

## ***Poll Shows That Parents Seriously Underestimate Availability and Use of Drugs Among Their Children***

According to the results of a national survey, 34% of parents of teens thought their child had been offered drugs, while over one-half (52%) of the teens reported being offered drugs. This disparity is even greater for youth--7% of parents thought their preteen had ever been offered drugs, while 23% of the youths said they actually had. Parents' perceptions of their children's drug use is not much better. While parents of preteens had fairly accurate perceptions of their children's experimentation with marijuana and cocaine, they underestimated their children's use of inhalants. Parents of teenagers seriously underestimated their children's use of all three of these substances. According to the authors, "parents need to understand the true vulnerability of their kids to drug experimentation today, and to educate themselves about drug use so that they can have greater confidence in listening to, talking with, and educating their children" (p. 12).

### **Drug Availability and Use Among U.S. Students, Grades 4-12, Parents' Perceptions Versus Students' Self-Reports, 1995\***

Student's Experiences	<u>Preteens</u> (Grades 4-6)		<u>Teenagers</u> (Grades 7-12)	
	Parents' Perceptions	Youth Reported	Parents' Perceptions	Teens Reported
Anyone ever tried to sell or give drugs to student	<b>7%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>52%</b>
Student tried marijuana at least once	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>38</b>
Student tried cocaine/crack at least once	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>
Student tried inhalants at least once	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>23</b>

\*This national survey was conducted by Audits & Surveys Worldwide, Inc. on behalf of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. Self-administered questionnaires were given to a randomly selected sample of 2,424 youth (grades 4-6), 6,096 teenagers (grades 7-12) and 822 parents (adults aged 18 and older who were parents of children under 19). The survey was conducted in May and June of 1995. For more information, contact Steve Dnistrian of the Partnership at 212-973-3504.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Partnership for a Drug-Free America, *1995 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study*, February 1996.

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**<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cesar/cesar.html>**

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