

Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration

SAMHSA News Release

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New report shows that adolescents are far more likely to drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs if they live with a parent that drives under the influence

Overall 11.5 percent of all youths aged 16 to 17 drove under the influence of drugs or alcohol in the past year

A new report shows that adolescents appear to be strongly influenced by parental behavior when it comes to driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The report conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) shows that those 16 and 17 years old living with parents who drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol are far more likely to drive under the influence than adolescents whose parents do not drive under the influence.

For example, 18.3 percent of 16 and 17 year olds living with a mother who drove under the influence of drugs or alcohol also drove under the influence – as opposed to 10.9 percent of the adolescents who lived with a mother who had not driven under the influence. The difference was even more pronounced for fathers -- 21.4 percent of adolescents living with a father who drove under the influence also drove under the influence, as opposed to 8.4 percent of adolescents living with a father who did not drive under the influence.

“Parents play a key role in preventing drunk and drugged driving, beginning with setting a good example,” said SAMHSA Administrator Pam Hyde. “Parents who drink, or drug, and drive not only put their lives and the lives of others at immediate risk, but increase the likelihood that their children will follow down this destructive path.”

SAMHSA has developed an online tool at <http://www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov/> to help parents create an action plan to talk with their children about the dangers of underage drinking.

The report entitled, *Data Spotlight: Adolescents Living with a Parent Who Drives Under the Influence Are at Increased Risk for Driving Under the Influence Themselves*, is based on data analyzed from SAMHSA’s 2002 – 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). NSDUH is a scientifically conducted annual survey of approximately 67,500 people throughout the country, aged 12 and older. Because of its statistical power, it is the nation’s premier source of statistical information on the scope and nature of many substance abuse behavioral health issues affecting the nation.

The report is available at: http://www.samhsa.gov/data/spotlight/WEB_SPOT_023/WEB_SPOT_023.pdf

For more information on SAMHSA’s efforts to prevent substance abuse go to <http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/>. Those seeking strategies focusing on teen driver safety can go to

<http://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/CAMPAIGNS/Teen+Safety/Youth+Access+To+Alcohol>.

SAMHSA is a public health agency within the Department of Health and Human Services. Its mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

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