



**OREGON STRATEGIES**

**Strengthening Families Program** is an evidence-based parenting program to reduce adolescent substance use and other problematic behaviors in youth 10 to 14 years old. This program has proven to be effective in:

- » Preventing the onset of alcohol or drug use among youth
- » Reducing parental alcohol and drug use
- » Improving parenting skills
- » Strengthening family bonds

**Face It, Parents**, is Oregon’s public education campaign, aimed at parents, using radio and television advertising written and produced by youth.

**Friendly PEERsuasion**, is an evidence-based curriculum specifically for young girls. It is being piloted in 6 communities beginning Fall 2007.

**Training** of law enforcement agencies across the state in minor decoy operations and controlled party dispersal techniques. As a result more communities are engaged in consistent enforcement of laws related to underage drinking.

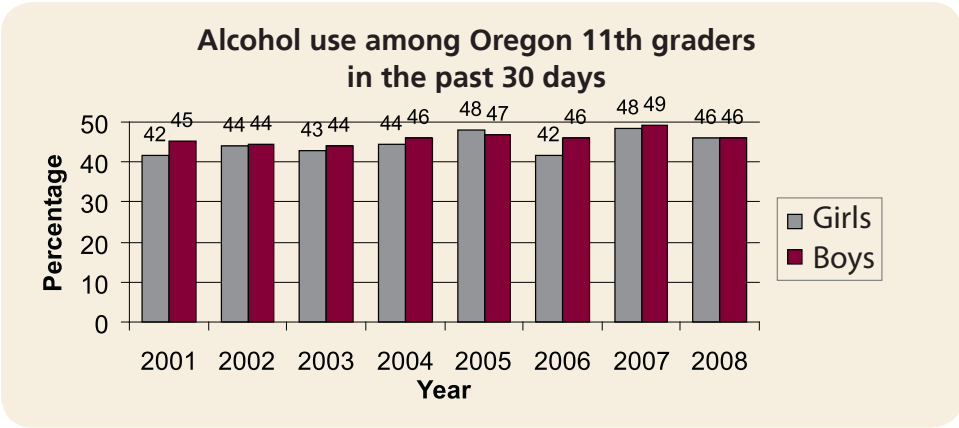
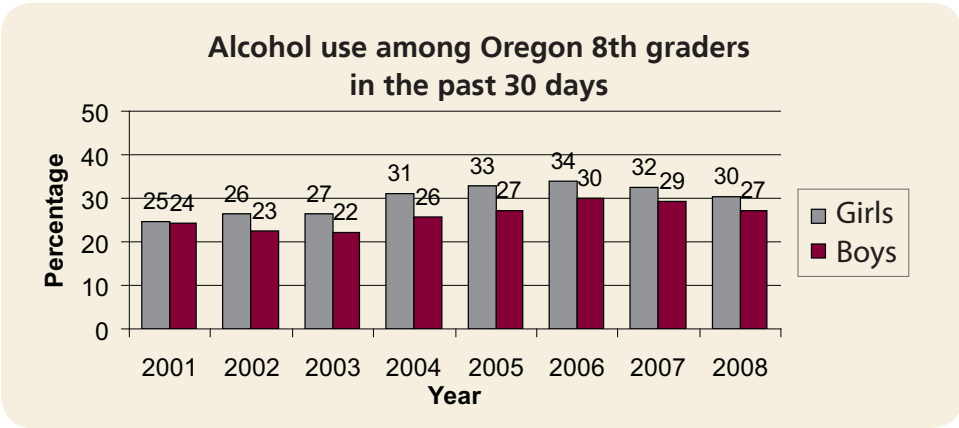
# Underage drinking

## EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ON YOUTH

An American Medical Association report shows that adolescent drinkers perform worse in school, are more likely to fall behind and have an increased risk of social problems, depression, suicidal thoughts and violence. Even occasional heavy drinking injures young brains. About one out of fifteen youth ages 12 to 17 suffers from alcohol abuse or dependence in Oregon, about 21,000 youth. Rather than “outgrowing” alcohol use, young abusers are significantly more likely to have drinking problems as adults.

## PAST MONTH DRINKING

Nearly a third of eighth grade youth and 46 percent of eleventh grade youth surveyed drank alcohol on one or more occasions in the past month, slightly lower than 2007. Since 2001, eighth grade alcohol use increased considerably, with higher rates for girls. Binge drinking involves consumption of five or more drinks within a couple hours. In 2008, 25 percent of 11th graders and 11 percent of eighth graders surveyed reported binge drinking on at least one day in the past month. In eighth grade, girls have slightly higher binge drinking rates; by eleventh grade, boys have higher rates than girls.



Data source: Oregon Health Teens Surveys, 2001 to 2008

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### Visit these Web sites:

- » **Face It, Parents** An Oregon campaign to reduce underage drinking  
[www.faceitparents.com](http://www.faceitparents.com)
- » **Stop Underage Drinking** Portal of Federal Resources  
[www.stopalcoholabuse.gov](http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov)

### Statewide contact:

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Department of Human Services  
Addictions and Mental Health Division  
500 Summer Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301-1118

If you think your child is not drinking alcohol...



Face it, Parents.

One in three Oregon 8<sup>th</sup> graders is drinking.  
Your child could be one.

If you need this fact sheet in alternate format, please call 503-945-5763 (Voice) or 503-945-5895 (TTY).  
Addictions and Mental Health Division



## WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

Youth listen to their parents. Students were asked, "How wrong do your parents feel it would be for you to drink beer, wine or hard liquor regularly?" Eighth graders who said their parents think it is "wrong or very wrong" were 2-1/2 times less likely to drink and 4 times less likely to binge than those who said their parents think it is "a little bit or not wrong at all." More than 60 percent of eighth graders and three-fourths of eleventh graders say it is easy or somewhat easy to get beer, wine or hard liquor. And they most often get alcohol at parties, from friends or by taking it from their homes.

### Parents can prevent underage drinking by:

- » Telling their children not to drink,
- » Knowing their children's whereabouts, and
- » Ensuring parties are alcohol-free and supervised by adults.

## WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

Youth who drink are at greater risk of academic failure. Alcohol use during adolescence is associated with significant and possibly irreversible damage to memory and learning. In Oregon, one in twelve youth, who said they drank alcohol in the past 30 days, also reported missing school or class because of drinking alcohol.

### Schools can help by:

- » Providing lessons about the effects of alcohol in elementary, middle and high school,
- » Establishing and enforcing strict policies against alcohol use, and
- » Providing information to parents about the consequences alcohol use can have on their children.

## WHAT COMMUNITIES AND GOVERNMENT CAN DO

Community attitudes about underage drinking must support the efforts of parents and schools. Eighth graders who believe most adults think it is "wrong or very wrong" for someone their age to drink alcohol are half as likely to drink when compared to youth who believe adults think it "a little wrong or not wrong at all."

### Communities and local government can help by:

- » Sponsoring events that send the message that underage drinking is not allowed, and
- » Supporting strict enforcement of underage drinking laws.

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## DATA SOURCES

Data about Oregon youth comes from the Oregon Healthy Teens survey and the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Information on the effects of alcohol on youth was obtained from the American Medical Association report, *Harmful Consequences of Alcohol Use on the Brains of Children, Adolescents, and College Students*.