

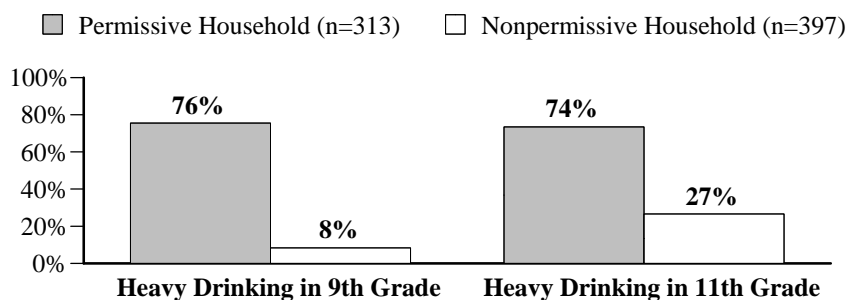
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

***South Dakota School Survey Finds Youths Living in Permissive Households
Significantly More Likely to Drink Heavily***

Youths living in permissive households are more likely to drink heavily than those from nonpermissive households, according to a longitudinal survey of youth attending South Dakota schools. Overall, 10% of youths lived in a permissive household and 10% lived in a nonpermissive household, based on the youths' reports of whether their parents would be upset if they drank or used marijuana, kept track of their whereabouts, or set curfews*. Three-quarters (76%) of youths from permissive households reported heavy drinking in 9th grade, compared to only 8% of youths living in nonpermissive households. Similar results were found for heavy drinking in 11th grade (see figure below). Youths from permissive households were also more likely to have other high risk factors, such as a higher rate of drinking by their best friend and the adult who was most important to them, a greater belief that occasional alcohol use was not harmful, and being less likely to believe that they might become dependent on alcohol if they drank every weekend (data not shown). These findings suggest that in addition to educating parents about the need for appropriate monitoring of youths' behavior, alcohol prevention programs that "target pro-drinking peer and adult influences, positive attitudes toward drinking, and resistance self-efficacy may be particularly important in deterring heavy drinking among adolescents living in permissive households" (p. 528).

**Percentage of South Dakota Students Reporting Heavy Drinking in 9th and 11th Grades,
by Permissiveness of Household**



*Data are from a sample of 3,687 7th grade students recruited from 48 South Dakota schools in 1997-1998, with follow-up assessments conducted in grades 8, 9, 10, and 11. Nonpermissive households (n=397, 10.3% weighted) were defined as parents being "very upset" to know that their child drank alcohol or used marijuana, knowing "all of the time" where to find their child, and telling the child "all of the time" what time to be home. Permissive households (n=313, 10.2% weighted) were defined as having at least three of these four characteristics: parents being "not at all" or "a little" upset to know that their child drank alcohol or used marijuana, knowing "sometimes" or less often their child's whereabouts, and telling the child "sometimes" or less often what time to be home. The remaining 79.5% (n=2,977) of the sample were from households that fell in between these two extremes in terms of permissiveness and were not analyzed.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Tucker, J.S., Ellickson, P.L., and Klein, D.J., "Growing Up In a Permissive Household: What Deters At-Risk Adolescents from Heavy Drinking?," *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 69(4):528-534, 2008. For more information, contact Dr. Joan S. Tucker at joan_tucker@rand.org.