

## COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR TEEN

When you think about it, kids are exposed to gambling almost every day. All they have to do is walk into a corner store to see people buy lottery tickets, or turn on the TV to see poker tournaments and ads for casinos. There are three reasons why it's important for teens to understand all this.

- Teenagers are only a few years from being adults who can gamble legally.
- Many teens are already gambling. It may only be a harmless bet of a dollar or two, but it can be a lot more serious.
- Several studies have shown that somewhere between four and eight percent of teenagers develop a gambling problem.

## HOW DO I PROTECT THEM?

Teens who understand gambling and its risks are less likely to develop a gambling problem. Parents can protect their kids by ensuring that they have this understanding.

Parents who have never raised the topic with their teen may not realize that they are already communicating some sort of message about gambling through their own behavior. Parents may buy lottery tickets, play bingo, or visit casinos and seem to enjoy the experience; they may not gamble at all, out of moral conviction or because they just aren't interested; they may spend too much money gambling and regret it afterwards. Talking about gambling directly is a way to make sure that you are communicating exactly what you want to get across.

## WHAT DO THEY NEED TO KNOW?

Teens need to understand that gambling is not a way to make money. They need to know that the games run by casinos, racetracks, internet sites, and lotteries are all designed so that most people lose in the long run.

Problem gamblers don't seem to understand this. They believe that they are blessed with special skills or special luck. They often "chase losses," betting more and more money in the belief that they will "win back" money they have already lost. Teens need to understand that these beliefs are illogical and actually dangerous.

Finally, teens need to recognize that problem gambling can lead to serious consequences throughout life, including the loss of enormous amounts of money, the destruction of a career, and the loss of friends and family.

## HOW DO I BRING IT UP?

Here are some tips for raising the issue with your child:

- Look for a time to raise the topic naturally. For example, after seeing a commercial for a casino or finding out that a friend has won or lost money gambling.
- Ask questions first. Explore your child's own ideas and feelings about gambling before giving information or offering your own opinions.
- Be patient. It may take several discussions before your child understands the ideas that you want to convey.

**Treatment options include telephone counseling, in-person individual counseling, and group counseling. Call the confidential, 24-hour phone number below for information or help: 1-877-2-STOP-NOW (1-877-278-6766)**

## **WHERE CAN YOU GO FOR HELP?**

If you are worried that your child may be having problems related to gambling, help is available.

Call the toll-free Oregon Gambling Help Line at **1-877-2-STOP-NOW (877-278-6766)** or contact your school's counseling office.

You will be able to talk to someone who can answer your questions and help you decide if your teen needs further counseling.

**Department of Human Services  
Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services:**  
[www.dhs.state.or.us/addiction](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/addiction)

**Oregon Lottery Problem Gambling:**  
[www.oregonlotteryhelp.com](http://www.oregonlotteryhelp.com)

**Oregon Gambling Addiction Treatment Foundation:**  
[www.gamblingaddiction.org](http://www.gamblingaddiction.org)

**Responsible Gambling:**  
[www.responsiblegambling.org/index.cfms](http://www.responsiblegambling.org/index.cfms)

**Youth Gambling International:**  
[www.youthgambling.com](http://www.youthgambling.com)

## **Talk to Your Kids About the Risks of Gambling. Help Them Beat the Odds.**

