



Dedham Organization for Substance Awareness

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Bi-Annual Parent Survey Evaluation Report
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The Dedham Organization for Substance Awareness (DOSA) is a community coalition that aims to address and prevent substance use disorders, overdose deaths, and youth substance misuse in Dedham. Research shows that parents are the biggest influence in a child's decision whether or not to use substances, and DOSA is committed to providing parents with the tools they need to keep their children safe from the negative effects of drugs and alcohol.

Therefore, from October-December 2019, DOSA administered an anonymous online survey to parents and guardians of children in grades 6-12. This survey asked parents 22 questions about their attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors surrounding underage substance use. Responses were kept confidential. In total, 362 parents responded to the survey.

This evaluation report summarizes the findings of the parent survey. Where possible, results were compared to the 2017 Dedham Parent Survey.

Key Findings:

- **96%** of Dedham parents think it is wrong for children to drink without parent supervision.
- **68%** of Dedham parents report monitoring or taking stock of their alcohol (an 11.2% percentage point increase since 2017).
- Only **14%** of Dedham parents report locking up their alcohol.

- **48%** of 12th grade parents have knowingly allowed their child to attend parties where alcohol use occurs.
- **94%** of parents believe they can have an influence on whether their child uses alcohol or drugs.
- **75%** of middle school parents and **64%** of high school parents had dinner with their child 5 or more days in the last week.

Demographic Data

Majority of respondents live in Dedham with a child that attends public school. Respondents were evenly distributed by grade.

Demographics	Percent
Place of Residence	
Lives in Dedham, child goes to school in Dedham	90%
Lives in Dedham, child goes to school outside of Dedham	1%
Lives outside of Dedham, child goes to school in Dedham	8%
None of the above (disqualified from survey)	1%
Parent/Guardian Role	
Mother	80%
Father	17%
Grandparent	1%
Other guardian	1%
Not a parent or guardian (disqualified from survey)	1%
Language spoken most often at home	
English	94%
Spanish	3%
Arabic	1%
Other*	2%
Child's grade:	
6 th	17%
7 th	17%
8 th	12%
9 th	13%
10 th	15%
11 th	13%
12 th	13%
Child attends school in Dedham?	
Yes	96%
No	4%

Child attends public school?	
Yes	91%
No	9%

**write-in responses: Albanian, Haitian Creole, Greek, German, Russian*

Attitudes and Perceptions

Most parents believe it is wrong for their child to engage in underage substance use. Responses from both middle school and high school parents were similar for majority of questions.

How wrong do you think it would be for your child to...	Answered "Wrong/Very Wrong"		
	Total (n=327)	Middle School Parents (n=151)	High School Parents (n=176)
Smoke tobacco?	98%	97%	99%
Use e-cigarettes or electronic vapor products?	98%	98%	98%
Drink alcohol with parental supervision?	85%	89%	83%
Drink alcohol without parental supervision?	96%	99%	94%
Have one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day?	98%	98%	99%
Use marijuana with parental supervision?	97%	97%	97%
Use marijuana without parental supervision?	98%	98%	97%
Use prescription drugs not prescribed to them?	99%	99%	99%

How much are a problem are the following activities in Dedham?	Answered "Somewhat/Very Much of a Problem"		
	Total (n=297)	Middle School Parents (n=131)	High School Parents (n=166)
Youth alcohol use?	83%	81%	86%
Youth marijuana use?	85%	82%	87%
Youth tobacco use?	69%	74%	65%
Youth e-cigarette use/"vaping"?	90%	87%	93%
Youth using prescription drugs not prescribed to them?	62%	67%	60%

94% of parents believe they can have an influence on whether their child uses alcohol or drugs.*

**Note: this number was the same for both middle and high school parents.*

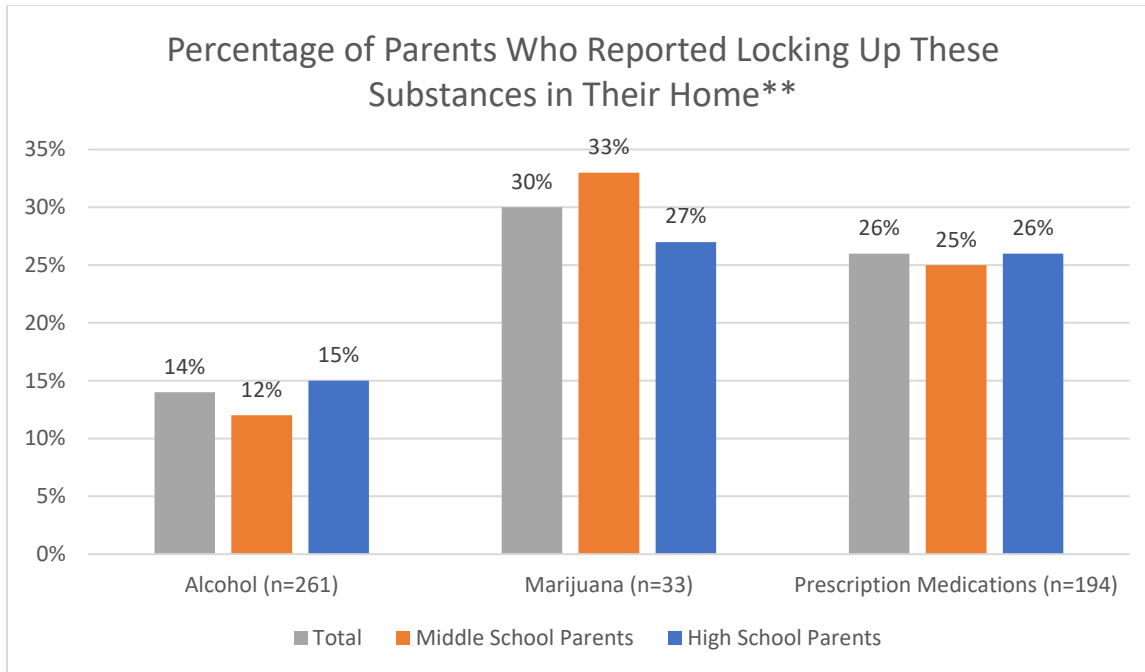
Do you actively monitor or take stock of the following substances in your home?

Substance	Percentage of Parents Who Reported Actively Monitoring These Substances in Their Home 2017	Percentage of Parents Who Reported Actively Monitoring These Substances in Their Home 2019**
Alcohol (n=271)*	56.8%	68%
Marijuana (n=66)	--	45%
Prescription Medications (n=206)	51.7%	71%

*where n = the number of parents who answered “Yes” or “No”, as opposed to “N/A”

**parents who reported not having this substance in their home (i.e. answered “N/A”) were excluded from the analysis

Substance	Percentage of Parents Who Reported Locking Up These Substances in Their Home**		
	Total	Middle School Parents	High School Parents
Alcohol (n=261)*	14%	12%	15%
Marijuana (n=33)	30%	33%	27%
Prescription Medications (n=194)	26%	25%	26%



*where n = the number of parents who answered “Yes” or “No”, as opposed to “N/A”

**parents who reported not having this substance in their home (i.e. answered “N/A”) were excluded from the analysis

Risk Behaviors

The percentage of parents who allow their children to have friends over when an adult is not home has dropped 10% since 2017. Parents are reporting higher rates of monitoring their child.

Do you ever....	Reported This Behavior* 2017 (n=465)	Reported This Behavior* 2019 (n=362)
Knowingly allow your child to attend parties where alcohol use occurs?	14%	15%
Knowingly allow your child to attend parties where marijuana use occurs?	15%	12%
Allow your child to drink alcohol under your supervision?	--	11%
Allow your child to use marijuana under your supervision?	--	0%
Allow your child to have friends over when you or another adult are not home?	63%	53%

*anything other than “never”

Protective Behaviors

98% of parents engage in conversation with their child regarding their activities. Communication and monitoring act as protective factors for youth.

How often do you....	Reported This Behavior*
Call other parents to make sure they will be home before allowing your child to attend a social gathering?	78%
Monitor the activities of your child and their friends in your home?	94%
Engage your child in a conversation to learn about their activities when coming home from being out with friends?	98%

*Answered "Sometimes/Often/Always"

Communication

Parent-child relationships and communication regarding substance use. Respondents generally reported high levels of communication and closeness with their children.

75% of middle school parents and **64%** of high school parents had dinner with their child 5 or more days in the last week.*

*According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), eating dinner with your child 5 or more days per week is a protective factor against youth substance misuse.

Statement	Answered "Very True"		
	Total (n=297)	Middle School Parents (n=135)	High School Parents (n=161)
Our family gets along well.	85%	83%	86%
The members of our family really care about each other.	95%	98%	86%
I get along well with my child.	93%	94%	91%

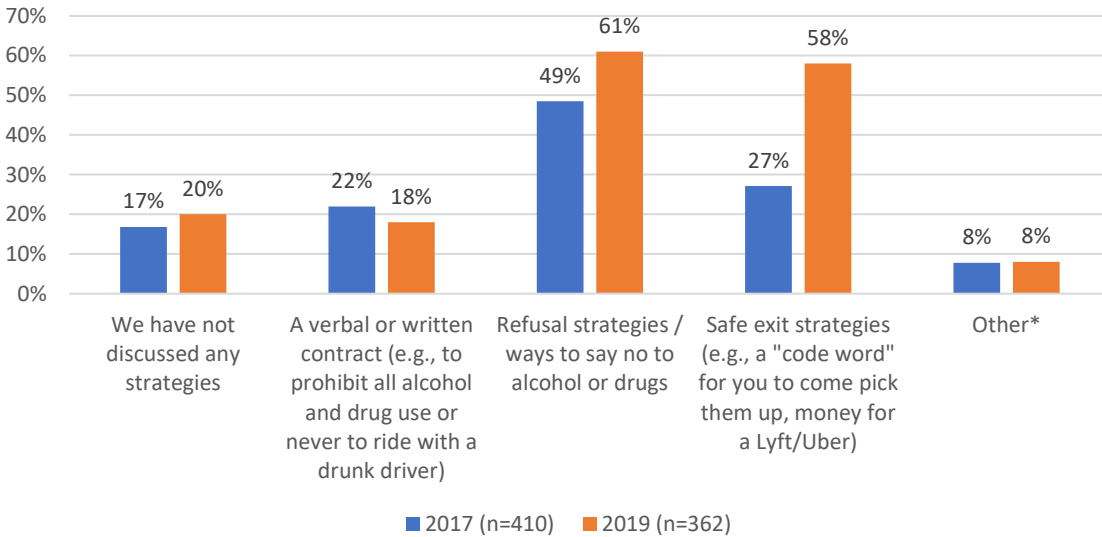
My child and I make decisions about their life together.	76%	80%	73%
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Do you currently have a clear rule for your child about the use of....	Answered "Yes"		
	Total (n=295)	Middle School Parents (n=134)	High School Parents (n=161)
Alcohol?	92%	90%	94%
Marijuana?	93%	90%	96%
Tobacco?	93%	90%	96%
E-cigs/"Vaping"?	94%	92%	96%
Prescription Drugs?	90%	86%	92%

How often do you talk with your child about the potential negative consequences of....	Answered "Often/Always"		
	Total (n=295)	Middle School Parents (n=134)	High School Parents (n=161)
Alcohol?	80%	90%	94%
Marijuana?	78%	90%	96%
Tobacco?	86%	90%	96%
E-cigs/"Vaping"?	90%	92%	96%
Prescription Drugs?	65%	86%	92%

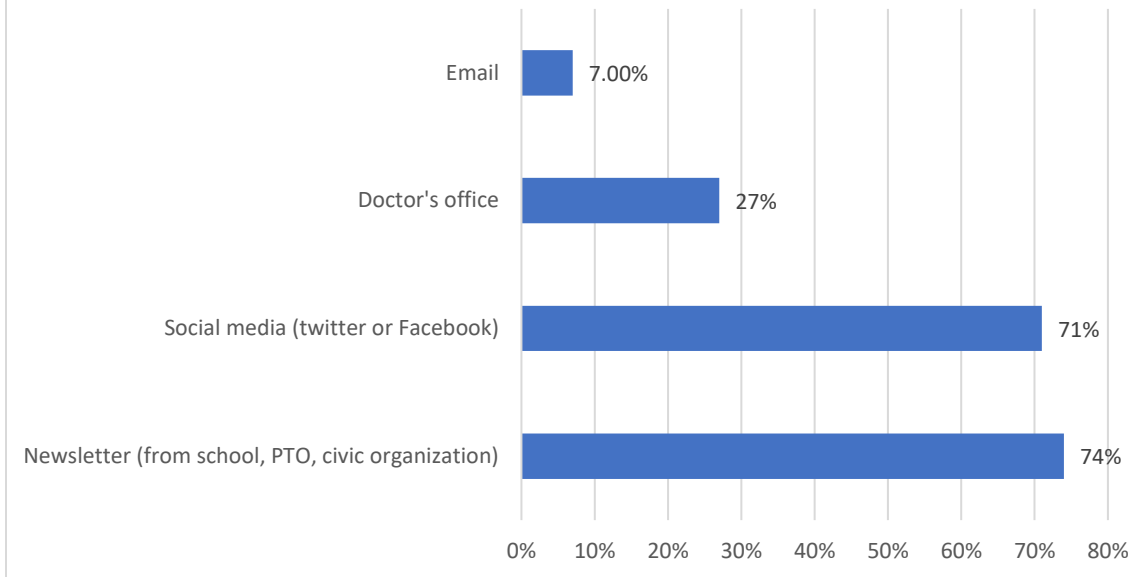
34% of middle school parents and **49%** of high school parents have talked with the parents/guardians of their child's closest friends about their household rules for underage drug and alcohol use.

Figure 2: Which of the following strategies have you discussed with your child to protect themselves in a potentially unsafe situation?



92% of middle school parents and **78%** of high school parents agree with the statement: I would like other parents/guardians to call me to see if I will be home if their child is coming to my house for a social gathering.

Figure 3: Most effective ways to reach parents/guardians



53% of parents are interested in learning more about strategies to talk to their child about drug and alcohol use.

Risk Behaviors By Grade

Do you ever....	Reported This Behavior*							
	Total (n=318)	6 th grade	7 th grade	8 th grade	9 th grade	10 th grade	11 th grade	12 th grade
Knowingly allow your child to attend parties where alcohol use occurs?	15%	6%	0%	5%	2%	16%	33%	48%
Knowingly allow your child to attend parties where marijuana use occurs?	12%	4%	2%	3%	2%	18%	21%	38%
Allow your child to drink alcohol under your supervision?	11%	4%	0%	19%	7%	18%	23%	17%
Allow your child to use marijuana under your supervision?	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Allow your child to have friends over when you or another adult are not home?	53%	30%	40%	58%	52%	67%	69%	67%

*anything other than “never”

Parental Monitoring Behaviors By Grade

How often do you...	Reported This Behavior*							
	Total (n=318)	6 th grade	7 th grade	8 th grade	9 th grade	10 th grade	11 th grade	12 th grade
call other parents/guardians to make sure they will be home before allowing your child to go to their house for a social gathering?	78%	81%	89%	95%	76%	67%	72%	66%
monitor the activities of your child and their friends in your home?	94%	93%	98%	97%	93%	96%	92%	90%
engage your child in a conversation to learn about their activities when they return home from being out with friends?	98%	94%	100%	100%	98%	100%	100%	98%

*answered "sometimes/often/always"