

CHAPTER 8

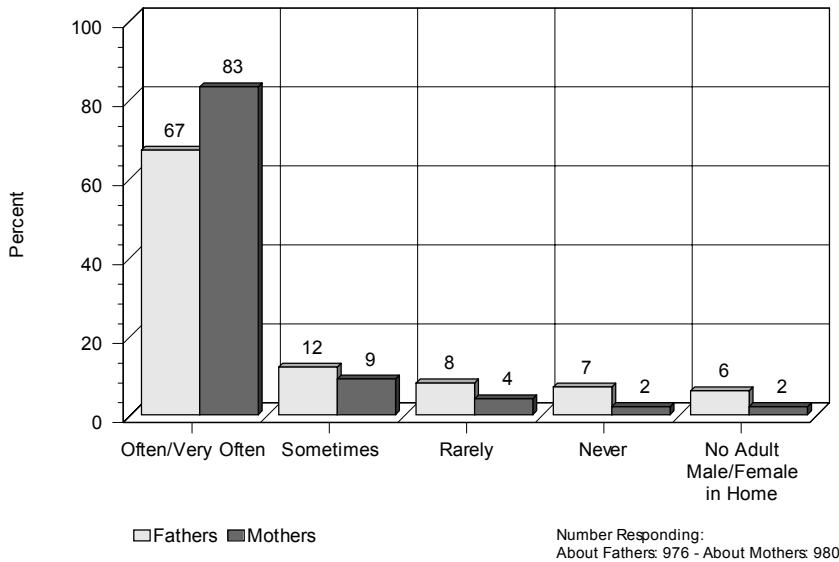
Parent-Teen Relationships

Most would agree the family is the most influential socializing agent in the lives of youth. It is through parents that youth learn about themselves, how to interact with others, how to make decisions, and how to develop morality and a sense of values.

Parental Support and Love

A factor central to the development of youth and the general quality of the parent-teen relationship is how supportive and loving parents are. As Figure 8-1 shows 83% of all teens felt their mother was there “often” or “very often” when they needed her; 67% felt the same for their father.

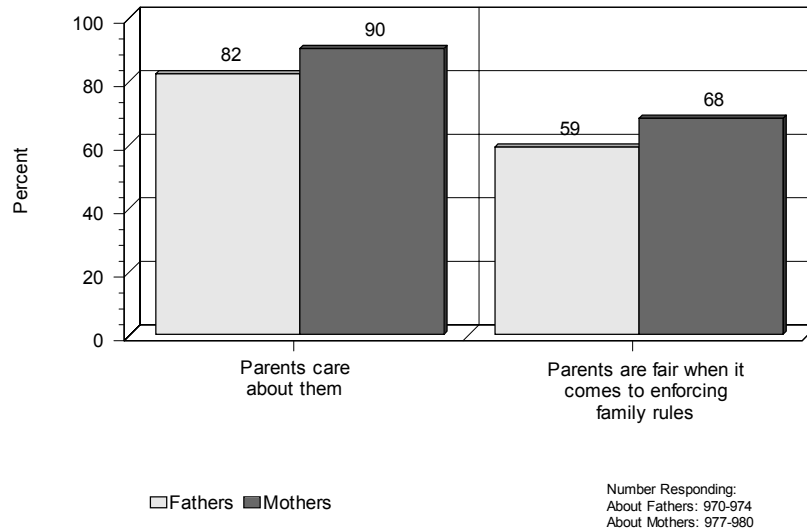
Figure 8-1: Parents Are There for Them



Note: Due to rounding, some graphs may not total 100%.

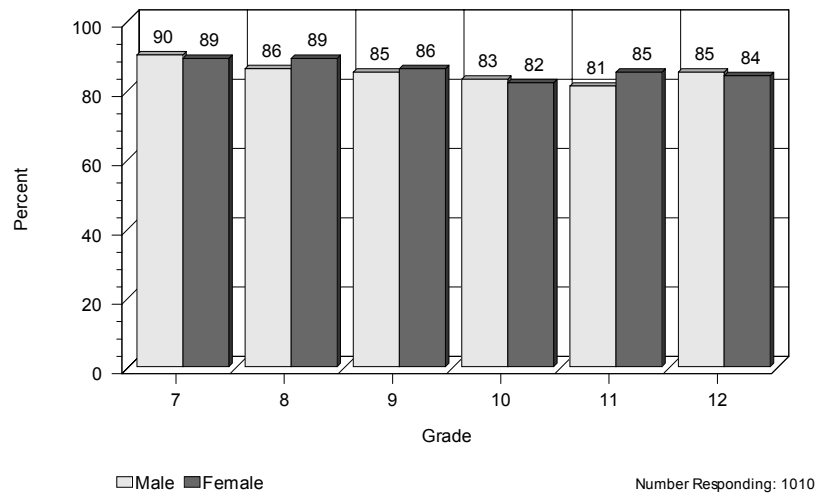
Figure 8-2 shows students' perceptions of two parental support factors--whether their parents care about them and fairness in enforcing the family rules. The vast majority of youth feel their parents care about them. Over 50% of students rate their parents as being fair "often" or "very often" in enforcing rules.

**Figure 8-2: Parental Support
(Often or Very Often)**



A sense of parental support can be seen in the high number of students (85%) who "agree" or "strongly agree" their parents are interested in what they are learning and how they are doing in school (junior high school, 88%; high school, 84%). This is illustrated in Figure 8-3.

**Figure 8-3: Teens Who Feel Their Parents Are Interested in
What They Learn and How They Are Doing in School
(Strongly Agree or Agree, by Grade and Gender)**



Getting Along with Parents at Home

As shown in Figure 8-4, 84% of local teens worried to some degree about getting along with their parents at home. Forty-seven percent (47%) worried “quite a bit” or “very much” about this issue (junior high school, 46%; high school, 49%).

Figure 8-4: Worry About Getting Along with Parents at Home

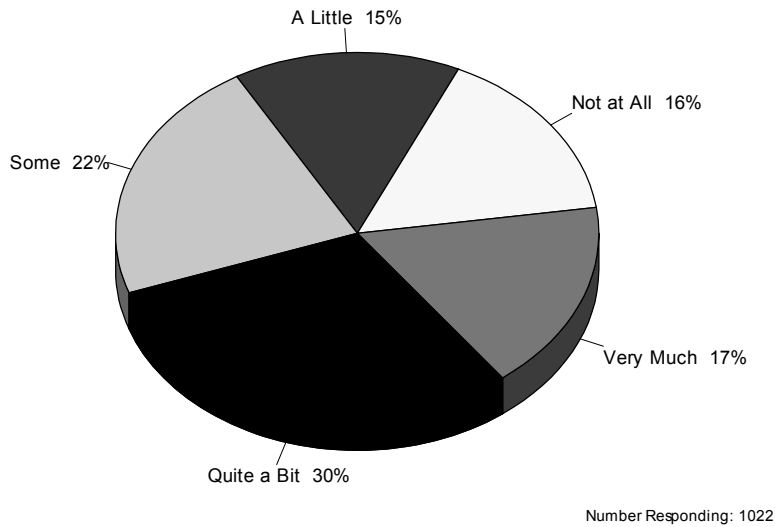
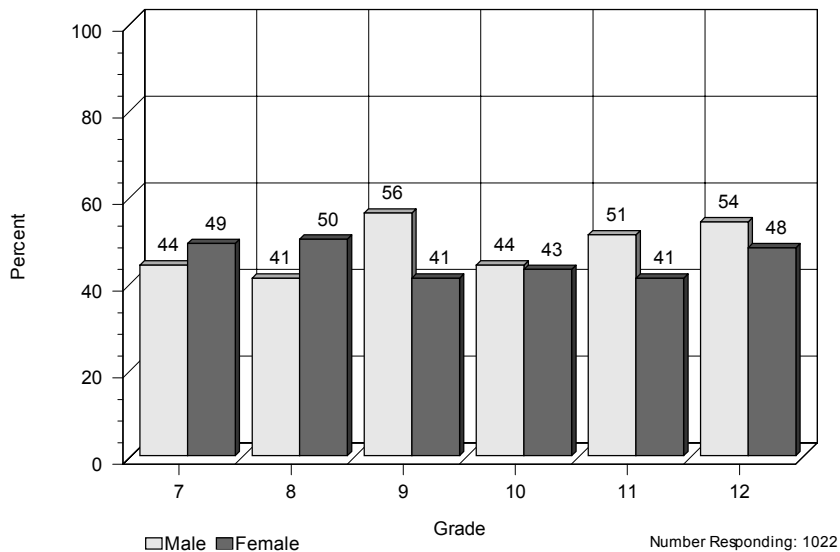


Figure 8-5 shows the percentage of teens who said they worried “quite a bit” or “very much” about getting along with their parents, on the basis of gender and grade level.

**Figure 8-5: Worry About Getting Along with Parents at Home
(Quite A Bit or Very Much, by Grade and Gender)**



Communication

Parent-teen communication is an important vehicle for sharing ideas, values, concerns, and dreams. As numerous scholars and family professionals have noted, good communication is vital to the well-being of parent-teen relations. Yet, many local youth felt they had not had a good talk with their mothers or fathers in the past year about some important issues. It seems reasonable to assume that more in-depth conversations on important topics in these areas would benefit both teens and parents. Figure 8-6 shows that many teens have “never” or “rarely” had a good talk with their fathers in the past year about birth control, risk of AIDS or other STDs, whether or not it is ok for teens their age to have sex, risks of drinking and using drugs, or personal problems.

**Figure 8-6: Teens Who Never or Rarely Had Good Talks with Fathers
(In the Past Year)**

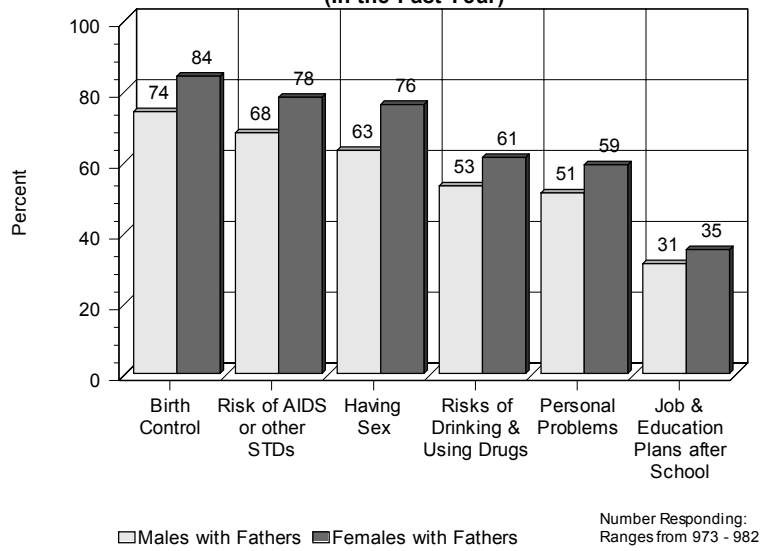
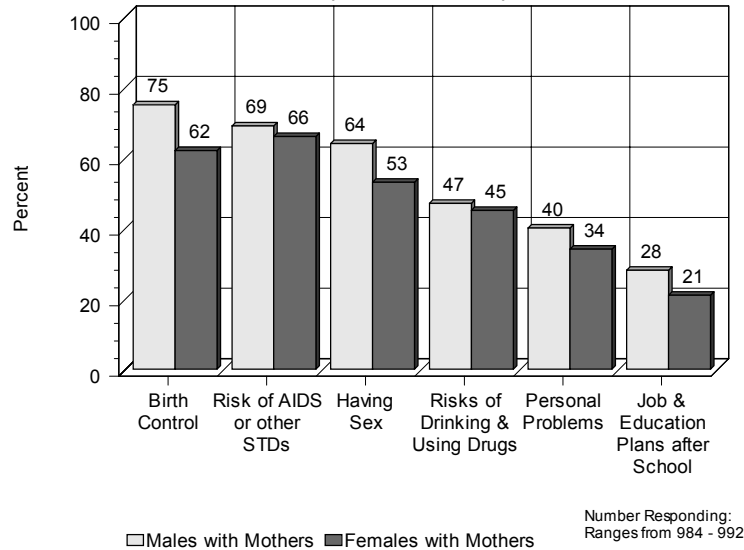


Figure 8-7 shows many teens have “never” or “rarely” had a good talk with their mothers in the past year about birth control, risk of AIDS or other STDs, whether or not it is ok for teens their age to have sex, risks of drinking and using drugs, or personal problems. In students’ discussions with both their mothers and fathers, birth control is the least discussed subject, while job or education plans are discussed most often.

Figure 8-7: Teens Who Never or Rarely Had Good Talks with Mothers (In the Past Year)



We asked students, “Would you like to talk more frequently with your parent(s) or other adult(s) in the home about the things that are important to you?”. Of all students surveyed, 40% said they would like to talk more with their parents (junior high school, 43%; high school, 39%). Figure 8-8 displays all responses by school level. Figure 8-9 displays responses by gender.

Figure 8-8: Teens Who Would Like to Talk More Frequently With Their Parents (By School Level)

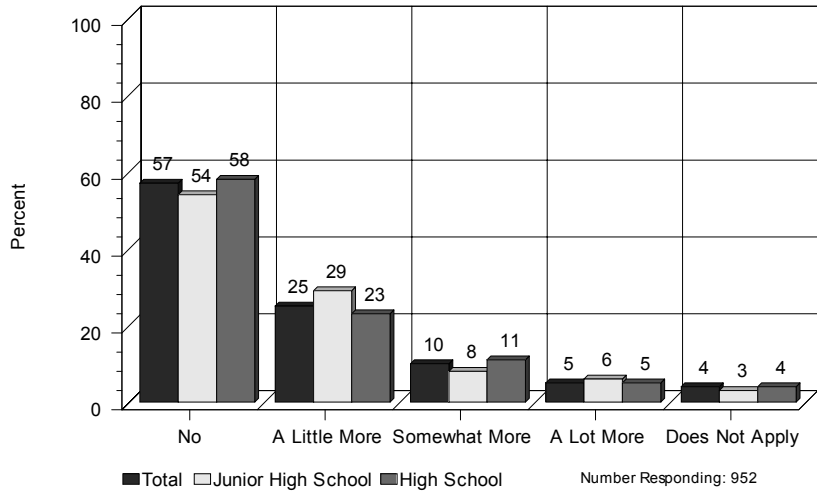
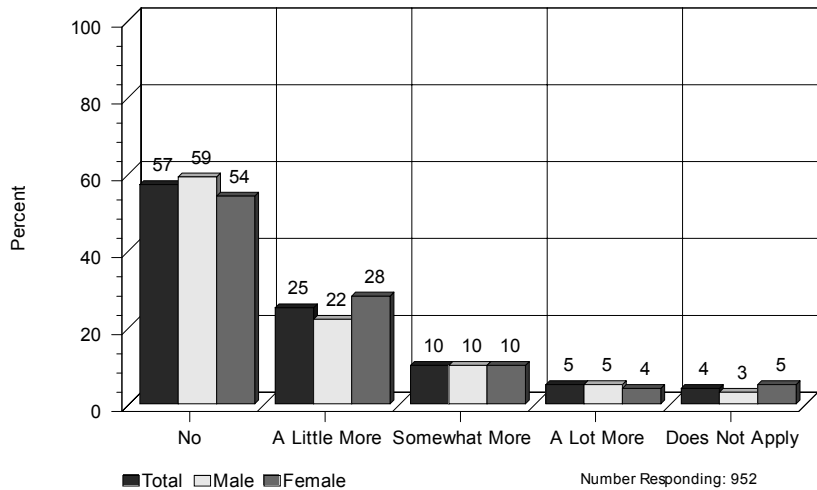


Figure 8-9: Teens Who Would Like to Talk More Frequently With Their Parents (By Gender)



Local teens were asked how often they lied to their parents or guardians. Over 50% of teens responded that they “never” or “rarely” lied. Figure 8-10 displays all responses by school level. Figure 8-11 shows that there was little difference between the responses of males and females.

Figure 8-10: How Often Teens Lie to Their Parents/Guardians (By School Level)

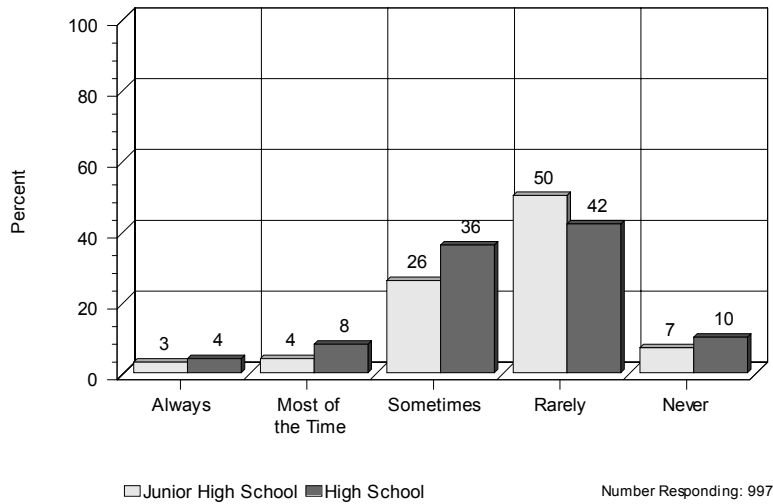
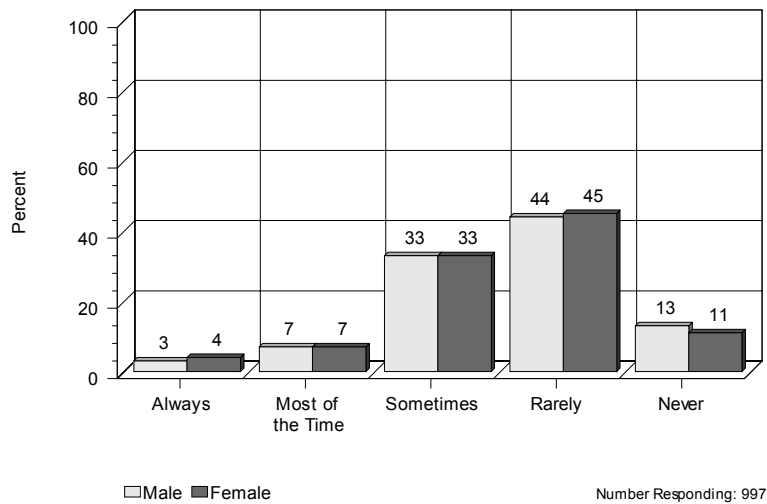


Figure 8-11: How Often Teens Lie to Their Parents/Guardians (By Gender)

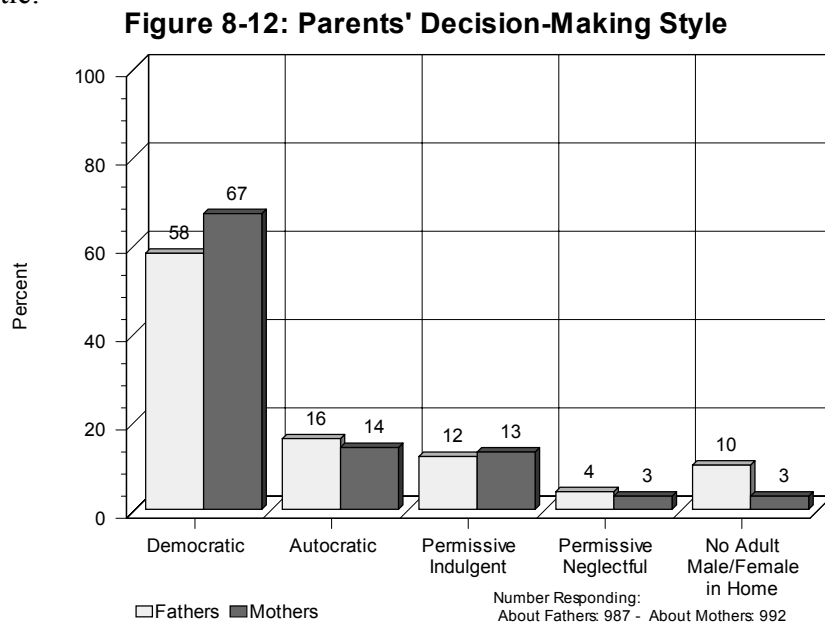


Decision-Making

Research has shown those teenagers who are the most competent, responsible, and who have the highest self-esteem are more likely to have parents who allow them to express their opinions, involve them in making decisions and rules, and explain the reasons behind family rules and discipline (Demo, Small, Savins-Williams, 1987; Liprie, 1993).

Originally parenting styles were characterized as authoritative, authoritarian, or permissive (Baumrind, 1967, 1971). Maccoby and Martin (1983) further defined the permissive category as permissive indulgent or permissive neglectful. In the TAP survey students were asked a question for each parent: *“In general, how are most important decisions made between you and your **mother/father or other adult female/male** at home (for example, what time you need to be home at night or where you can go with friends?)”*. Student responses were categorized into the parenting styles. The authoritative or democratic style involved the teen in making decisions under the parents’ watchful supervision (*She/he and I talk about it and **together** we come to a decision. or She/he asks my opinion but she/he has the final say. or She/he discusses the decision with me but then lets me decide.*). Such a parenting style can be contrasted with an authoritarian or autocratic style where parents make most or all the decisions and allow their child little say in decisions or rules (*She/he tells me exactly what to do.*). In a permissive parenting style, parents allow their child to make all decisions with little or no input or advice from them. This style can be either permissive indulgent (*She/he trusts me to make my own decisions.*) or permissive neglectful (*She/he doesn’t care what I do, so I decide for myself.*).

Figure 8-12 displays the reported parenting style of local mothers and fathers. According to the reports of local teens, 58% of fathers and 67% of mothers use an authoritative or democratic style, while 16% of fathers and 14% of mothers were characterized by their teens as being authoritarian or autocratic.



Parental Monitoring

Research has suggested parental monitoring can be an important factor in influencing adolescent problem behaviors. Higher levels of parental monitoring have been found to be related to lower rates of sexual activity and alcohol and other drug use (Dornbusch, Carlsmith, Bushwall, Ritter, Leiderman, Hastorf & Gross, 1985; Flannery et al., 1999; Luster & Small, 1997; Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984; Rodgers, 1999). Parental monitoring involves a parent’s supervision and awareness of a child’s behavior and whereabouts. A series of eight questions in the survey was used to assess how well teens were monitored by their parents. Figure 8-13 displays the eight areas questioned and the percentage of students who responded “a lot of the time” or “always”.

Figure 8-13: Teens Who Report Parental Monitoring of Their Behavior (A Lot of the Time or Always)

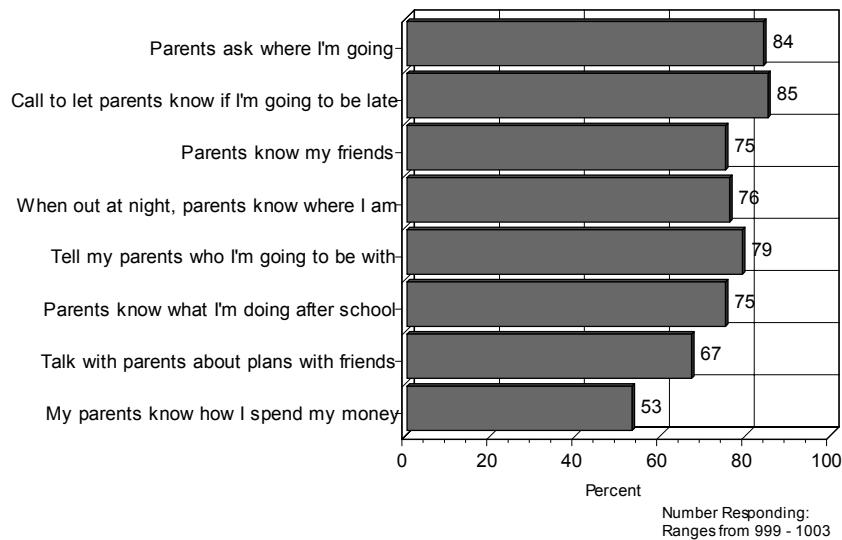


Figure 8-14 shows that junior high school students reported higher levels of parental monitoring than high school students for most categories.

Figure 8-14: Teens Who Report Parental Monitoring of Their Behavior
(A Lot of the Time or Always, by School Level)

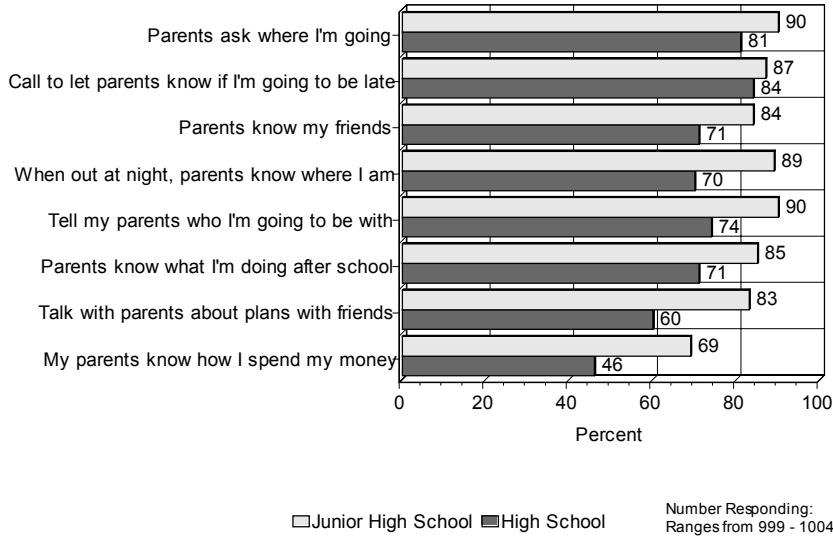
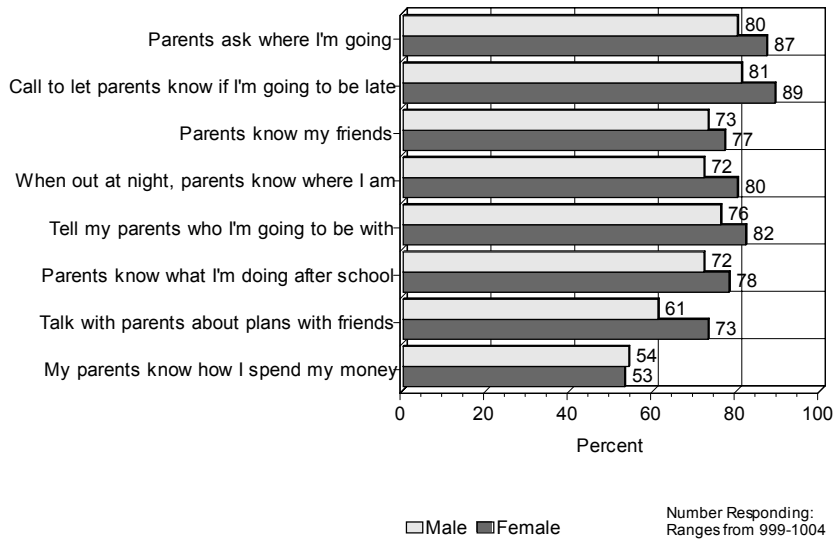


Figure 8-15 shows student responses by gender.

Figure 8-15: Teens Who Report Parental Monitoring of Their Behavior
(A Lot of the Time or Always, by Gender)



The relationship between levels of parental monitoring and teen health risk behaviors was examined. The responses to the eight parental monitoring questions were averaged and then scores were divided into tertiles for the graph below. Figure 8-16 shows a strong relationship between level of parental monitoring and monthly teen drinking. Because the results of the TAP survey provide descriptive information, no cause and effect relationship can be inferred. We cannot say that one behavior caused another, only that there is a relationship between the two.

Figure 8-16: Relationship Between Levels of Parental Monitoring and Monthly Teen Drinking (By Gender)

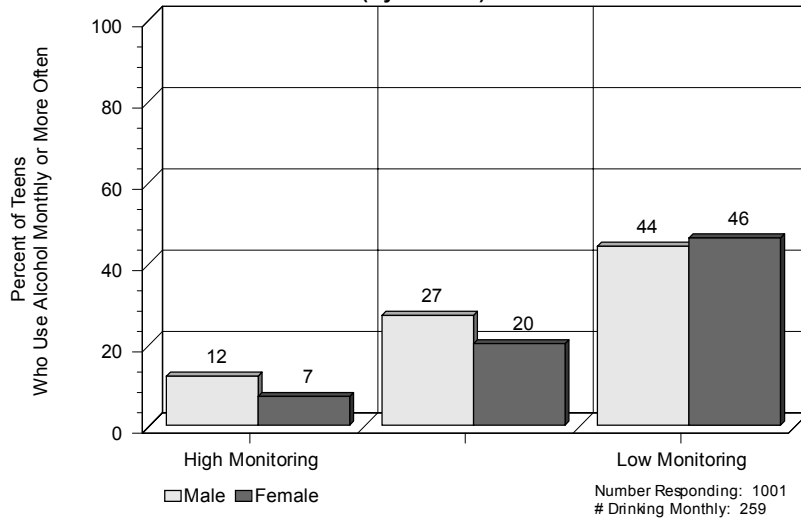


Figure 8-17 shows the relationship between the level of parental monitoring and monthly teen smoking. Because the results of the TAP survey provide descriptive information, no cause and effect relationship can be inferred. We cannot say that one behavior caused another, only that there is a relationship between the two.

Figure 8-17: Relationship Between Levels of Parental Monitoring and Monthly Teen Smoking (By Gender)

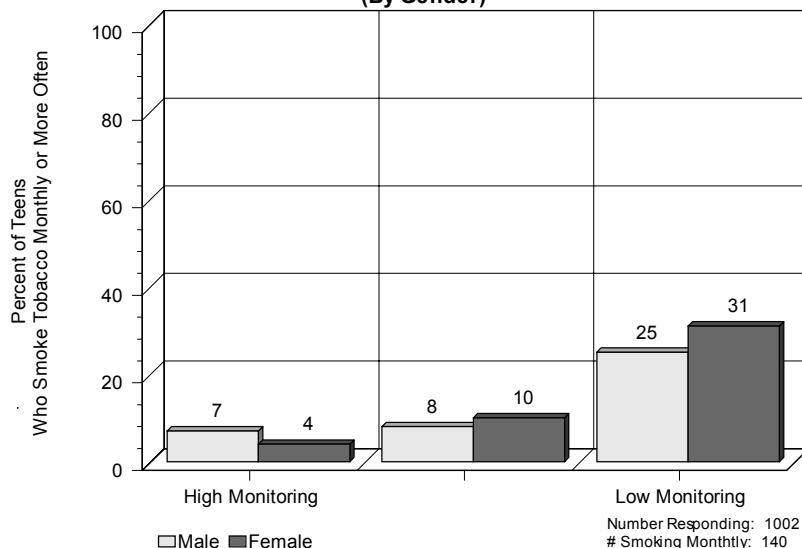
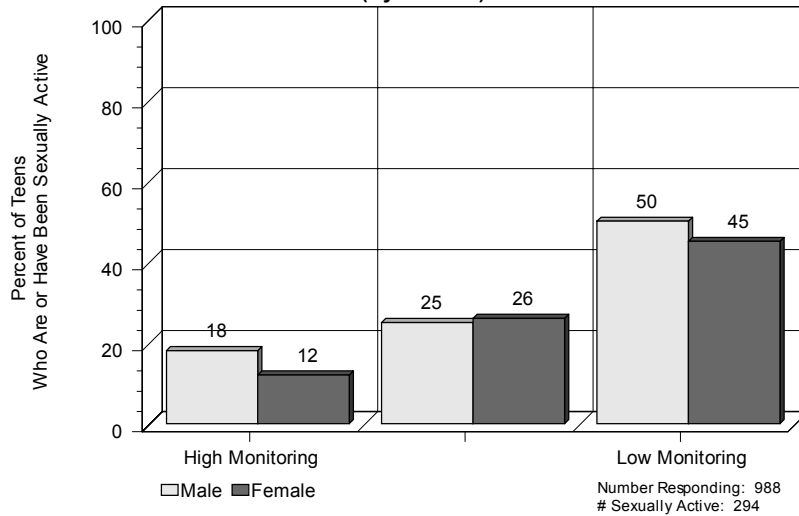


Figure 8-18 shows the relationship between levels of parental monitoring and percentage of teens who have ever had sexual intercourse. Because the results of the TAP survey provide descriptive information, no cause and effect relationship can be inferred. We cannot say that one behavior caused another, only that there is a relationship between the two.

Figure 8-18: Relationship Between Levels of Parental Monitoring and Teen Sexual Activity (By Gender)



Parental Values

Students were asked whether their parents thought it was wrong for teens their age to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, or have sexual intercourse. Possible responses to the statement were grouped into three categories: strongly agree or agree, not sure, and strongly disagree or disagree. Figure 8-19 shows total responses for each health risk behavior.

Figure 8-19: Teens' Perceptions of Parental Values About Health Risk Behaviors

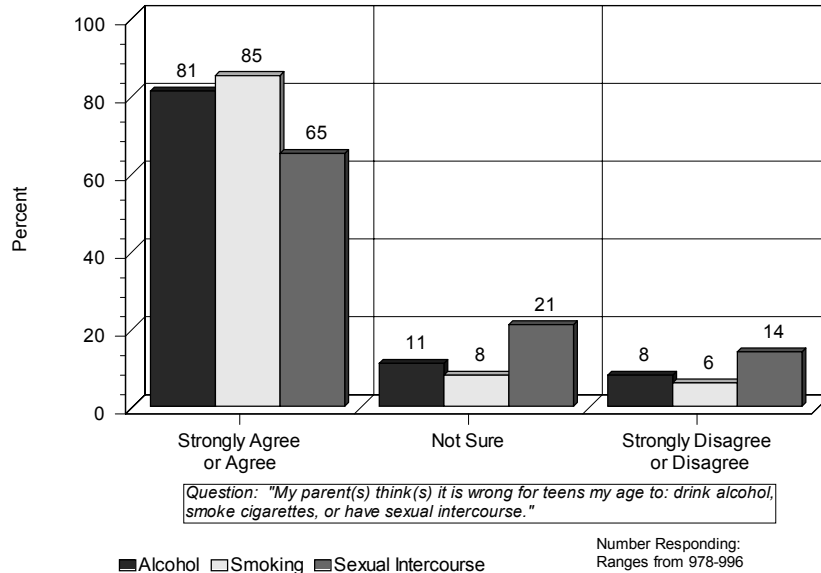


Figure 8-20 shows the relationship between teens' perceptions of parental values about drinking alcohol and monthly teen drinking. Because the results of the TAP survey provide descriptive information, no cause and effect relationship can be inferred. We cannot say that one behavior caused another, only that there is a relationship between the two.

Figure 8-20: Relationship Between Teens' Perceptions of Parental Values and Monthly Teen Drinking (By Gender)

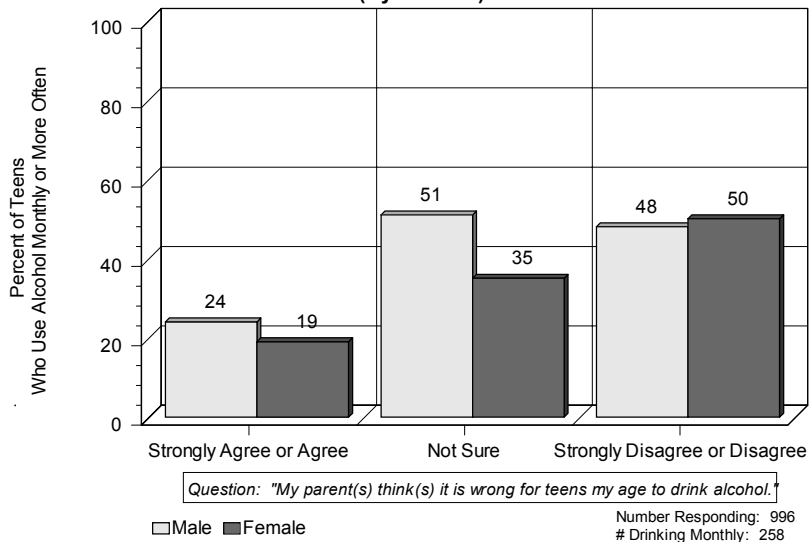


Figure 8-21 shows the relationship between teens' perceptions of parental values about smoking cigarettes and monthly teen smoking. Because the results of the TAP survey provide descriptive information, no cause and effect relationship can be inferred. We cannot say that one behavior caused another, only that there is a relationship between the two.

Figure 8-21: Relationship Between Teens' Perceptions of Parental Values and Monthly Teen Smoking (By Gender)

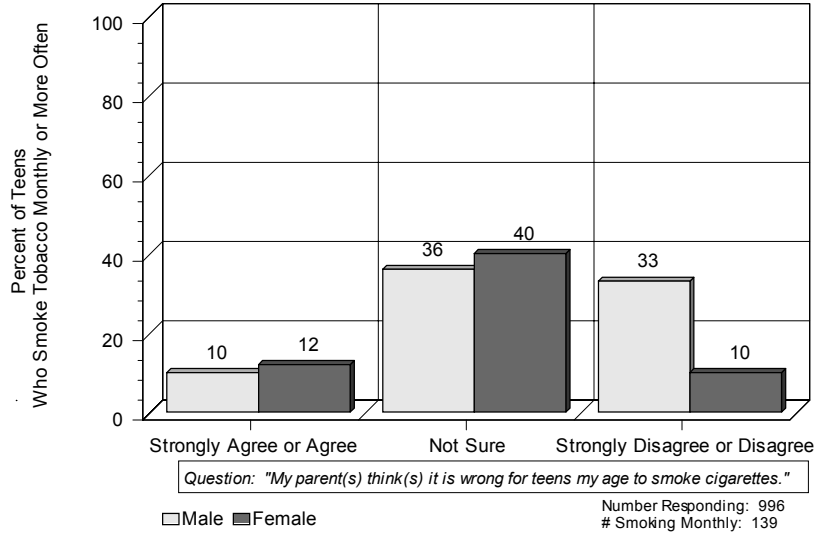
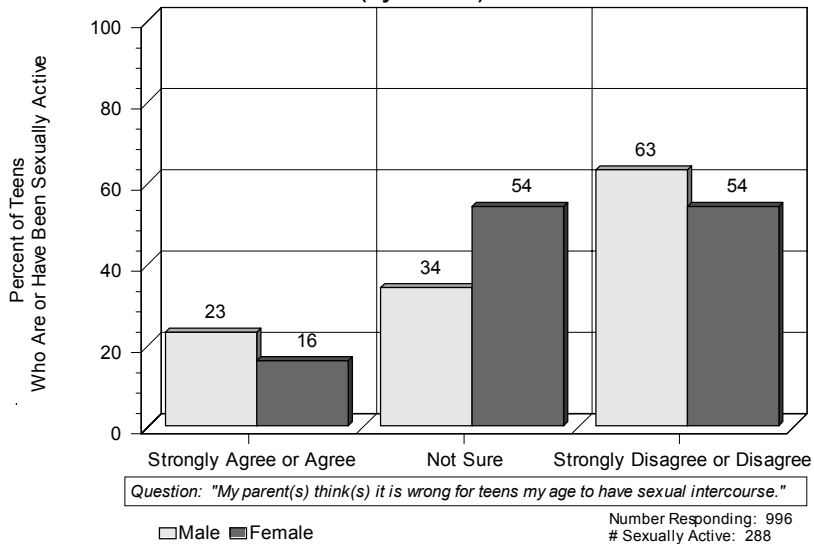


Figure 8-22 shows the relationship between teens' perceptions of parental values about sexual intercourse and teens' sexual behavior. Because the results of the TAP survey provide descriptive information, no cause and effect relationship can be inferred. We cannot say that one behavior caused another, only that there is a relationship between the two.

Figure 8-22: Relationship Between Teens' Perceptions of Parental Values and Teen Sexual Activity (By Gender)



Parental Consequences

Another strong factor influencing teen health risk behaviors is whether teens think they will get in trouble for engaging in that behavior. Students were asked if they thought they would get in trouble for drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, or having sex if their parents knew about it. Responses were grouped into Yes or Probably, Not Sure, and No or Probably Not. Figure 8-23 shows total responses by health risk behavior.

Figure 8-23: Teens' Perceptions of Parental Consequences For Health Risk Behaviors

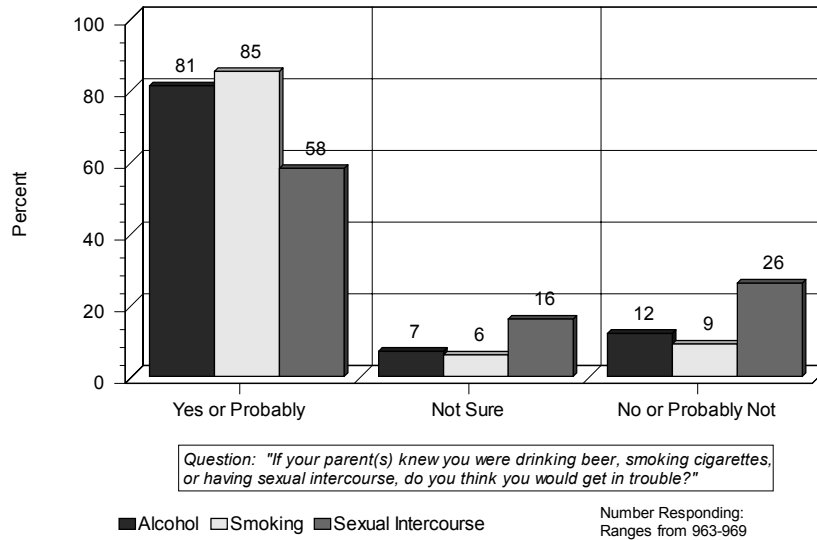


Figure 8-24 shows the relationship between teens' perceptions of parental consequences about drinking alcohol and monthly teen drinking. Because the results of the TAP survey provide descriptive information, no cause and effect relationship can be inferred. We cannot say that one behavior caused another, only that there is a relationship between the two.

Figure 8-24: Relationship Between Teens' Perceptions of Parental Consequences and Monthly Teen Drinking (By Gender)

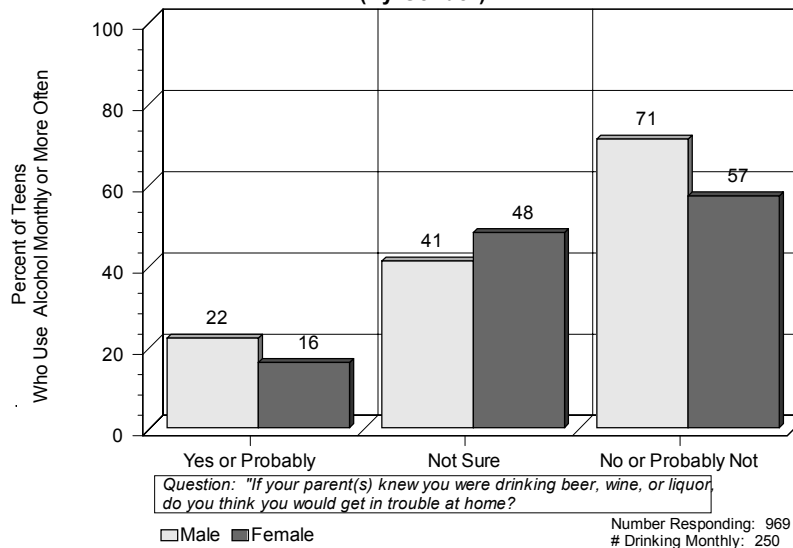


Figure 8-25 shows the relationship between teens' perceptions of parental consequences about smoking cigarettes and monthly teen smoking. Because the results of the TAP survey provide descriptive information, no cause and effect relationship can be inferred. We cannot say that one behavior caused another, only that there is a relationship between the two.

Figure 8-25: Relationship Between Teens' Perceptions of Parental Consequences and Monthly Teen Smoking (By Gender)

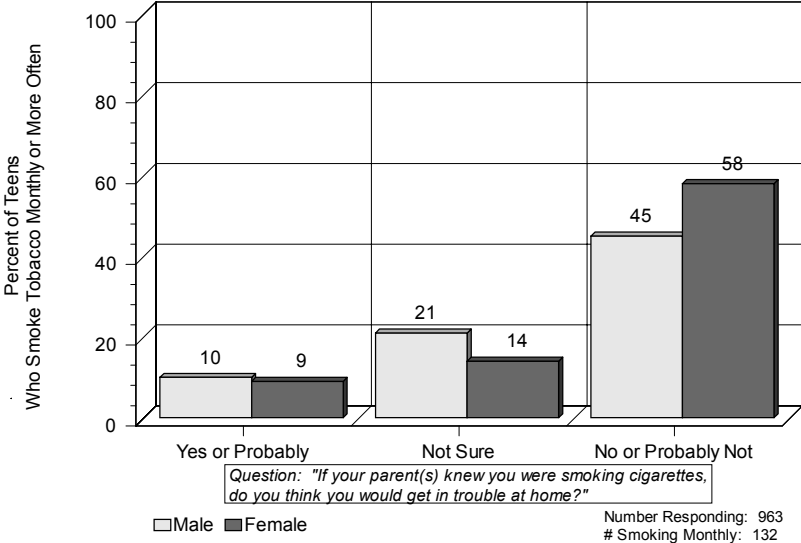


Figure 8-26 shows the relationship between teens' perceptions of parental consequences about sexual intercourse and teens' sexual behavior. Because the results of the TAP survey provide descriptive information, no cause and effect relationship can be inferred. We cannot say that one behavior caused another, only that there is a relationship between the two.

Figure 8-26: Relationship Between Teens' Perceptions of Parental Consequences and Teen Sexual Activity (By Gender)

