

# Alcohol and Tobacco Use: What Teens Are Doing and What Parents Know

According to the *Student Drug Use Survey*<sup>1</sup>, rates of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use by Greater Cincinnati's youth have been steadily declining since 2000. This is the good news. The bad news is that parents don't know their kids are using alcohol and tobacco.

The 2005 *Child Well-Being Survey*<sup>2</sup> included questions of parents that were also included on the *Student Drug Use Survey*. For the first time, our region has data from teenagers and parents regarding alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. This summary presents the results from these two surveys of youth ages 13–17 and parents of youth ages 13–17. While the two surveys did not interview parents and teenagers from the same families, the two surveys provide a representative picture of parents and teenagers in Greater Cincinnati<sup>3</sup>.

Other research has shown that children whose parents talk to them about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, set clear rules, or punish them when rules are broken are less likely to use alcohol and other drugs. How many Greater Cincinnati teenagers use alcohol and tobacco, and how many parents know their teenagers are smoking and drinking? Do parents and teenagers agree on how often they talk about alcohol and other drugs and about clear rules and punishments?

## Teenage alcohol and tobacco use

Less than 2% of Greater Cincinnati parents (1.6%) said that to their knowledge, their teenagers used alcohol in the past 30 days. Almost 1 in 4 teenagers (23.5%) said that they had used alcohol in the past 30 days. Parents were slightly more aware of their teens' tobacco use: 5.1% said that, to their knowledge, their teenager used tobacco products in the past 30 days, compared to 17.3% of teenagers who said they used tobacco products.

## Talking about alcohol and other drugs

Greater Cincinnati's parents believe they talk to their children about alcohol and other drugs more often than

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<sup>1</sup> Coalition for a Drug-Free Greater Cincinnati (2006). *Student Drug Use Survey*. Cincinnati, OH: Author.

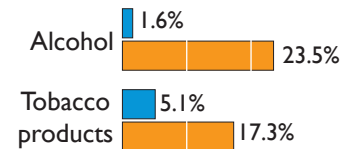
<sup>2</sup> Child Policy Research Center at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (2006). *Child Well-Being Survey*. Cincinnati, OH: Author.

<sup>3</sup> For more information about the methodology of each survey, please visit our web site at <http://www.healthfoundation.org/resources/otherdata.html>.

## Alcohol and tobacco use in the last 30 days

**Parent question:** To your knowledge, in the last 30 days, has your child used alcohol or tobacco products? (Graph represents parents who answered "yes.")

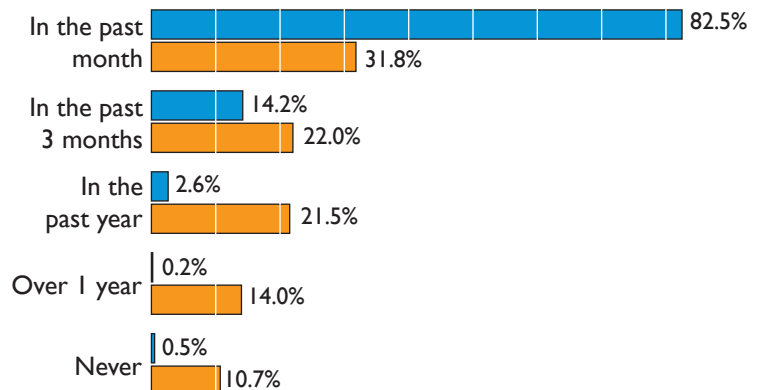
**Teen question:** Within the past year, how often have you used alcohol or tobacco products? (Graph represents teenagers who responded that they used alcohol or tobacco at least once a month.)



## Talking about alcohol and other drugs

**Parent question:** When was the last time you talked to your children about alcohol and other drugs?

**Teen question:** When was the last time your parents talked to you about alcohol and other drugs?



■ Parents (Source: Child Policy Research Center's 2005 *Child Well-Being Survey*; results from parents of children ages 13–17 only)

■ Teenagers (Source: Coalition for a Drug-Free Greater Cincinnati's 2006 *Student Drug Use Survey*; results from children ages 13–17 only)

This summary presents findings from two surveys partially funded by The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati: the *Student Drug Use Survey*<sup>1</sup> and the *Child Well-Being Survey*<sup>2</sup>. For more information about these surveys, please visit our web site at [www.healthfoundation.org/resources/otherdata.html](http://www.healthfoundation.org/resources/otherdata.html). For the complete survey datasets, visit [www.oasis.uc.edu](http://www.oasis.uc.edu).



teenagers believe their parents talk to them about alcohol and other drugs. About 8 in 10 Greater Cincinnati parents (82.5%) said that they had talked to their teenagers about alcohol and other drugs in the past month. Only 3 in 10 teenagers (31.8%) said their parents had talked to them about alcohol and other drugs in the past month.

### Setting clear rules

Almost all Greater Cincinnati parents (97.0%) believe they set clear rules for their children a lot (66.2%) or

often (29.8%). However, only 70% of teenagers think their parents set clear rules for them a lot (41.0%) or often (28.8%).

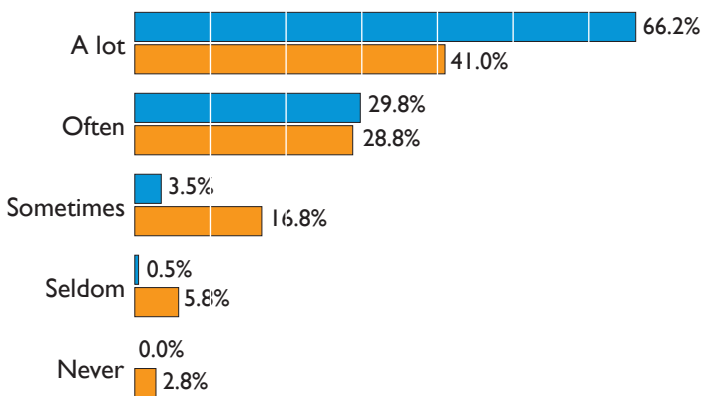
### Punishment when rules are broken

Greater Cincinnati's parents and teenagers agree on how often parents punish when their children break the rules, with about 60% of parents and teens saying that parents punish them a lot or often when rules are broken.

### Setting clear rules

**Parent question:** How often do you set clear rules for your children?

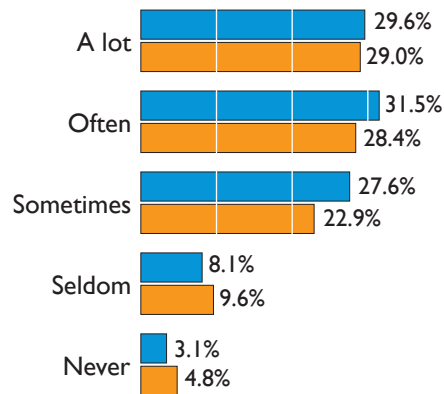
**Teen question:** Do your parents set clear rules for you?



### Punishment when rules are broken

**Parent question:** How often do you punish your children when they break the rules?

**Teen question:** Do your parents punish you when you break the rules?



- Parents (Source: Child Policy Research Center's 2005 *Child Well-Being Survey*; results from parents of children ages 13–17 only)
- Teenagers (Source: Coalition for a Drug-Free Greater Cincinnati's 2006 *Student Drug Use Survey*; results from children ages 13–17 only)