

Parties with Alcohol: What Parents Think and What Children Do

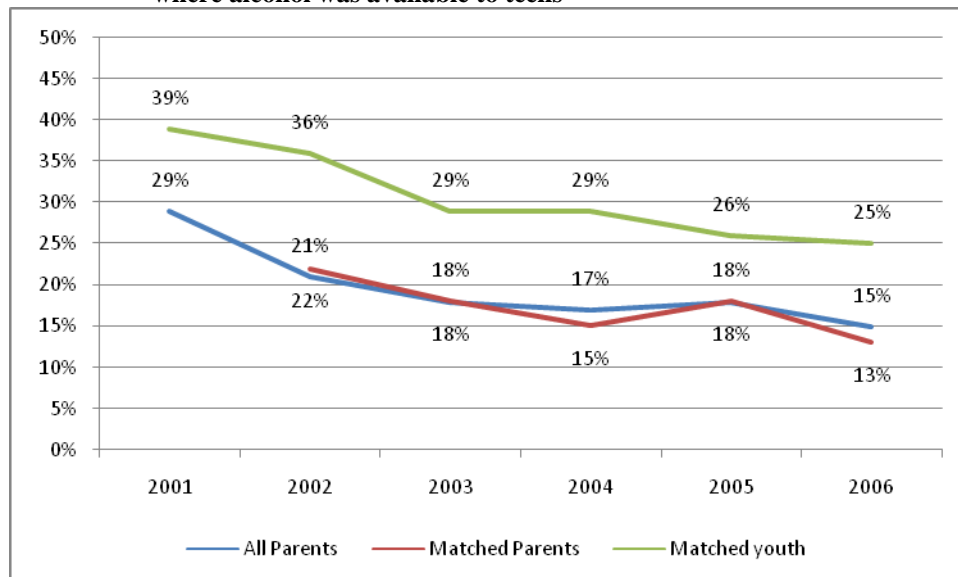
In 2000, Drug-Free Action Alliance began a media campaign called *Parents Who Host, Lose the Most: Don't be a party to teenage drinking* to educate parents and teenagers about the legal consequences of hosting parties where alcohol is available or served to teens. Over the past six years, telephone surveys with Franklin County parents and their adolescent children have shown increasing understanding and awareness of Ohio's underage drinking laws. Nevertheless, adolescents continue to have access to alcohol, possibly because adults are uninformed about the extent of their children's alcohol use.

Survey results collected between 2001 and 2006 show that parents fail to recognize the extent to which their children are attending parties where alcohol is made available for teenagers to drink.¹ In 2006, parents underestimated their children's attendance at such parties by almost 12 percentage points, a knowledge gap that is only slightly narrower than in most previous survey years (Figure 1).

However, fewer youth are attending such parties. In 2001, 40% of youth respondents said they had attended a party where alcohol was served. In 2006, the percentage of youth who attended such a party dropped to 25%. Nevertheless, one-quarter of youths surveyed in Franklin County have attended supervised or unsupervised parties and had access to alcoholic beverages.

Parents should strive to become informed about the laws regarding youth alcohol use. However, they must also acknowledge that their own children may be attending drinking parties without their knowledge or consent. Parents must be vigilant about knowing where their children are and should talk with their teens about the health, safety, and legal risks to themselves and others, including other adolescents and/or adults buying or providing alcohol for them.

Figure 1 Percent of respondents who say they (or their child) attended a party where alcohol was available to teens



¹ Matched parent results are unavailable for 2001
Applied Research Center
Miami University