



### Parental Drinking And Parenting Practices Influence Adolescent Drinking

Adolescence is a critical time of development on many different levels, but especially concerning the initiation and escalation of alcohol use. For example, the proportion of American adolescents who regularly drink alcohol roughly doubles during secondary-school years. New findings show that parental drinking both directly influences adolescent drinking, as well as indirectly through adolescent perceptions of parenting, especially monitoring and discipline received.

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### Prescription for Danger

You may have seen some recent ads that started on the Super Bowl which kick off a new White House public education campaign to alert parents about the troubling trend of teen prescription drug abuse. Studies show that more teens abuse prescription drugs than any other illicit drug, except marijuana; more than cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine combined. Every day, 2,500 kids age 12-17 abuse a prescription painkiller for the first time and more people are getting addicted to prescription drugs.

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### FOCUS ON ALCOHOL AND POPULAR CULTURE

When crafting prevention messages and programs, it is important to understand that popular culture plays a powerful role in young people's lives. Youth between the ages of 8 and 18 spend almost 7 hours per day with various types of media. Through movies, television, music, advertising, and other outlets, youth are exposed to an extraordinary array of messages—many of which glamorize alcohol use. Rarely are the negative consequences or health risks of alcohol use shown. Young people need to learn how to be critical thinkers about media messages, to question sources of information, and to look for missing information. Community groups can help youth understand the risks associated with alcohol use and resist pressures to drink.

#### Facts

- ☑ More than 9 out of 10 (93%) of the 200 most popular movie rentals in 1996 and 1997 included depictions of alcohol use. When alcohol use was portrayed, no consequences were associated with consumption in over half (57%) of the movies (Roberts, DF, April 1999)
- ☑ A review of top-selling popular songs found alcohol mentioned in 47% of rap musing lyrics
- ☑ In recent television programs, 9 out of 10 drinkers are portrayed as either experiencing no effects at all or only positive personal and social outcomes from their alcohol consumption (Gerbner, G, 1996)

#### What to Do

- ☑ Write an article for a local parenting section of a newspaper, PTA newsletter or faith community bulletin encouraging adults in your community to watch television, attend concerts, and go to the movies with young people. Urge adults to note when underage drinking is portrayed in the media and to use these experiences as opportunities to talk with youth about the real consequences of alcohol use. Remind adults to be respectful of young people's opinions and to listen to their observations.
- ☑ Invite local agencies such as the Department of Health to teach media literacy