

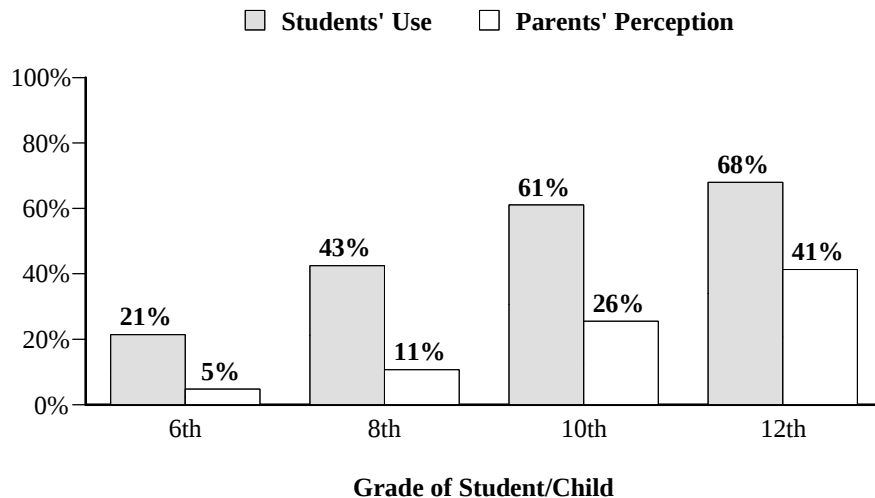
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

***National Survey Finds Parents Underestimate
Alcohol and Illicit Drug Use by Youth***

Parents dramatically underestimate alcohol and illicit drug use by youth, according to data from the most recent national Pride surveys of parents and students. One-fifth (21%) of students in 6th grade reported that they had drunk alcohol at least once in the past year. Yet only 5% of parents said that their 6th grade child has tried or is using alcohol. While the gap between students' self-reported use and parents' perceptions of their own children's use narrows with age, parents continue to significantly underestimate alcohol use by youth. More than two-thirds of 12th graders reported past year alcohol use, while only 41% of parents thought that their 12th grade child had used alcohol. Similar results were found for illicit drug use (data not shown). For example, 36% of 12th graders reported using illicit drugs at least once in the past year, while 15% of parents reported that their 12th grade child used drugs. Recent research has shown that early alcohol use increases the likelihood of developing alcohol dependence at a later age (see *CESAR FAX*, Volume 15, Issue 30).

**Percentage of Students Reporting Drinking Alcohol at Least Once in the Past Year and
Percentage of Parents Reporting that Their Child Had Tried or Is Using Alcohol**



SOURCES: Adapted by CESAR from International Survey Associates, *PRIDE Surveys National Summary for Parents, 2004-05*, 2006; and International Survey Associates, *PRIDE Surveys National Summary for Grades 6-12, 2004-05*, 2005. Available online at <http://www.pridesurveys.com/Reports/index.html>.

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