

Running head: PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ADOLESCENT GAMBLING

Parents' Perceptions of Adolescent Gambling  
Behaviour: A Canadian National Study

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## Certification

I certify that this thesis has not been submitted for any other degree to any other University or  
Institute.



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## Abstract

Adolescent gambling is an issue of concern. Previous findings report children perceive parents are unconcerned with their gambling activities. Attitudes parents hold towards gambling in comparison to other risky behaviours, gambling with their children, and awareness regarding youth education and prevention for gambling and other behaviours were examined. A total of 2,710 parents from Canada with adolescents ages 13 to 18 years were recruited via the Internet to complete the study. Results indicated parents view gambling as relatively unimportant in comparison to other adolescent risky behaviours, have purchased lottery items for their children, and that their child received insufficient prevention material about excessive gambling. Parental attitudes towards gambling suggest that it is not an activity they are comfortable having their adolescent participate.

## Résumé

La participation des adolescents aux jeux d'argent est un phénomène inquiétant. Des résultats de recherche ont souligné le fait que les adolescents croient que leurs parents ne se préoccupent pas ou se préoccupent peu de leur participation à des jeux d'argent. La présente étude examine les attitudes parentales à l'égard de la participation des mineurs à ces activités, en comparaison avec d'autres problématiques adolescentes, la participation des adultes à des jeux d'argent en compagnie de leurs adolescents, l'éducation des parents et leur sensibilisation aux problèmes liés à la participation aux jeux d'argent.

Au moyen de l'Internet, 2 710 parents canadiens d'adolescents âgés entre 13 et 18 ans ont été invités à participer à l'étude. Les résultats montrent que la participation des adolescents aux jeux d'argent est une problématique jugée peu importante ou peu préoccupante par la majorité des parents, en comparaison à d'autres problématiques adolescentes. Également, plusieurs parents rapportent avoir offert des billets de loterie à leurs enfants, qui, à leurs dires, n'auraient pas reçu suffisamment d'information et de matériel de prévention du jeu excessif. Enfin, l'attitude des parents à l'égard de la participation des jeunes aux jeux d'argent illustre un malaise ou un inconfort face la participation de leur adolescent à ce type d'activités.

## Introduction

### Parents' Perceptions of Adolescent Gambling Behaviour: A Canadian National Study

Drug use. Binge Drinking. Tobacco use. These are a few examples of risky behaviours that individuals participate in and may lead to an addiction. Although such risky behaviours can be concerning for adults, they can be especially troublesome when children and adolescents engage in them. Another potentially risky behaviour is gambling. Gambling presents many issues for children and adolescents. Despite not being of legal age to gamble on government regulated forms of gambling, adolescents remain at greater risk for developing gambling problems than adults (Dickson, Derevensky & Gupta, 2004a; Jacobs, 2004; National Research Council, 1999; Shaffer & Hall, 1996; Shaffer, Hall & Vander Bilt, 1999). In addition, early reports suggest adolescents perceive their parents to generally approve of their gambling, are not concerned about getting caught gambling, and report that gambling with family members is a fairly common occurrence (Gupta & Derevensky, 1997; Ladouceur & Mireault, 1988). However, no study to date has examined in-depth parents' knowledge or attitudes concerning their child's gambling behaviour. Ascertaining parents' perceptions of adolescent gambling behaviour is important as this information may be particularly useful in the development of programs and strategies aimed at parents to help prevent the development of adolescent problem gambling. The purpose of this study is to determine parental attitudes and perceptions of youth gambling, especially as it relates to their child, and to compare these attitudes and perceptions to other risky behaviours.

## Review of Literature

*Adolescent Gambling in Canada*

Gambling is a popular activity among adolescents. Approximately 80% of Canadian adolescents have reported having gambled at least once during their lifetime (Gupta & Derevensky, 1998; Jacobs, 2000; Shaffer & Hall, 1996). Adolescent gambling most often begins and takes place between individuals in a private setting. Examples include games of poker played in people's homes, betting on the outcome of a game of skill, and wagering on the outcomes of sporting events. This is perhaps the easiest way for youth to gamble, since there is very little that governments or even parents can do to prevent this behaviour. Not surprisingly, unregulated forms of gambling are regularly found to be the most popular forms of gambling among youth (Jacobs, 2004). In Jacobs' analysis of youth gambling prevalence studies conducted in North America, the most popular forms of gambling were consistently found to be games of cards and dice played among friends, betting on games of personal skill among peers, and sports wagering with peers in a classroom setting or with a bookie. However, as youth approach adulthood, changes emerge in their gambling behaviour and they are more likely to participate in government regulated gambling activities in spite of prohibitions. A longitudinal study conducted over one and a half years in Minnesota by Winters, Stinchfield and Kim (1995) found that as youth approach legal gambling age, their preference of gambling activity shifted from informal types of gambling, including betting on games of personal skill, towards formal types of gambling such as purchasing lottery tickets and casino-based games.

The regulatory control of gambling activities in Canada falls under the jurisdiction of each individual province. As a result, the legal age for gambling varies from province to province. Currently, the legal age for the purchase of lottery tickets in each province is either 18

Table 1

*Legal Gambling Ages by Province*

Activity	Age		
	18	19	Not Available
Lottery	Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta	British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Newfoundland	
Casino	Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec	British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island <sup>a</sup>	New Brunswick <sup>b</sup> , Newfoundland
VLT	Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec	Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island	Ontario, British Columbia
Horse Racing	Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, Ontario	Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Newfoundland	

<sup>a</sup>Although not advertised as a casino, the Charlottetown Driving Park and Entertainment Centre has a gaming room with 210 VLTs and 6 live Texas Hold'em poker tables. <sup>b</sup>New Brunswick is planning to open a casino in 2010 near the city of Moncton.

years or 19 years of age. Provincial laws also differ with the age at which individuals are allowed to gamble in casinos. A description of legal restrictions on gambling ages by province and activity is provided in Table 1 (Canadian Partnership for Responsible Gambling, 2009). Age restrictions for bingos are a little more unclear, as bingo in many provinces can be offered by charitable organizations. Although these organizations need to apply to the provincial government for a

permit in order to hold a bingo event, it is up to the individuals hosting the event to prevent the entry of minors and applications do not always stipulate that individuals have to be a specific age in order to participate. In fact, in Alberta, bingos with prizes less than \$50 allow minors accompanied by an adult to participate (Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, n.d.).

Most governments worldwide also have age related restrictions on gambling, although the ages required to gamble may be more uniform across each respective country than in Canada. Surprisingly, both in Canada and abroad the enforcement of these laws are not always implemented by the retailers who sell lottery products. In an investigation conducted by CBC News on Prince Edward Island, a 16 year old was able to purchase lottery tickets in 14 of 20 stores, while a 14 year old was able to purchase lottery tickets in 3 of the 20 stores (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2007). A more recent study by St. Pierre (2008) examining retailer compliance with lottery laws in and around the city of Montreal found that youth aged 15-17 years were frequently able to purchase lottery products, alcohol, and a combination of both products without providing any form of identification in spite of existing legislation requiring age identification for individuals under 25. The participants in this study were asked to provide their identification when attempting to purchase lottery products only 60% of the time. Nevertheless, underage participants were able to successfully purchase lottery tickets 42% of the time. By comparison, the participants had a slightly easier time purchasing beer (also restricted to age 18) having a 45% success rate.

In addition to youth being able to purchase lottery tickets, evidence suggests youth under the age of 18 are also able to access casino gambling in Canada. A study conducted by Adlaf, Paglia-Boak, and Ialomintenu (2006) in Ontario found that 1% of students in grades 7 to 12 reported having gambled in an Ontario casino in the past year. Compared to results from the same

survey administered in 2003 and 2001, the percentage of underage youth reporting having accessed casino gambling remained unchanged. Although only a small percentage of youth reported being able to gamble in Ontario casinos, this study suggests that it is possible for adolescents under the legal age for casino gambling to access this form of gambling.

Another type of gambling whose popularity has been increasing in recent years is Internet gambling (Brown, 2006). There are very few firm regulations in place to prevent youth from accessing Internet gambling websites. A recent study conducted in the United Kingdom by Smeaton and Griffiths (2004) explored how easy it was for youth to access gambling sites. Of 30 U.K. based gambling sites, half of them failed to carry an age warning of any form, while 11 of the sites had no age verification check for site registration whatsoever. A number of the sites examined accepted payment by methods other than credit cards, allowing youth to easily pay for gambling as it is usually difficult for a minor to obtain their own credit card. Virtually no measures are in place to prevent a youth who is dishonest about their age and in possession of a credit card from gambling online.

Despite having restrictions put in place by governments to prevent youth from gambling, an alarmingly high rate of adolescents report having gambled at one point in their lives. Studies conducted in North America generally report adolescent gambling rates of about 80% (Gupta & Derevensky, 1998; Jacobs, 2000; Shaffer & Hall, 1996; Welte, Barnes, Tidwell & Hoffman, 2008). A study by Gupta and Derevensky (1998) found that 35% of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 reported having gambled at least once in the past week. These youth gambling prevalence rates are roughly the same as rates of gambling reported by adults in Canada, as approximately 80% of adults also report having gambled in the past year (Azmier, 2000; Marshall & Wynne, 2003).

### *Adolescent Problem Gambling*

Problem gambling is typically thought of as being a concern attributable to adults. This conception likely has to do with the legal age restrictions on state and provincially organized gambling as well as the limited financial resources of many teens. Although problem gambling by adults is an issue of concern, rates of problem gambling and individuals at risk for problem gambling are higher among adolescents than among adults. Studies have found prevalence rates for youth and adolescent serious problem gambling to range from 4% to close to 8% (Jacobs, 2000; Shaffer & Hall, 1996; Shaffer et al., 1999). By comparison, pathological gambling rates among adults are much lower, with approximately 1-2% of Canadian adults suffering from pathological gambling (Cox, Yu, Afifi & Ladouceur, 2005). There is concern that problem gambling during adolescence may further lead to problem gambling as an adult (Winters et al., 1995; Winters, Stinchfield, Botzet & Anderson, 2002), and is associated with a higher than normal rate of problem behaviours including smoking, drinking and drug use (Hardoon, Gupta & Derevensky, 2004; Stinchfield, 2000; Winters & Anderson, 2000), and school-related problems (Gupta & Derevensky, 1998; Ladouceur, Boudreault, Jacques & Vitaro, 1999).

### *Attitudes and Perceptions of Gambling*

Despite evidence which shows the negative consequences of problem gambling for both youth and adults, many individuals do not view gambling as a problematic issue. In a study by Shaffer (1996), only 25% of adolescents viewed gambling as potentially dangerous. By comparison, 60% of adolescents viewed alcohol, 64% viewed smoking, and 75% viewed stimulants and narcotics as potentially dangerous.

Studies on the adult perceptions of gambling also reflect this attitude. A national study examining attitudes on gambling found that 63% of Canadians believed that it was their right to



gamble, regardless of the consequences, with the youngest respondents (ages 18-19) showing the highest agreement (Azmier, 2000). Sixty-three percent of the participants also believed that gambling was an acceptable activity. When asked to compare the seriousness of gambling to a number of other issues, gambling was viewed as being less serious of a problem in comparison to drug use, alcohol addiction, smoking, and driving above the speed limit, although the variance in the responses on the seriousness of gambling was considerable. In addition, the majority of individuals would prefer that governments raise revenue when necessary by increasing gambling revenues as opposed to raising taxes. Gambling was also perceived to be a good method for charities to raise funds. In regards to underage gambling, 85% of participants felt that underage individuals should be restricted from accessing certain forms of gambling. While attitudes by Canadian adults tend to be supportive of gambling in general, there is significant opposition to allowing youth to gamble (Azmier, 2000).

There also appears to be a lack of knowledge about problem gambling among the general population. Although approximately 90% of participants (Turner, Wiebe, Falkowski-Ham, Kelly & Skinner, 2005) could identify at least one warning sign related to problem gambling, less than half the adults had heard of the term “responsible gambling”, seen a public notice about problem gambling, or were aware about anything being done by governments, social agencies or other organizations to reduce problem gambling. No studies to date have assessed parental knowledge about resources available for children who may have a gambling problem, although results from Turner et al. (2005) would suggest that this knowledge would be limited.

### *Impact of Parental Gambling on Children*

Parental gambling behaviours have been shown to influence their child's gambling, as both adolescent and adult problem gamblers are more likely to report that their own parents are involved in gambling or have a gambling problem themselves (Abbott, Volberg, Bellringer & Reith, 2004; Gupta & Derevensky, 1997; Wood & Griffiths, 1998). A social learning theory perspective (Bandura, 1969) suggests that youth may imitate or model the gambling attitudes and behaviours of their parents, whatever they happen to be. A study using adolescents and both parents in order to examine the interactive links between family risk factors, which included parental gambling and parental discipline practices, indicated that the gambling frequency of both the adolescents' parents was related to the gambling frequency of their child but not children's gambling problems (Vachon, Vitaro, Wanner & Tremblay, 2004). Only the degree of gambling pathology of the father (and not the mother) had an impact on the problem gambling of their child, as fathers who scored high on the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS) were significantly more likely to have children who scored in the problem or at-risk for problem gambling range on the South Oaks Gambling Screen Revised for Adolescents (SOGS-RA). In addition to the effects that parental gambling frequency and gambling severity had on their child's gambling frequency and gambling severity, parenting practices also influenced adolescent gambling behaviour. Parents who reported a high rate of child monitoring also noted that their child gambled less frequently. Inadequate or harsh discipline methods were found to have an impact upon adolescent gambling severity, with parents who incorporated poor discipline methods having children with higher scores on the SOGS-RA. However, Vachon and her colleagues concluded they were unable to determine the directionality of the relationship, since adolescents with gambling problems may place severe stress on their parents thus influencing them to use less effective parenting practices in an attempt to control their child's behaviour.

In addition to the impact parents gambling behaviours have on the gambling behaviour and attitudes of their children, parental gambling, especially problem gambling, can have adverse effects on their children. A longitudinal study by Vitaro and his colleagues (Vitaro, Wanner, Brendgen & Tremblay, 2008), a continuation the original data from Vachon et al. (2004), compared the children of problem gamblers to the children of non-problem gamblers, following them from mid-adolescence to early adulthood. It was found that children of problem gamblers were more likely to report depressive symptoms at both ages 16 and 23 than children from a control group. In addition, parents with gambling problems were more likely to use ineffective parenting practices, including coercive disciplinary practices, which may have resulted in more conduct and antisocial problems. Vitaro and his colleagues speculated that the disruptions to family life and parenting caused by problem gambling may lead parents to the use of ineffective parenting methods including high levels of coercion and low levels of monitoring, which predicts child behaviour problems and affiliation with deviant friends (Dishion, Patterson, Stoolmiller & Skinner, 1991), and can also lead to childhood depressive symptoms. Poor parenting among problem gamblers thus may indirectly affect depression in their children, although the feelings of depression in the children of problem gamblers are likely to be directly affected by the presence of a parent suffering from a gambling problem.

#### *Youth Reports of Parent Gambling Behaviour and Attitudes*

The attitudes held by parents about gambling participation by their children have been primarily explored by examining their children's perceptions of their attitudes. Several studies have reported that youth believe that their parents do not seem to be very concerned about their gambling behaviour. In an early study by Gupta and Derevensky (1997), among children ages 9-14, 40% of children reported having gambled with their parents. Of all the children in grade 4

(9-10 years old) who reported having gambled, 40% had gambled with their parents. Not surprisingly, the study also found that 20% of all youth were fearful of their parent or another authority figure discovering their gambling behaviour. This fear decreased with age, as 44% of children ages 9-10 were afraid of getting caught gambling while only 10% of 13-14 year olds were concerned that they would get caught gambling. When comparing parents' attitudes between alcohol use and gambling, adolescents report their parents are much more likely to be angry if they consumed alcohol (71%) than if they were caught gambling (42%). These findings reflect an earlier study conducted in and around Quebec City using high school students (Ladouceur & Mireault, 1988) which found an even higher percentage of youth had gambled with their parents (60%). Despite 90% of students reporting that their parents knew of their gambling activities, 84% of the students indicated that their parents did not object to their gambling.

Another indication that parents are accepting of their children's gambling behaviour are the findings from a study by Felsher, Gupta and Derevensky (2001). In their study, 77% of adolescents reported that their parents purchased scratch lottery tickets for them, and 50% had purchased lottery draw tickets. In addition, 70% of adolescents also reported that they received lottery ticket gifts from family members. Having parents purchase lottery tickets for their children could possibly lead to a much more serious involvement in gambling, or serve to support an already problematic behaviour in some teens (Felsher, Derevensky & Gupta, 2004). It has also been suggested that lottery gambling may serve as a gateway for other forms of gambling, such as video lottery terminal (VLT) and casino gambling, since it is easier for youth to access this form of gambling (Felsher et al., 2004). If this is indeed the case, then current parental attitudes towards youth gambling as reported by their children are alarming.

#### *Adult Perceptions of Adolescent Gambling*

Despite the presence of studies examining the perceptions youth have of their parents' attitudes towards their gambling behaviour, there has been very little done to directly examine parents' attitudes on youth gambling, although work by Fisher (1999) suggests that having a parent who does not care if his or her child gambles significantly increases that child's probability of experiencing significant gambling problems. To date, there have not been many studies conducted that examine parents' attitudes towards their adolescents' gambling behaviour. The research conducted by Vachon et al. (2004) that studied parents and their influence on their children's gambling is one of the few studies that use parents as subjects in a study on youth gambling. Studies that show youth believe their parents don't care about their gambling haven't been replicated using parent responses. Therefore, it is important to investigate what parents opinions are about youth gambling.

#### *Adult Perception of Other Risky Adolescent Behaviours*

*Alcohol use.* Although there hasn't been very much research done on parents' views of gambling behaviour, there have been studies that have examined parents' attitudes and perceptions of their adolescents' involvement in other high risk behaviours, including alcohol, drugs, and smoking. In regards to alcohol use, several studies have noted that parents generally disapprove of underage drinking and favor various means of restricting access to alcohol (Beck, Scaffa, Swift, & Ko, 1995; Kypri, Dean & Stojanovski, 2007). A study conducted in New Zealand by Kypri et al. (2007), shortly after the legal drinking age was lowered from age 19 to 18, determined that 67% of parents surveyed *disagreed* (28%) or *strongly disagreed* (39%) with the statement "It's good that the government changed the law to allow 18 and 19 year-olds to purchase alcohol", while only 21% of parents either *agreed* (19%) or *strongly agreed* (2%) with the statement.

There have also been a number of studies that have specifically asked parents to answer questions related to their child's drinking behaviour. Generally, parents are not aware of their children's drinking behaviour, or tend to deny its extent. For instance, only 20% of parents believed that their children had ever returned home from a party intoxicated even though 60% of the same parents believed that their children went to parties where alcohol was readily available (Beck et al., 1995). A telephone-based survey conducted in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area focussed on parental monitoring and family rules surrounding alcohol use (Beck, Ko & Scaffa, 1997) and found that parents who closely monitored their children, such as supervising parties that their child hosts, reported a lower incidence of their child returning home intoxicated as well as being more comfortable discussing issues surrounding drinking with their child, and ultimately discussed these issues more often with them.

*Smoking.* Parents' attitudes of their child's smoking behaviour have similarly been examined (Clark, Scarisbrick-Hauser, Gautam & Wirk, 1999; Herbert & Schiaffino, 2007; Mauer, Brunson & Pleck, 2003). Clark and colleagues (1999) found that 87% of parents have some rules towards smoking in their house, thus showing that the majority of parents have firm anti-smoking attitudes in regards to their children. However, explanations of these rules were not always made to the children. When asked whether they thought that they would be able to effectively prevent their adolescent from smoking, the responses differed according to race. Caucasian parents felt that they had less control over their child's behaviour than African-American parents. In addition, African-American parents who smoked were more likely than Caucasian parents who smoked to address the issue of smoking with their teens.

Another study on parental smoking attitudes and communication conducted by Herbert and Schiaffino (2007) paired responses from mothers and their adolescents in order to determine their

influence. They reported that mothers who smoked communicated the negative consequences of smoking to their children more often than non-smoking mothers, however their adolescents reported that they perceived their smoking mothers to be less involved in communicating anti-smoking messages and were not viewed as being credible when they did. Parents who did not have pro-smoking attitudes were more much more aware of and concerned about the consequences of smoking. Regardless of the attitudes parents held and communicated to their children, the smoking behaviour of the mother was, in general, a much stronger influence than anything they could tell their child about the negative consequences of smoking.

*Drug use.* Drug use is a much broader category than alcohol or smoking, as drugs encompass a wide number of substances including cannabis, cocaine, heroine, LSD, ecstasy, and inhaled solvents among others. Parental drug use has been shown to influence adolescent drug use (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996) and as with smoking and alcohol use, a number of studies have examined adolescents' perceptions of their parents' drug use (Dorius, Bahr, Hoffman, & Harmon, 2004; Fletcher, Steinberg & Williams-Wheeler, 2004). A qualitative study by Jackson, Usher and O'Brien (2006) examined the effects that adolescent substance abuse had on the lives of 18 families. Findings revealed that the experience of having a drug-abusing adolescent family member had a profound effect on other members of the immediate family, which contributed to the fracturing of family relationships. Five main themes were reported by parents in the study, which included betrayal and loss of trust, abuse and violence, sibling anger and resentment, isolation and disgrace, and feeling as though they weren't a good parent.

Williams (1999) examined the relationship between adolescent substance use and the family environment from both parental and adolescent perspectives using the responses from 46 parents of American middle school students. Adolescent perceptions of problem communication

with their parent and problem communication with their mother were found to be significant in predicting whether or not an adolescent would be identified as a drug-user. Adolescents in the study who didn't use drugs reported higher family satisfaction than drug-using adolescents. Parents in the Williams study tended to under-report their adolescent's substance use, as with studies on alcohol use.

### Summary

Although not common, there have been a number of studies examining parent's attitudes toward certain risky behaviours by youth, including smoking, drinking and drug use by directly using parents as their source of information. The current study addresses a gap in the gambling research as very few studies to date have directly examined parental attitudes in regards to their children's gambling behaviour. The existing research is limited thus far on this topic as it has utilized self reports from children to determine their perceptions of parental attitudes. Results from studies that assess youths' perceptions of their parents' attitudes are informative and can be used to speculate the results of the current study. However, the lack of empirical studies directly examining parents' attitudes of their child's gambling behaviour suggests further investigation is required.

### Principal Aims

The goal of the current study is to determine how serious of an issue adolescent gambling is to parents. Considering the results of previous studies, it is hypothesized that the current study will find that parents view adolescent gambling as an issue that is less important than other adolescent issues such as alcohol use, drug use, and smoking. In addition, this study will explore



whether parents gamble with their child, as well as how often they gamble with their children and which forms of gambling are most prevalent. The study also aims to determine which misconceptions parents may have regarding adolescent gambling and assess their current level of knowledge and awareness of adolescent problem gambling while making comparisons to other adolescent issues.

## Method

### *Participants*

Participants in the current study were selected on the basis of having one or more children between 13 and 18 years of age and were recruited via an Internet based request. Over 40,000 Canadian individuals were contacted via e-mail to complete the survey; with 3,315 people responding to the survey and 2,710 individuals completing the survey. The survey was originally developed in English, translated into French, and available in both languages. In total, 237 parents completed the study in French, representing 8.7% of all respondents.

The data was collected electronically by the program *Confermit*. Due to the nature of the program used to electronically collect the surveys, it was possible to exclude individuals who did not meet the study's criteria. The criteria included being the parent of at least one child who was between the ages of 13 and 18 years of age, who was currently residing with one or both parents. This ensured that parents were aware of the issues currently facing the population of interest. Participants with multiple children between the ages of 13 and 18 years of age were asked to report on the oldest child within that age range. The sample collected included responses from residents of all Canadian provinces, but excluded residents of the three territories. Participants from the provinces of Alberta and Quebec were required to have at least one child who was between 13 and 17 years of age given the legal restrictions on gambling in those provinces exclude individuals

under 18 years of age. Participants were screened prior to their participation in order to ensure an equal representation and distribution of parents with children of varying ages and an equal ratio of sons and daughters.

Participants from each of the provinces were included in the study. The provinces with the largest number of participants included in the study were Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, each with 500 participants resulting from funding bodies. The number of participants from each province is provided in Table 2, with the type of community presented in Table 3. The data was weighted to reflect the Canadian population distribution by province as outlined by Statistics Canada.

Based upon the parents who completed the survey, 846 were male (31.2%) and 1,864 were female (68.8%). The data used in the analysis was weighted by parent gender to obtain an approximate number of men and women to use with the analysis. The mean age of respondents was 45 years, with most parents falling between the ages of 45 and 54 (Table 3). When completing the survey, parents were instructed to refer to their oldest child between the ages of 12-18 currently living with them. There were approximately equal numbers of male and female children. The distribution of children by gender and age is presented in Table 4. When comparing the participants to the 2006 Canadian census data, those in the current study are more likely to live in a town or rural area, have higher levels of education, and earn more money on average.

Table 2

*Number of Participants by Province: Actual and Weighted Responses*

Province	N	Percentage	Percentage of Canadian residents	Weighted response rates
Alberta	500	18.45%	9.3%	239

British Columbia	500	18.45%	13.9%	355
Manitoba	36	1.33%	3.9%	101
New Brunswick/ Newfoundland/ Prince Edward Island	43	1.59%	0.8%	19
Nova Scotia	500	18.45%	6.9%	177
Ontario	394	14.54%	40.8%	1044
Quebec	237	8.75%	21.1%	540
Saskatchewan	500	18.45%	3.3%	85
Total	2710	100.0%	100.0%	2558

Table 3

*Place of Residence for Participants and Age of Parents*

Place of Residence	N	Percentage
Major city	656	24.2%
Suburbs of a major city	407	15.0%
Small city	730	26.9%
Town or rural area	917	33.8%
<b>Age of Parents</b>		
< 25 years	5	0.2%
25-34 years	129	4.8%
35-44 years	1172	43.2%
45-54 years	1205	44.5%
55-64 years	178	6.6%
> 65 years	21	0.8%

Table 4

*Ages and Gender of the Children of Respondents*

	All ages	13-14 years	15-16 years	17-18 years
	<b>N (Percentage)</b>			
Male	1383 (51.0%)	416 (15.4%)	532 (19.6%)	435 (16.1%)
Female	1327 (49.0%)	398 (14.7%)	528 (19.5%)	401 (14.8%)
Total	2710 (100%)	814 (30.0%)	1060 (39.1%)	836 (30.8%)

*Measures*

The survey examined four separate domains, attitudes that parents held towards gambling in comparison to other risky behaviours; parental gambling behaviour; involvement in gambling with their children; and attitudes/awareness regarding youth education and prevention for gambling and other risky behaviours (see Appendix A). Questions from all four domains were developed by the research team and evaluated on 5 separate occasions over a 4 month period before piloting and finalizing the questionnaire. Some of the questions used in the first domain were adapted from the Parent Smoking Communication Survey-II (Herbert & Schiaffino, 2007). Many of the questions in domain 2 were adapted from gambling screens such as the South Oaks Gambling Screen (Lesieur & Blume, 1987). In addition it included questions on the frequency of parental gambling, and knowledge and awareness the individual has of other individuals who they believe have a gambling related problem. Questions from domain 3 investigated how often and in which types of gambling parents participated with their children. In addition to the gambling activities listed, parents were asked if they engaged in any of the gambling activities with their children without money being involved. Parents were also asked if their child had received any gambling related gifts from either themselves or from others. The final domain centered on parents' knowledge of existing youth gambling prevention programs and compared it to their knowledge of programs for other youth issues, such as alcohol or tobacco use.

In addition to the four domains examined, participants were also required to complete a section with demographic information. This included answering questions on household income, level of education obtained, and length of time their family had been living in Canada. Parents were also asked about their child's access to money and credit cards, as well as how closely they supervised their child's Internet use.

### *Procedure*

Participants were contacted via e-mail to participate in the study electronically. They were selected from an existing database of individuals who registered to complete online surveys that was available to the research company *Research Now*. Included in the e-mail was a message notifying participants concerning the inclusion criteria, the task requirements in order to complete the study, and described any risks involved. Upon reading the message, participants provided their consent by selecting the “continue option”. The questions were automatically presented through the survey, skipping questions that were not relevant to specific participants based upon their responses. The program also removed any incomplete surveys from the database, such that only completed surveys were accepted. Upon completion of the study, participants were entered into a draw for a \$1,000 prize or received \$5 depending upon recruitment procedures.

### *Data Analysis*

Data for the study was analyzed using SPSS version 11. The analysis included descriptive measures of the results, comparisons of means, and a 2x2x3 ANOVA was conducted comparing parent gender, child gender, and child age (13-14, 15-16, & 17-18) on many of the variables. In addition to conducting descriptive analyses and comparing differences based upon parent gender, child gender and age, a linear regression was used in order to determine which variables provided the best predictors of the frequency of conversations between parents and their adolescents about gambling, and parental concern about adolescent gambling in general.

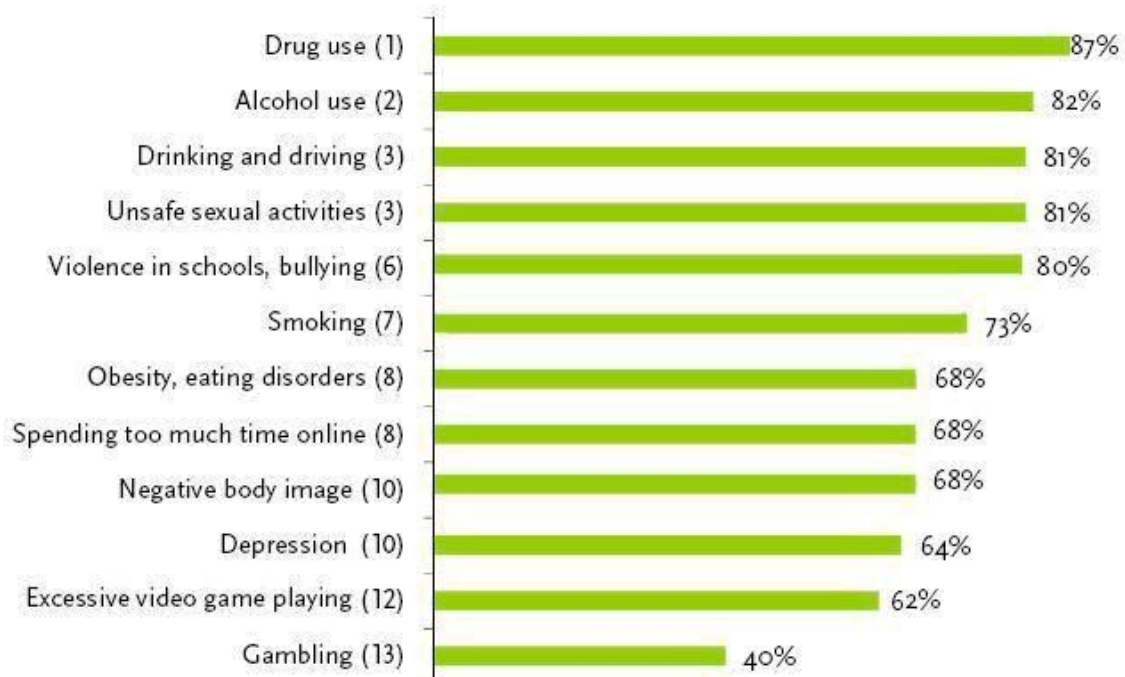
Separate linear regression analyses were performed to assess how frequently parents had discussions about gambling with their child and perceptions of the seriousness of adolescent gambling. Variables were entered using a forward stepwise procedure, where each variable was included in a model if the probability of the F value was large enough in order to reject the null

hypothesis and  $\leq .05$ . Variables included in earlier models were excluded from subsequent models if the F value changed to have a probability of rejecting the null hypothesis of  $\geq .10$ .

## Results

### *Seriousness of Gambling as an Issue*

Parents were asked to rate the overall seriousness of a number of adolescent issues that may impact their child by indicating their level of agreement on a five point Likert scale (1 = *not at all serious*, 5 = *very serious*). These issues included gambling, drug use, alcohol use, drinking and driving, unsafe sexual activities, violence in schools/bullying, smoking, obesity/eating disorders, spending too much time online, negative body image, excessive video game playing, and depression. As shown in Figure 1, drug use was seen by parents as being the most serious issue (87% viewed issues as either *serious* or *very serious*), followed by alcohol use (82%),



In your opinion, how serious of an issue are the following for teens today? ("serious" and "very serious")

Figure 1: Serious Youth Issues.

drinking and driving (81%) and unsafe sexual activities (81%). Gambling was viewed by parents as being the least serious issue. Overall, only 40% of all parents viewed adolescent gambling as either serious or very serious, the only issue that didn't have at least half of parents viewing a potentially risky behaviour as either *serious* or *very serious*. Investigating the differences between parents on the seriousness of gambling, an ANOVA with parent gender, child's gender, and age of the child (grouped into the categories 13-14, 15-16 and 17-18) as the independent variables found a significant difference for both parent ( $F(1, 2224) = 13.11, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .006$ ) and child gender ( $F(1, 2224) = 6.40, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .003$ ) as mothers were more concerned about gambling (42.9% viewed gambling as *serious* or *very serious*) than fathers (37.0% viewed gambling as *serious* or *very serious*) and parents of boys were more concerned about gambling (41.0% viewed gambling as *serious* or *very serious*) than parents of girls (38.8% viewed gambling as *serious* or *very serious*). No significant differences were found based solely upon the age of the child, however an interaction between parent gender and child gender ( $F(2, 2224) = 4.29, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .003$ ) was found to be significant, with mothers of males viewing gambling as being more serious of an issue (See Figure 2). An interaction between child age and parent gender ( $F(1, 2224) = 3.36, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .002$ ) was also found to be significant, with mothers of 13-14 and 17-18 year olds viewing gambling as more serious of an issue than fathers of 13-14 and 17-18 year olds (See Figure 3).

Parents were also asked whether each of the 13 issues had personally impacted their child. The most commonly reporting issue was bullying/violence, with 28.3% of parents reporting that their child had been personally affected. Gambling was the issue that parents were least likely to mention as having personally impacted their child (1.0% of parents), with no differences based on the gender or age of the child. Interestingly, a third of parents (34.2%) stated that their child had not been impacted by any of the issues listed in the survey.



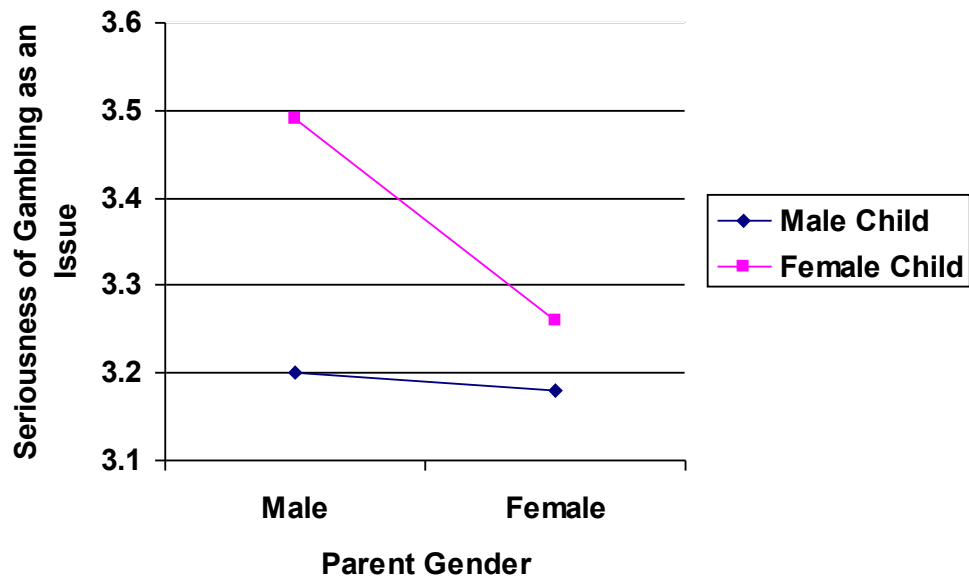


Figure 2. Interaction Between Parent Gender and Child Gender on Perceived Parental Seriousness of Gambling as an Issue.

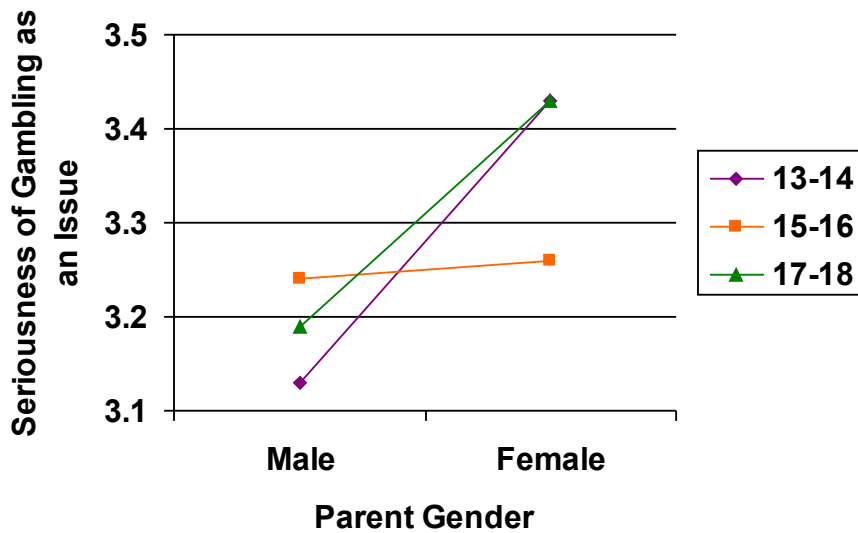


Figure 3. Interaction Between Parent Gender and Child Age on Perceived Parental Seriousness of Gambling as an Issue.

### *Opinions and Perceptions about Gambling*

Parents gave their opinion on a number of gambling questions which attempted to determine their opinion on the acceptability of gambling. The statements included the items “there is nothing wrong with teens gambling occasionally”, “gambling can be a good way to relieve boredom”, “gambling is a good way for community organizations to raise funds” and “gambling for money is acceptable if you are just playing with your friends”. As shown in Table 5, the majority of parents disagreed with these positive statements about gambling, although at least one parent strongly agreed with each of the statements. Parents strongly disagreed with the statement “if you really know the game, gambling can be an easy way to make money”. There were some differences on how strongly parents agreed on these statements based on gender of the parent and age of the child, as determined by a 3 way ANOVA. Fathers were more likely to agree that it is acceptable for teens to watch poker on television ( $F(1, 2246) = 34.43, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .015$ ), that gambling can be a good way to relieve boredom ( $F(1, 2351) = 53.21, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .023$ ), and that if you really know the game, gambling can be an easy way to make money ( $F(1, 2224) = 7.77, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .003$ ). Parents of children who are 13-14 are more likely to disagree with the statement nothing is wrong with gambling occasionally ( $F(2, 2412) = 4.22, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .004$ ), and parents of 17-18 year olds are more likely to think that it's acceptable for them to watch poker on television ( $F(2, 2224) = 4.45, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .004$ ). Parents disagreed that teens are more at risk for problem gambling than adults, that it is impossible to gamble responsibly, and that lottery and scratch tickets should be kept out of sight in stores. Although parents were unlikely to agree with many of the positive statements about gambling, they were also not very likely to strongly endorse statements that portray gambling as a negative activity for adolescents.

Table 5

### *Parents' Support of Gambling*

Statements in Support of Gambling	Mean	SD
If you really know the game, gambling can be an easy way to make money	1.86	0.95
Gambling is a good way for community organizations to raise funds	2.78	1.11
Gambling can be a good way to relieve boredom	2.16	1.04
It is acceptable for teens to watch professional poker tournaments or TV shows featuring gambling	2.70	1.00
Gambling for money is acceptable if you are just playing with friends	2.30	1.00
There is nothing wrong with teens gambling occasionally	2.18	1.03
Statements Against Gambling	Mean	SD
It is impossible to gamble responsibly	2.70	1.17
Lottery and scratch tickets should be kept out of sight in stores	2.75	1.17
Teens are more at risk for problem gambling than adults	2.85	1.50

*Note.* Based on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1- *strongly disagree* to 5 - *strongly agree*.

### *Opinions on the Development of Problem Gambling*

Overall, 51.6% of all parents indicated that it was *likely* or *very likely* that underage gambling can escalate into a gambling problem. By comparison, only 46.0% of parents felt that it was *likely* or *very likely* that underage drinking can lead to alcoholism and 54.1% that smoking marijuana in teenage years leads to experimenting with harder drugs. Parents were more likely to believe that experimenting with cocaine use during teenage years leads to a cocaine addiction with 76.0% perceiving that it was *likely* or *very likely*.

Parents rated a series of statements that investigated their knowledge about the risks associated with gambling and possible misconceptions about gambling and teen gambling. Statements that examined parents' knowledge of the risks of gambling included "gambling can lead to criminal behaviour", "gambling can negatively impact friendships", "gambling can negatively impact work performance", and "gambling can be highly addictive". Statements that examined parent's possible misconceptions about gambling included "gambling can increase self-esteem", "gambling can increase self-confidence", "gambling can be a fun way to spend time with friends", and "gambling can help develop useful skills". The same statements were used in order to assess parents' knowledge and conceptions of teen gambling, except the words "teen gambling..." were used at the start of each statement, and instead of the effect that gambling had on work, parents were asked to rate how gambling effects teens' school performance. Parents indicated how strongly they disagreed or agreed with each statement using a five point Likert scale (1 – *strongly disagree*, 5 – *strongly agree*).

Parents were more likely to agree with statements about gambling *in general* that portrayed gambling negatively, such that it can be highly addictive ( $M = 4.31$ ,  $SD = .87$ ), negatively impacts work performance ( $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = .93$ ), negatively impacts friendships ( $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = .94$ ), and leads to criminal behaviour ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ). Parents disagreed with statements such as gambling can be a fun way to spend time with friends ( $M = 2.89$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ), help develop useful skills ( $M = 2.06$ ,  $SD = .99$ ), increase self confidence ( $M = 2.03$ ,  $SD = .98$ ) and increase self-esteem ( $M = 1.99$ ,  $SD = .94$ ). When compared to parents' attitudes on questions about *teen gambling*, parents were more likely to agree that teen gambling had a negative impact on friends ( $t = -2.74$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and would more likely lead to criminal behaviour than gambling in general ( $t = -9.41$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Parents also identified the required legal age in order to participate in a number of activities in their province, including purchasing lottery tickets, gambling at a casino, playing a video lottery terminal (in provinces which have video lottery terminals), purchasing alcohol, purchasing cigarettes and driving a car. When asked if they should increase or decrease the legal age of each activity, parents chose to increase the legal age for all activities in most cases, including gambling activities. The results are presented in Table 6 by province, due to the differing legal ages for each activity. The Atlantic Provinces were grouped together, as the legal age for each activity was the same in each of the provinces and the response rates from New Brunswick, Newfoundland & Labrador, and Prince Edward Island were all very low.

### *Gambling Knowledge*

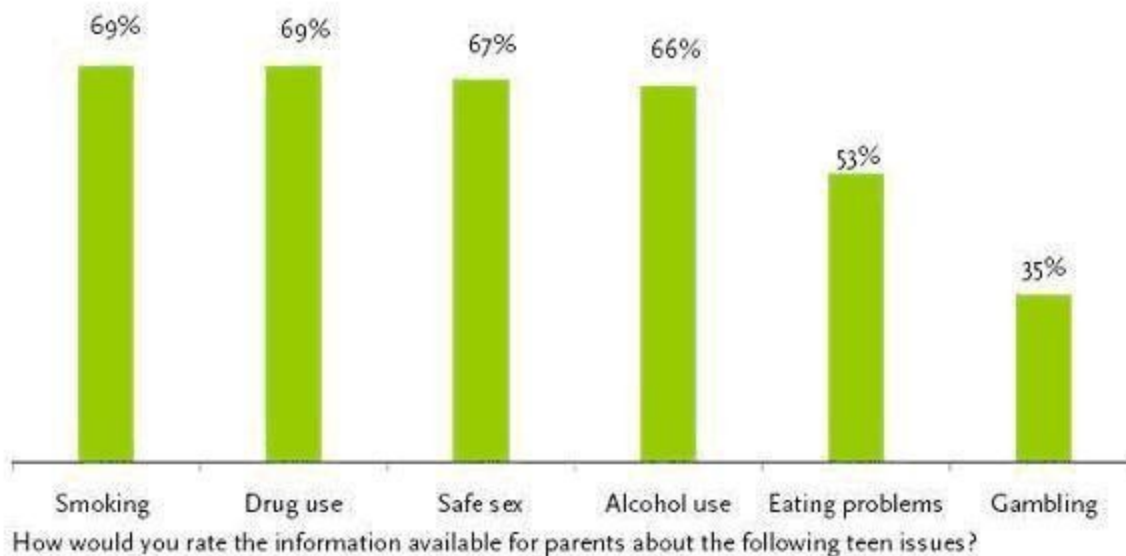
*Information about gambling.* Parents were asked about the information they received about gambling from their child's school, and only 8.1% of parents replied that their child had ever brought home information related to gambling prevention. In addition, only 9.7% of parents reported that their child had participated in a school prevention or education program about the potential risks associated with gambling. By comparison, parents reported that their school had provided considerable prevention programs or educational material for their child on the topics of sex education (82.9%), bullying (79.9%), drug use (79.8%), cigarette smoking (66.7%), alcohol use (64.2%), and eating disorders (39.4%). Only 7.7% of parents reported that their child hadn't received educational material or been provided with prevention programs for any of the mentioned behaviours.

Table 6

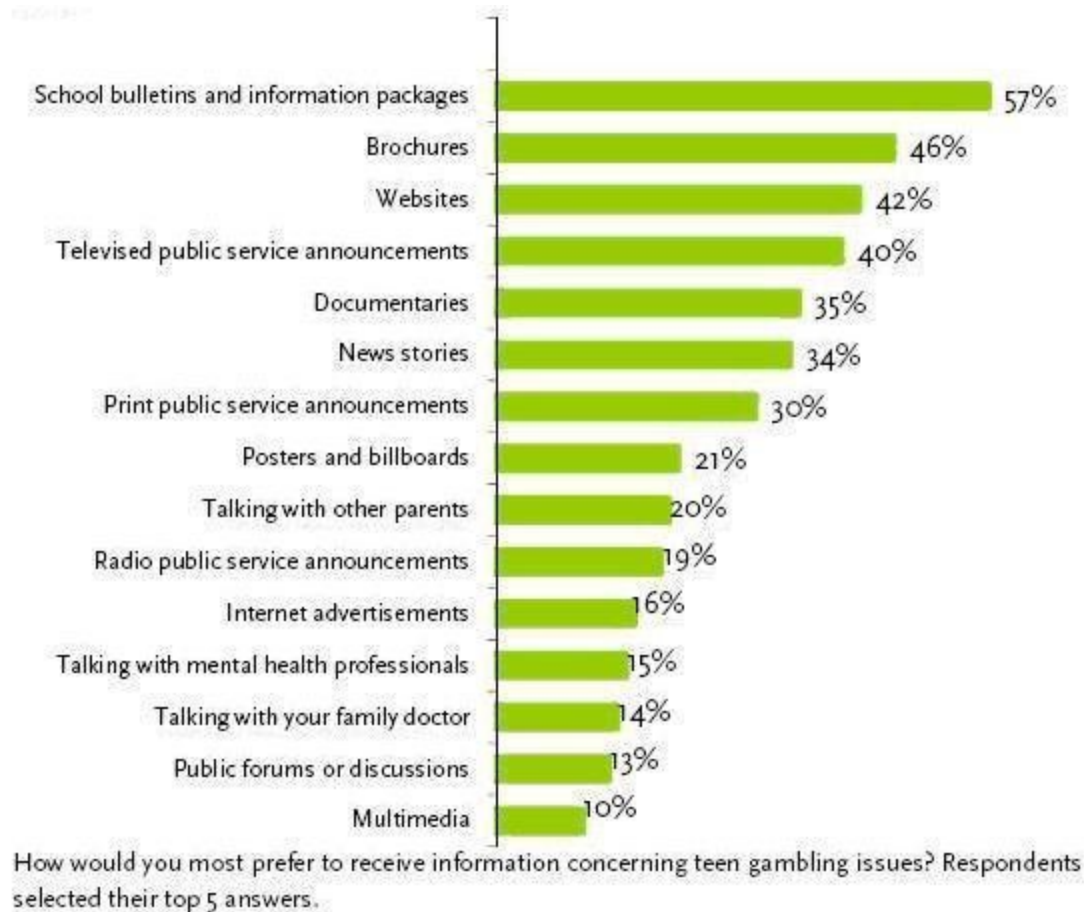
*Parents' Perceptions of Legal age and Preferred Legal Age for Activities by Province*

Province	Actual Age for Driving a Car	Parents' Perceived Age for Driving a Car	Parents' Preferred Age for Driving a Car
British Columbia	16	16.12	17.65
Alberta	16	15.74	17.19
Saskatchewan	16	16.01	16.81
Manitoba	16	15.93	17.57
Ontario	16	16.14	17.48
Quebec	16	16.37	18.36
Atlantic Provinces	16	16.09	17.57
Province	Actual Age for Purchasing Alcohol	Parents' Perceived Age for Purchasing Alcohol	Parents' Preferred Age for Purchasing Alcohol
British Columbia	19	19.03	19.96
Alberta	18	18.02	20.29
Saskatchewan	19	18.95	20.37
Manitoba	18	18.02	19.70
Ontario	19	19.09	20.04
Quebec	18	18.05	20.67
Atlantic Provinces	19	19.03	20.17
Province	Actual Age for Purchasing Cigarettes	Parents' Perceived Age for Purchasing Cigarettes	Parents' Preferred Age for Purchasing Cigarettes
British Columbia	19	18.82	22.72
Alberta	18	18.06	23.60
Saskatchewan	18	18.31	21.75
Manitoba	18	18.28	26.47
Ontario	19	18.90	22.20
Quebec	18	17.93	23.26
Atlantic Provinces	19	18.70	21.53
Province	Actual Age for Purchasing Lottery Tickets	Parents' Perceived Age for Purchasing Lottery Tickets	Parents' Preferred Age for Purchasing Lottery Tickets
British Columbia	19	18.43	19.33
Alberta	18	17.63	19.97
Saskatchewan	18	17.87	18.96
Manitoba	18	17.33	19.34
Ontario	18	18.07	19.09
Quebec	18	18.03	20.14
Atlantic Provinces	19	18.53	19.49
Province	Actual Age for Casino Gambling	Parents' Perceived Age for Casino Gambling	Parents' Preferred Age for Casino Gambling
British Columbia	19	19.16	20.86
Alberta	18	18.24	21.41
Saskatchewan	19	18.79	20.61
Manitoba	18	18.30	20.75
Ontario	19	18.90	20.51
Quebec	18	18.43	22.41
Atlantic Provinces	19	19.09	21.06

*Resources for parents.* Parents also rated the resources available on a number of adolescent topics, including gambling, smoking, alcohol use, drug use, eating disorders and safe sex. As shown in Figure 4, parents felt the best information was available for smoking, as 69% of parents rated the information available as either *good* or *excellent*. Gambling was the topic that parents rated as having the poorest information available, as only 35% of parents rated the information available as *good* or *excellent*. Parents were asked to indicate their preferred methods of receiving information on gambling. The most commonly identified ways were via school bulletins (57%), brochures (46%) and websites (42%). The least commonly cited methods of receiving information concerning adolescent gambling were through public forums (13%) and multimedia (10%) (See Figure 5).



**Figure 4:** Parents Rate the Quality of the Information Available about Youth Issues (0 – poor, 100% excellent).



**Figure 5: Preferred Channels/Type of Informational Material about Teen Gambling Issues.**

### *Conversations and Limitations to Conversations about Gambling*

*Initiating conversations.* Reasons prompting parents to initiate a conversation with their child about youth gambling related to feeling pressured to participate in gambling ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = 1.43$ ) followed by a friend or acquaintance of their child being involved in gambling ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ) (see Table 7). In describing conversations with their child about gambling, parents reported that they felt as though their child would be receptive if they were to initiate a conversation with them, as 66.8% of parents thought that their child would be either *receptive* or *very receptive*. Only 12.4% of parents thought that their child would be either *unreceptive* or *very unreceptive*, while the remaining 20.8% of parents



Table 7

*Reasons for Parents to Prompt a Conversation with their Child about Gambling*

Prompt	Mean	Standard Deviation
Child is feeling pressured to participate	3.48	1.52
Friend of child is involved in gambling	3.43	1.46
Topic was discussed at school	3.27	1.25
Viewed or read something on the news	3.19	1.27
Conversations with other parents	3.06	1.26
Became aware of a responsible gambling campaign	2.85	1.21

*Note.* Based upon a 5 point Likert scale, 1 = *not at all likely*, 5 = *very likely*.

thought that their child would be *neither receptive nor unreceptive*. A three way ANOVA examining parent gender, child gender, and child age found that mothers ( $M = 4.03$ ,  $SE = .034$ ) believed that their child would be more receptive to a conversation about gambling than fathers did ( $M = 3.87$ ,  $SE = .030$ ) ( $F(1, 2224) = 12.79$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .006$ ). Although there were no significant differences as to how receptive sons or daughters would be towards discussing gambling, there was a significant interaction effect between parent gender and child gender ( $F(1, 2224) = 5.64$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .003$ ), as mothers reported that their sons would likely be more receptive if they initiated a conversation with them about gambling than with their daughters. There were no significant differences between parents' responses based on either the age of their child or interactions between age and either child or parent gender.

*Frequency of conversations.* Parents were confident that their child would be receptive toward a conversation about gambling, although when asked about how frequently these conversations took place, parents indicated that they were typically infrequent. On a five point Likert scale (1 = *never*, 5 = *regularly*), 66% of parents reported that they *rarely* or *never* had

conversations with their child about gambling, which was the least frequently discussed topic in comparison to other teen issues included in the survey. A three way ANOVA using parent gender, child gender and child age as the independent variables revealed that fathers had conversations about gambling with their children less frequently than mothers ( $F(1, 2224) = 16.60, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .007$ ), and that both mothers and fathers had conversations about gambling with their sons more often than with their daughters ( $F(1, 2224) = 49.65, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .022$ ). Parents also reported having conversations about gambling more frequently with 13-14 year old children than their 15-16 or 17-18 year olds, and they also had conversations more frequently with their 15-16 year olds than with their 17-18 year olds ( $F(2, 2224) = 4.11, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .004$ ). When compared to the frequency of conversations parents had with their children on the topics of smoking, alcohol use, and drug use, parents also discussed smoking more often with their 13-14 year old children than with their 15-16 and 17-18 year old children ( $F(2, 2224) = 11.55, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .010$ ). However, parents were more likely to have discussions with their 17-18 year old children than their 13-14 year olds about alcohol use ( $F(2, 2224) = 5.60, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .005$ ). Child age was not a significant factor in regards to how frequently parents had conversations about drug use ( $F(2, 2224) = 3.16, p > .05$ ) (See Table 8).

*Limitations to conversations.* Parents also indicated limitations precluding conversations with their children about gambling. The reasons limiting conversations focussed upon parents fearing they would be perceived as intruding on their child's life; that they don't want to be seen as a strong disciplinarian (the bad cop); they are uncomfortable discussing gambling issues with their child; they don't know how to address the topic of gambling; they don't have sufficient knowledge about the issue; they don't believe their child would listen to them; it's not their

Table 8  
*Frequency of Parental Conversations Concerning Gambling, Smoking, Alcohol Use, and Drug Use by Age*

Gambling		
Child's age	Mean	SD
13-14	2.53	1.18
15-16	2.38	1.13
17-19	2.34	1.21
Smoking		
Child's age	Mean	SD
13-14	3.28	1.18
15-16	3.07	1.20
17-19	3.03	1.26
Alcohol use		
Child's age	Mean	SD
13-14	3.18	1.12
15-16	3.31	1.06
17-19	3.37	1.10
Drug Use		
Child's age	Mean	SD
13-14	3.47	1.07
15-16	3.40	1.09
17-19	3.37	1.14

*Note.* Based on a 5 point Likert scale, 1 = *never*, 5 = *regularly*.

responsibility; and it's not a priority. These statements were rated on a 5 point Likert scale and the results are included in Table 9. The reasons parents agreed with for limiting their conversations with their child about gambling were that gambling was not perceived to be a priority ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ) and they didn't know enough about the issue ( $M = 2.20$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ). With the exception of the statement "I don't know enough about the issue", fathers were significantly more likely to agree with each of the limiting statements as shown in Table 10.

When compared on how comfortable parents are discussing gambling as an issue with their child there were no significant differences between those parents who gambled and those who did not gamble. However, the severity of parent's gambling behaviour was found to have an impact upon their ability to discuss gambling issues. Parents who indicated that they had personally experienced a gambling problem (responding yes to the question "have you ever experienced a gambling problem in the past?" [ $N = 115$ ]) agreed more strongly with the statements "I don't want to be seen as the bad cop" ( $M = 2.11$ ,  $SD = 1.08$  vs.  $M = 1.80$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ,  $t = 3.03$ ,  $p < .01$ ),

Table 9

*Parents' Perceived Limitations to Discussing Gambling with their Adolescent*

Limitation	Mean	Standard Deviation
It isn't a priority	2.50	1.56
Don't know enough about the issue	2.20	1.00
Don't know how to address the issue	1.98	0.93
Don't think that their child would listen to them	1.93	0.94
Don't want to intrude on child's life	1.82	0.88
Don't want to be seen as the "bad cop"	1.81	0.90
Uncomfortable discussing gambling issues	1.66	0.86
Don't think it is parent's responsibility	1.49	0.79

*Note.* Based on a 5 point Likert scale, 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*.

Table 10

*Parental Gender Differences on Factors that Limit Their Ability to Discuss Gambling Issues with their Child*

Limiting Factor	Father Mean	Father SD	Mother Mean	Mother SD
Don't want to intrude on child's life	1.95	0.89	1.68	0.84
Don't want to be seen as the "bad cop"	1.93	0.92	1.69	0.86
Uncomfortable discussing gambling issues	1.75	0.92	1.57	0.84
Don't know how to address the subject	2.10	0.93	1.86	0.91
Don't know enough about the issue	2.19	0.96	2.21	1.04
Don't think their child would listen	2.00	0.91	1.87	0.96
Not responsible	1.51	0.74	1.47	0.84
Not a priority	2.59	1.13	2.41	1.17

*Note.* Based on a 5 point Likert scale, 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*.

"I am uncomfortable discussing gambling issues with my child" ( $M=1.97$ ,  $SD = 1.02$  vs.  $M = 1.65$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ,  $t = 3.86$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and "I don't think that it's my responsibility" ( $M= 1.78$ ,  $SD = 1.02$  vs.  $M = 1.47$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ,  $t = 3.22$ ,  $p < .01$ ) compared to parents who did not identify themselves as having a gambling problem.

*Participation in Gambling with Children*

Parents indicated those gambling activities in which they participated with their child for money (see Figure 6). Overall, approximately 60% of parents reported having participated in a gambling activity with their child. The most commonly participated in activity was purchasing joint lottery scratch tickets (40% participation). This was followed by purchasing raffle tickets for fund raising (36%) and joint lottery draw tickets (12%). Many of the activities had very low participation levels, including VLT gambling and casino table games. Overall, there were few differences based upon parent gender, with the exceptions that mothers were more likely to

participate in raffle tickets for fund raising ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 2559) = 8.66, p < .01$ ) and bingo ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 2558) = 4.17, p < .04$ ), and with fathers more likely to play poker ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 2558) = 14.27, p < .001$ ), lottery scratch tickets ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 2559) = 8.02, p < .01$ ) and wager on games of skill ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 81) = 13.80, p < .001$ ). Both mothers and fathers were more likely to report betting on sports events with their sons as opposed to their daughters ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 2558) = 10.56, p < .001$ ).

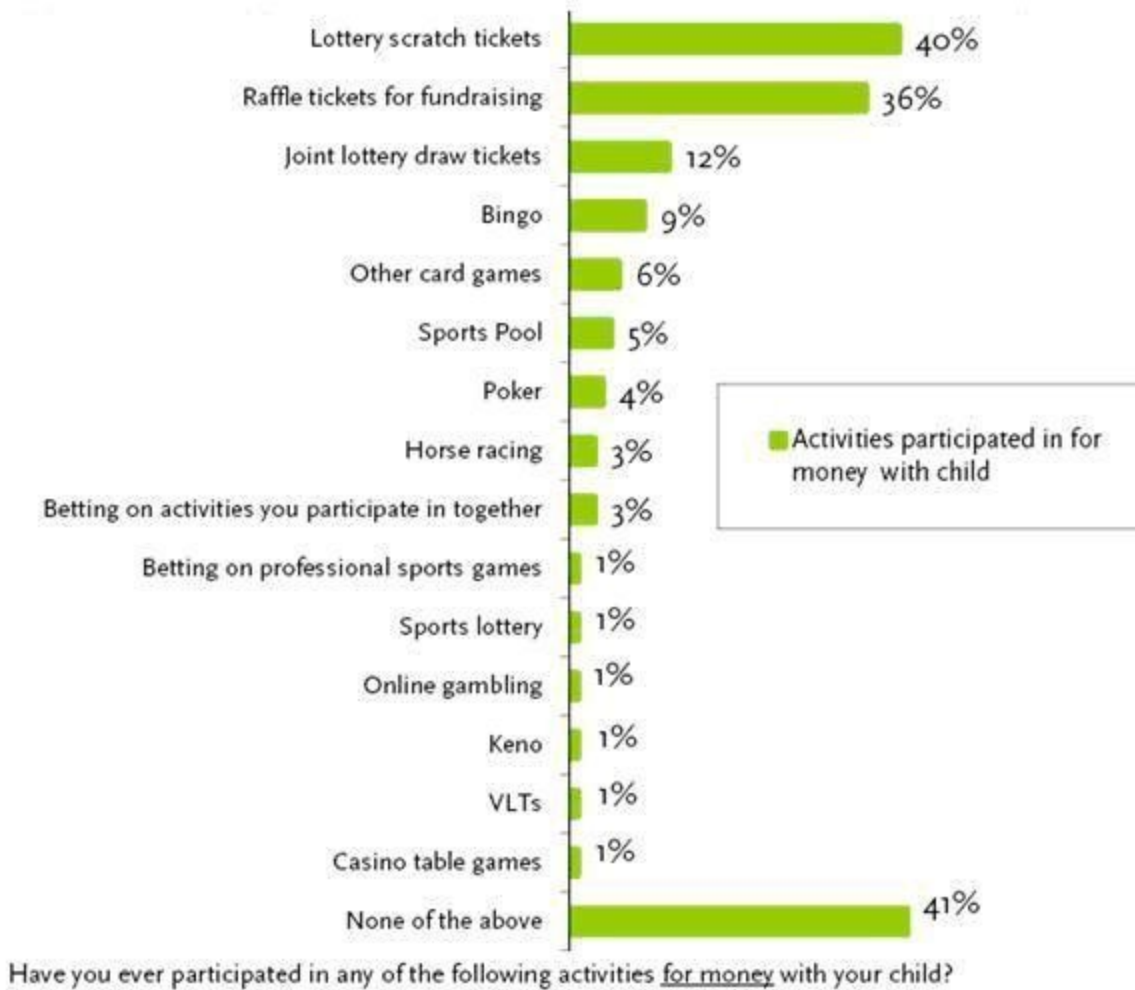


Figure 6: Gambling Activities Parents Participate in with their Child for Money.

### *Purchasing Lottery Tickets as a Holiday Gift*

Approximately one fifth (21.2%) of all parents reported having purchased lottery tickets (lottery draw, lottery scratch, or sports lottery) as a holiday gift for their child, and 55.1% of parents who purchased lottery tickets for their child first did so when their child was less than 14 years old. The percentage of parents who purchased lottery draw tickets as gifts for their child is lower than those who reported having purchased lottery scratch tickets for their child overall (40.1%), but higher than the percentage of parents who reported that they purchase joint lottery tickets (11.5%) or sports lottery tickets (1.1 %) for their child. Parents did not purchase lottery draw tickets as holiday gifts for their child very frequently. Overall, 63.0% of the participants who reportedly purchased these items for their child did so fewer than 4 times. However, 10.2% of parents who had purchased lottery tickets for their child as a holiday gift have done so ten times or more. Fathers reported purchasing lottery tickets for their child more frequently than mothers ( $\chi^2 (3, N = 554) = 14.76, p < .01$ ), however, mothers reported first purchasing lottery tickets for their child at a younger age than fathers ( $\chi^2 (4, N = 543) = 10.00, p < .05$ ).

In addition to their own purchase of lottery tickets for their child, parents also reported on how frequently friends and other family members purchased lottery tickets as gifts for their child. In total, 23.6% of parents reported that their child had received such a gift from a relative or friend, a finding similar to the percentage of parents who purchased lottery tickets themselves as gifts for their child. Parents were also asked whether they had ever purchased poker chips, bingo dabbers or any other gambling-related gift for their child. Overall, 6.1% of parents had purchased one of these items as gifts. While mothers and fathers were just as likely to purchase these items for their child, sons were more likely to be the recipients of these gifts ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 2558) = 40.85, p < .001$ ). Interestingly, parents who reported having experienced a gambling problem were more likely to give these gambling-related gifts to their child ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 2558) = 5.82, p < .05$ ).

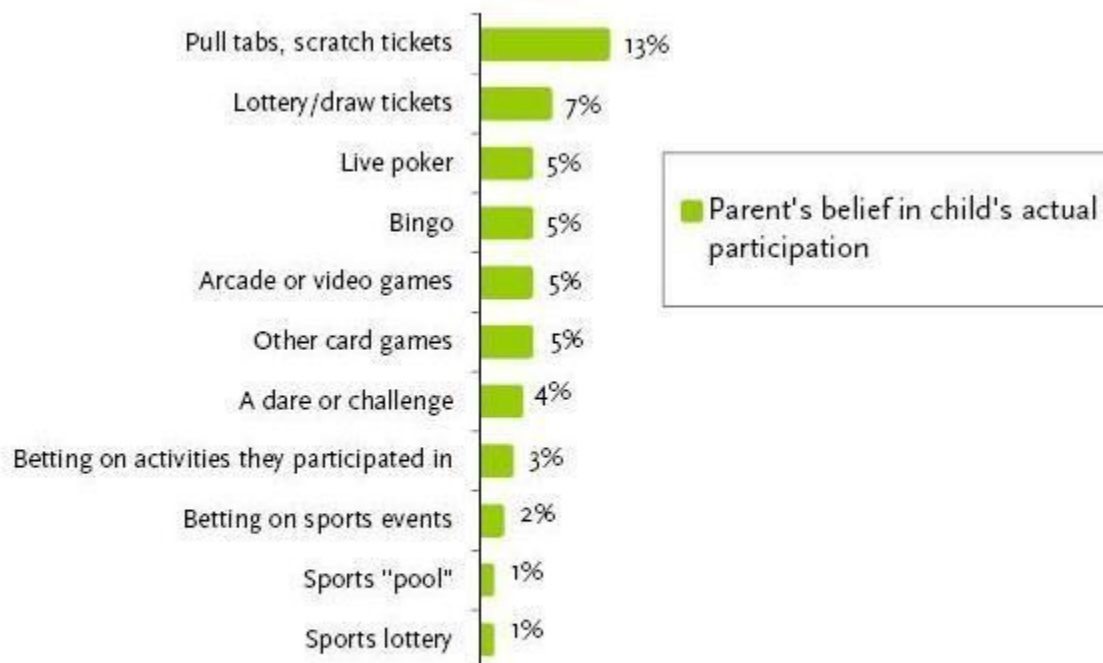
*Child's Gambling Behaviour*

Children's gambling behaviour, without parent involvement, was also investigated based upon parent reports. Overall, 12.5% of parents stated that they were aware their child was gambling. Fathers (13.8%) were significantly more likely to report being aware of their child's gambling than mothers (11.2%) ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 2559) = 4.04, p < .05$ ). Both parents were more likely to be aware of their son taking part in such an activity (17.7%) compared to their daughter (7.3%) ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 2559) = 62.59, p < .001$ ). The level of awareness of this activity increased with their child's age ( $\chi^2 (2, N = 2559) = 60.28, p < .001$ ). Only 7.6% of parents of 13-14 year olds were aware of their child's gambling, whereas 11.1% of parents of 15-16 year olds and 20.1% of parents of 17-18 year olds were aware of their child's gambling. When asked how they had become aware that their child participated in gambling, the most common response was that their child had informed them of their involvement (59.8%), followed by the parent being present at the time (28.6%), or that someone else had informed them (5.2%). An additional 18.7% of parents who claimed that they were aware of their child's participation in gambling said that they weren't certain but suspected that their child may have taken part in some gambling activity.

Parents also specified in which gambling activities they perceived their child was engaged (see Figure 7). The most commonly mentioned form of gambling was lottery scratch/pull tickets, with 13% of all parents reporting that their child had participated in this activity. This was followed by lottery draw tickets (7%), Texas Hold'em poker games (5%), and bingo (5%). The two most common activities adolescents participated in as cited by parents, lottery draw tickets and pull/scratch lottery tickets, were also the two activities that parents were least concerned about their child's participation (lottery draw,  $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ; lottery scratch cards,  $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ). The gambling activities that parents found most concerning were sports-related gambling



through a bookie ( $M = 4.62$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ) and Internet gambling ( $M = 4.36$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ). However, only 3 parents reported being aware that their child participated in placing bets with a bookie, and only 16 parents noted that their child participated in Internet gambling.



Have you ever participated in any of the following activities for money with your child?

**Figure 7: Gambling Activities Parents Believe their Child has Participated in for Money.**

*Level of comfort with amount spent on gambling.* Approximately half of all parents (52.1%) said that they would be concerned if their child gambled with any amount of money, with 71.7% being concerned with amounts less than five dollars. Only 9.3% of parents said that their child would have to gamble with amounts greater than \$20 before they would be concerned. As the age of children increased, parents became less concerned about the amount of money their child wagered ( $F(2, 2233) = 58.77, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .05$ ). Overall, 60.4% of parents of 13 and 14 years olds were concerned when their child gambled with any amount of money, with 51.9% of parents of 14-15 year olds, and 42.5% of parents of 17-18 year olds being similarly concerned.

#### *Helping with Children's Gambling Problems*

Parents felt primarily responsible for the prevention of teen gambling ( $M = 4.60/5.00$ ,  $SD = .66$ ), followed by teens themselves ( $M = 4.06/5.00$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ). Parents also viewed the gambling industry ( $M = 3.78/5.00$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ) and the government ( $M = 3.43/5.00$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ) as responsible for the prevention of teen gambling. In addition to feeling responsible for preventing their adolescent from developing a gambling problem, parents were confident that they would be able to help their child if approached (the mean value on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1- *not at all confident* to 5- *very confident* was 4.11,  $SD = .97$ ). A three way ANOVA including parent gender, child gender and child age as variables found that parents of male children were more confident that they would be able to help ( $F(1, 2224) = 7.61, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .003$ ; male  $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = .03$ , female  $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = .03$ ). Parents were also more confident that they would be able to help older children ( $F(2, 2224) = 3.23, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .003$ ), although this difference existed only between parents of 13-14 year olds and parents of 17-18 year olds based upon a Bonferroni post hoc comparison (13-14  $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD = .03$ , 17-18  $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = .04$ ). Parental gender was not an

influence on their perceived abilities to help their child if they came to them with a gambling problem.

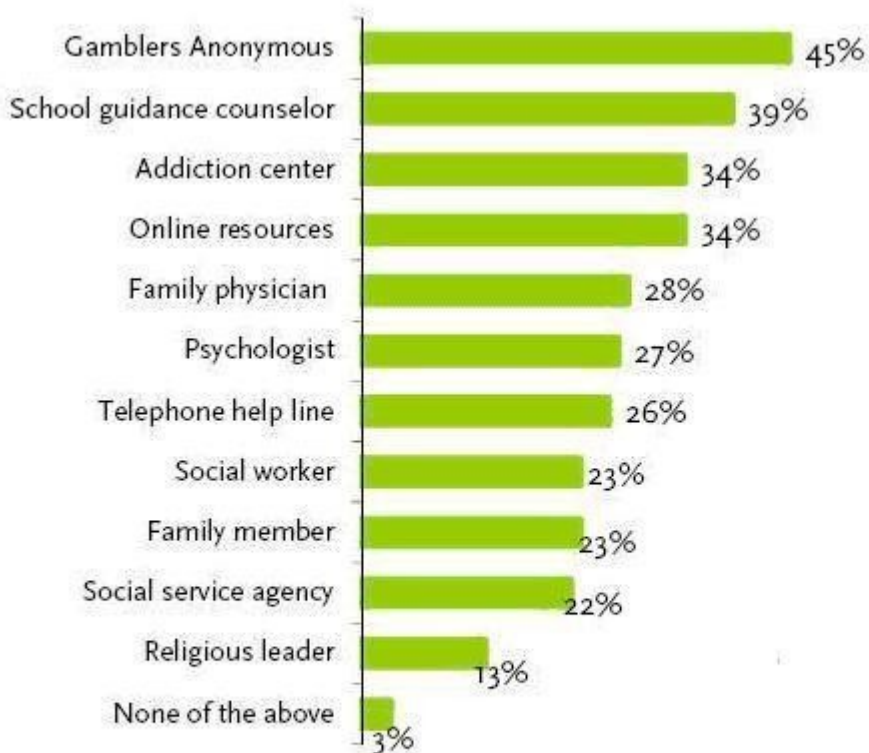
Parents indicated what avenues they would potentially investigate in order to seek help for their child's gambling problem, including a professional; discussing the dangers involved with gambling; restricting their child's access to money; setting strict curfews and monitoring their child's behaviour more closely; setting controls on their child's Internet activity; and educating themselves about teen gambling. Their likelihood of partaking in each activity is depicted in Table 11. Having a discussion about the dangers of involvement in gambling activities ( $M = 4.67$ ,  $SD = .63$ ) was the predominant response, followed by seeking information about teen gambling ( $M = 4.52$ ,  $SD = .80$ ). Parents were least likely to restrict their child's access to money ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = .97$ ) if it was suspected they were gambling.

Table 11

*What Parents Would do if their Child Came to Them with a Gambling Problem*

Action	Mean	SD	Note. Based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1- <i>not at all likely</i> to 5- <i>very likely</i> .  The resource that parents were most likely to use if their child came to them with a gambling
Have a discussion about the dangers of gambling	4.67	0.62	
Seek information on teen gambling	4.52	0.80	
Set controls and monitor child's internet activity	4.46	0.84	
Set strict curfews	4.33	0.90	
Seek help from a professional	4.28	0.96	
Restrict child's access to money	4.24	1.00	

problem was Gamblers Anonymous, as 45% of parents indicated that they would turn to this resource. This was followed by consulting their child's school guidance counsellor (39%) and utilizing online resources (34%). Figure 8 shows a complete breakdown of the utilization of all resources. Although there was no one resource that the majority of parents reported they would utilize, only 3% of parents indicated that they would not seek help or utilize any of the resources provided.



If your child had a problem with gambling, where would you most likely seek help?

**Figure 8: Resources Parents would use to seek help for a Gambling Problem.**

### *Regression Analysis*

*Conversations about gambling.* A regression analysis using a general linear model was performed in order to determine what factors predicted whether parents frequently had conversations with their child about gambling. A stepwise approach was used. The dependent variable was “how frequently do you have conversations with your child about gambling?” which

is measured by responses on a 5 point Likert scale. The factors originally included in the model as predictors included the age (category) of the child, parent gender, child gender, the province in which the parent lived, the type of community in which the parent lived (rural, urban or suburban), family income, highest level of parent education, parental personal experience with a gambling problem, whether the parent knew someone who had personally experienced a gambling problem, and gambling with their child. In addition, positive attitudes towards gambling (which was created by combining the responses by parents on a number of questions that examined parents' attitudes towards gambling, including the questions "There is nothing wrong with teens gambling occasionally, gambling is a good way for community organizations to raise funds, gambling can be a good way to relieve boredom, gambling for money is acceptable if you are just playing with friends, it is acceptable for teens to watch professional poker tournaments or TV shows featuring gambling", and "if you really know the game, gambling can be an easy way to make money") was created. A cronbach's alpha value was calculated for these 6 items and found to be 0.78.

The stepwise procedure required that for each variable included in the model, the F value had to have a probability value of  $\leq .05$ , and for exclusion, the F value had to have a probability value of  $\geq .10$ . The final model ( $F(8, 2549) = 29.28, p < .001$ ) had eight different variables that made a significant contribution. The variable that was the strongest predictor of whether parents discussed gambling as an issue with their child was whether or not parents lived in the province of Quebec. Parents from Quebec were more likely to discuss gambling issues with their children than parents from other provinces. The second strongest predictor was the gender of the child, as parents were more likely to discuss gambling with their sons than with their daughters. The remaining variables and their effect sizes are included in Table 12. The change in effect size, as measured by the R square value change between many of the variables, is quite small. For

instance, living in the suburbs, being a female parent, not completing high school, having a child who is 13-14 years old, knowing someone with a gambling problem, and level of family income are all contributing less than .6% of variance to each subsequent model.

Table 12

*Regression Model for Variables Predicting Frequency of Discussing Gambling with Child and Effect Sizes*

Predictor Variable added to Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	F Value	Sig. F Value
Lives in Quebec	.047	.046	.047	125.56	.001
Male Child	.063	.062	.016	85.33	.001
Lives in Suburbs	.069	.068	.006	62.83	.001
Parent Female	.073	.071	.004	50.19	.001
Did not complete high school	.076	.075	.003	42.20	.001
Child 13-14 years old	.079	.077	.003	36.67	.001
Knows someone with gambling problem	.082	.080	.003	32.55	.001
Yearly Family Income	.084	.081	.002	29.28	.001

*Perceived seriousness of adolescent gambling.* A regression analysis also determined which factors predicted how seriously parents viewed gambling as an issue. The dependent variable was the score on the seriousness of adolescent gambling as measured by a response on a 5 point Likert scale. A stepwise approach was used in order to determine which independent variables predicted frequency of discussions about gambling. The factors originally included in the model as predictors were the age (category) of the child, parent gender, child gender, the province in which the parent lived, the type of community in which the parent lived (rural, urban or suburban), family income, highest level of parent education, parental personal experience with a gambling problem, whether the parent knew someone who had personally experienced a gambling

problem, and gambling with their child. In addition, positive attitudes towards gambling (which was created by combining the responses by parents on a number of questions that examined parents' attitudes towards gambling, including the questions "There is nothing wrong with teens gambling occasionally, gambling is a good way for community organizations to raise funds, gambling can be a good way to relieve boredom, gambling for money is acceptable if you are just playing with friends, it is acceptable for teens to watch professional poker tournaments or TV shows featuring gambling", and "if you really know the game, gambling can be an easy way to make money") was created, whose cronbach's alpha value was calculated to be 0.78.

The stepwise procedure was identical to the procedure used in order to predict parent's frequency of conversations about gambling. The final model ( $F(11, 2546) = 13.09, p < .001$ ) had 11 significant predictor variables. The strongest predicting variable of whether parents viewed adolescent gambling as a serious issue was if the parent lived in the province of Quebec, as parents who lived in Quebec viewed adolescent gambling as a more serious issue than parents in the rest of the country. Parents' opinions on gambling were the next strongest predictor of how serious parents viewed adolescent gambling as an issue. Parents who did not agree with statements that portrayed gambling positively were more likely to view gambling as a potentially serious issue facing teens. The remaining variables and their effect sizes are included in Table 13. As shown, the changes in effect size for each variable are very slight. For instance, completing an undergraduate degree, completing college or CEGEP, completing a post graduate degree, and the gender of the child are all contributing less than .4% of the variance to each model.



Table 13

*Regression Model for Variables Predicting Parental Perception of Seriousness of Adolescent Gambling and Effect Sizes*

Predictor Variable added to Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	F Value	Sig. F Value
Lives in Quebec	.015	.015	.015	39.18	.001
Gambling Attitudes	.025	.025	.010	33.30	.001
Yearly Family Income	.030	.029	.005	26.48	.001
Completed Undergrad Degree	.034	.033	.004	22.77	.001
Completed College or CEGEP	.038	.036	.004	20.25	.001
Never Gambled with Child	.042	.040	.004	18.60	.001
Completed Post-graduate Degree	.045	.042	.003	17.16	.001
Personally Experienced a Gambling Problem	.048	.045	.003	16.00	.001
Male Child	.050	.046	.002	14.86	.001
Lives in Atlantic Canada	.052	.048	.002	13.92	.001
Parent Female	.054	.049	.002	13.09	.001

## Discussion

Adolescents have been reported to be at increased risk for developing a gambling problem in comparison to adults and have high rates of gambling participation (Jacobs, 2004; Shaffer & Hall, 1996). Previous studies have shown that adolescents perceive their parents to generally approve of their gambling and report that gambling with family members is a relatively common occurrence (Gupta & Derevensky, 1997; Ladouceur & Mireault, 1988). The current study, using a Canadian national sample, examined parents' knowledge and attitudes towards their child's gambling behaviour.

### *Seriousness of Gambling as an Issue*

Parents indicated the seriousness of thirteen contemporary adolescent issues and high-risk behaviours that their teens could possibly encounter. Gambling was not viewed as a serious issue, with fewer than 50% of parents rating it to be *serious* or *very serious*. As found in other studies, drug and alcohol use, and drinking and driving were identified by parents as being the three most serious issues (Beck, 1990; Beck et al., 1995; Blanchard, Gurka & Blackman, 2006; Kypri et al., 2007). It would be difficult to argue that youth gambling is a more serious issue than drug or alcohol use by teens, as both of these activities have well established negative effects on the physical health of the user in addition to the potential for addiction. The risks associated with drug and alcohol abuse have been portrayed frequently in the media and the effects that these substances can have on an individual are well known. Drinking and driving has received similar attention from the media, and the potential consequences of drinking and driving are well established. It is thus not surprising that parents viewed gambling as a less serious issue compared to drug and alcohol use, since gambling does not have any direct immediate effects on the physical health of the individual gambling. Gambling also leads to fewer deaths than drinking and driving. However,

it is surprising how relatively unimportant of an issue parents viewed gambling to be considering gambling does have well established problems associated with it, including negative financial consequences, impaired relationships, mental health issues and associated academic problems. The fact that provincially regulated gambling is prohibited to minors, similar to alcohol and smoking, should somehow indicate to parents the seriousness of youth gambling.

Spending too much time on the Internet and excessive time playing videogames were both seen as being more serious of an issue than gambling. These two issues are not without their risks, as excessive video game play and Internet usage can become problematic (Caplan & High, 2006; Salguero & Morán, 2002; Young, 2004). Parents also perceived obesity and eating disorders as being a more serious issue for teens than gambling. Obesity and unwanted weight gain is a health problem that is facing more and more adolescents in both Canada and the United States, as the prevalence of obesity among adolescents has increased significantly over the past 25 years (Lobstein, Baur, & Uauy, 2004). Obesity also poses a number of health issues for adolescents, including the development of diabetes, joint problems, and mental distress (Mellin, Neumark-Sztainer, Story, Ireland, & Resnick, 2002; Storch et al., 2007). In addition to affecting a great number of individuals, this issue has also received a lot of exposure by the media. Therefore, it is not surprising that many parents are concerned with their child's risk for obesity, since it is prevalent, has significant health effects, and benefits from media exposure.

Despite parents' identifying gambling as one of the least serious issues facing their adolescent, a number of findings from the study indicated that parents perceive teen gambling to be a potentially serious issue. For example, the majority of parents in the study endorsed raising the legal age of gambling in their province alongside both smoking and drinking, suggesting that it is an activity that they don't want their underage children to participate in. Their knowledge of the

risks associated with excessive gambling was also accurate, as gambling was not perceived to be a harmless activity. Very few parents agreed with the statements “there is nothing wrong with teens gambling occasionally” or “if you really know the game, gambling can be an easy way to make money.”

Some groups of parents were found to be more likely to view gambling as a serious issue, which included parents who live in Quebec, those with negative opinions about gambling, and individuals with higher levels of education and income. It is interesting that the strongest predictor of whether parents were concerned about teen gambling was if they resided in Quebec. Previous gambling studies conducted in Quebec have found that parents do gamble with their children (Felsher, Gupta & Derevensky, 2001). A national study conducted by Huang and Boyer (2007) found that Quebec has the lowest rate of youth non-gamblers in the country, and the percentage of youth aged 15-24 who are at a moderate to high risk of developing a gambling problem was 2.12%, compared to 2.22% for all of Canada. The results of Quebec parents compared to parents from other provinces in this study suggest that despite having gambled with their children, parents from Quebec still view the issue of underage gambling as serious. The reason for this discrepancy may be due to cultural differences. Quebec is a unique province within Canada since it is the only province where the majority of individuals are Francophone, but there is a significant minority of English speakers as well. A study by Ellenbogen, Gupta and Derevensky (2007) investigated the differences in youth gambling behaviour between Anglophones and Francophones, as well as a third linguistic group known as Allophones (individuals who have a primary language other than English or French). Results indicated that Francophone youth gambled the least often on a weekly basis (boys = 13%, girls = 8.3%) compared to Anglophone (boys = 20%, girls = 11.8%) and Allophone youth (boys = 38%, girls = 15.5%). The Ellenbogen study also found that rates of

problem gambling among Francophone youth were lower than those of Anglophone and Allophone youth (Ellenbogen et al., 2007).

The current study only included responses in French from Quebec participants, so based on this study it is not possible to tell if the difference between individuals from Quebec and those from the rest of the country are due to cultural differences (since bilingual Anglophone or Allophone parents could have responded to the survey in French), or due to efforts being put forth by organizations in Quebec that are educating parents about adolescent gambling, such as the campaign to notify parents that lottery tickets are not appropriate holiday gifts for children that has been held in December for the past five years in Quebec. In order to determine the extent to which cultural differences and measures taken affect parents in Quebec, Anglophone and Francophone parents within the province of Quebec would have to be compared to each other, and then to parents in the rest of the country.

One plausible reason as to why parents do not believe adolescent gambling is a serious issue facing teens is due to the fact that their child has not been affected by it. In the current study, only 1% of parents reported that their child had been directly impacted by problem gambling. This rate is significantly lower than the rates of adolescent problem gambling reported in the literature (Jacobs, 2004; Shaffer et al., 1999). However, rates of adolescent problem gambling are likely higher than those reported in the current study as it is possible for adolescents to hide gambling problems from their parents. Gambling is often referred to as the hidden addiction for the ease at which individuals are able to conceal their actions from others. Some adolescents may be adept at hiding their gambling activities from their parents. For instance, one of the main repercussions of problem gambling is a loss of financial resources. Many adolescents are able to hide their financial losses from their parents, as they have their own bank accounts and even their own source of

income through part-time or summer jobs. With many teens having control over their own finances, it is also plausible that a parent would be unaware of the impact of gambling on their child's finances. Because teens are capable of hiding their gambling problems from their parents, some parents in the current study may have children who are problem gamblers or at risk for gambling problems but are unaware. However, even if the rates of teen problem gambling are underreported in the current study (which is likely), the fact remains that rates of adolescent serious problem gambling have been found to be between 4% and 8% (Jacobs, 2000; Shaffer & Hall, 1996; Shaffer et al., 1999), and that the majority of adolescents are not affected by gambling as a problem.

Due to the expansion and promotion of gambling by provincial governments, advertisements for various forms of gambling are widespread in Canada. Government sponsored advertising for gambling activities has potentially removed the stigma associated with gambling. Commercials with smiling people standing around a craps table may make individuals less likely to think of the drawbacks of excessive gambling, such as addiction and the impact of that addiction has on families, and more likely to think of the potential for entertainment. In addition, gambling is typically viewed as an adult behaviour and problem. Since many gambling activities are restricted to youth and depictions of adolescents gambling in the media are uncommon, people typically don't view gambling as an activity that adolescents participate in, despite studies that show that gambling and problems associated with gambling are both common among youth (Dickson et al., 2004a; Jacobs, 2004; Shaffer & Hall, 1996; Shaffer et al., 1999).

Conversations between parents and their children about gambling were found to be infrequent. Sixty-six percent of parents never or rarely had conversations with their child about gambling, making it the least discussed developmental issue included in the study. The reasons for the infrequency of these conversations did not appear to be related to the inability of parents to discuss gambling, as the majority of parents were confident that their child would listen to them if they were to have a conversation about gambling. In addition, most parents thought that they had sufficient information about gambling to have a conversation on the topic and parents believed that they knew how to address the issue. Generally, parents were comfortable discussing gambling issues with their child and felt strongly that it was their responsibility as parents. However, many parents also believed discussing gambling was not a priority. Although parents didn't identify obstacles to discussing gambling with their child, fathers found discussing gambling with their child to be more difficult than mothers, as they were significantly more likely to endorse each of the limiting factors to discussing gambling.

Parents from the province of Quebec reportedly discussed gambling with their child more often than parents from other provinces. Again, this finding may be due to cultural differences or due to efforts being made in Quebec to inform parents about the risks of gambling. Parents also had discussions with their sons more often than they had discussions with their daughters. It is reassuring to know that parents discuss gambling with their adolescent sons, as rates of problem gambling among young males are much higher than the rates reported for females the same age (Engwall, Hunter & Steinberg, 2004; Shaffer et al., 1999; Stinchfield, Hanson & Olson, 2006). However, that does not mean young women are immune from the development of problem gambling, and parents should discuss the risks associated with gambling with both their sons and daughters.

Parents who reported having a problem with gambling were more uncomfortable having conversations about gambling with their children than parents who didn't report experiencing a gambling problem. These parents who have been affected by problem gambling also identified obstacles to discussing gambling with their children. For instance, they didn't think that it was their responsibility to discuss the topic of gambling with their child. These results may indicate challenges that parents who themselves are problem gamblers have when discussing gambling with their children. Studies of other high risk behaviours such as smoking have shown that parents who smoke face unique challenges when discussing smoking with their children (Herbert & Schiaffino, 2007), so it is reasonable to believe that parents who have gambling problems may also have difficulties discussing gambling with their children.

#### *Parent Gambling Involvement with Children*

Similar to findings in previous studies, the current study found that the majority of parents report gambling with their children. Only 40% of parents reported that they had never gambled with their child on any of the gambling activities provided. However, the frequency of gambling is not very high, as most parents report gambling on each of the activities only a couple of times a year.

The type of gambling that parents participated in with their children most frequently was lottery scratch tickets, a perceived innocuous form of gambling. Purchasing raffle tickets for fundraising was the next most common activity between parents and their children, which is an activity that is much more accessible for adolescents on their own. Some of the least common activities between parents and their children were types of gambling that are restricted. For instance, fewer than 2% of parents participated in Keno, VLTs or casino table games with their children. This is not surprising, as many of these forms of gambling are not accessible in every



part of Canada and in the places which they are located, they are only accessible in licensed establishments where the employees check the age of the individuals entering the gambling areas. However, the fact that any parents are participating in these activities with their children and adolescents is a cause for concern. Taking their children to places where alcohol may also be provided, and in the case of VLT gambling exposing them to gambling activities that could be addictive, is problematic (Dowling, Smith & Thomas, 2005).

Surprisingly, the types of gambling activities that youth most frequently play with one another, such as games of cards and betting on activities that they are participating in together, are not activities that parents commonly report participating in with their children. For instance, only 4% of parents reported that they had played poker with their child, while only 3% of parents reported that they had bet on activities that they participated in with their child. It is not clear why parents are not participating in these activities with their children which have been shown to be adolescents' preferred types of gambling in other studies (Jacobs, 2004). It is likely that adolescents are participating in these activities among their peers without their parents' awareness. It is possible that some youth may be using their parents in order to access more restrictive forms of gambling (e.g. lottery tickets) since adolescents are restricted from purchasing lottery tickets on their own. It is also possible that some parents are introducing their children to forms of gambling that they otherwise would not have access to until they reach legal age. It should be noted that adolescents are still able to access lottery tickets and other government regulated forms of gambling on their own, as not all retailers comply with regulations (Adlaf et al., 2006; Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2007; St-Pierre, 2008).

#### *Awareness of Child Gambling*

Despite the majority of parents reporting that they have gambled at least once with their child, fewer parents reported being aware of their child's gambling participation without their involvement. Only 32% of parents report that they suspected their child had gambled. This is puzzling, as 60% of parents reported having gambled with their child. Parents may have interpreted the question to mean whether adolescents participated in gambling without their involvement. Other studies indicate that between 70% and 90% of adolescents have gambled for money in the past year (Gupta & Derevensky, 1998; Jacobs, 2000; Shaffer & Hall, 1996; Shaffer et al., 1999), making prevalence reports by parents in the current study appear to be very low. Multiple studies using adolescents as subjects have confirmed that the rate of adolescent gambling is much higher than the 32.2% as reported by parents in the current study. The results in the current study support that parents, in general, are not aware of their adolescent's gambling behaviour. This finding, while disconcerting, is not particularly surprising, as parents also underestimate their children's alcohol and drug use (Beck et al., 1995; Stanton et al., 2000).

#### *Attitudes Towards Gambling*

The majority of parents in the current study report gambling with their child. Additionally, they don't view adolescent gambling as an important issue in comparison to other issues facing adolescents. However, their opinions and attitudes towards gambling appear to suggest that gambling is not an activity that parents are comfortable with their adolescent participating in. For instance, when asked about how uncomfortable they would be if their child were to play poker in a number of settings, even if children played poker with family members at home without money, many parents still reported that they would be uneasy with their child participating in this type of activity. Parents' level of discomfort with playing poker escalated once money was involved.

Their child playing poker in settings in which either they or other parents were unlikely to supervise gambling activities, such as at school or on the Internet, caused the most discomfort.

Other questions tried to determine if parents viewed gambling as an unimportant issue that had little risks. Very few parents strongly agreed with the statements “there is nothing wrong with teens gambling occasionally”, “gambling can be a good way to relieve boredom”, and “if you really know the game, gambling can be an easy way to make money”. Parents were more likely to believe that “gambling is a good way for community organizations to raise funds”, and that “it is acceptable for teens to watch professional poker tournaments or TV shows featuring gambling”. Although parents tend to disagree with statements that endorse gambling, there are still some parents who endorse each of the statements, with 10.9% of parents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement “there is nothing wrong with teens gambling occasionally”.

#### *Discrepancy Between Attitudes and Behaviours*

The results suggest that parental attitudes and behaviours can be quite different. While parents are not fond of the idea of their children gambling and do not think that gambling is an activity in which teens participate, the majority of parents admitted to having gambled with their adolescent child at least once. As well, parents do not appear to think that adolescent gambling is a serious issue. Parents fail to see the need to discuss gambling with their children, as the frequency of conversations they have with their children on this topic are infrequent in comparison to other teen issues. This lack of discussion about gambling exists despite the fact that the majority of parents do not identify obstacles preventing them from discussing the issue of gambling. Parents report having sufficient knowledge about gambling, they know how to properly address the topic, and they believe that their child would listen to them if they had such conversations. The primary

reason preventing parents from discussing gambling with their adolescents was that they did not view adolescent gambling as a serious issue.

#### *Information and Resources Available to Parents*

Parents also rated the resources and information available to them concerning youth gambling. Only 35% of parents thought that the available information on gambling was *good* or *excellent*. In contrast, 69% of parents thought that the information available to them on smoking and drug use was *good* or *excellent*. The information that children are currently provided with about gambling is perceived by parents to be of poor quality in comparison to other issues facing teens. Thus, the information available to parents about youth gambling may need to be reviewed for its quality and effectiveness, although it is possible that this perception by parents is due to their limited exposure to such programs about gambling.

Parents provided information on how they would prefer to receive information on adolescent gambling. The preferred method of receiving information was through school newsletters or bulletins. Using schools to provide information on adolescent gambling is advantageous as almost all adolescents in Canada attend school. Thus it is possible to reach a higher percentage of the target population than by using a non-school setting to provide information. Schools make it possible to access both children and their parents, which also makes it easier to inform both parents and their children about the risks associated with underage gambling.

Currently, there are very few empirically-based prevention programs that have been implemented with the goal of reducing youth gambling. However, there are still a number of youth gambling prevention programs that have been developed and empirically studied (Hayer, Griffiths & Meyer, 2005). One of the first gambling prevention programs to be developed and empirically

validated was instituted in Quebec City among school children by Gaboury and Ladouceur (1993). Their original study included 289 junior and senior high school students from the Quebec City area. The participants in the experimental group of the study attended three, 75 minute sessions, over a three week period. Each of these sessions was divided into six units that looked at different aspects of gambling, including the legal status of certain gambling activities in the province of Quebec, how the business of gambling works, automatic behaviours by gamblers, pathological gambling, and coping techniques to avoid gambling and to control gambling. At a six month follow-up, students in the experimental condition were reported to have a much higher level of knowledge about gambling than a control group. However, no influence on actual gambling behavior was observed after a six month follow-up. A study conducted by Ferland, Ladouceur and Jacques (2000) shared many of the same in-school components of the Gaboury and Ladouceur (1993) study but also included an interactive learning component that required students to complete take-home activities. As with the earlier study, results revealed that students in the experimental condition had a much higher level of knowledge about gambling and a decrease of gambling misconceptions, but no significant behavioral changes were reported.

Ferland, Ladouceur, and Vitaro (2002) targeted misconceptions about gambling using a 20-minute video shown to students. Seventh and eighth graders were randomly assigned to three experimental conditions: (a) the video session only, (b) providing information to students in combination with interactive learning elements (presentation of information), and (c) an integrated approach of both conditions. A control condition was also included. Results showed that all three conditions were useful in increasing knowledge and correcting erroneous cognitions about gambling. A follow-up study by Lavoie and Ladouceur (2004) confirmed the previous results

using a video in order to increase knowledge about gambling and decrease gambling-related attitudinal errors with pre-adolescent students from grades 5 and 6 as well.

A comprehensive school based approach to preventing gambling which included both gambling-specific and gambling-unspecific information was evaluated by Williams (2002). The aims of the program were to advocate responsible gambling and enhance life skills, but not necessarily to reduce gambling participation or even encourage abstinence from gambling. Compared to a control group, participants showed an increase of both gambling-related knowledge and negative attitudes towards gambling. However, as with previous studies no significant changes in gambling behaviour were found in comparison to a control group.

In spite of the lack of empirically based gambling prevention programs aimed at youth, a conceptual framework has been developed by Dickson, Derevensky and Gupta (2004b) based on empirical evidence from prevention efforts aimed at other addictive behaviours utilizing a risk-protective factor model, adapted from Jessor's (1998) model on adolescent risk behaviour theory. The model (see Figure 9) outlines several risk and protective factors previously identified from empirical research, including those specific to gambling, factors that influence both gambling and other addictive behaviours, and factors that have been identified for addictive behaviours other than gambling. Risk factors identified through research specific to gambling outlined in the model include paternal pathological gambling, access to gambling venues, a positive media portrayal of gambling, and an early onset of gambling experience. Being male, having models for deviant behaviour, low conformity and school difficulties are all risk factors that adolescent problem gambling shares with other high risk behaviours. Although the model

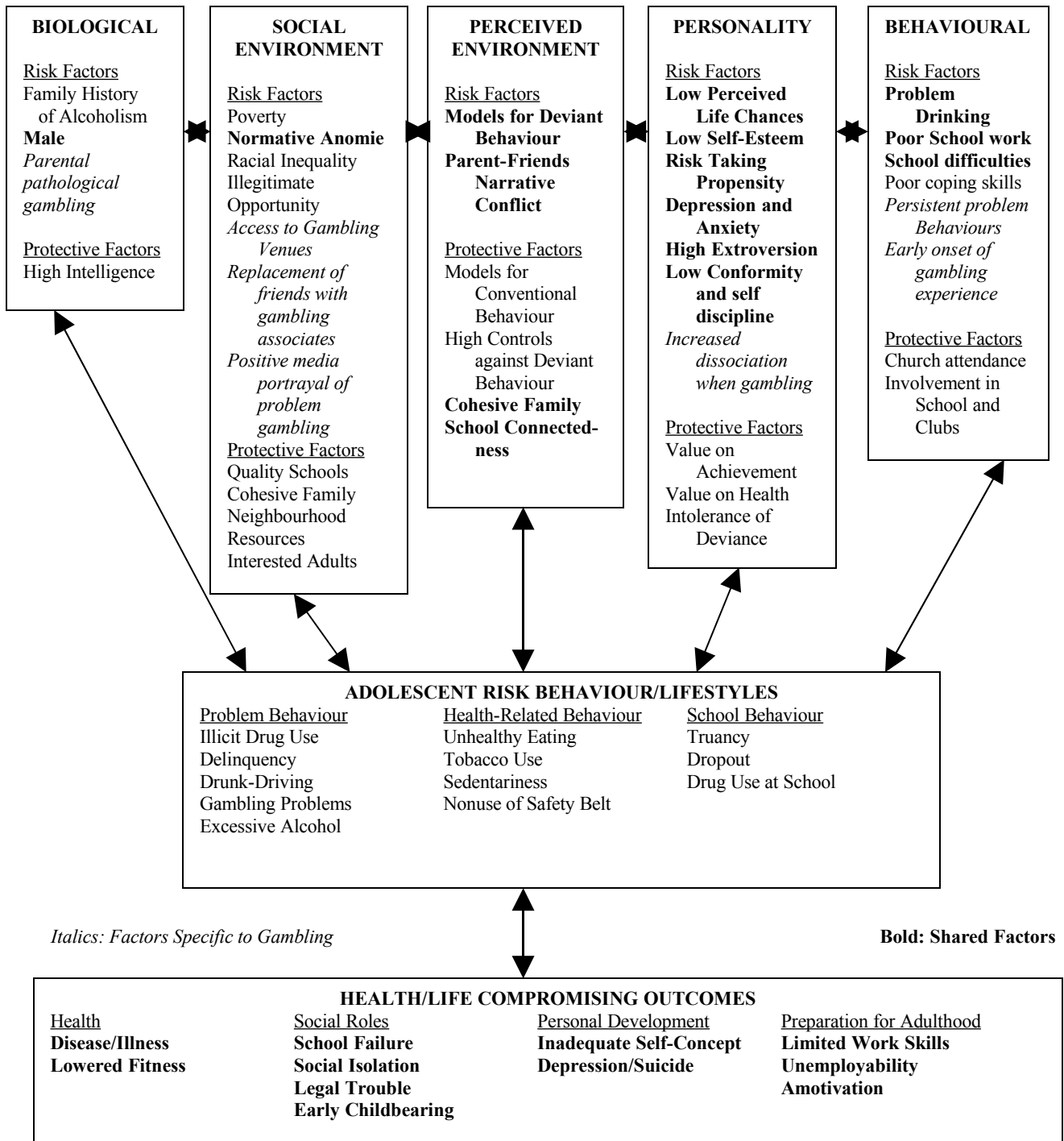


Figure 9. The Adolescent Risk Behaviour Model with Incorporated Youth Gambling Risk Factors (Dickson, Derevensky & Gupta, 2002).

requires further refinement, it is an important framework that could be used in the development of prevention programs aimed at youth gambling.

In addition to utilizing schools as a resource, parents also mentioned that they preferred to get information from websites and television public service advertisements. These two methods of communicating the risks associated with teen gambling are useful because they can both reach a wide audience. The overwhelming majority of households in Canada with school age children have a television and access to the Internet, as 98% of all households own at least one television and 83% of families with children under the age of 18 have access to the Internet (Statistics Canada, 2005; Statistics Canada, 2008). Therefore, as with schools these two methods are also capable of reaching a broad number of individuals. However, unlike efforts put forth in schools where students are required to attend classes and have little to no choice in what the teacher presents in lessons, individuals have more control over what they watch on television or access on the Internet. It is easy for individuals to change the channel, or choose to not watch television at all. Internet use is even more user driven, as each click of the mouse allows the user to visit different web pages. Therefore, any efforts aimed at educating parents and their children using these methods will face the challenge of actually reaching its intended audience.

### *Impact of Child Gambling*

Only 1% of parents reported that their child has personally experienced a gambling problem. This is the lowest percentage of parents reporting that their child had been personally impacted by any of the issues. So not only is gambling seen by parents as the least serious issue, it is also the issue that they are least likely to report having affected their child. Drinking and driving was only reported by 5.5% of parents as having personally impacted their child, the next lowest percentage of parents to do so. However, the relationship between whether an issue has impacted



their child and how serious they perceive that issue to be was different with drinking and driving. Drinking and driving was identified by parents as one of the most serious issues facing teens today despite the low level of perceived direct impact that it had on their children. It is likely that a combination of factors, including the direct impact on their child, the potential to cause physical harm to their child, and efforts to raise awareness about specific issues by organizations (e.g., Mothers Against Drunk Driving in the case of drinking and driving), celebrity endorsements of such campaigns, and government public service announcements that effects how seriously parents perceive specific teen issues.

### *Gender Differences*

A theme that appeared throughout the results was the differences in responses between fathers and mothers. It was found that fathers were less concerned about gambling problems and all other potential teen issues than mothers. In addition to this lack of concern on the behalf of fathers, they also had conversations with their adolescent about issues facing teens, including gambling, less frequently than mothers. Gender differences also existed based on the gender of the child. In many instances, parents were more concerned with their son's gambling behaviour and were more likely to look for help for their son. Although this lack of concern for daughter's gambling behaviour is concerning as gambling is not an activity restricted to males, it remains that young males have higher rates of problem gambling than young females (Jacobs, 2004). This study suggests that parents are aware that sons may be at greater risk for gambling and problem gambling.

It was also investigated as to whether mothers and fathers differed in their gambling with their adolescent. For the most part, there are few differences in regard to the types of gambling that parents participated in with their children based on parent gender. However, fathers tended to

participate in each activity more often than mothers. For instance, fathers and mothers did not differ on whether they had ever purchased a lottery ticket for their child, but fathers purchased these tickets for their child on a more frequent basis. Although both fathers and mothers report having ever gambled with their child at about the same level of frequency, the amount of times per year that they gamble with their child differs depending on gender, as fathers gamble more times per year with their children.

### Conclusions

Gambling, despite being an issue that affects more adolescents than adults (Cox et al., 2005; Jacobs, 2000; Shaffer & Hall, 1996; Shaffer et al., 1999), is not perceived by parents to be as serious of an issue compared to other youth behaviours, including drug and alcohol use, smoking, eating disorders/obesity, depression, and excessive video game playing. Parents also report that their discussions with their adolescents about gambling are infrequent, and the majority of parents report having gambled at least once with their child in the past year. Despite these findings, which make it appear as though adolescent gambling is an issue that parents do not take seriously, there were findings that indicated gambling isn't an activity that parents view as totally benign. Parents are uncomfortable with their child gambling in unsupervised settings and with large amounts of money, and they don't perceive there to be any significant barriers towards their ability to communicate about gambling with their child. However, parents did report being open to receiving information about adolescent gambling, and indicated by which methods they preferred to receive this information, which can be utilized in the development of preventative and educational efforts. It should be noted that parents saw themselves as being the party with the most responsibility for preventing teen gambling. Thus, it appears as though despite not taking actions to limit gambling by their adolescents and perhaps even promoting gambling by

participating in a wide range of gambling activities with their children, parents seem receptive to the idea of gambling as an issue facing teens and are confident with their abilities to approach this issue if it were to emerge as an issue with their adolescent.

### *Limitations*

Despite the large sample size, there are a number of limitations. Since the data was collected using the Internet, only individuals with access to the Internet were able to participate. Parents who do not have Internet access, or who lack a high speed Internet connection, were much less likely to be included in the study unless they were able to access a public computer in order to participate. Individuals are more likely to have access to the Internet if they have a higher than average income and have attended a post-secondary educational institute. Thus, the current study may be overrepresented by individuals belonging to those two groups. Only having Internet users complete the study also likely had an effect on the responses to specific questions. For instance, it is logical to assume that many of these parents report that they would access resources on the Internet if their child came to them with a gambling problem, since they completed the study online. Those parents who were unable to complete the study because they don't use the Internet would be unlikely to endorse this method of getting information about gambling.

The current study also had a very low response rate. Over 40,000 individuals were contacted and invited to participate in the study, but only 3,315 responded and only 2,710 completed the study. However many of the 40,000 individuals may have not met the criteria for inclusion in the study. Since only fully completed surveys were used in order to calculate the results, the response rate was less than 7%. For this reason, it cannot be assumed that responses came from a representative sample. Responses to Internet-based surveys are typically lower than mail based surveys (Kaplowitz, Hadlock & Levine, 2004; Kongsved, Basnov, Holm-Christensen &

Hjollund, 2007), and usually have a response rate that is 11% lower than studies that are conducted by other methods including mail, telephone and fax-machine according to a meta-analysis conducted by Manfreda and colleagues (2008).

Another limitation is the effect sizes of many of the independent variables are small. For instance, while the difference between mothers and fathers on the seriousness of gambling was found to be significant, the overall difference in the variance that was accounted for by the gender of the parents was only 0.6%. So while many significant differences exist based on a number of different grouping variables, the practical significance of these differences in many cases is small. For this reason, the results were reported using descriptive statistics. Because of the exploratory nature of the study, replication is required in order to validate the results obtained in this study.

### *Implications*

The current study has a number of important implications. Very few studies have directly explored parents' perceptions of their adolescent's behaviour. Many studies instead investigate adolescents' perspectives of their parents' views and opinions. By using parents as the participants, the study has shown that underage gambling remains an issue that parents are not addressing. This issue needs to be addressed.

The study also gives an indication of how many parents gamble with their children. Compared to previous studies using adolescents recall, 60% of parents in this study reported having gambled with their child. However, the 40% of parents in the current study who reported purchasing lottery scratch tickets as a gift for their child is appreciably lower than the 77% of adolescents who reported their parents purchased a lottery ticket for them in an earlier study (Felsher et al., 2001). Reasons for this disparity may be that parents are responding in a socially desirable manner. Another possible explanation is that the response rate was relatively low and

may not be representative. The studies that revealed high rates of gambling participation between parents and their children were conducted in school settings. Since almost all adolescents attend school, it is easier to obtain a more representative sample.

Information gathered from this study can also be used in order to develop or improve current prevention efforts aimed at reducing the number of parents who are gambling with their children and to raise adult awareness of the seriousness of adolescent gambling behaviour. However current efforts, while minimal, being made to prevent the initiation of youth gambling are possibly undermined by parents as the majority of parents reported having gambled with their children and do not view gambling as a serious youth issue. As both the behaviours and attitudes of parents have an influence upon their children, this study highlights the importance of directly targeting parents as a method of helping to prevent youth gambling, given that early initiation of gambling is a risk factor for later gambling problems.

In addition to information on potential methods for raising parent's awareness of adolescent gambling as an issue, parents also provided information on these resources and groups they would draw upon if they ever faced a situation in which their child approached them with a gambling problem. This information is important as it provides researchers an indication of where parents are likely to seek help for gambling problems. For instance, results from the study suggest that the Internet is an effective method of reaching parents with information about adolescent gambling. A little more than a third of parents reported that they would search for information on adolescent gambling online. However, since the study was Internet based, responses to this question are likely confounded to a degree by the data collection methods. Regardless, the Internet is still a strong option for reaching parents on issues related to youth gambling as the majority of households in Canada have an Internet connection (Statistics Canada, 2008).

*Future Research*

The current study found parents to report rates of gambling with their children to be much lower than the rates reported by children for gambling with their parents in other studies. A study that included both parents and their adolescents which paired parent responses with those of their child on the frequency of parent-child gambling would be a good next step. By pairing the responses of children and their parents, it would be possible to see if parents are underreporting the frequency of this activity or if rates of this behaviour are closer to what adolescents have previously reported. This type of study design is not used often, as parents are a group that is infrequently included in studies on the effects of potentially problematic behaviours on their children. The field of gambling research is an excellent example, as many studies rely upon adolescent's reports of their parents' behaviour and attitudes. However, by including parents as participants can provide information which can then be used in order to determine ways to partner with parents to prevent the development of problematic behaviours such as problem gambling.

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Appendix A

# Parents as Partners Gambling Research Study

## Questionnaire Outline

July 25, 2008

Note: A brief introduction for respondents will be inserted here.

1. Please state your year of birth (Drop down/ year of birth)
2. Please state your gender:
  - Male
  - Female
3. In which province or territory do you currently live?
  - Alberta
  - British Columbia
  - Manitoba
  - New Brunswick
  - Newfoundland and Labrador
  - Nova Scotia
  - Ontario
  - Prince Edward Island
  - Quebec
  - Saskatchewan
  - Northwest Territories
  - Nunavut
  - Yukon
4. How many children do you have currently living in your home? (Range from 0-6+)
  - None
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6 +
  - For each child ask age and gender

Survey Note: From this point on, all questions about your child will refer to your (age)\_\_\_\_\_ year old (gender)\_\_\_\_\_ child who is living in your home.

5. Does your child receive a weekly allowance?



6. If yes, how much? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Does your child have access to a personal credit card? Yes/No

b) Does your child have access to a family credit card? Yes/No

8. Does your child have access to a personal debit card? Yes/No

b) Does your child have access to a family debit card? Yes/No

9. Do you usually monitor your child's online activities? Yes/No

10. Does your child have a computer or laptop in their bedroom with Internet access?  
Yes/No

11. How frequently do you have conversations with your child about any of the following issues? (never, rarely, sometimes, often, regularly) PN: randomize drop down list

- Violence in schools/Bullying
- Alcohol use
- Drug use
- Unsafe sexual activities/teen pregnancy
- Obesity/eating disorders
- Gambling
- Drinking and driving
- Smoking
- Too much time spent online (e.g. Facebook, Online chat sites, social networking sites)
- Unsafe online activities
- Depression
- Negative body image
- Excessive video game playing

12. In your opinion, how serious of an issue are the following for teens today? PN: randomize drop down list

Not at all serious

1

2

3

4

Very Serious

5

- Violence in schools/Bullying
- Alcohol use
- Drug use
- Unsafe sexual activities/teen pregnancy
- Obesity/eating disorders
- Gambling
- Drinking and driving
- Smoking
- Too much time spent online (e.g. Facebook, Online chat sites, social networking sites)
- Unsafe online activities
- Depression

- Negative body image
- Excessive video game playing

13. How much do you agree/disagree that the following limit your child from having discussions with you about serious teen issues? (5 POINT AGREEMENT SCALE)

PN: randomize drop down list

- a) Fear of being punished
- b) Fear of disappointing you
- c) Fear of how you might react
- d) Doesn't think you would understand
- e) Doesn't think you could help

Other \_\_\_\_\_

14. To your knowledge, what is the legal age for the following in your province? (allow respondent to type in age, include option for "none")

PN: randomize drop down list

- Purchasing lottery tickets
- Purchasing alcohol
- Driving a car
- Purchasing cigarettes
- Gambling at a casino
- Playing Video Lottery Terminals (PN: only include for respondents in the following provinces: \_\_\_\_\_)

15. In your opinion, what SHOULD the legal age for the following activities be? PN: respondent inserts number

PN: randomize drop down list

- Purchasing lottery tickets \_\_\_\_
- Purchasing alcohol \_\_\_\_
- Driving a car \_\_\_\_
- Purchasing cigarettes \_\_\_\_
- Gambling at a casino \_\_\_\_

16. Have you ever participated in any of the following activities for money with your child? (Yes/No) PN: randomize drop down list (frequency of each)

- Joint lottery draw tickets (e.g., 649, Super7)
- Raffle tickets for fundraising
- poker
- other card games
- Betting on activities that you are participating in together (e.g., ockey, billiards or pool, other sports, etc.)
- Bingo

- Keno
- **Online gambling**
- Lottery scratch tickets
- Sports lottery (e.g., proline, sports-select, mise-O-jeu, etc.)
- Sports pool (e.g., hockey pool, fantasy leagues, etc.)
- Betting on professional sports games
- Video Lottery Terminals/slot machines
- Horse racing
- Casino table games (e.g., roulette, blackjack, etc.)
- Other

17. Have you ever given your child a lottery ticket, scratch ticket or sports lottery ticket as a holiday, birthday, or other gift? (yes or no)

- If yes, approximately what age was your child when you first gave them this as a gift?
- < 8, 8-10, 11-13, 14-16, 17-18
- Approximately how many times has your child received a lottery ticket, scratch ticket or sports as a holiday, birthday, or other gift?
  - once
  - 2 to 4 times
  - 5 to 10 times
  - 10 + times

B) To your knowledge, has your child ever received a lottery ticket, scratch ticket or sports lottery ticket as a holiday, birthday, or other gift from relatives or friends?

18. Have you ever given your child poker chips, bingo dabbers, or other gambling related item as a holiday, birthday, or other gift? Yes/No

**Include note to respondents to guide through to next section....**

19. In the past 12 months, have you participated in any of the following activities with money? PN: randomize drop down list

- Lottery/draw tickets (e.g. Lotto 6-49, Super7)
- Raffle tickets for fundraising
- poker
- other card games
- Betting on activities that you are participating in (e.g. pool, hockey, etc.)
- Bingo
- Keno
- Lottery scratch tickets
- Sports lottery
- Sports pool (e.g., office hockey pool, March madness bracket)
- Betting on sports games
- VLT/slot machines
- Horse racing
- Casino table games (e.g., roulette, blackjack, etc.)

- Internet gambling
- Other

**\*parents video game gambling wager money via play station**

19b) Program note: for each activity above, if yes: how often have you participated in this activity? (daily, weekly, monthly, once or twice, never) PN: randomize drop down list

20. How likely are any of the following to prompt you to initiate a conversation with your teen about underage gambling? (5 point scale)

Not at all likely				Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

- a) Viewed/read something on the news
- b) Became aware of a campaign for responsible gambling
- c) Topic was discussed at my child's school
- d) My child is feeling pressured to participate in these activities
- e) A friend or acquaintance of my child is involved in these activities
- f) Having a conversation with other parents

21. How receptive do you think your child would be if you initiated a conversation with them about responsible gambling? Context for responsible gambling.... ?

Not at all receptive				Very Receptive
1	2	3	4	5

22. How much do you agree/disagree that the following limit your ability to discuss gambling issues with your child? (5 POINT AGREEMENT SCALE)

PN: randomize drop down list

- a) I don't want to my child to feel I am intruding in their life
- b) I don't want to be seen as the "bad cop"
- c) I am uncomfortable discussing gambling issues with my child
- d) I don't know how to address the subject of adolescent gambling
- e) I don't know enough about this issues
- f) I don't think my child would listen to me
- g) I don't think it's my responsibility
- h) It's not a priority

23. Have you done any of the following activities related to your child?

PN: randomize drop down list

- a) Enforce strict rules about length of time allowed online (yes/no)
- b) Set controls on the computer to limit visiting inappropriate sites (yes/no)
- c) Set limits to restrict online chatting (yes/no)
- d) Set limits to restrict participation in social networking sites (facebook, MySpace, etc.) (yes/no)
- e) Placed the computer in a common space in the house where family members are usually present (yes/no)
- f) Installed an anti Internet gambling program on the computer (yes/no)

24. Focusing on poker play specifically, please share your level of comfort with your child taking part in the following where there is NO EXCHANGE OF MONEY involved:

PN: randomize drop down list

Not at all uncomfortable				Very Uncomfortable
1	2	3	4	5

- a) playing poker online
- b) playing poker at your home with their friends
- c) playing poker at your home with family
- c) playing poker at a friend's house with their friends
- d) playing poker at school at lunch/recess with their friends

25. Focusing on poker play specifically, please share your level of comfort with your child taking part in the following activities FOR MONEY:

PN: randomize drop down list

Not at all uncomfortable				Very Uncomfortable
1	2	3	4	5

- a) online poker
- b) poker at your home with their friends
- c) poker at your home with family
- c) poker at a friend's house with their friends
- d) poker at school (at lunch/recess) with their friends

26. Do you believe your child has taken part in a gambling activity where there was an exchange of money involved? Yes, No

- b) If yes, how do you know your child has taken part in a gambling activity? Select all that apply.
  - a. You were present at the time
  - b. Your child has told you they have gambled for money
  - c. Someone else informed you
  - d. You're not certain, but you think they may have taken part in a gambling activity

27. What types of gambling activities do you believe your child has participated in where there was an exchange of money or **something of value**? Select all that apply.

PN: randomize drop down list (**include something of value in previous child gambling activity question**)

- a. Lottery/draw tickets (e.g. 6/49, Super 7, BC 49)
- b. Bingo
- c. Pull tabs/scratch tickets
- d. Live Poker / Texas Hold'em
- e. Online Poker / Texas Hold'em
- f. Other card games, dice or board games
- g. Arcade or video games
- h. Sports "Pool" (with friends, at work etc.)
- i. Sports lottery
- j. Betting on sports events
- k. Keno

- l. Sports through a bookie (someone who accepts and pays off bets)
- m. Bet with money on the outcome of a game of skill that they were playing (e.g. pool, golf, basketball, video games, darts, etc)
- n. A dare or challenge
- o. Internet gambling
- p. None of the above

28. If your child did gamble with money, at what amount of money would it concern you?  
(Select one)

- a) Any amount
- b) over \$1
- c) over \$5
- g) over \$10
- i) over \$20
- k) over \$50
- m) over \$100
- n) over \$200

29. Indicate your agreement with the following statements (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)

PN: randomize drop down list

- There is nothing wrong with gambling occasionally
- Teens are more at risk for problem gambling than adults
- It is acceptable for teens to watch professional poker tournaments or TV show featuring gambling (i.e. Celebrity Poker) on TV, online, etc.
- Gambling for money is acceptable if you are just playing with your friends
- Gambling is a good way for community organizations to raise funds
- Gambling can be a good way to relieve boredom
- Poker is based on skill more than luck or chance
- It is impossible to gamble responsibly
- Lottery and scratch tickets in stores should be kept out of sight
- (If you really know the game gambling can be an easy way to make money)

30. In your opinion, how likely is the following to happen?

PN: randomize drop down list

Not at all likely				Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

- a) Underage drinking escalates to alcoholism
- b) Underage gambling escalates to a gambling addiction/problem
- c) Shoplifting in teenage years escalates to a pattern of theft
- d) Smoking marijuana in teenage years escalates to a drug addiction
- e) Experimenting with cocaine in teenage years leads to a cocaine addiction

31. Has your child ever brought home information concerning the risks associated with gambling?

Yes/ No/Don't know

32. Has your child ever participated in a prevention **(education session?)** program at school concerning the potential risks associated with gambling? Yes/No/Don't know

33. To your knowledge, has your child's school ever provided prevention programs or educational material in any of the following areas? Select all that apply.  
PN: randomize drop down list.

Alcohol use  
Drug use  
Cigarette smoking  
Bullying  
Gambling  
Sex education  
Eating disorders

34. How confident are you that you would be able to help your child if they came to you with a gambling problem?

Not at all confident				Very confident
1	2	3	4	5

35. If you became aware that your child had a gambling problem, how likely would you be to do any of the following? (5 point scale, very unlikely to very likely)  
PN: randomize drop down list

- a) Seek help from a professional (guidance counsellor, etc.)
- b) Have a discussion about the dangers of involvement in gambling activities
- c) Restrict your child's access to money
- d) Set strict curfews and monitor your child's behaviour more closely
- e) Set controls or strictly monitor your child's online activities
- f) Seek information on teen gambling to educate myself
- g) Other \_\_\_\_\_

36. If your child had a problem with gambling, where would you most likely seek help?  
PN: randomize drop down list, but always keep "Other" last

Not at all likely				Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5-

- a. Addiction center
- b. Family physician
- c. School guidance counsellor
- d. Psychologist
- e. Social worker
- f. Religious leader
- g. Family member
- h. Gamblers Anonymous
- i. Telephone help line

- j. Social service agency
- k. Online resources
- l. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

37. The responsibility for preventing teen gambling lies with: (5 point scale: completely disagree, disagree, neither disagree nor agree, agree, completely agree)

PN: randomize drop down list

- The teen themselves
- Parents
- School staff (classroom teachers, guidance counsellors, etc.)
- Mental health professionals (psychologists, social workers, addiction counsellors, etc.)
- The gambling industry
- The government
- Police

38. How would you rate the information available for parents about the following teen issues? (Excellent-Good-Satisfactory-Poor-Very poor)

PN: randomize drop down list

- Alcohol use
- Smoking
- Drug use
- Gambling
- Eating problems
- Safe sex

39. How useful would the following types of information for parents concerning teen gambling issues be? PN: randomize drop down list

Not at all useful				Very useful
1	2	3	4	5

- Websites
- Televised Public service announcements
- Radio public service announcements
- Print public service announcements (e.g. newspaper or magazine ads)
- Brochures
- Public forums or discussions
- Multimedia (e.g. cd-roms, DVDs)
- Posters and billboards
- School bulletins and information packages
- Internet advertisements
- News stories
- Documentaries
- Talking with other parents
- Talking with mental health professionals
- Talking with your family doctor



39. b) From this list, which ONE item would you personally find most useful? (PN show the list from 39.)

40. To your knowledge, which of the following have personally impacted your child? Please select all that apply. Yes, No, Not sure/don't know

PN: Randomize drop down list

- Violence in schools/Bullying
- Alcohol use Drug use
- Unsafe sexual activities/teen pregnancy
- Obesity/eating disorders
- Problem gambling
- Drinking and driving
- Smoking
- Too much time spent online (e.g. Facebook, Online chat sites, social networking sites)
- Unsafe online activities
- Depression
- Negative body image
- Excessive video game playing

41. Has anyone you personally know ever experienced a gambling problem?

- Yes or no

42. Have you ever personally experienced a gambling problem?

- Yes or no

43. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements: (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)

PN: randomize drop down list

Gambling can:

- lead to criminal behaviour
- negatively impact friendships
- negatively impact work performance
- increase self-esteem
- increase self-confidence
- be highly addictive
- be a fun way to spend time with friends
- help develop useful skills

44. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements: (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree). For these questions, teen refers to individuals between 13 and 18 years of age.

PN: randomize drop down list

Teen gambling can:

- lead to criminal behaviour
- negatively impact friendships

- negatively impact school performance
- increase self-esteem
- increase self-confidence
- be highly addictive
- be a way for adolescents to have fun with their friends
- help develop useful skills

### Demographic Info

45. Which of the following best describes you? Please select one.

- I am a first generation Canadian (I was not born in Canada).
- I am a second generation Canadian (I was born here, but one or both of my parents were not.)
- Both my parents and I were born in Canada

46. What is your current employment situation? PN: select all that apply

- full-time employed
- part-time employed
- student
- unemployed
- stay at home parent

47. Which category best describes your total family income before taxes for the previous year?

- < 20,000
- 20,001-40,000
- 40,001-60,000
- 60,001-80,000
- 80,001-100,000
- 100,001-120,000
- 120,001-140,000
- 140,001+

48. What is your highest level of education?

- Did not complete high school
- High school
- trade school degree or certificate
- College/CEGEP Some university
- Undergraduate degree
- Post Graduate (Masters degree/PhD or professional degree (e.g. MD, Law school))

49. Which of the following best describes where you live?

- a) A major city
- b) Suburbs of a major city
- c) Small city (over 20,000 people, less than 500,000)
- d) Town or rural area

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research.

For more information on youth gambling prevention/education or if you or someone you know may have a gambling problem please visit [www.youthgambling.com](http://www.youthgambling.com)