

SAMHSA's Award-Winning Newsletter
March/April 2009, Volume 17, Number 2



Are Prevention Messages Working?

New Data on Teens, Parents, & Drugs

We've all seen the commercials urging parents to "talk to your kids about drugs." Are teens getting the message?

A new national report issued during National Alcohol Awareness Month provides both discouraging and encouraging news on efforts to inform young people about the risks of underage drinking and illicit substances. ([See more on underage drinking.](#))

The SAMHSA report, based on a series of national surveys, finds that a smaller percentage of adolescents (age 12 to 17) were exposed to substance use prevention messages through media sources in 2007 (77.9 percent) than in 2002 (83.2 percent).

Similarly, a smaller percentage of adolescents are participating in out-of-school substance use prevention programs (from 12.7 percent in 2002 to 11.3 percent in 2007).

However, the report shows a significant rise during this same period in the level of adolescents who engaged in substance abuse-related conversations with at least one parent (from 58.1 percent in 2002 to 59.6 percent in 2007).

Adolescents who have conversations with their parents about the dangers of substance use are less likely to be current substance users than those who did not have these conversations.

Specifically, adolescents who had conversations with their parents about the dangers of substance abuse were significantly less likely to be current users of the following substances than those who did not have such conversations with their parents:

- Alcohol (16.2 percent versus 18.3 percent)
- Cigarettes (10.6 percent versus 12.5 percent)
- Illicit drugs (9.5 percent versus 11.7 percent).

Read [Exposure to Substance Use Prevention Messages and Substance Use among Adolescents: 2002 to 2007](#).

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