the American Association of Advertising Agencies. Now in its 20th year, the Partnership helps parents and caregivers effectively address drug and alcohol abuse with their children. A major new initiative now unfolding integrates the latest science and research with the most effective traditional media and digital communication techniques to give parents the tools, resources and support they need to help their children lead healthy lives. This effort – the first ever for the Partnership – will include a web-based interactive information resource center, parent-to-parent support network, a national toll-free call center and user-friendly online/offline tools.

The organization has a long-established record of effectiveness – most recently with its national program addressing Ecstasy that helped drive down teen usage of this illicit drug by over 50 percent (source: Monitoring the Future) and an innovative addiction, intervention, and

treatment program implemented in select markets across the country. Currently, the Partnership's Meth360™ program, launched in 2005, is helping mobilize communities to address the spread of methamphetamine use. Partnership research is leading a groundbreaking effort that brought national attention to the intentional abuse of prescription and over-the-counter medicines by teens.

In addition, the Partnership has participated in an unprecedented public/private marketing effort since 1998. Backed by an annual appropriation and with bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign began in July 1998. The Partnership, which receives no funding for its role in this campaign, is the primary provider of advertising to this federally backed effort.

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 [www.drugfree.org](http://www.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

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The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS) is 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 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 2006 PATS is the 19th wave of this research conducted since 1987. Prior to 1993, these studies were conducted in central location malls. 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, GfK Roper Public Affairs and Media has conducted the studies for the Partnership. PATS is funded in part by an organizational grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The parents' study also receives support from Procter & Gamble. In the 2006 PATS study, 1,356 parents with children under the age of 19 were surveyed (624 were parents of children in grades 7 – 12, 178 were parents of children in grades 4 - 6, and 173 were parents of children in grades 3 and under). The margin of error for the entire sample is +/- 2.7 percent and the margin of error for the sample of parents with children in grades 7 -12 is +/- 3.9 percent.

The data in this report were collected from February through April 2006. Parents of children under age 19 were questioned with an over-sampling of African- and Hispanic-American populations. 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.

Significant differences on charts and graphs in this report are indicated only for 2006 results versus 2005, unless otherwise noted. Significant differences are indicated by a box.

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## Questionnaire Development

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GfK Roper Public Affairs and Media developed the questionnaires for the Partnership Attitude Tracking Study in cooperation with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America®.

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## Self-Reported Data

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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

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The Partnership's 2006 survey of parents with children in grades 7 through 12 indicates that parents need to have more talks with their children about the risks of drugs and alcohol. There is a 12% drop from 2005 in the number of parents who report having frequent discussions (four or more) with their teens about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. The Partnership's teen research has found that kids who learn a lot about the risks

of drugs from their parents are up to 50 percent less likely to use drugs than are kids who learn nothing about the risks from their parents.

These parent/child discussions need to be more frequent, consistent, and in greater detail than they currently are. Parents also need to become more knowledgeable about the risks of drugs in the "changing landscape" of adolescent drug use, i.e., prescription and over-the-counter medicine abuse. While a vast majority of parents are aware of new drugs threats like teens' abuse of medicines, parents are not thoroughly covering the very real health risks of medicine abuse when talking with their kids. On average, parents are a third less likely to discuss the risks of prescription and over-the-counter medicine abuse than they are to discuss the risks of drugs like heroin, cocaine, and crack with their teens. Of special concern is that almost three in ten parents agreed that using prescription and over-the-counter drugs to get high is safer than using illegal drugs.

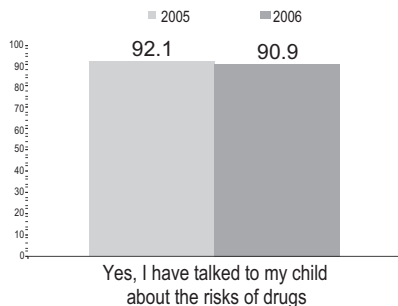
Parents are aware of their child's ease of access to the Internet, but many do not feel knowledgeable about what their child does on the Internet and many parents are very concerned about what their child might be exposed to.

The survey found that parents are not complacent – they want to know how to be more effective in educating their children and keeping them drug free and healthy. They report needing additional information about the risks and effects of specific drugs, prescription and over-the-counter medicine abuse, and specific plans of action.

# The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study Among Parents

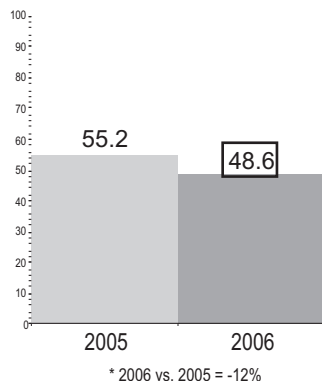
## Discussions About Drugs

Parents' education about the risks of drugs is an important factor in raising healthy children. In the 2006 survey, virtually all parents (92.1 in 2005 and 90.9 in 2006) reported they had talked to their child about drugs.

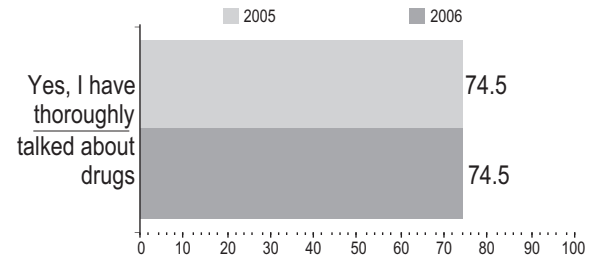


However, the survey results indicate that parents are not having the consistent frequent conversations that are necessary to educate children about the risks of drugs. There was a 12 percent significant decrease from 2005 (55.2 percent) to 2006 (48.6 percent) in the number of parents who reported having discussed drugs four or more times in the past year.

### Percentage Discussed Drugs 4 or More Times

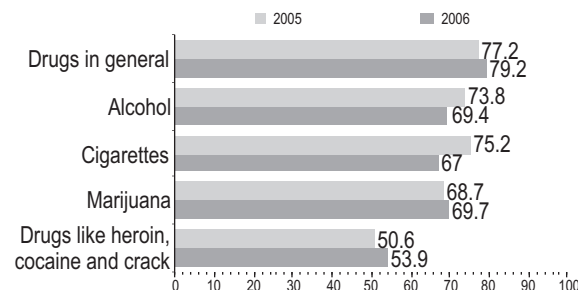


Three-quarters (74.5 percent) of parents reported that their discussions about drugs were thorough.



The survey includes two questions designed to determine the depth and degree of the discussions about drugs. One question lists names of drugs (e.g., marijuana, cigarettes, prescription medicine, non-prescription cough medicine, drugs in general, and others) and asks whether they have discussed the specific drug with their children "never," "a little," or "a lot." The second question lists effects of using drugs (e.g., "drugs can physically hurt your child's body," "using prescription medication to get high can have serious health risks," "using non-prescription cough medicine to get high is dangerous," and others). Looking at the data in greater detail shows that parents are covering the risks of the more prevalent drugs (alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana). In 2006, 79.2 percent reported discussing drugs in general "a lot," 69.4 percent reported including alcohol "a lot," 67 percent reported discussing cigarettes "a lot," and 69.7 percent spoke of marijuana "a lot."

### Percentage Discussed Drugs "A Lot"

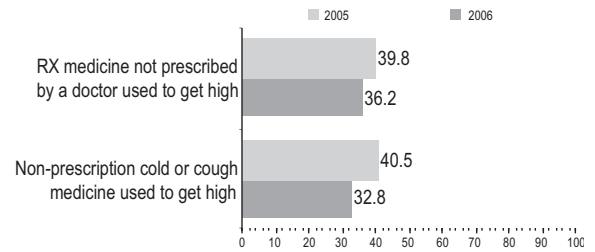


While parents appear to be covering the risks of the more prevalent drugs in their conversations, their reports indicate that they are not thoroughly discussing the risks of drugs included in the “changing landscape” of adolescent drug use.

The 2005 PATS Parent survey reported that parents today face new challenges to their anti-drug education and prevention efforts. As prescription and over-the-counter medicine use becomes more prevalent in their children’s lives, parents are not aware of the serious health risks to their children. The 2006 survey found that parents are less likely to cover the risks of prescription and over-the-counter medicine abuse than they are to discuss the risks of drugs like alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana with their children.

In 2006, 36.2 percent discussed prescription medicine abuse “a lot” with their children and 32.8 percent included non-prescription cold or cough medicine abuse “a lot” in their conversations. Roughly that means that parents are about 50 percent less likely to discuss the risks of prescription and over-the-counter medicine abuse “a lot” with their children than they are to discuss the risks of alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana abuse and a third are less likely to discuss the the risks of prescription and over-the-counter medicine abuse than they are to discuss the risks of drugs like heroin, cocaine and crack. (The survey question is “The following is a list of things you might or might not have talked to your child about when discussing drugs. In general, to what degree have you discussed each of the following drug-related topics with your child? The possible responses are “never,” “a little,” or “a lot.”)

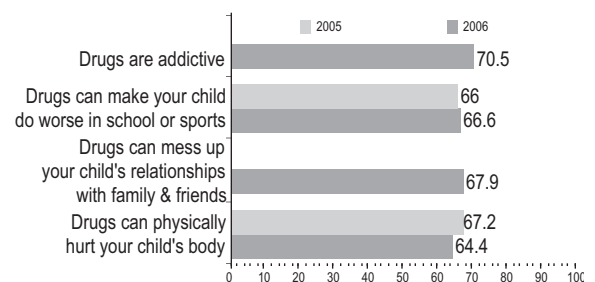
**Percentage Discussed Drugs “A Lot”**



Other findings from the 2006 survey support the finding that parents are not having the frequent and detailed discussions about the risks of prescription and over-the-counter medicine abuse that are needed to raise healthy children.

Parents reported frequently talking about the risks of drugs in general with their children. In 2006, 70.5 reported frequently discussing that “drugs are addictive,” 66.6 percent agreed that “drugs can make your child do worse in school or sports,” 67.9 percent reported that “drugs can mess up your child’s relationships with family and friends,” and 64.4 percent reported frequently discussing that “drugs can physically hurt your child’s body.”

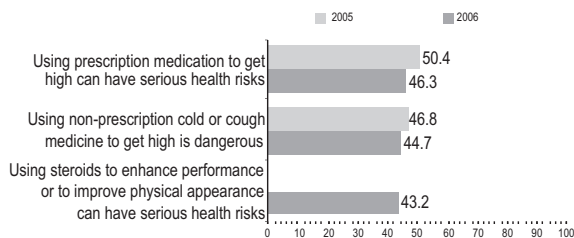
**Frequently Discussed Topics**



In comparison, in 2006, only 46.3 percent of parents reported frequently discussing that “using prescription medication to get high can have serious health

risks,” 44.7 percent reported frequently talking about “using non-prescription cold or cough medicine to get high is dangerous,” and 43.2 percent reported frequently talking about “using steroids to enhance performance or to improve physical appearance can have serious health risks.” Roughly that means that parents are about 34 percent less likely to frequently discuss the risks of prescription and over-the-counter medicine abuse with their children than they are to frequently discuss the risks of drugs in general. (The survey question is “The following is a list of things you might or might not have talked to your child about when discussing drugs. In general, to what degree have you discussed the following topics with your child? The possible responses are “never,” “once or twice,” or “frequently.”

### Frequently Discussed Topics

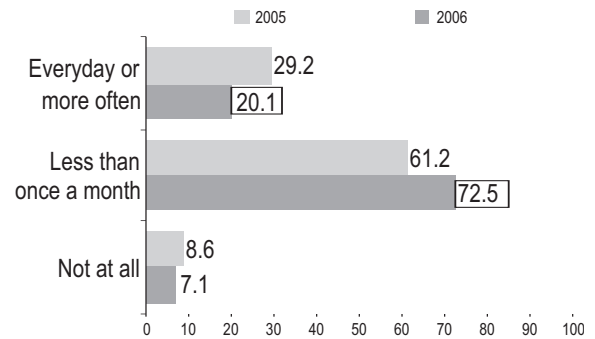


## Media Messages

The 2006 survey found that parents reported receiving fewer media messages (e.g., public service announcements on television/radio, ads in newspapers or magazines) encouraging them to talk to their children about the risks of drugs than in 2005. Parents who report-

ed seeing or hearing ads “everyday or more often” significantly decreased from 29.2 percent in 2005 to 20.1 percent in 2006, a 31 percent decrease.

### Frequency of Seeing Ads about Drugs

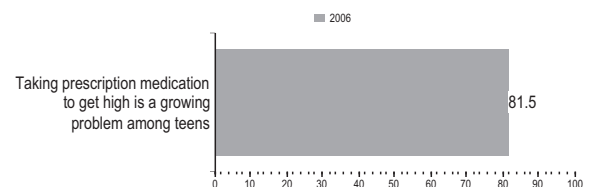


## Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medicines

Prescription and over-the-counter medicines can be extremely helpful to those for whom they are prescribed. However, non-medical use of these substances can lead to serious health risks.

The vast majority of parents (81.5 percent) reported being aware of the growing problem of teen abuse of prescription medicines.

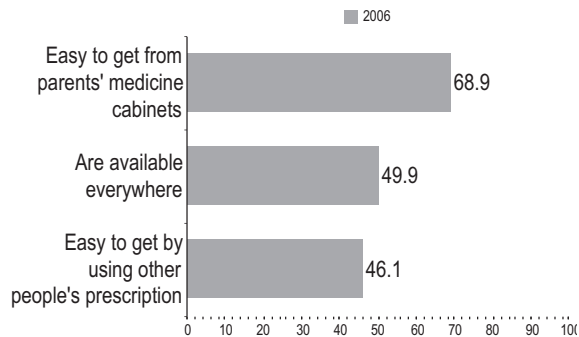
### Percentage Agree Strongly / Somewhat





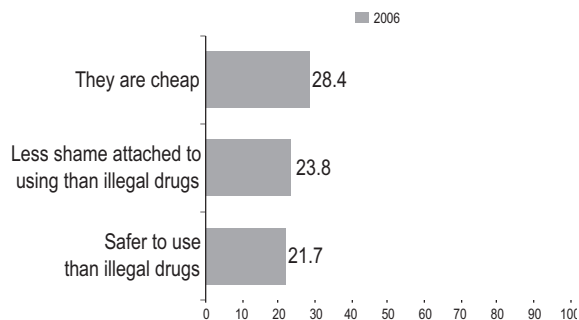
In response to a question about reasons why some teens might use prescription pain relievers without a doctor's prescription (list provided in the questionnaire), the leading reason (68.9 percent) checked was that they are "easy to get from parent's medicine cabinets."

**Reasons Teens Use Prescription Pain Relievers (Without a doctor's prescription)**



About one in five (21.7 percent) parents reported that teens might use prescription pain relievers without a doctor's prescription because the teens may feel that prescription pain relievers are "safer to use than illegal drugs."

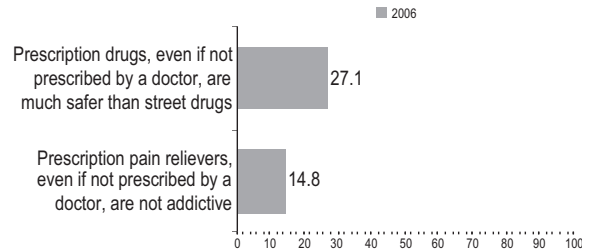
**Reasons Teens Use Prescription Pain Relievers (Without a doctor's prescription)**



Not only do a segment feel that "safer to use than illegal drugs" is a reason why teens might choose to use prescription

pain relievers, almost three in 10 (27.1 percent) parents agree that prescription drug abuse is safer than using street drugs.

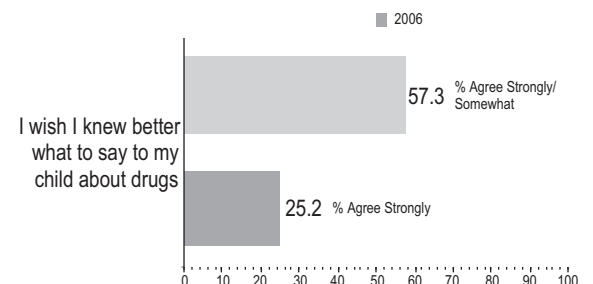
**Percentage Agree Strongly / Somewhat**



**Parental Self-Efficacy**

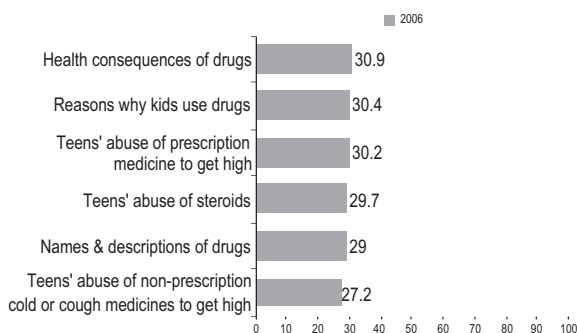
A majority of parents reported that they felt they needed help in educating their children about the risks of drugs (57.3 percent agreed to the statement "I wish I knew better what to say to my child about drugs"). About a quarter of parents feel they are strongly in need of help (25.2 percent agreed strongly to the same statement).

**Parents' Sense of Efficacy**

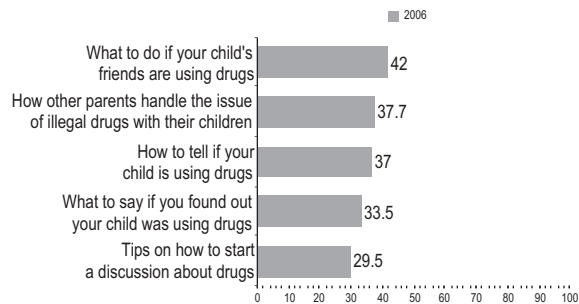


## Parents Needs

To help better educate their children about the risks of drugs, about a third of parents reported having informational needs (29 percent wanted “names and descriptions of drugs,” 30.2 percent information on teens’ abuse of prescription medicine to get high,” 27.2 percent information on teens’ abuse of non-prescription cold or cough medicine to get high,” 29.7 percent information on “teens’ abuse of non-prescription cold or cough medicine to get high,” 29.7 percent information on “teens’ abuse of steroids,” 30.9 percent on “health consequences of drugs,” and 30.4 percent on “reasons why kids use drugs”).



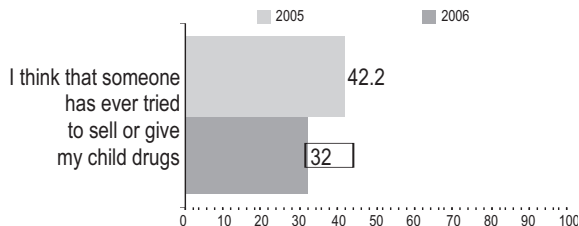
In addition to informational needs, parents also reported needing advice and tools on what specific things they should do (37 percent asked for “how to tell if your child is using drugs,” 37.7 percent “how other parents handle the issue of illegal drugs with their children,” 33.5 percent asked “what to say if you found out your child was using drugs,” 42 percent “what to do if your child’s friends are using drugs,” and 29.5 percent wanted “tips on how to start a discussion about drugs”).



## Offers/Sales of Drugs to Children

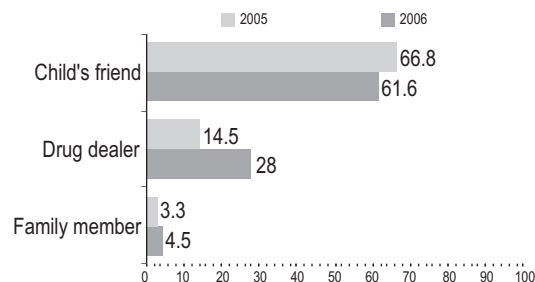
Parents in 2006 (32 percent) were significantly less likely than were parents in 2005 (42.2 percent) to report that they believed their child had been offered drugs.

### Exposure to Drugs



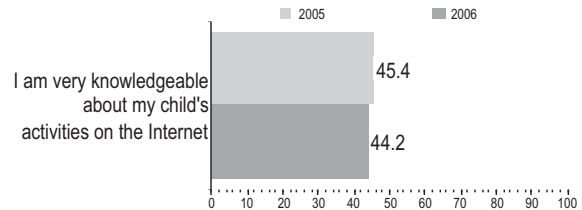
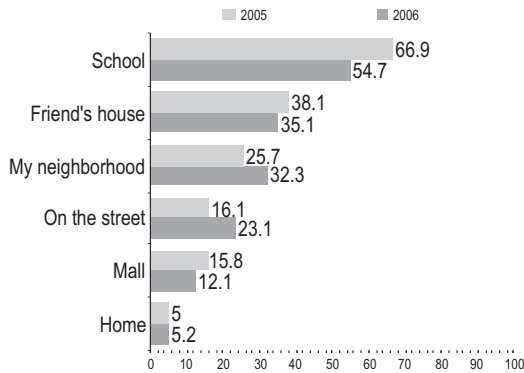
The majority of parents in 2005 (66.8 percent) and in 2006 (61.6 percent) felt that the person offering the drugs was the child’s friend.

### Person Offering / Selling Child Drugs

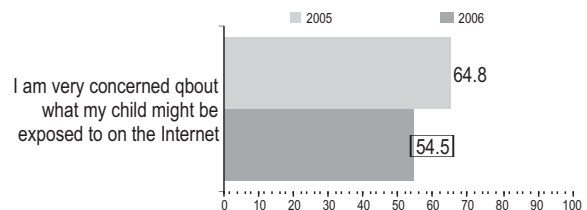


Parents were also aware that the likely place for a child to be offered drugs was in the child's immediate environment (in 2006, 54.7 percent said a school).

### Place Where Child Offered Drugs

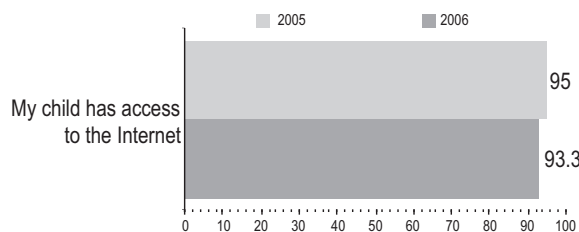


Over half of parents reported being very concerned about what their child might find on the Internet, although the percentage was down significantly from 2005 (64.8 percent in 2005 and 54.5 percent in 2006).



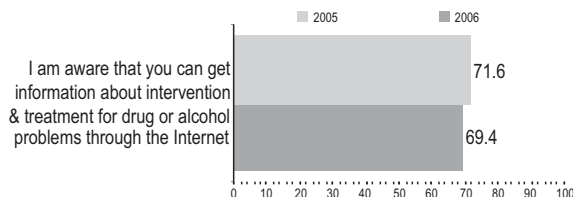
## Internet

Parents in this study reported virtually universal access to the Internet by their children (93.3 percent in 2006 indicated their child had access to the Internet). This study is a national probability sample of parents and the sample is not large enough to investigate the lack of Internet access in poorer communities.



Fewer than half of parents in the study (45.4 percent in 2005 and 44.2 percent in 2006) felt they were very knowledgeable about their child's Internet activities.

About seven out of 10 parents (71.6 percent in 2006) reported being aware that information about intervention and treatment for drug and alcohol problems is available through the Internet.



About one in five parents (22.6 percent in 2006) reported they would be "extremely" likely to use the Internet for information on intervention and treatment.

