

# Needham Parent Survey

An Assessment of Perceived Norms, Attitudes,  
and Preventive Behaviors Related to Youth  
Substance Use

A Report to The Substance Prevention Alliance of Needham (SPAN)  
and the Needham Public Health Department

2019

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## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### Demographics

- A total of 613 parents who have at least one child in grades 6-12 provided valid responses to the survey. It is estimated that the survey was completed by 33% of all households with at least one 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grader attending Needham public schools.

### Communication About Substance Use

- Family Dinners – 57.6% of respondents reported that they ate dinner at home with their child on 5 or more of the past 7 days. [Page 5]
- Attitudes About the Effectiveness of Parent-Child Communication – 91.6% of parents believe they can have an influence on whether their child uses alcohol or drugs. [Page 6]
- Parent-Child Communication about Substance Use [ever discussed] – 93.0% of respondents have communicated their family’s guidelines and expectations around youth alcohol and drug use to their child. [Page 7]
- Parent-Child Communication about Substance Use [past 30 days] – 68.6% of respondents talked with their child in the 30 days prior to the survey about the potential negative consequences associated with using electronic vapor products such as Juul, 61.7% talked with their child about tobacco use, 59.3% about alcohol use, 51.9% about marijuana, 34.7% about the use of illegal drugs other than marijuana, and 31.0% about non-medical use of prescription drugs. [Page 7]
- Communicating with Child about Safety Strategies – Almost all parents (89%) have discussed one or more strategies with their child about alcohol and other drug use and how to protect themselves in a potentially unsafe situation. [Page 9]
- Communicating with Other Parents – 56.8% of survey respondents report that they have talked with the parents of their child’s close friends to share and compare parental philosophies and standards regarding alcohol and drugs. [Page 11]

### Attitudes and Beliefs About Substance Use

- Parent Attitudes About Substance Use – 70.8% of parents believe that underage drinking is never a good thing under any circumstances. A larger proportion of parents (93.2%) believe youth marijuana use is never a good thing. [Page 12]
- Attitudes About Youth Substance Use at Home – 77.8% of parents *disagree* that it is okay to allow underage alcohol use at home (even if it is responsible and not excessive) and 94.8% *disagree* that it is okay to allow youth marijuana use at home. [Page 14]

- Attitudes About Impact of MA Recreational Marijuana Law on Youth – 54.1% of respondents believe that marijuana is more available to youth under the new law, 39.3% believe the law has caused more youth to try marijuana, 28.1% believe the law change has probably had no effect on youth, 27.1% think youth will start using at a younger age, and 22.3% think that those already using marijuana will increase their level of use. [Page 15]
- Attitudes about Receiving Calls from Other Parents – 87.5% of parents would like other parents to call them to see whether a parent will be home before allowing their child to come over for a social gathering. [Page 16]
- Attitudes about Police Involvement in Underage Drinking Situations – 99.8% of parents think that police should take action against teens caught drinking alcohol. The action endorsed by the majority of parents (90.9%) was contacting the teens’ parents. [Page 17]
- Likelihood of Contacting Police About Teens – 25.5% of respondents indicated that they would be *mostly* or *very likely* to contact law enforcement concerning teens drinking, using substances, or engaging in other illegal behaviors. [Page 18]
- Needham Youth Diversion Program – only 7.7% of respondents indicated that they are familiar with Needham’s Youth Diversion Program. Of those who are familiar with the program (n=37), 41.7% indicated that the presence of the program has increased their willingness to contact law enforcement when they witness or become aware of teens engaged in risky behavior. [Page 19]
- Parental Disapproval of Youth Substance Use – Almost all respondents (96.7%) think it would be *very wrong* for their child to use prescription drugs not prescribed to them, 95.7% think it would be *very wrong* for their child to have 1 or 2 drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day, 84.9% think it would be *very wrong* for their child to use an electronic vapor product such as Juul, 80.0% think it would be *very wrong* for their child to smoke tobacco, 70.1% think it would be *very wrong* for their child to use marijuana, and 34.9% think it would be *very wrong* for their child to drink alcohol occasionally. [Page 20]
- Parent Beliefs about Community Substance Use Norms – 45.2% of parents think that many parents set a bad example for their children by their own excessive alcohol use, 42.0% think too many parents in Needham either provide alcohol for their children or turn a blind eye to underage alcohol use, 17.2% think that many parents set a bad example for their children by their own excessive marijuana use, and 29.6% think too many parents in Needham turn a blind eye to youth marijuana use. In a new item added in 2019, 90.3% of parents are concerned the increase in use of electronic vapor products (e.g., Juul) by some youth and adults increases the likelihood that more youth will begin vaping. [Page 21].
- Beliefs about Why Some Parents Allow Underage Drinking – Respondents were most likely to believe that other parents may allow underage youth to drink alcohol in their home so the drinking is supervised (30.0%). [Page 23]

- Parent Attitudes about School-Based Substance Abuse Prevention – 94.0% of parent respondents think that schools should provide substance abuse prevention education for students their child’s age. [Page 25]
- Substance Abuse Prevention Curriculum Effectiveness – 38.5% of respondents felt that the substance abuse prevention curriculum in their child’s school is comprehensive and effective – most had no opinion (41.9%). [Page 27]
- Effective Ways/Places to Reach Parents with Prevention Messages – The largest proportion of respondents indicated that the most effective ways to reach Needham parents with prevention messages are through the parent newsletter from the school (72.1%), through the PTC e-mail/newsletter (61.2%), doctor’s offices (55.8%), Facebook or Twitter (50.6%), and the school’s website (50.0%). [Page 28]

### **Perceptions of Substance Use**

- Parent Perception of Substance Use and Related Issues in Needham – Parents over-estimate the percentage of Needham youth in grades 6-8 and grades 9-12 who drank alcohol in the past 30 days, binge drank in the past 30 days, rode with a drinking driver in the past 30 days, used marijuana in the past 30 days, used an electronic vapor product in the past 30 days, and ever used prescription drugs without a doctor’s prescription. On average, parents over-estimated each of these behaviors by approximately 13% at the middle grades level and 15% at the high school level in comparison to data from the 2018 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey conducted in Needham Public Schools. [Page 30]
- Parent Perception of Other Parents’ Attitudes and Behaviors [Middle School] – Respondents believe that 15.0% of the parents of 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders knowingly allow their child to attend parties where underage drinking occurs, think that 12.4% knowingly allow their child to attend parties where marijuana use occurs, believe that 24.5% call to make sure a parent will be present when their child goes to a social gathering at another house, and believe that 41.6% of 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade parents would like to be called if their own child was hosting a gathering to ensure that an adult will be present. [Page 31]
- Parent Perception of Other Parents’ Attitudes and Behaviors [High School] – Respondents believe that 43.3% of the parents of 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders knowingly allow their child to attend parties where underage drinking occurs, think that 34.0% knowingly allow their child to attend parties where marijuana use occurs, believe that 19.5% call to make sure a parent will be present when their child goes to a social gathering at another house, and believe that 39.9% of 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade parents would like to be called if their own child was hosting a gathering to ensure that an adult will be present. [Page 31]

### **Substance Use Prevention Behaviors**

- Means Restriction – Among those who keep alcohol in their home, 57.6% actively monitor or take stock of the alcohol and 12.6% secure or lock-up the alcohol. Among those with prescription medication in their home, 61.0% actively monitor or take stock of it and 15.6%

secure or lock-up their prescription drugs. In response to a new item, 76.5% think it is *mostly or very important* for individuals to actively monitor and lock-up any marijuana they choose to keep in their home for medical or recreational purposes. [Page 32]

- Parties and Gatherings – 29.0% of parents report that they have knowingly allowed their child to attend parties where underage drinking occurs and 18.4% have knowingly allowed their child to attend parties where marijuana use occurs. [Page 34]
- Calling Other Parents – 34.7% of parents report that they call other parents either *most of the time* or *all of the time* to make sure a parent will be home before they let their child attend a gathering at another house. An additional 28.6% make the call *sometimes*, 19.9% *rarely* call, and 16.7% *never* make the call. [Page 35]
- Parental Monitoring (While Child is with Friends) – 58.3% of parents report they monitor the activity of their child and his/her friends by walking through the area in which they are congregating and visually assessing for signs of substance use either *most of the time* or *all of the time* when their child has friends over the house, 96.9% require their child to tell them with whom and where they will be when they are out with friends, and 81.1% check-in with their child by phone or text message while they are out with friends. [Page 36]
- Parental Monitoring (After Child is Out with Friends) – 62.0% visually assess their child for signs of substance use either *most of the time* or *all of time* when their child returns home from being out with friends, 82.1% report someone is awake when their child comes home from being out with friends, and 90.6% engage their child in a conversation to learn about their activities when their child returns home from being out with friends. [Page 37]
- Actions Parents Support When Other Parents Violate Underage Drinking Laws – If parents learned that another parent was allowing teens to drink alcohol at their home, 70.0% indicated that they would discuss it with their child, 54.0% indicated that the action they would take depends on how well they know the other parents, and 47.9% would prohibit their child from going to that house. [Page 38].

### Help Seeking

- Familiarity with and Perceived Need for Support Services – 62.0% of respondents are familiar with treatment or recovery support services for individuals having problems with substance use, 58.4% are familiar with family supports for those with a loved one experiencing substance misuse, and 68.2% think there is a need for support groups in Needham for caregivers and families. [Page 40].

### Positive Alternative Activities

- Positive Alternatives – Respondents provided multiple ideas for providing positive alternatives to engaging in substance use including weekend and after-school activities, places for youth to congregate in healthy settings, interest groups, and health and wellness education and activities. [Page 43]

## BACKGROUND AND METHODS

The Substance Prevention Alliance of Needham (SPAN) and the Needham Public Health Department conducted a survey of parents/guardians<sup>1</sup> of students in grades 6-12 to learn about their beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors regarding underage drinking and youth substance use. The survey asked questions in four broad domains: (1) communication about underage drinking and youth substance use, (2) attitudes and beliefs, (3) perceptions of the prevalence of underage drinking and youth substance use, and (4) parenting behaviors.

The anonymous survey, which consisted of 73 discrete questions, was administered as an online questionnaire during the six-week period between May 29, 2019 and July 12, 2019. To be eligible to take part in the survey, parents had to: (a) have at least one child in grades 6-12 in public or private school in Needham (regardless of town of residence) or (b) be a Needham resident with at least one child in grades 6-12 in a school outside of Needham. Individuals without a child in grades 6-12 and those who were not Needham residents and didn't have a child in grades 6-12 in Needham schools were not eligible to participate.

This was the fifth time that the survey was implemented – it was also administered in 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017. Reports on the earlier surveys are available separately. When possible, comparisons have been made in this report to data from the earlier surveys.

### Validity and Reliability

One of the challenges associated with survey research is the potential for error in the data. This can stem from multiple sources such as the same respondent submitting multiple surveys, poor question wording, lack of appropriate response options that accurately reflect the experiences of all potential respondents, frivolity, and misinterpretation of the underlying meaning of a question. Despite these challenges, there are several steps that can be taken to increase confidence in the results. For example:

1. Using clear and unambiguous language in the instructions – prominently indicating who the intended target audience is (i.e., parents of 6th-12th graders) and indicating what the questions are about (i.e., beliefs, perceptions, and parenting behaviors related to underage drinking and youth substance use).
2. Data screening – using visual and statistical screening to identify and remove cases in which the respondent provided obviously frivolous responses (i.e., always choosing the same or extreme response options for every item).
3. Identical case analysis – statistically identifying all duplicate records to minimize the chances that the same person submitted multiple surveys and/or the chances that the survey was accidentally submitted multiple times.

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<sup>1</sup> The terms “parents,” “guardians,” and “caregivers” are used interchangeably throughout this report.



While these are not failsafe methods, they do help to ensure a clean dataset that minimizes the chances that there are gross errors present in the final set of data. Each of these steps was taken during the administration and analysis of the Needham Parent Survey.

Ideally, the development of survey items, such as those used in the Needham Parent Survey, should be an iterative process. Items should be field-tested with a subset of representatives from the intended target population and psychometric analyses should be conducted to help build the case that the survey items are both valid and reliable. Under real world, non-laboratory conditions, this is often difficult to accomplish. To help guard against this potential for error, survey items should be based either in whole, or in part, on items that have been used successfully in other research projects and in other settings. The Needham survey met this condition for the majority of items in the parent survey.

There always remains the possibility that some participants may not feel they can accurately respond to a given item. This can be addressed in two ways: (1) instructing respondents to select the *best* possible answer for any given item and (2) instructing respondents to skip any items that they either cannot or do not feel comfortable answering. During the analysis phase, issues with specific items can be identified based on the pattern of missing responses. If, for example, 25% of respondents did not answer one of the items, this should be noted as part of the results and this item should be modified in any future surveys. Similarly, if a subset of participants (e.g., the parents of 6th graders) were significantly more likely than other respondents to skip an item, this should be noted in the results and this item should be examined to determine whether and how it should be modified in the future. As shown on pages 3-4 of this report, a missing values analysis failed to detect any systemic issues.

By striking a balance of design, logical, and statistical controls, as was the case with the Needham Parent Survey, we can minimize the odds of large-scale error creeping into the survey and maximize confidence in the results.

### **Analysis Plan**

Descriptive statistics are presented for each item in the survey (i.e., the number and percentage of all respondents that answered each response option for each item in the questionnaire). All items were also analyzed to examine the presence or absence of differences based on the age of the respondents' oldest 6-12<sup>th</sup> grade child. The results of these analyses may help Needham better plan and target prevention activities and prevention messaging by understanding whether an issue exists among the parents of some age groups and not others. Limited comparisons were also made to earlier Needham parent surveys.

### **Analytical Sample**

A total of 739 individuals visited the survey webpage during the six-week period that it was open. One-hundred and twenty-six (126) of these individuals (17% of those who visited) were removed from the final analytical sample.

The reason for removal of these cases is as follows:

- 61 individuals visited the website but did not answer any of the questions in the survey.
- 50 individuals were automatically disqualified because they did not currently have any children in grades 6-12.
- 5 individuals were removed because they did not answer any questions in the survey other than whether they currently have any children in grades 6-12.
- 10 individuals were removed because they did not identify the age of their oldest child in grades 6-12 so their responses could not be grouped with similar individuals.

The final analytical sample consisted of 613 parents/guardians who currently have at least one child in grade 6-12. The age of the respondents' oldest child in grades 6-12 is as follows:

	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Final Sample</b>	5.7% (35)	14.0% (86)	13.7% (84)	16.5% (101)	17.5% (107)	14.8% (91)	17.8% (109)

Results are generalizable only to those parents who took part in the survey and may not reflect the perceptions, attitudes, or parenting behaviors of other members of the Needham community. According to the MA Department of Education, there were 2,997 public school students enrolled in Needham schools in grades 6-12 during the 2018-2019 academic year. Based on the number of children in grades 6-12 that respondents reported having (1,002) and assuming only one parent responded per household, this survey likely captured 33% of all households with at least one 6-12<sup>th</sup> grader attending Needham public schools – that is, approximately 1 of every 3 parents in the age range of interest.

**Note:** The 2019 survey came very close to the ideal of having roughly 14% of parent/guardian respondents indicate that their oldest child was in each of the seven grade levels from 6-12. The only exception was for parents/guardians of 6<sup>th</sup> graders (5.7%). The findings from 2019 may underrepresent the attitudes, perceptions, or behaviors of parents of 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

### Missing Values Analysis

A missing values analysis was conducted to: (1) identify any items that were skipped by many respondents and (2) assess whether respondents differed in their likelihood of answering a question based on the age of their oldest child.

On average, each question in the survey was answered by 83% of respondents. This ranged from a low of 73% to a high of 100%. None of the questions were answered by fewer than 446 of the 613 individuals who took part in the survey. Examination of these data indicate that the length of the survey likely played the largest factor in the observed pattern versus issues with any of the questions. On average, each question at the beginning was answered by 85% of individuals who took part in the survey. Each question at the end was answered by an average

of 76% of individuals who took part in the survey. If this survey is administered in the future, thought should be given to shortening the instrument.

The missing values analysis also assessed the number of items skipped by the age of the respondents’ oldest 6-12<sup>th</sup> grade child. The purpose of this analysis was to identify whether all items were equally applicable across respondents (independent of the age of their oldest 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade child). Overall, there were no significant differences in the average number of items that were skipped based on the age of the respondents’ oldest child – suggesting that the questions were broadly applicable to all parent respondents.

For the purposes of the current assessment, the effects of missing data appear to be minimal (i.e., each question was answered by at least roughly three-quarters of respondents).

### **FINDINGS – RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS**

As described earlier, the survey was open to both residents of Needham and to parents who live outside of Needham but have a child in grades 6-12 in public or private school in Needham.

Most respondents (91.5%) were Needham residents whose oldest child in grades 6-12 attends Needham Public School. Unless noted, results should be interpreted with this demographic in mind (i.e., Needham resident parents of public middle and high school students). See Table 1.

**Table 1: Respondent Demographics**

<b>School System</b>	<b>Needham Resident</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Public School – Needham</b>	2.6% (16)	91.5% (561)	94.1% (577)
<b>Private School – Needham</b>	-	0.5% (3)	0.5% (3)
<b>Public School – Outside of Needham</b>	-	1.0% (6)	1.0% (6)
<b>Private School – Outside of Needham</b>	-	4.4% (27)	4.4% (27)
<b>TOTAL</b>	2.6% (16)	97.4% (597)	100.0% (613)

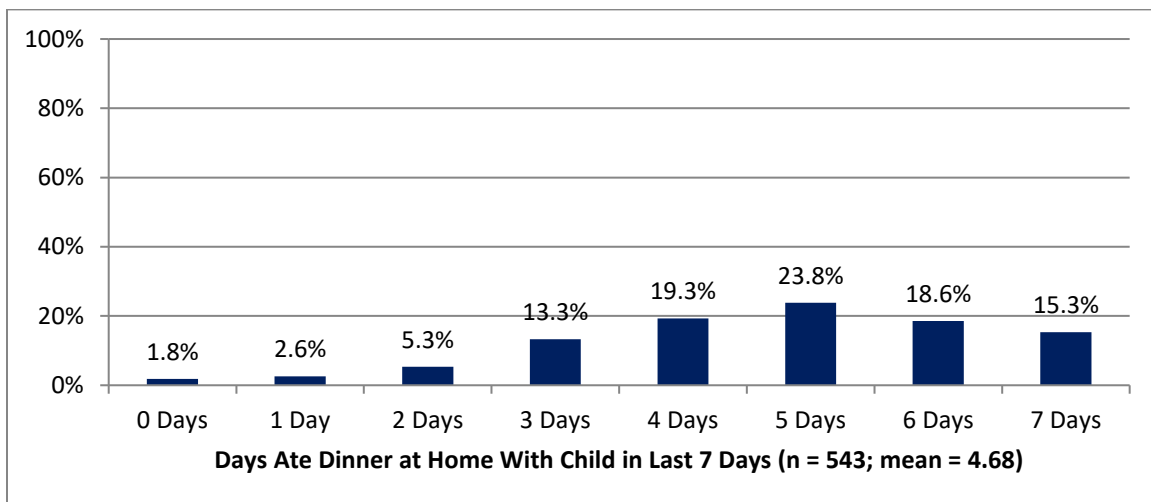
## FINDINGS – COMMUNICATION ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE

The first set of questions in the survey asked about different types of communication the respondent may have had with their child and/or other parents. All items in this section asked the respondent to answer the question with their oldest 6-12<sup>th</sup> grade child in mind.

### Communication – Family Dinners

Research has demonstrated a relationship between parental engagement and youth substance use. In one study by the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, children in families who ate dinner together at least five times a week were less likely than their peers to engage in substance use (CASA, 2005)<sup>2</sup>. The first question in the survey asked respondents, “During the past 7 days, on how many days did you eat dinner at home with your child?” As shown in Figure 1, over half of respondents (57.6%) reported that they ate dinner at home with their child on 5 or more of the past 7 days. The average across the entire sample was 4.68 days.

Figure 1: Days Ate Dinner at Home with Child in Last 7 Days



**Age/Grade.** Parents whose oldest child was in middle school reported eating dinner at home with their child an average of 5.08 days in the last seven days in comparison to an average of 4.48 days among parents whose oldest child was in high school – a statistically significant difference,  $p \leq .001$ .

**Trend [2013-2019].** The proportion of parents who reported that they ate dinner at home with their child on 5 or more of the past 7 days was 64.3% in 2013 (mean = 4.80 days), 66.7% in 2015 (mean = 4.98 days), 57.0% in 2017 (mean = 4.65 days), and 57.6% in 2019 (mean = 4.68 days). Parents in 2015 reported eating dinner at home with their child significantly more often than parents in 2017 ( $p \leq .001$ ) and 2019 ( $p \leq .01$ ). There was no difference between parents from 2017 to 2019 ( $p = .776$ ).

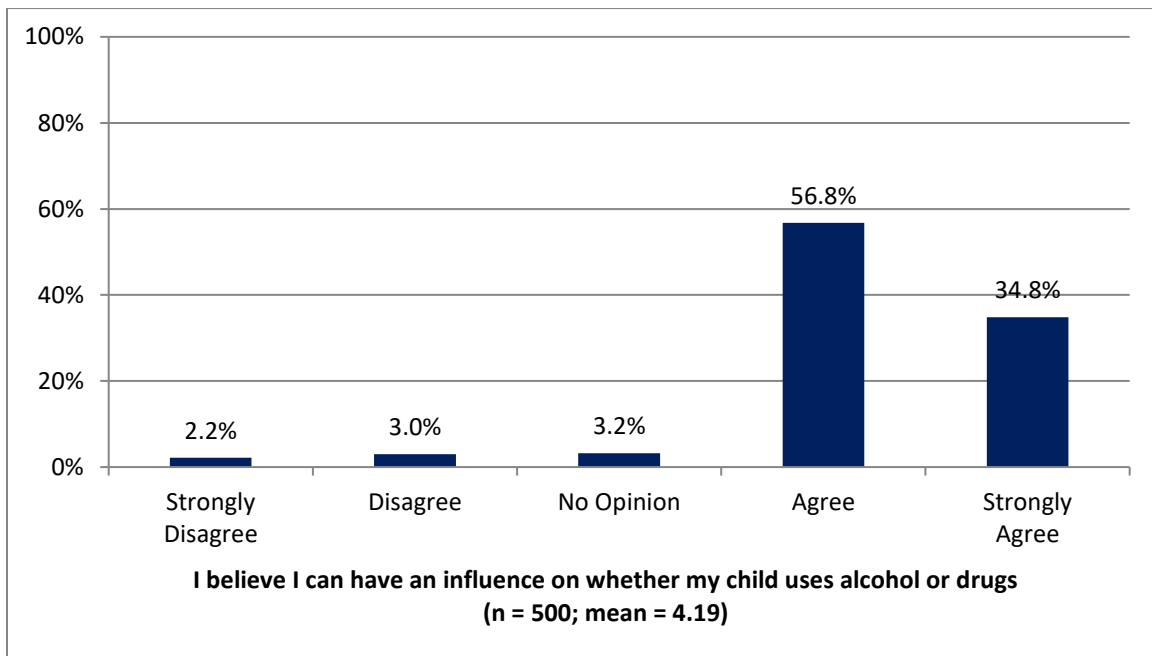
<sup>2</sup> Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA). (2005). *The importance of family dinners II*. New York, NY: Author. Accessed online at: <http://casafamilyday.org/familyday/files/themes/familyday/pdf/Family-Dinners-II.pdf>

### Communication – Attitudes on Effectiveness of Parent-Child Communication

One of the factors that may influence the propensity of a parent to engage their child in a discussion about the use of alcohol or other drugs is whether the parent believes that such conversations will be effective.

Respondents were asked to disagree or agree with the following statement, “I believe that I can have an influence on whether my child uses alcohol or drugs.” As shown in Figure 2, the majority of respondents (91.6%) *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with this statement and felt that they can have an influence on whether their child uses alcohol or drugs.

**Figure 2: Attitudes on Effectiveness of Parent-Child Communication**



**Age/Grade.** Parents’ belief that they can have an influence on whether their child uses alcohol or drugs did not vary significantly between parents of middle and high school students,  $p=.373$ . The proportion of parents who *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with this statement was highly consistent by the age/grade of their oldest child: (6<sup>th</sup> grade: 97%; 7<sup>th</sup>: 96%; 8<sup>th</sup>: 91%, 9<sup>th</sup>: 93%, 10<sup>th</sup>: 90%, 11<sup>th</sup>: 92%, 12<sup>th</sup>: 87%).

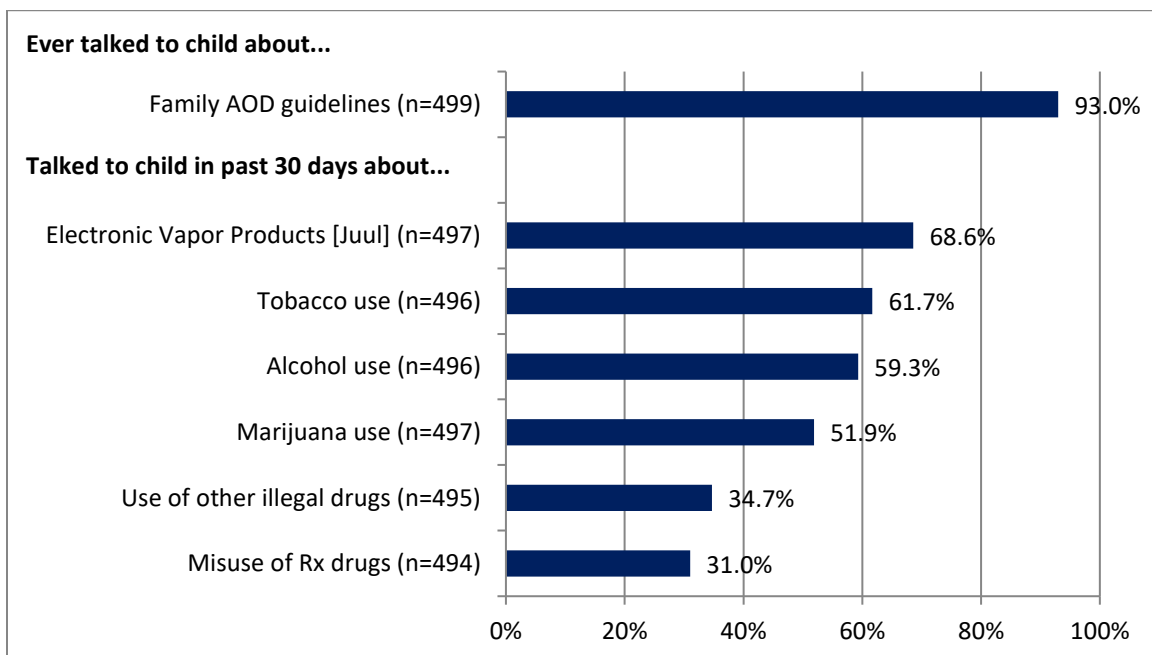
**Trend [2015-2019].** The proportion of parents who *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with this statement was almost identical between 2015 (91.7%), 2017 (91.3%), and 2019 (91.6%). The difference between the three years was not statistically significant (2015: mean=4.24; 2017: mean=4.17; 2019: mean=4.19),  $p=.248$  – indicating no change over time in parents’ beliefs that they can have an influence on whether their child uses alcohol or drugs. This question did not appear in the 2013 survey.

### Communication – Parent-Child Communication about Substance Use

Seven items in the survey explored parent-child communication about underage drinking and substance use (see Figure 3). A large proportion of respondents (93.0%) reported that they have communicated their family’s guidelines and expectations around youth alcohol and drug use to their child.

During the 30 days prior to the survey, parents were most likely to report having talked to their child about the potential negative consequences associated with: electronic vapor products such as Juul (68.6%); tobacco use (61.7%); alcohol use (59.3%); marijuana use (51.9%); use of other illegal drugs such as cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines, and ecstasy (34.7%); and misuse of prescription medication (31.0%).

**Figure 3: Parent-Child Communication about Substance Use**



**Age/Grade.** Parents of high school students were significantly more likely to have talked with their child about: their family’s guidelines and expectations (MS: 86%; HS: 97%), underage alcohol use (MS: 45%; HS: 67%), and marijuana use (MS: 41%; HS: 58%). Each of these differences was statistically significant as assessed using chi-square analyses.

There was no difference between middle and high school parents having talked with their child about tobacco use (MS: 67%; HS: 59%), use of electronic vapor products such as Juul (MS: 71%; HS: 67%), misuse of prescription medication (MS: 33%; HS: 30%), or use of other illegal drugs (MS: 31%; HS: 37%).

**Trend [2011-2019].** The proportion of respondents who ever talked with their child about their family’s guidelines and expectations around youth alcohol and drug use was significantly higher in 2019 (93.0%) than in 2015 (88.0%).

The proportion of respondents who talked to their child in the past 30 days about the potential negative consequences associated with tobacco use was significantly higher in 2019 (61.7%) than in 2015 (43.7%) and 2017 (41.4%).

Respondents in 2019 (31.0%) were significantly more likely to have talked with their child in the past 30 days about the potential negative consequences associated with misuse of prescription medication than respondents in 2013 (23.1%).

**Table 2: Trends in Parent-Child Communication about Substance Use**

<b>Ever talked to child about...</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2019</b>
Family AOD guidelines	91.9%	93.9%	88.0%*	88.6%	93.0%*
<b>Talked to child in past 30 days about...</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2019</b>
Alcohol use	-	63.6%	57.3%	65.1%	59.3%
Tobacco use	-	-	43.7%*	41.4%*	61.7%*
Marijuana use	-	47.7%	48.5%	52.2%	51.9%
Electronic vapor product use	-	-	-	-	68.6%
Misuse of Rx drugs	-	23.1%*	24.1%	28.1%	31.0%*
Use of other illegal drugs	-	-	-	-	34.7%

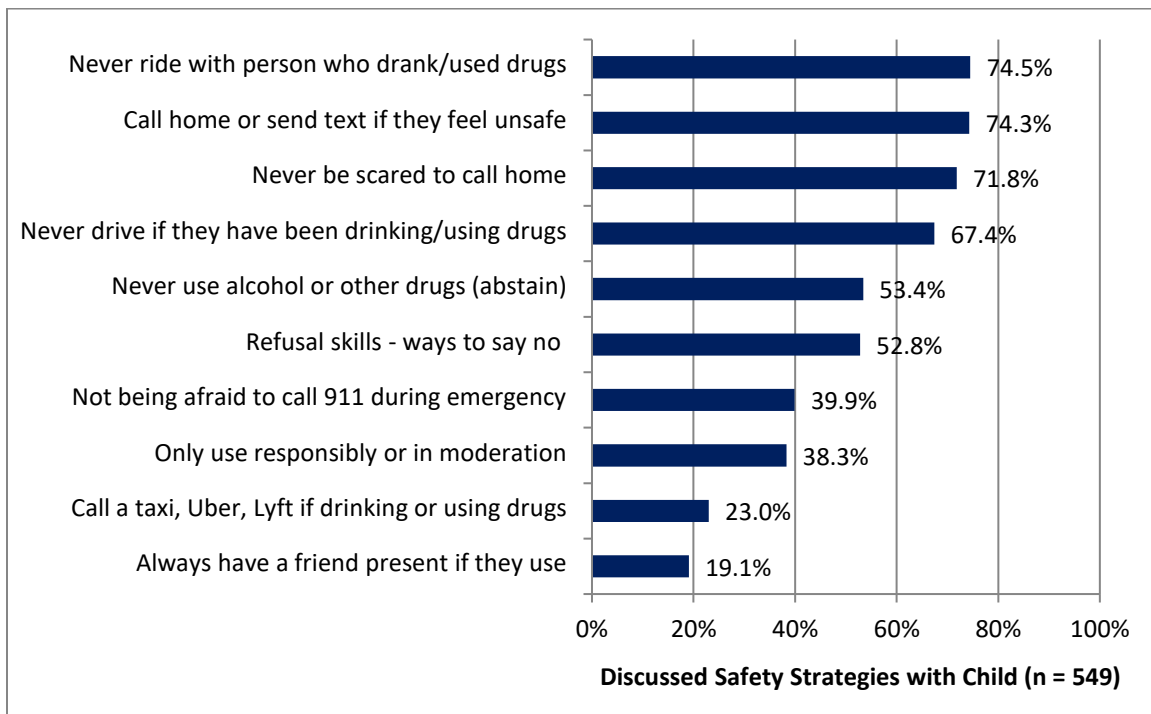
\* Denotes a statistically significant difference between 2019 and an earlier year.

### Communication – Communicating with Child about Safety Strategies

Parents were asked to indicate which, if any strategies, they and their child have discussed about alcohol and other drug use and how to protect themselves in a potentially unsafe situation. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of respondents reported that they have discussed one or more strategy with their child (mean=5.14 strategies).

As shown in Figure 4, the largest proportion of parents have talked with their child about: never riding with a person who has been drinking or using drugs (74.5%); calling home or sending a text message if they feel unsafe (74.3%); never feeling like they can't call home for help because there are scared they might get in trouble (71.8%); never driving if they have been using alcohol or other drugs (67.4%); never using alcohol or other drugs while they are a minor – abstaining (53.4%); refusal skills (52.8%); not feeling afraid to call the police or emergency medical services (911) if there is a medical emergency (e.g., alcohol poisoning, someone gets hurt, etc.) (39.9%); only using responsibly or in moderation if they do choose to use (38.3%); calling a taxi or ride service if they have been drinking or using drugs (23.0%); and always having a close friend present if they do choose to use (19.1%).

**Figure 4: Safety Strategies Parents Have Discussed with their Child**



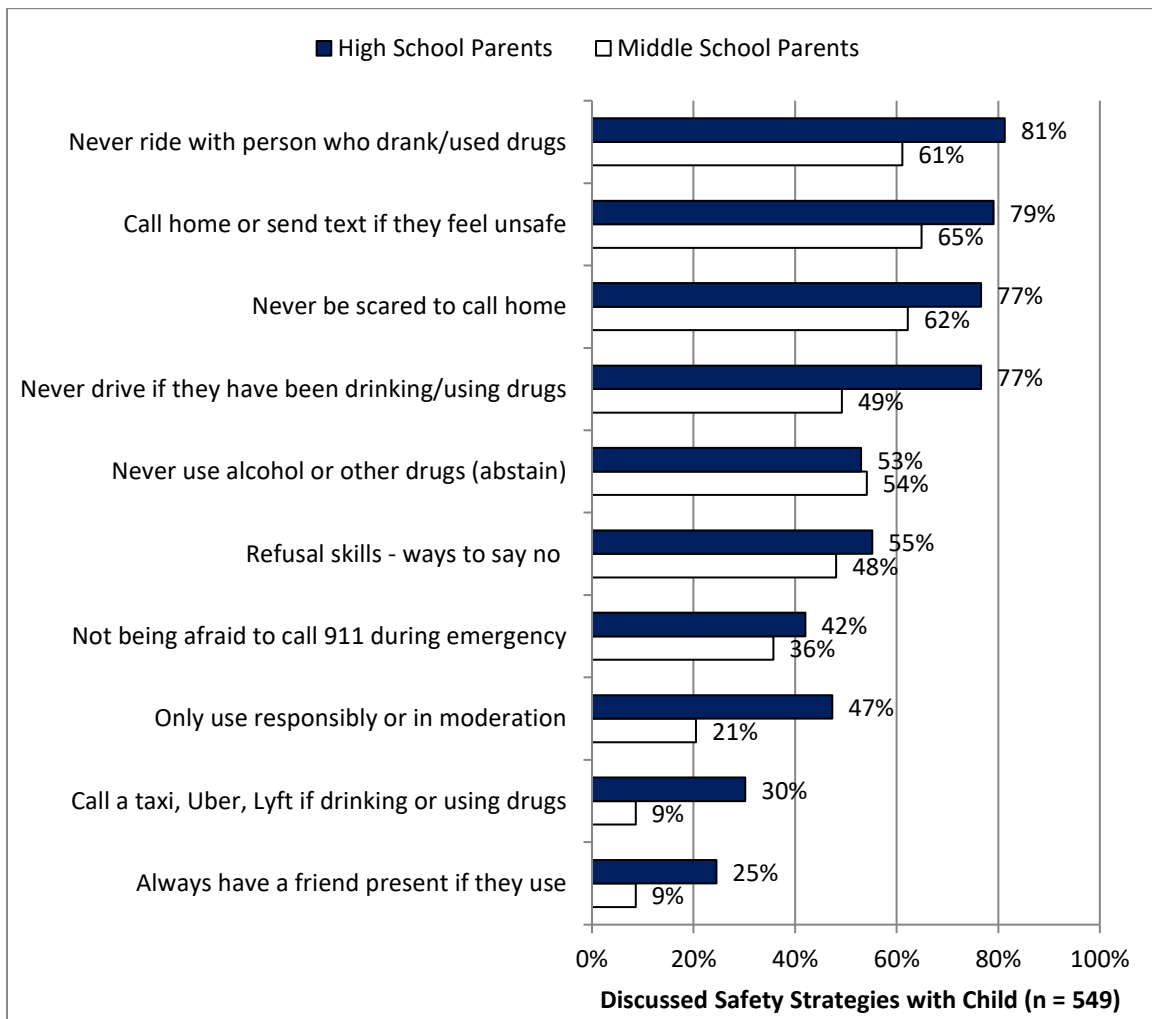
**Age/Grade.** Parents of high school students were significantly more likely than middle school parents to have discussed most of these strategies with their child. The only exceptions were for reports of talking with their child about: (a) never using alcohol or other drugs while they are a minor (MS: 54%; HS: 53%); (b) not feeling afraid to call the police or emergency medical services (911) if there is a medical emergency (MS: 36%; HS: 42%); and (c) refusal skills (MS: 48%; HS: 55%).



The most pronounced differences by age/grade were for discussions about: (a) never driving a vehicle if they have been drinking or using drugs (MS: 49%; HS: 77%); (b) only using responsibly or in moderation if they choose to use alcohol or other drugs (MS: 21%; HS: 47%); (c) calling a taxi or ride service like Uber or Lyft if they have been drinking or using drugs (MS: 9%; HS: 30%); and (d) never riding in a vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking or using drugs (MS: 61%; HS: 81%). In general, there were fewer differences by age/grade for *prevention* strategies and greater differences by age/grade for *harm reduction* strategies.

On average, parents of high school students reported having discussed 6 of these 10 strategies with their child. Parents of middle school students reported that they had discussed an average of 4 of these 10 strategies with their child.

**Figure 5: Safety Strategies Parents Have Discussed with their Child by Age/Grade**

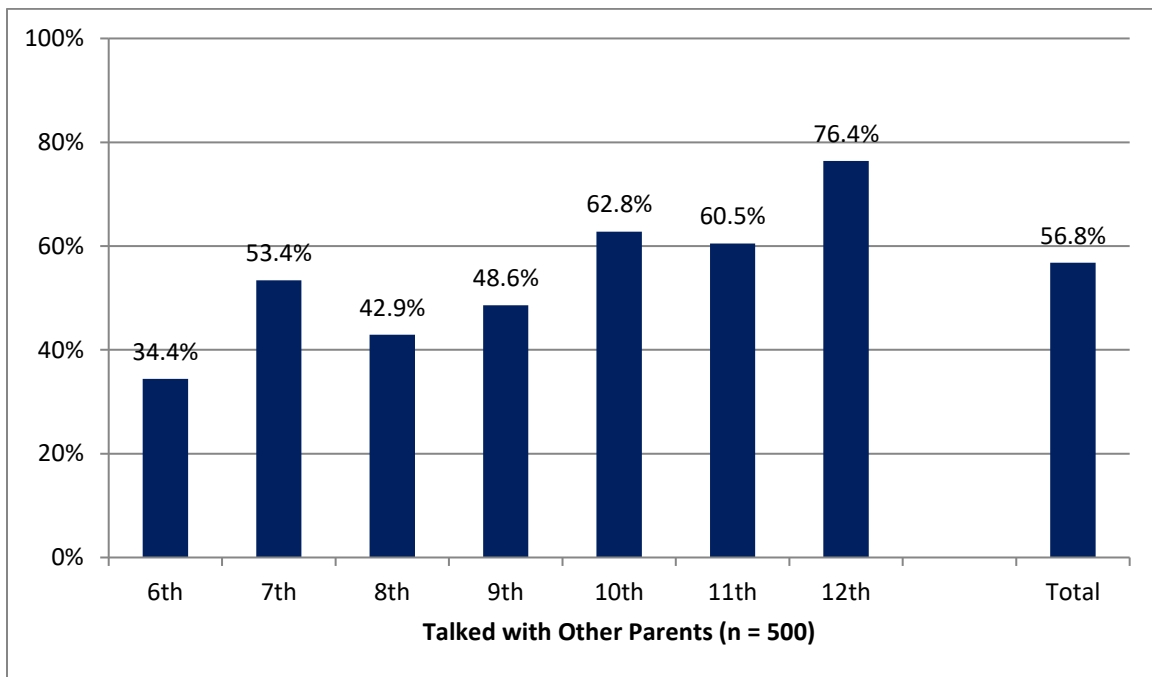


**Trend [2017-2019].** Respondents in 2017 (mean = 5.44 strategies) reported discussing significantly more strategies with their child than respondents in 2019 (mean = 5.14),  $p \leq .05$ .

### Communication – Communicating with Other Parents

Respondents were asked, “Have you ever talked with the parents/guardians of your child’s close friends to share and compare parental philosophies and standards regarding alcohol and drugs?” As shown in Figure 6, over half of the respondents (56.8%) reported that they have ever talked with other parents about alcohol and drug standards and parenting.

**Figure 6: Talked with Other Parents about Standards and Parenting**



**Age/Grade.** Parents of 12<sup>th</sup> graders were significantly more likely to have talked with other parents about alcohol and drug standards and parenting (76.4%) than parents whose oldest child was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade (34.4%), 7<sup>th</sup> grade (53.4%), 8<sup>th</sup> grade (42.9%), or 9<sup>th</sup> grade (48.6%). In general, parents whose oldest child was in high school were significantly more likely to have talked with other parents (63%) than parents whose oldest child was in middle school (46%),  $\chi^2(1, N=500) = 13.484, p \leq .001$ .

**Trend [2011-2019].** The proportion of respondents who reported that they ever talked with other parents about alcohol and drug standards and parenting did not vary significantly across the years that this item was included in the survey – indicating no change in this behavior.

**Table 3: Trends in Talking with Other Parents About Standards and Parenting**

	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019
Talked with Other Parents About Alcohol and Other Drug Standards and Parenting	65.2%	63.4%	63.4%	57.8%	56.8%

## FINDINGS – ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE

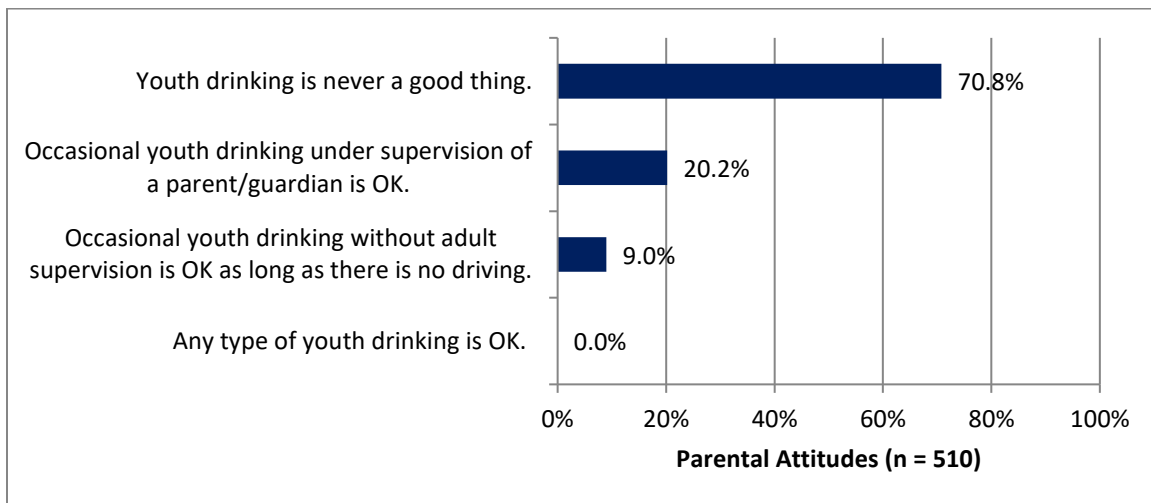
A series of 26 items asked about respondents' beliefs about underage drinking and youth substance use. As with the first section on Communication, all items in this section asked the respondent to answer the question with their oldest 6-12<sup>th</sup> grade child in mind.

### Attitudes and Beliefs – Parent Attitudes about Substance Use

Parents' beliefs about underage drinking and youth marijuana use were assessed using a parallel set of items. The two items asked parents to indicate which of four response options *best* represents their own belief about underage alcohol use and youth marijuana use.

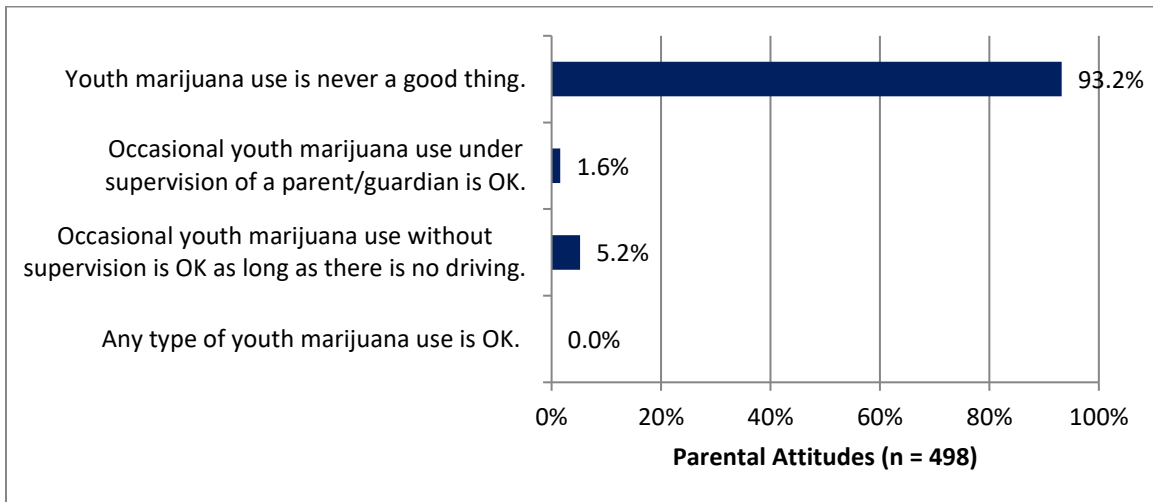
As shown in Figure 7, roughly three-quarters of respondents (70.8%) indicated they personally believe underage alcohol use is never a good thing. Twenty percent (20.2%) believe that occasional youth drinking under supervision of a parent/guardian is OK. Far fewer respondents believe occasional youth drinking without adult supervision is OK as long as there is no driving involved (9.0%). None of the respondents felt that any type of youth drinking is OK (0.0%).

Figure 7: Parental Attitudes About Underage Alcohol Use



As shown in Figure 8, almost all parents (93.2%) indicated that they personally believe youth marijuana use is never a good thing. Five percent (5.2%) believe that occasional youth marijuana use without adult supervision is OK as long as there is no driving involved and 1.6% believe that occasional youth marijuana use under supervision of a parent/guardian is OK. None of the respondents believe that any type of youth marijuana use is OK.

**Figure 8: Parental Attitudes About Youth Marijuana Use**



**Age/Grade.** Differences by the grade level of the respondents' oldest child were examined for both items by dichotomizing the question into two categories: (1) respondents who believe that underage alcohol use/youth marijuana use is never a good thing and (2) respondents who believe that some form of underage alcohol use/youth marijuana use is OK.

The proportion of parents who indicated that there are some conditions under which underage alcohol use is acceptable did not vary significantly between the parents of middle school and high school students (MS: 25%; HS: 31%),  $\chi^2(1, N=510) = 1.824, p=.212$ .

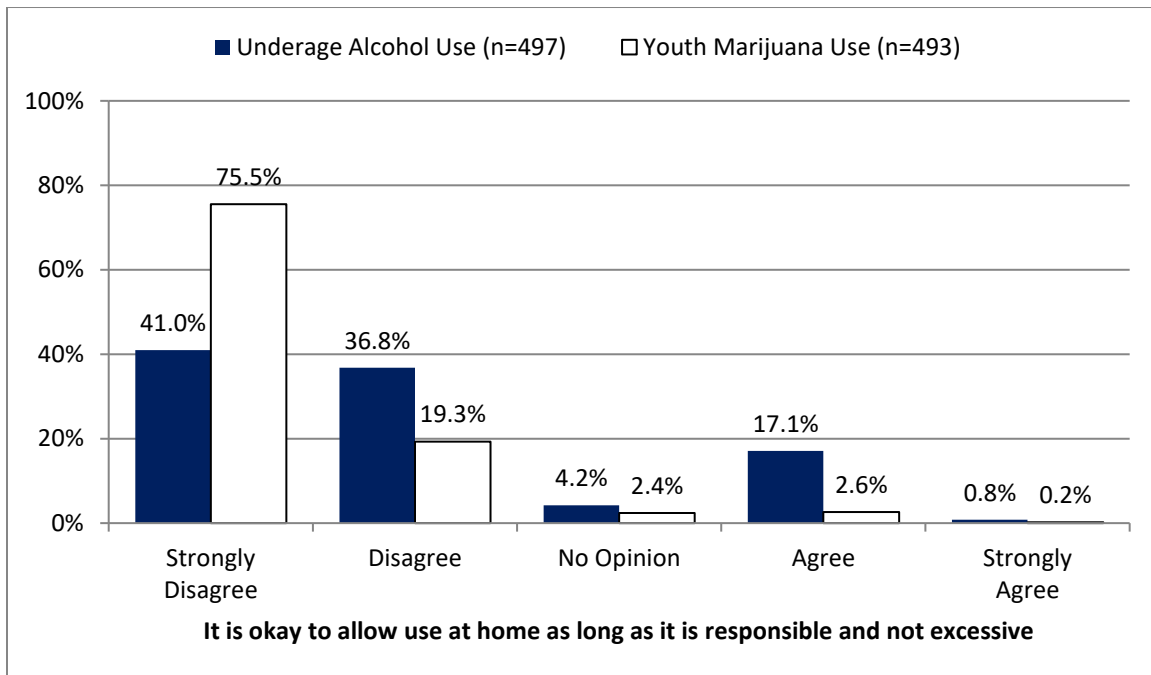
The proportion of parents who indicated that there are some conditions under which youth marijuana use is acceptable did not vary significantly between the parents of middle school and high school students (MS: 6%; HS: 8%),  $\chi^2(1, N=498) = .650, p=.457$ .

**Trend [2015-2019].** The proportion of parents who indicated that it is never acceptable for youth to engage in underage alcohol use (2015: 76.7%; 2017: 73.0%; 2019: 70.8%) and marijuana use (2015: 94.8%; 2017: 93.1%; 2019: 93.2%) did not vary significantly across the 2015, 2017, and 2019 surveys – indicating no change in parents' attitudes over this time period.

### Attitudes and Beliefs – Attitudes about Substance Use at Home

Parents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following question, “I think it is okay to allow [underage alcohol use/youth marijuana use] at home as long as it is responsible and not excessive.” Over three-quarters of respondents (77.8%) either *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that it is okay to allow underage alcohol use at home as long as it is responsible and not excessive and 94.8% *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that it is okay to allow youth marijuana use at home. Almost two times as many parents *strongly disagree* it is okay to allow youth marijuana use compared to underage alcohol use (see Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Attitudes about Substance Use at Home**



**Age/Grade.** The proportion of parents who *strongly disagree* or *disagree* that it is okay to allow underage alcohol use at home (MS: 79%; HS: 77%),  $\chi^2(1, N=497) = .183, p=.730$ , and to allow youth marijuana use at home (MS: 95%; HS: 95%),  $\chi^2(1, N=493) = .036, p=1.000$ , did not vary by age/grade of the respondent’s oldest child.

**Trend [2013-2019].** These items did not vary significantly across the survey administrations – indicating no change in attitudes about youth using alcohol or marijuana at home over time.

**Table 4: Trends in Attitudes About Youth Substance Use at Home**

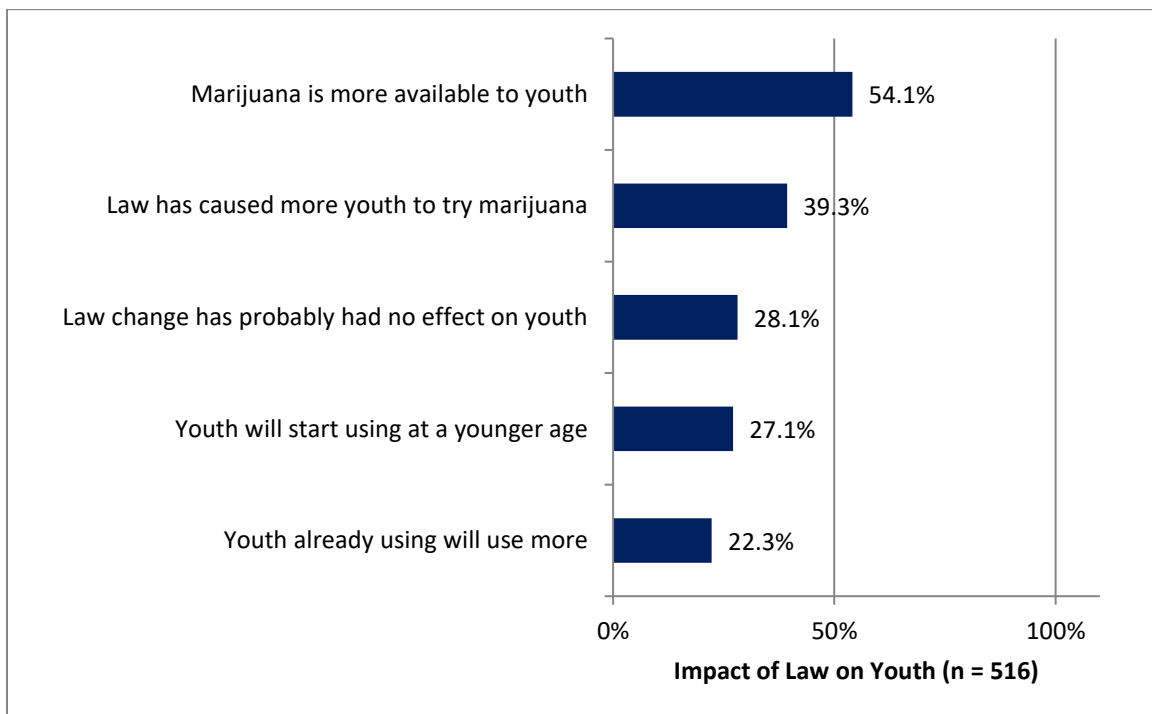
	2013	2015	2017	2019
Disagree Underage Alcohol Use at Home is OK <sup>1</sup>	80.3%	80.1%	77.6%	77.8%
Disagree Youth Marijuana Use at Home is OK <sup>1</sup>	95.8%	96.1%	94.9%	94.8%

<sup>1</sup> Represents the proportion of respondents who either disagree or strongly disagree.

**Attitudes and Beliefs – Attitudes about Impact of MA Recreational Marijuana Law on Youth**  
In 2016, Massachusetts legalized recreational marijuana for adults 21 and older. Respondents were asked to indicate their opinion about the different impact(s) of the law, if any, on youth.

As shown in Figure 12, half of all respondents (54.1%) believe that *marijuana is more available to youth* now that the law has changed, 39.3% believe the change to the law has *caused more youth to try marijuana*, 28.1% believe the change to the law has *probably not had much of an effect on youth*, 27.1% believe the change to the law has caused youth to *start using marijuana at a younger age*, and 22.3% believe that the change to the law has caused youth who were already using marijuana to *increase their level of use*.

**Figure 10: Attitudes About Impact of MA Recreational Marijuana Law on Youth**



**Age/Grade.** There were no significant differences in respondents’ attitudes about the impact of the change to the law in Massachusetts based on whether their oldest child was in middle school or high school.

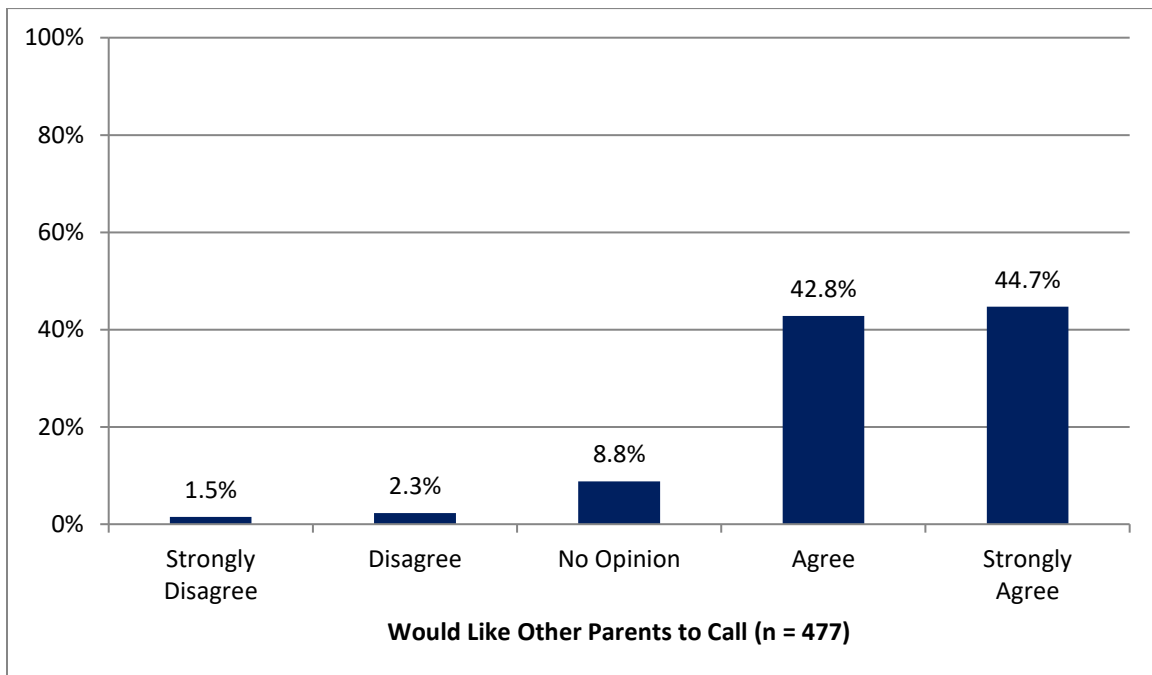
**Trend [2019 Only].** This question was added to the survey for the first time in 2019.

### Attitudes and Beliefs – Attitudes about Receiving Calls from Other Parents

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statement, “I would like other parents/guardians to call me to see if I will be home if their child is coming to my home for a social gathering

As shown in Figure 11, almost all parents (87.5%) either *agree* or *strongly agree* that they would like other parents to call to see whether an adult will be home if the other parent’s child is coming over for a social gathering. Nine percent of respondents (8.8%) had *no opinion*, 2.3% indicated that they *disagree*, and 1.5% reported that they *strongly disagree*.

**Figure 11: Would Like to Receive Calls from Other Parents**



**Age/Grade.** The proportion of parents of middle school students who *agree* or *strongly agree* that they would like to receive a call from other parents if other youth are coming to their house for a social gathering (88%) did not vary significantly from the proportion of high school parents who share this attitude (87%).

**Trend [2011-2019].** This item did not vary significantly across the survey administrations – indicating no change in attitudes about wanting to be called over time.

**Table 5: Trends in Attitudes About Receiving Calls from Other Parents**

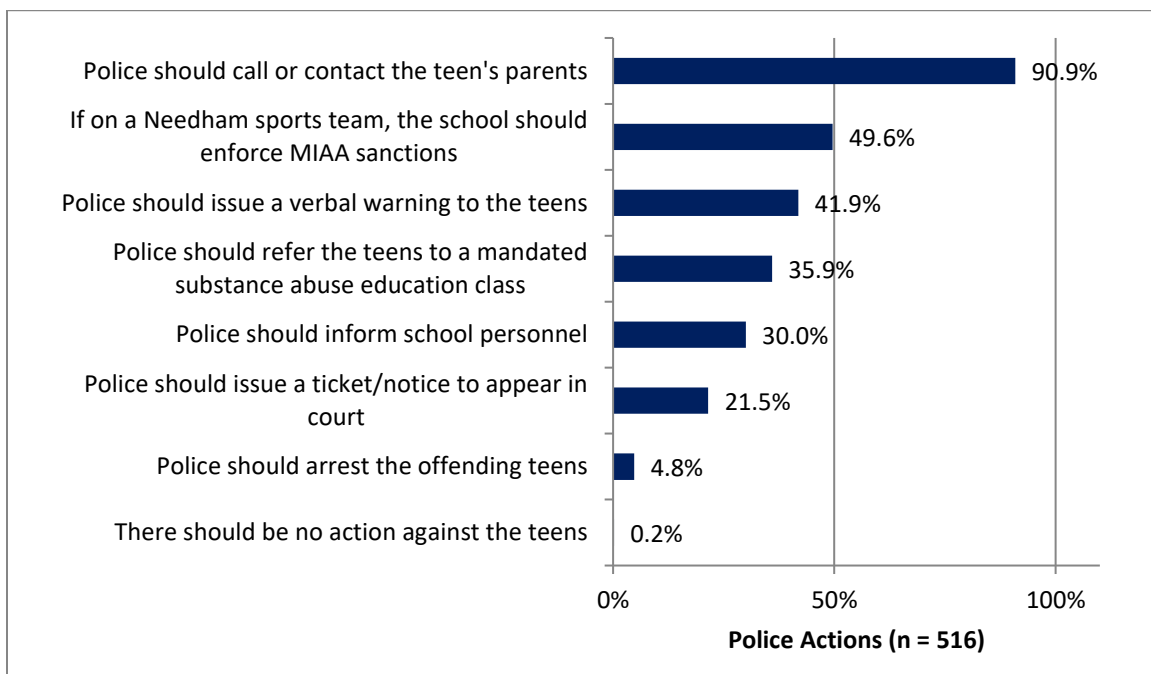
	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019
Would Like Other Parents to Call Them	89.0%	90.2%	91.0%	89.8%	87.5%

### Attitudes and Beliefs – Police Involvement in Underage Drinking Situations

Respondents were asked to indicate what law enforcement action(s), if any, they would support if the police became aware that Needham teens were drinking alcohol.

As shown in Figure 12, almost all respondents (90.9%) think police should contact the teens' parents, half (49.6%) think the school should enforce MIAA sanctions if the student is on a Needham sports team, and 41.9% feel that the police should issue a verbal warning to the teens. Roughly one-third of respondents think that police should refer the teens to a mandated substance abuse education class (35.9%), think police should inform school personnel (30.0%), and 21.5% think police should issue a ticket/notice to appear in court. Only 4.8% think the police should arrest the teens and 0.2% think that there should be no action against the teens.

**Figure 12: Action(s) Parents Would Support Teens Were Caught Drinking**



**Age/Grade.** Parents of high school students were significantly more likely than parents of middle school students to report that the school should enforce MIAA sanctions (MS: 41%; HS: 54%),  $\chi^2(1, N=516) = 7.757, p \leq .01$  and to report that police should refer the teens to a mandated substance abuse education class (MS: 30%; HS: 39%),  $\chi^2(1, N=516) = 4.292, p \leq .05$ . None of the other actions varied significantly by the grade level of the respondent's child.

**Trend [2011-2019].** Respondents in 2019 were less likely than their peers in 2013, 2015, and 2017 to indicate that police should contact the teens' parents. Respondents in 2019 were less likely than their peers in 2013 to endorse arresting the offending teens or enforcing MIAA sanctions.



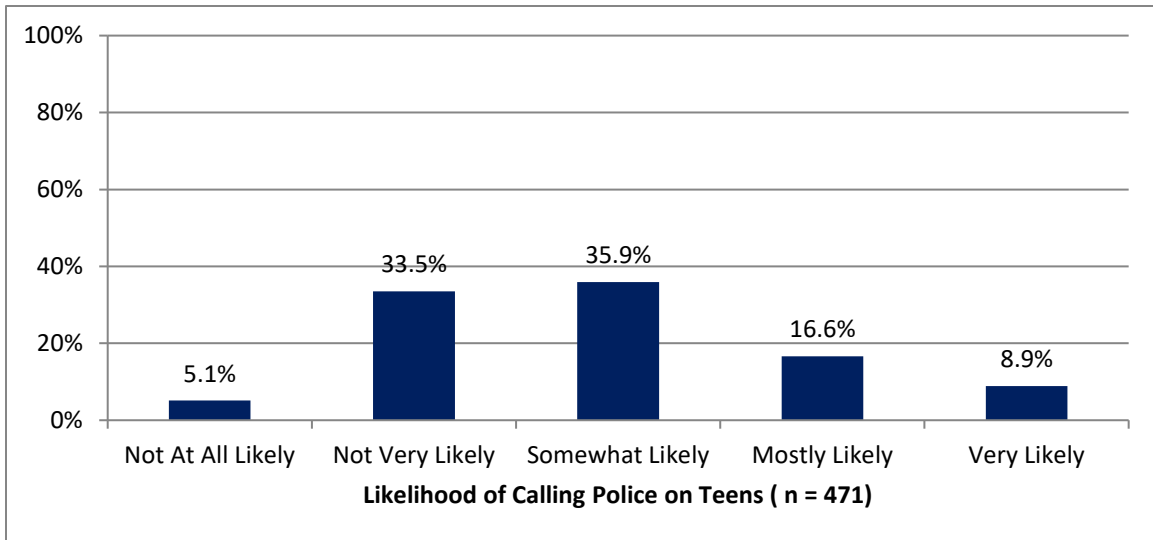
**Table 6: Trends in Actions Parents Support if Teens Caught Drinking**

Actions Parents Would Support...	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019
There should be no action against the teens	0.2%	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	0.2%
Police should issue a verbal warning to the teens	37.8%	37.9%	46.3%	44.9%	41.9%
Police should call or contact the teens' parents	95.0%	97.7%*	96.2%*	96.0%*	90.9%*
Police should give ticket/notice to appear in court	24.8%	26.0%	21.5%	23.6%	21.5%
Police should arrest the offending teens	9.0%	12.6%*	7.0%	7.9%	4.8%*
Police should inform school personnel	34.0%	30.0%	27.6%	32.6%	30.0%
If on a Needham sports team, the school should enforce MIAA sanctions	56.3%	58.2%*	50.8%	49.8%	49.6%*
Police should refer the teens to a mandated substance abuse education class	39.4%	39.3%	33.6%	37.3%	35.9%

\* Denotes a statistically significant difference between 2019 and an earlier year.

Respondents were asked how likely they are to contact law enforcement if they witnessed or became aware of Needham teens drinking, using substances, or engaging in other illegal behaviors. As shown in Figure 13, only one-quarter of respondents (25.5%) indicated that they are *mostly* or *very likely* to contact law enforcement concerning teens drinking, using substances, or engaging in other illegal behaviors.

**Figure 13: Likelihood of Contacting Police About Teens**



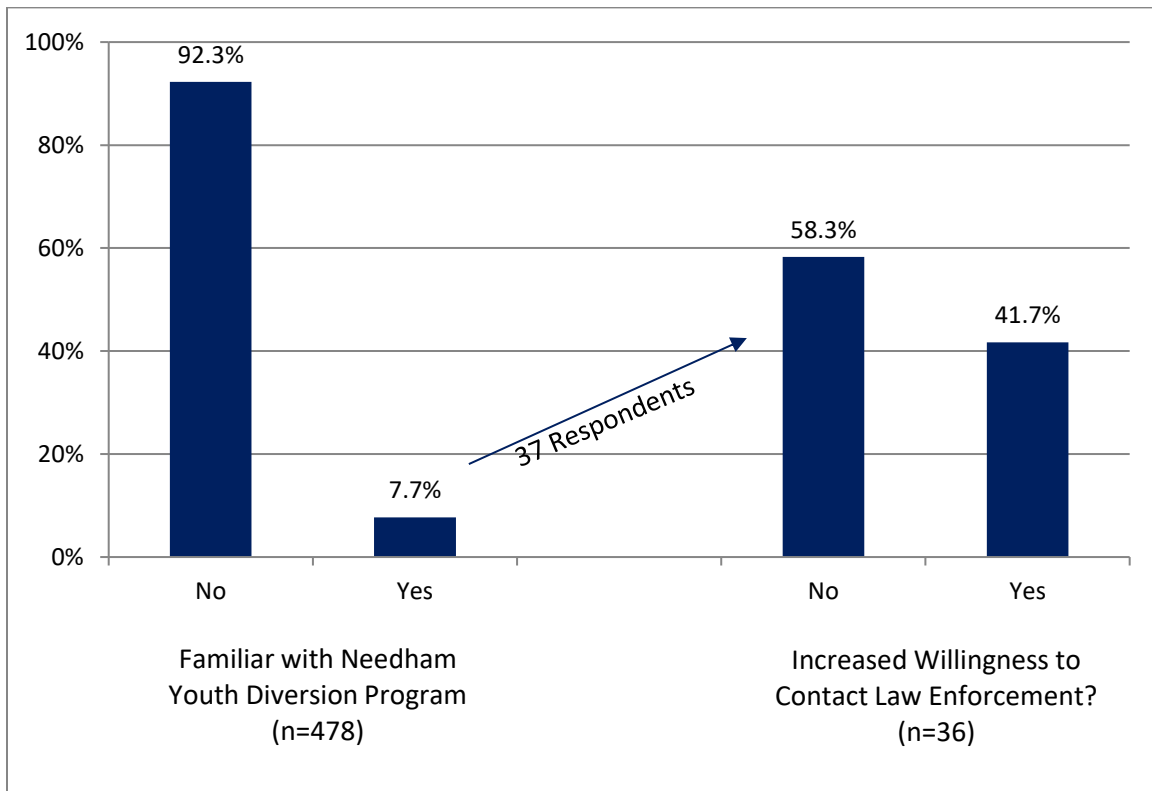
**Age/Grade.** Parents of middle school students were significantly more likely than parents of high school students to report that it is *mostly* or *very likely* that they would contact law enforcement (MS: 31%; HS: 23%),  $\chi^2(1, N=471) = 3.341, p \leq .05$ .

**Trend [2017-2019].** There was no difference across years in the proportion of respondents who reported that it is *mostly* or *very likely* that they would contact law enforcement (2017: 26.2%; 2019: 25.5%),  $p = .420$ .

Survey respondents were asked whether they are familiar with the Needham Youth Diversion Program (<https://www.spanneedham.org/nydp>), which serves as an alternative to processing youth 14 to 18 years of age and younger within the juvenile justice system. As part of this program, youth caught using substances or engaging in other risky behaviors are assigned community service or some other type of restitution versus the incident appearing on their permanent record. A follow-up question asked those who were aware of the new Needham Youth Diversion Program whether the presence of the program has increased their willingness to contact law enforcement if they witnessed or became aware of Needham teens drinking, using substances, or engaging in other illegal behaviors.

As shown in Figure 14, only 7.7% of respondents reported that they were aware of the Needham Youth Diversion Program (n=37 respondents). *Of the 37 respondents aware of the program, 41.7% reported that the presence of the program has increased their willingness to contact law enforcement if they witness or become aware of teens engaged in risky behaviors.*

**Figure 14: Needham Youth Diversion Program**



**Age/Grade.** Parents of middle school students and high school students did not vary significantly in their awareness of the Needham Youth Diversion Program or in their propensity to contact law enforcement based on this knowledge.

**Trend [2019 Only].** This question was added to the survey for the first time in 2019.

### Attitudes and Beliefs – Parental Disapproval of Youth Substance Use

A series of six questions assessed parental disapproval of youth substance use. As shown in Table 7, almost all respondents (96.7%) think it would be *very wrong* for their child to use prescription drugs not prescribed to them, 95.7% think it would be *very wrong* for their child to have 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks nearly every day, 84.9% think it would be *very wrong* for their child to use an electronic vapor product such as Juul, 80.0% think it would be *very wrong* for their child to smoke tobacco, 70.1% think it would be *very wrong* for their child to use marijuana, and 34.9% think it would be *very wrong* for their child to drink alcohol occasionally.

**Table 7: Parental Disapproval of Youth Substance Use**

	How wrong do you think it would be for your child to...				Mean (1-4)
	Not At All Wrong	A Little Bit Wrong	Wrong	Very Wrong	
Smoke tobacco (n=489)	0.0% (0)	1.6% (8)	18.4% (90)	<b>80.0%</b> (391)	3.78
Drink alcohol occasionally (n=490)	4.3% (21)	22.4% (110)	38.4% (188)	<b>34.9%</b> (171)	3.04
Have 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks nearly every day (n=489)	0.0% (0)	0.6% (3)	3.7% (18)	<b>95.7%</b> (468)	3.95
Use marijuana (n=492)	0.6% (3)	6.1% (30)	23.2% (114)	<b>70.1%</b> (345)	3.63
Use an electronic vapor product such as Juul (n=490)	0.0% (0)	1.4% (7)	13.7% (67)	<b>84.9%</b> (416)	3.83
Use prescription drugs not prescribed to them (n=490)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.3% (16)	<b>96.7%</b> (474)	3.97

**Age/Grade.** High school parents reported significantly lower levels of disapproval than middle school parents for occasionally drinking alcohol (MS mean: 3.33; HS mean: 2.94), using marijuana (MS mean: 3.70; HS mean: 3.57), and for using an electronic vapor product (MS mean: 3.89; HS mean: 3.81).

**Trend [2015-2019].** There were no differences in parental disapproval of youth substance use between 2017 and 2019. Parental disapproval of youth drinking alcohol occasionally and youth using marijuana were significantly lower in 2019 than in 2015.

**Table 8: Trends in Parental Disapproval of Youth Substance Use [Mean Scores]**

How wrong do you think it would be for your child to...	2015	2017	2019
Smoke tobacco	3.79	3.74	3.78
Drink alcohol occasionally	3.25*	3.09	3.04*
Have 1 or 2 drinks of alcohol nearly every weekend	3.95	3.94	3.95
Use marijuana	3.71*	3.60	3.63*
Use prescription drugs not prescribed to them	3.96	3.98	3.97

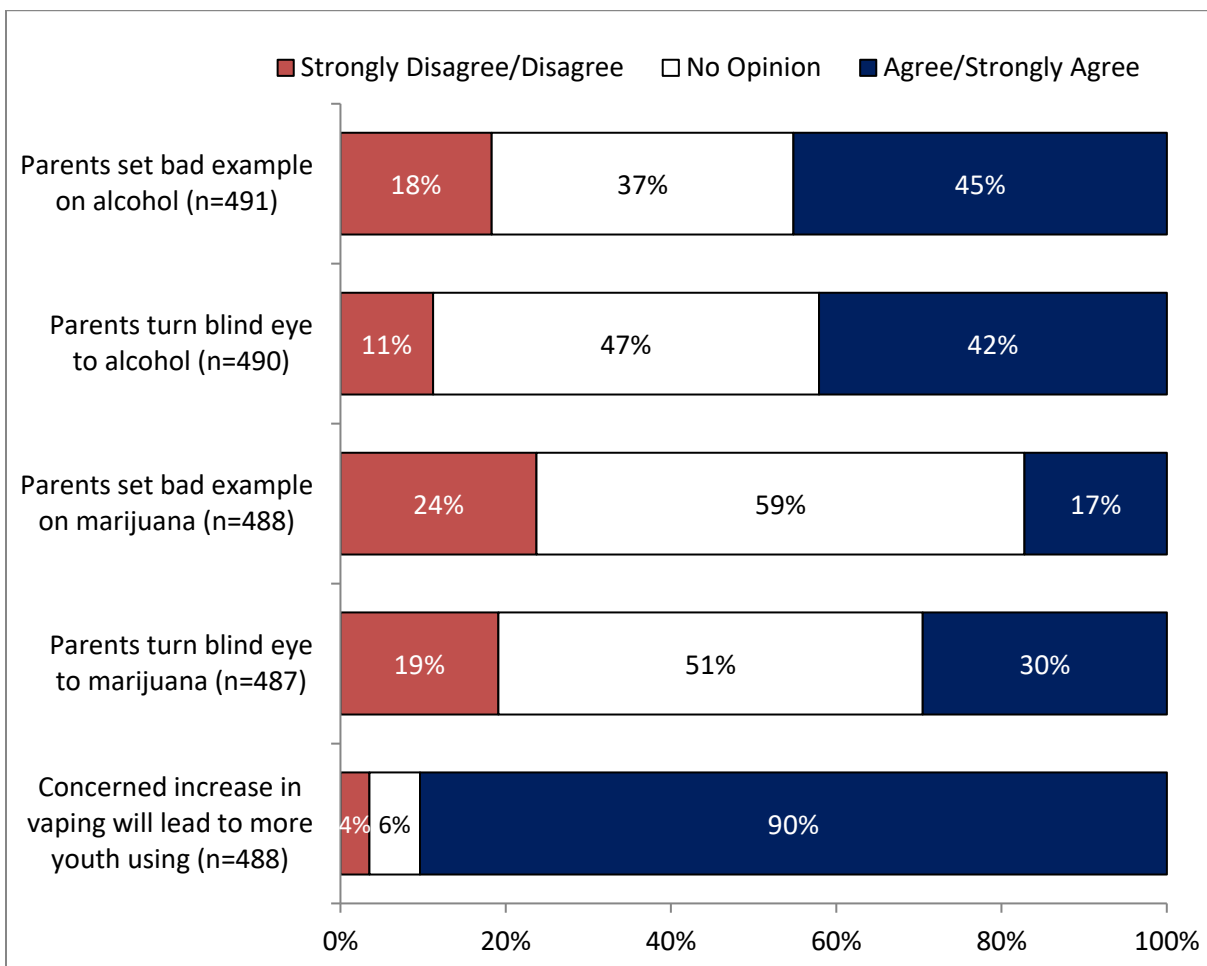
\* Denotes a statistically significant difference between 2019 and an earlier year.

### Attitudes and Beliefs – Beliefs about Community Substance Use Norms

Four questions examined parents’ beliefs about community substance use norms. As shown in Figure 15, 45% of parents either *agree* or *strongly agree* that many parents/guardians in Needham set a bad example for their children by their own excessive alcohol use, 42% feel too many parents either provide alcohol to their children or turn a blind eye to underage alcohol use, 17% think many parents set a bad example by their own excessive marijuana use, and 30% think too many parents turn a blind eye to youth marijuana use.

In a new item added in 2019, almost all parents (90%) *agree* or *strongly agree* that they are concerned the increase in use of electronic vapor products (e.g., Juul) by some youth and adults increases the likelihood that more youth will begin vaping.

**Figure 15: Parent Beliefs about Community Substance Use Norms**



**Age/Grade.** Parents of high school students were significantly more likely than parents of middle school students to *agree* or *strongly agree* that many parents in Needham set a bad example for their children by their own excessive alcohol use (MS: 39%; HS: 48%), feel that too many parents in Needham either provide alcohol for their children or turn a blind eye to

underage alcohol use (MS: 29%; HS: 49%), to feel that too many parents in Needham set a bad example for their children by their own excessive marijuana use (MS: 11%; HS: 20%), and to feel that too many parents in Needham turn a blind eye to youth marijuana use (MS: 19%; HS: 35%). Parents of middle and high school students did not vary significantly in their attitude that the increases in use of electronic vapor products (e.g., Juul) by some youth and adults increases the likelihood that more youth will begin vaping (MS: 91%; HS: 90%).

**Trend [2011-2019].** There was a statistically significant increase between 2017 and 2019 in the percentage of parents who feel that too many parents in Needham set a bad example for their children by their own excessive marijuana use (2017: 12.6%; 2019: 17.2%),  $p \leq .05$ . There were no other differences between 2017 and 2019 for any of the other items.

Respondents in 2019 were significantly less likely than their peers in 2013 to feel that many parents set a bad example for their children by their own excessive alcohol use (2013: 75.8%; 2019: 45.2%). Respondents in 2019 were significantly more likely than their peers in 2015 to feel that too many parents in Needham either provide alcohol for their children or turn a blind eye to underage alcohol use.

**Table 9: Trends in Parent Beliefs about Community Substance Use Norms**

	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019
Many parents set a bad example for their children by their own excessive alcohol use.	41.6%	75.8%*	41.5%	46.2%	45.2%*
Too many parents in Needham either provide alcohol for their children or turn a blind eye to underage alcohol use.	41.6%	45.4%	33.8%*	43.3%	42.0%*
Many parents in set a bad example for their children by their own excessive marijuana use.	-	-	-	12.6%*	17.2%*
Too many parents in Needham turn a blind eye to youth marijuana use.	31.7%	34.9%	27.5%	27.2%	29.6%
I am concerned that the increase in use of electronic vapor products (e.g., Juul) by some youth and adults increases the likelihood that more youth will begin vaping.	-	-	-	-	90.3%

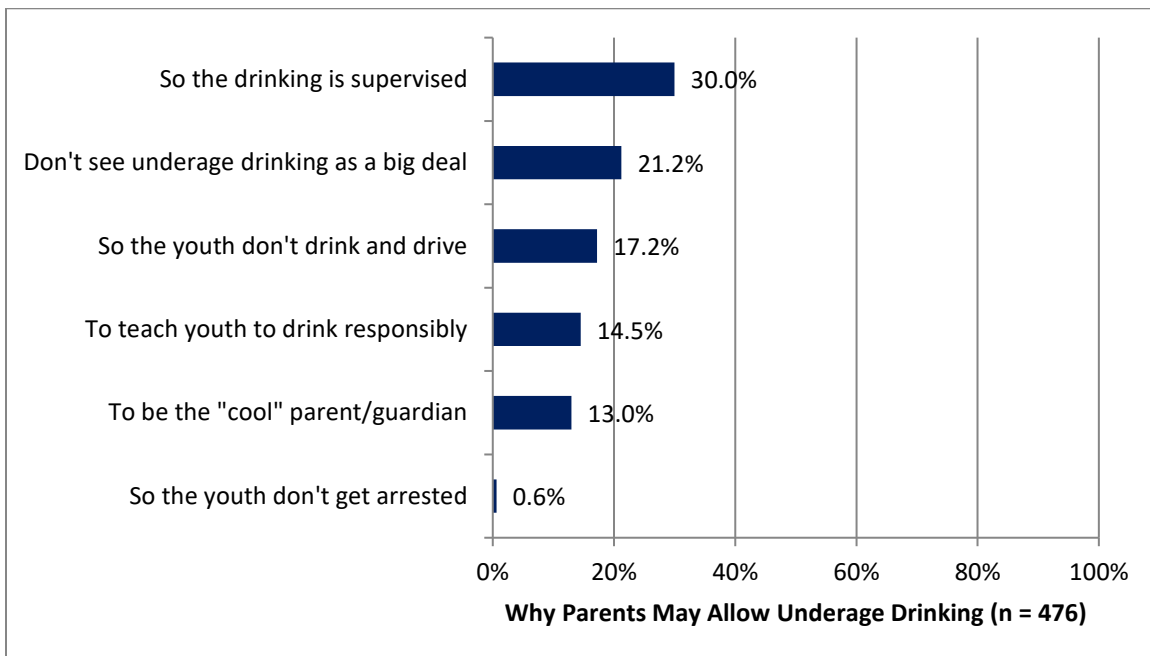
\* Denotes a statistically significant difference between 2019 and an earlier year.

### Attitudes and Beliefs – Why Other Parents May Allow Underage Drinking

Respondents were asked to identify the *main* reason they think some parents may allow their own children and other children to drink alcohol in their home. As shown in Figure 16, respondents were most likely to believe that other parents may allow their and other children to drink alcohol in their home so the drinking is supervised (30.0%), because these parents don't see underage drinking as being a big deal (21.2%), so the youth don't drink and drive (17.2%), to teach youth to drink responsibly (14.5%), to be perceived as being the "cool" parent (13.0%), and so the youth don't get arrested (0.6%).

A sub-set of respondents thought it was for a different reason (3.4%). These respondents (n=16) indicated that they don't know why some parents allow this (6 respondents), feel that it is just poor judgment or lack of parenting skills on the part of parents (3), feel that it may be due to the parents' own use/partying (1), feel that it may be a cultural issue (1), and feel that it is to avoid conflict with their child (1).

Figure 16: Why Parents May Allow Underage Drinking



**Age/Grade.** Parents of middle school students were significantly more likely to think the main reason was *so the youth don't drink and drive* (MS: 24%; HS: 14%). Parents of high school students were significantly more likely to type-in an answer (MS: 1%; HS: 5%).

**Trend [2015-2019].** There were no significant differences between 2017 and 2019 in perceptions of the *main* reason some parents may allow their own children and other children to drink alcohol in their home.

Respondents in 2019 were significantly more likely than their peers in 2015 to believe it is *so the drinking is supervised* (2015: 22.5%; 2019: 30.0%).

Respondents in 2019 were significantly less likely than their peers in 2015 to believe it is *so the youth don't drink and drive* (2015: 24.2%; 2019: 17.2%) or for some *other reason* (2015: 6.9%; 2019: 3.4%).

**Table 10: Trends in Perception of Why Other Parents May Allow Underage Drinking**

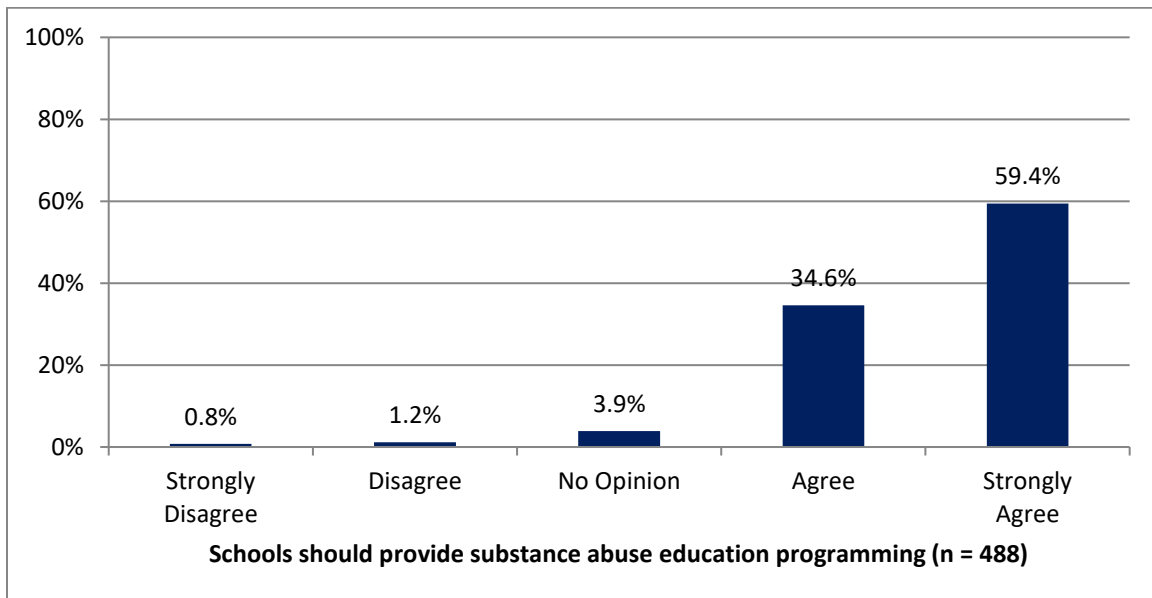
	2015	2017	2019
So the drinking is supervised	22.5%*	28.1%	30.0%*
They don't view underage drinking as being a big deal	17.7%	16.6%	21.2%
So the youth don't drink and drive	24.2%*	17.4%	17.2%*
To teach youth to drink responsibly	16.8%	17.7%	14.5%
To be perceived as being the "cool" parent/guardian	10.6%	14.0%	13.0%
So the youth don't get arrested	1.2%	1.9%	0.6%
Some other reason	6.9%*	4.5%	3.4%*

\* Denotes a statistically significant difference between 2019 and an earlier year.

### Attitudes and Beliefs – School-Based Substance Abuse Prevention

Two questions assessed whether respondents feel that schools should provide substance abuse prevention programs and the grade(s) at which this content should be delivered. As shown in Figure 17, almost all respondents (94.0%) reported they *agree* or *strongly agree* that schools should provide education programs for students their child’s age that are designed to help prevent and reduce underage drinking and substance abuse.

**Figure 17: School-Based Substance Abuse Prevention**



**Age/Grade.** Parents of middle and high school students did not vary significantly in their response to this question (MS: 94%; HS: 94%),  $\chi^2(1, N=488) = .012, p=1.00$ .

**Trend [2011-2019].** The proportion of parents who believe that schools should provide education programs for students that are designed to help prevent and reduce underage drinking and substance abuse did not vary significantly by survey year – indicating no change in this attitude over time.

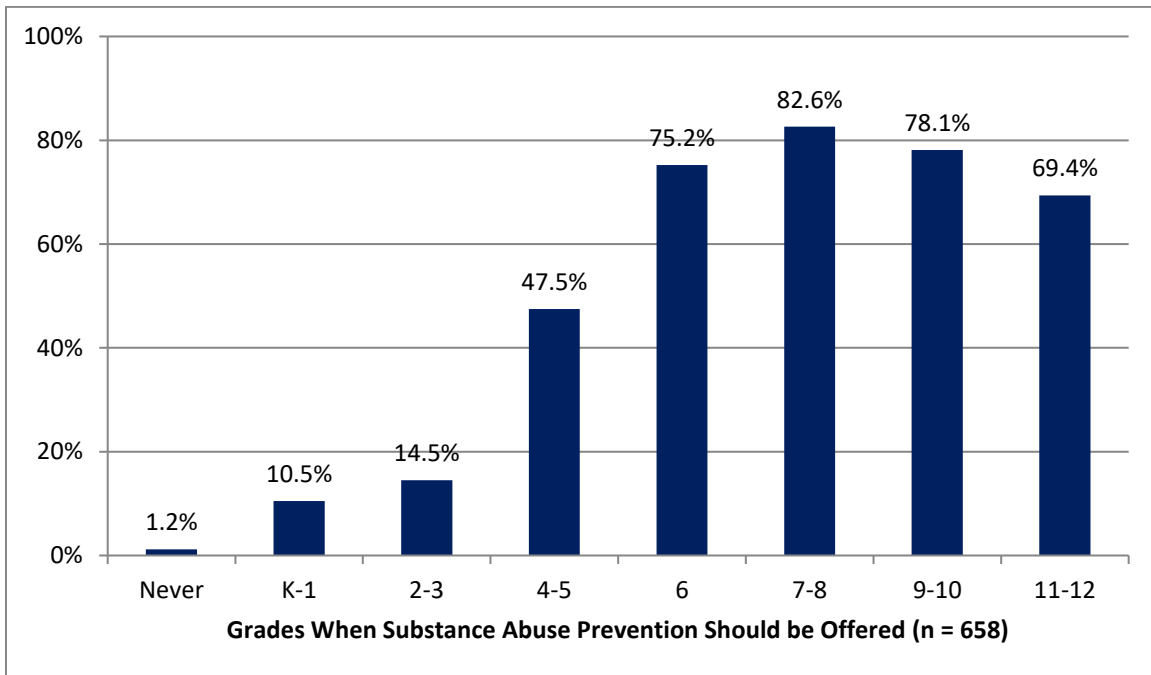
**Table 11: Trends in Attitudes About Substance Abuse Prevention**

	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019
Agree or Strongly Agree That Schools Should Provide Substance Abuse Education	89.2%	93.2%	92.4%	93.7%	94.0%



The second question in this part of the survey asked respondents to indicate the grade level(s) in which schools should provide evidence-based, age/developmentally appropriate substance abuse awareness and prevention curricula through health classes. As shown in Figure 18, respondents were most likely to indicate that prevention education should be offered in grades 6-12 – although almost half (47.5%) felt that it should also be offered in grades 4-5.

**Figure 18: Grade(s) When Substance Abuse Prevention Should be Delivered**



**Trend [2013-2017].** In general, support for evidence-based, age/developmentally appropriate substance abuse awareness and prevention curricula through health classes in grades k-6 was at its highest level in 2019. There were significant decreases between 2017 and 2019 in support for this programming in grades 7-12.

**Table 12: Trends in Grades When Substance Abuse Prevention Should Be Delivered**

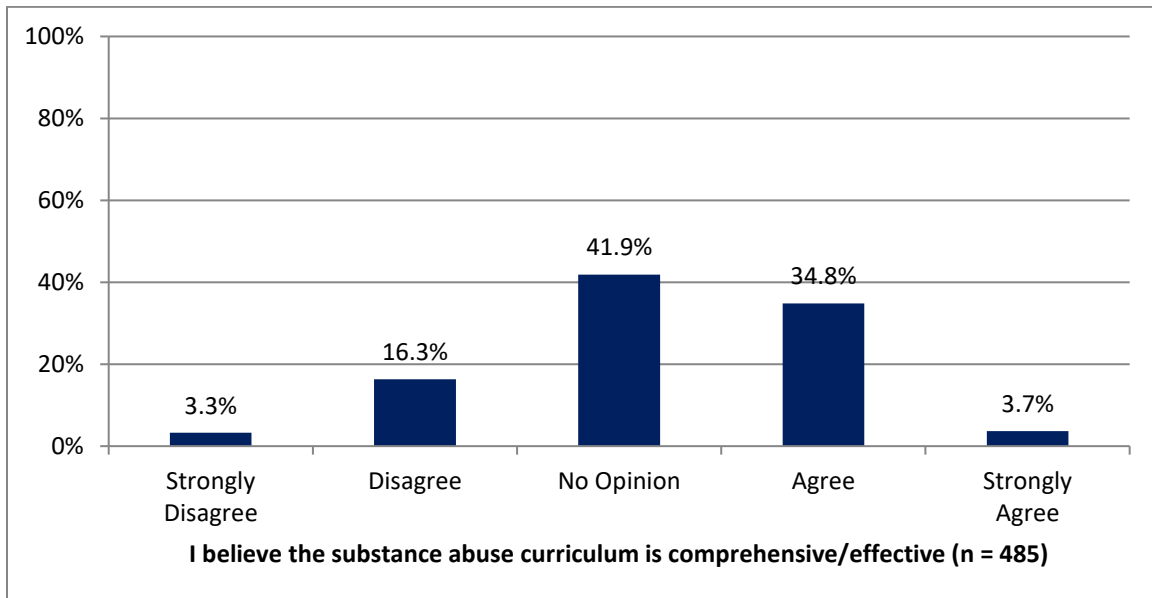
	2013	2015	2017	2019
Never	0.7%	0.6%	0.3%	1.2%
K-1	6.0%*	4.9%*	8.1%	10.5%*
Grades 2-3	9.5%	10.6%	11.9%	14.5%
Grades 4-5	37.4%*	36.0%*	41.1%	47.5%*
Grade 6	68.9%	70.4%	73.8%	75.2%
Grades 7-8	81.9%	88.1%*	88.6%*	82.6%*
Grades 9-10	76.2%	81.8%*	84.5%*	78.1%*
Grades 11-12	69.8%	74.5%	76.3%*	69.4%*

\* Denotes a statistically significant difference between this year and other years.

A final question in the series asked parents to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement, “I believe that the substance abuse awareness and prevention curriculum in my child’s school is comprehensive and effective.”

As shown in Figure 19, the majority of respondents (41.9%) had *no opinion* on the extent to which the substance abuse prevention curriculum in their child’s school is comprehensive and effective. A total of 38.5% reported they *agree* or *strongly agree* that the curriculum is comprehensive and effective and 19.6% disagreed with this statement.

**Figure 19: Substance Abuse Prevention Curriculum Effectiveness**



**Age/Grade.** Parents of middle school and high school students did not differ significantly in their reports that the substance abuse awareness and prevention curriculum in their child’s school is comprehensive and effective (MS: 42%; HS: 37%),  $\chi^2(1, N=485) = 1.098, p=.318$ .

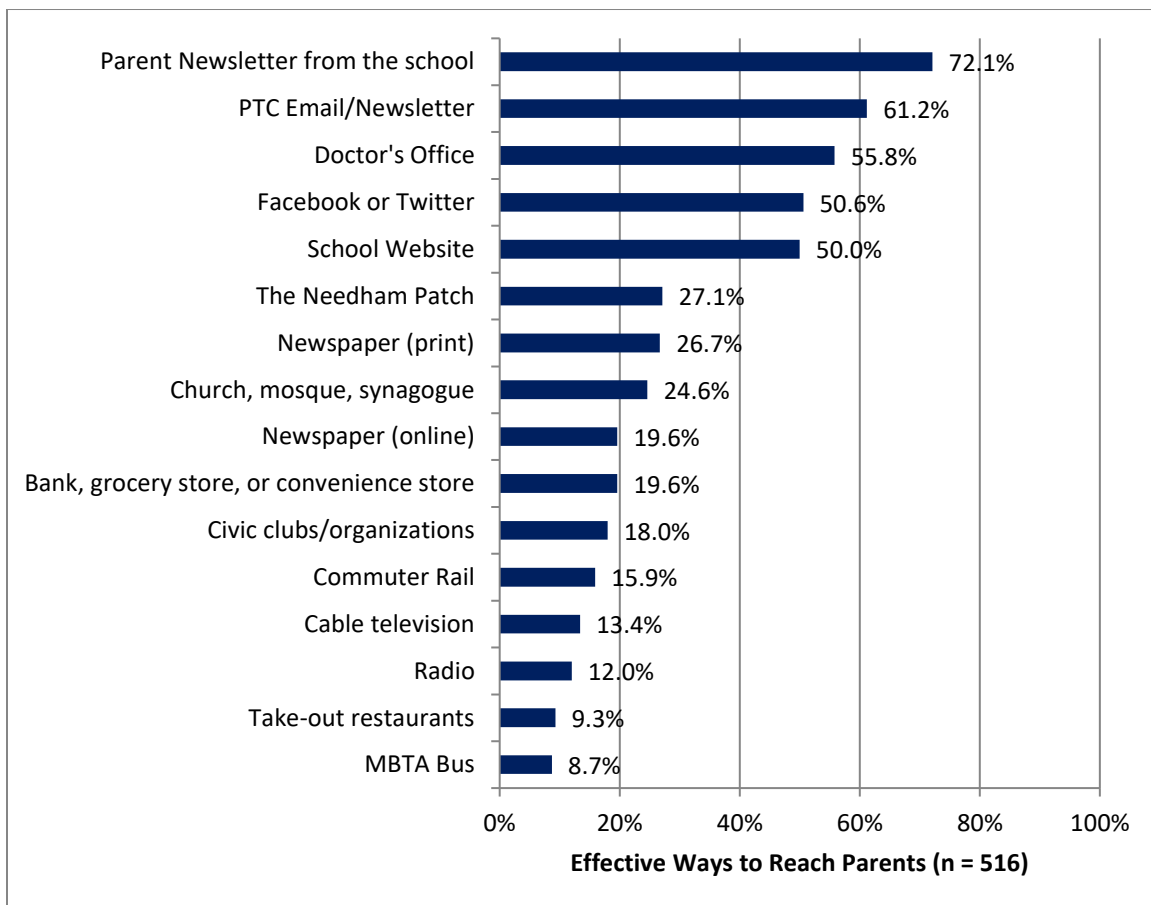
**Trend [2017-2019].** Respondents in 2017 and 2019 were equally likely to believe that the substance abuse awareness and prevention curriculum in their child’s school is comprehensive and effective (2017: 39.1%; 2019: 38.5%),  $p=.902$ .

### Attitudes and Beliefs – Effective Ways/Places to Reach Parents

Respondents were provided with a list of 15 different options and were asked to identify what they feel are effective ways/places to reach Needham parents with prevention messages.

As shown in Figure 20, the largest proportions of respondents indicated that the most effective ways to reach Needham parents with prevention messages are through the parent newsletter from the school (72.1%), PTC Email/Newsletter (61.2%), doctor's offices (55.8%), Facebook or Twitter (50.6%), and the school website (50.0%).

**Figure 20: Effective Ways/Places to Reach Parents**



A sub-set of respondents identified a different method (4.5%). These respondents (n=23) felt that other effective ways/places to reach parents/guardians with prevention messages include: Instagram, Snapchat, or Youtube (6 respondents); parent nights, talks, or trainings at the school (5); physical mail or direct from school communication (3); community events such as Needham Night (2); email from the school or superintendent (2); posts at the Town Hall or on the town website (2); local gyms (1); school sporting events (1); and text messages (1).

**Age/Grade.** There was some significant variation in the sources identified by parents based on the grade level of their oldest child. Parents of high school students were significantly more likely than parents of middle school students to identify civic clubs/organizations (MS: 12%; HS: 21%), MBTA bus (MS: 5%; HS: 10%); radio (MS: 8%; HS: 14%), and takeout restaurants (MS: 5%; HS: 12%).

Parents of middle school students were significantly more likely than parents of high school students to identify PTC Email/Newsletter (MS: 68%; HS: 58%).

**Trend [2011-2019].** Parents were significantly less likely in 2019 than their peers in 2017 to identify print newspaper as an effective way/method to reach parents with prevention messages. There were no other significant differences between 2017 and 2019.

Respondents in 2019 were significantly more likely than their peers in earlier years to identify facebook or twitter and the Needham Patch.

Respondents in 2019 were significantly less likely than their peers in earlier years to identify online newspaper, print newspaper, parent newsletter from the school, PTC email/newsletter, and school website.

**Table 13: Trends in Effective Ways/Places to Reach Parents**

	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019
Bank, Grocery Store, or Convenience Store	21.3%	22.3%	23.6%	20.7%	19.6%
Cable Television	14.5%	17.5%	14.9%	16.6%	13.4%
Church, Mosque, or Synagogue	32.6%	29.8%	24.5%	26.2%	24.6%
Doctor’s Office	47.1%	54.2%	57.4%	54.8%	55.8%
Civic Clubs/Organizations	23.3%	20.8%	20.2%	19.0%	18.0%
Facebook or Twitter	26.5%*	29.9%*	36.7%*	47.6%	50.6%*
Commuter Rail	11.0%	13.0%	14.9%	16.4%	15.9%
MBTA Bus	4.4%	6.1%	6.7%	6.8%	8.7%
Newspaper (online)	27.2%	34.8%*	29.0%*	24.4%	19.6%*
Newspaper (print)	60.0%*	55.2%*	46.4%*	35.8%*	26.7%*
The Needham Patch	15.7%*	32.2%	25.1%	27.1%	27.1%*
Parent Newsletter from the School	78.4%	82.4%*	82.6%*	76.3%	72.1%*
PTC Email/Newsletter	75.2%*	66.3%	73.0%*	64.2%	61.2%*
Radio	7.8%	11.6%	9.1%	13.5%	12.0%
School Website	66.4%*	66.1%*	61.6%*	53.4%	50.0%*
Take-Out Restaurants	10.8%	11.4%	10.5%	10.2%	9.3%

\* Denotes a statistically significant difference between 2019 and an earlier year.

## FINDINGS – PERCEPTIONS OF SUBSTANCE USE

A series of 11 items in the survey asked about respondents' *perceptions* of what occurs in Needham around underage drinking, youth substance use, and related issues.

### Perceptions – Parent Perception of Substance Use and Related Issues

Parents were asked to estimate the percentage of Needham students in 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade and 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade who engage in substance use and related issues. Respondents were only asked to estimate use among the age group of their oldest child (i.e., parents of 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders estimated use for 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders and parents of 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders estimated use among 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders).

Table 14 shows parents' average estimate of how many 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders engaged in each of these behaviors and the actual percentage of 7-8<sup>th</sup> graders who reported engaging in these behaviors in the 2018 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey conducted in the Needham Public Schools. Similarly, the table shows parents' estimate of these behaviors among 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders and actual data from the MetroWest survey for this age group. Parents over-estimated the occurrence of each of these behaviors for which comparative data are available.

**Table 14: Parent Perception of Substance Use and Related Issues**

Estimate % of Needham Students Who...	6-8 <sup>th</sup> Grade (Estimate)	7-8 <sup>th</sup> Grade (Actual 2018)	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Grade (Estimate)	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Grade (Actual 2018)
Current Alcohol Use	18.0%	3.7%	49.0%	29.2%
Binge Alcohol Use	7.6%	0.8%	24.6%	18.5%
Rode with Driver Who Drank	23.2%	N/A	22.2%	11.0%
Current Marijuana Use	14.2%	1.6%	38.7%	19.6%
Electronic Vapor Product	25.8%	5.8%	43.7%	22.5%
Illegal drug other than marijuana or inhalants	8.0%	N/A	15.1%	N/A
Ever Misused Rx Drugs	12.0%	N/A	19.6%	4.3%

**Note.** There are several important limitations to this set of analyses.

The MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey took place during October-November 2018 and the parent survey took place during May-June 2019. Given that use of substances tends to increase with age, actual use may have been slightly higher during the time when parents took part in the survey. This difference may over-exaggerate the gap between actual and perceived use (i.e., the gap between estimated and actual may be smaller than it appears).

On the opposite side, parents of 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders were asked to estimate these behaviors among 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders but the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey only surveys 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders in this age group. Had the parent survey asked respondents to only estimate use among 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders (excluding 6<sup>th</sup> graders), their estimates may have been higher (i.e., the gap between estimated and actual may be larger than it appears).

### Perceptions – Parent Perception of Other Parents’ Attitudes and Behaviors

Parents were asked to estimate the percentage of parents at their child’s school who they think have certain attitudes and engage in certain behaviors. Since respondents were asked about parents at their child’s school, these data are presented separately for parents whose oldest child is in 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade and parents whose oldest child is in 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade.

As shown in Table 15, respondents whose oldest child is in 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade think that 15.0% of other 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade parents knowingly allow their child to attend parties where underage drinking occurs, think that 12.4% of other 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade parents knowingly allow their child to attend parties where marijuana use occurs, think that 24.5% of other 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade parents call to make sure a parent will be present before allowing their child to go to another home for a social gathering, and think that 41.6% of other 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade parents would like to receive a call (from other parents) if their own child is hosting a social gathering.

Respondents whose oldest child is in 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade think that 43.3% of other 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade parents knowingly allow their child to attend parties where underage drinking occurs, think that 34.0% of other 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade parents knowingly allow their child to attend parties where marijuana use occurs, think that 19.5% of other 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade parents call to make sure a parent will be present before allowing their child to go to another home for a social gathering, and think that 39.9% of other 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade parents would like to receive a call (from other parents) if their own child is hosting a social gathering.

**Table 15: Parent Perception of Other Parents’ Attitudes and Behaviors**

What % of PARENTS at your child’s school do you think...	Parents of 6-8 <sup>th</sup> Graders Estimate of Other 6-8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Parents	Parents of 9-12 <sup>th</sup> Graders Estimate of Other 9-12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Parents
Knowingly allow their children to attend parties where underage drinking occurs?	15.0%	43.3%
Knowingly allow their child to attend parties where marijuana use occurs?	12.4%	34.0%
Call to make sure that a parent is home before they allow their child to go to another home for a social gathering?	24.5%	19.5%
Want to receive a call (from other parents) if their own child is hosting a social gathering?	41.6%	39.9%

## FINDINGS –SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION BEHAVIORS

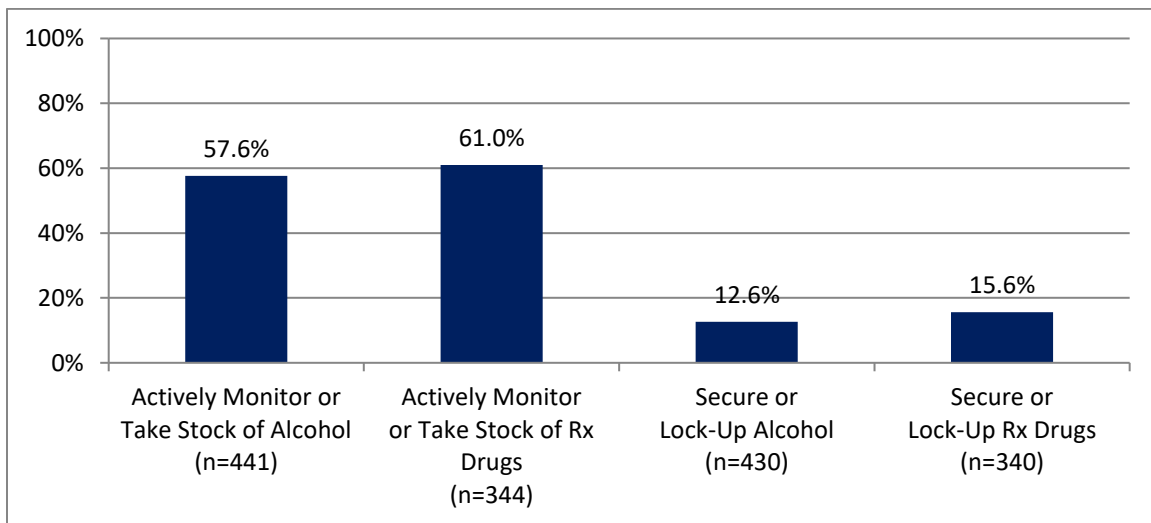
Nineteen questions assessed parents’ behaviors associated with preventing underage drinking and youth substance use.

### Behaviors – Means Restriction

Four questions in the survey examined the extent to which parents: (a) actively monitor or take stock of any alcohol or prescription medications present in their home and (b) secure or lock-up any alcohol or prescription medications present in their home.

Ninety-four percent (94%) of respondents indicated that they keep alcohol in their home and 75% reported that there are prescription medications in their home. As shown in Figure 21, among respondents who keep alcohol in their home, 57.6% report that they actively monitor or take stock of the alcohol and 12.6% secure or lock-up the alcohol. Among respondents who have prescription drugs in their home, 61.0% report that they actively monitor or take stock of the prescription drugs and 15.6% secure or lock-up the prescription drugs.

**Figure 21: Alcohol and Prescription Drug Means Restriction Efforts**



**Age/Grade.** Parents of high school students were significantly more likely than parents of middle school students to report that they actively monitor or take stock of alcohol in their home (MS: 47%; HS: 63%), that they secure or lock-up alcohol in their home (MS: 8%; HS: 15%), and that they actively monitor or take stock of prescription medications in their home (MS: 52%; HS: 66%). Reports of securing or locking-up prescription medications in the home did not vary significantly by the grade level of the respondent’s oldest child (MS: 14%; HS: 17%).

**Trend [2011-2019].** Respondents in 2019 were significantly more likely to report actively monitoring or taking stock of any prescription medication in their home in comparison to their peers in 2017 and 2015,  $p \leq .05$ . None of the other items varied by survey year.

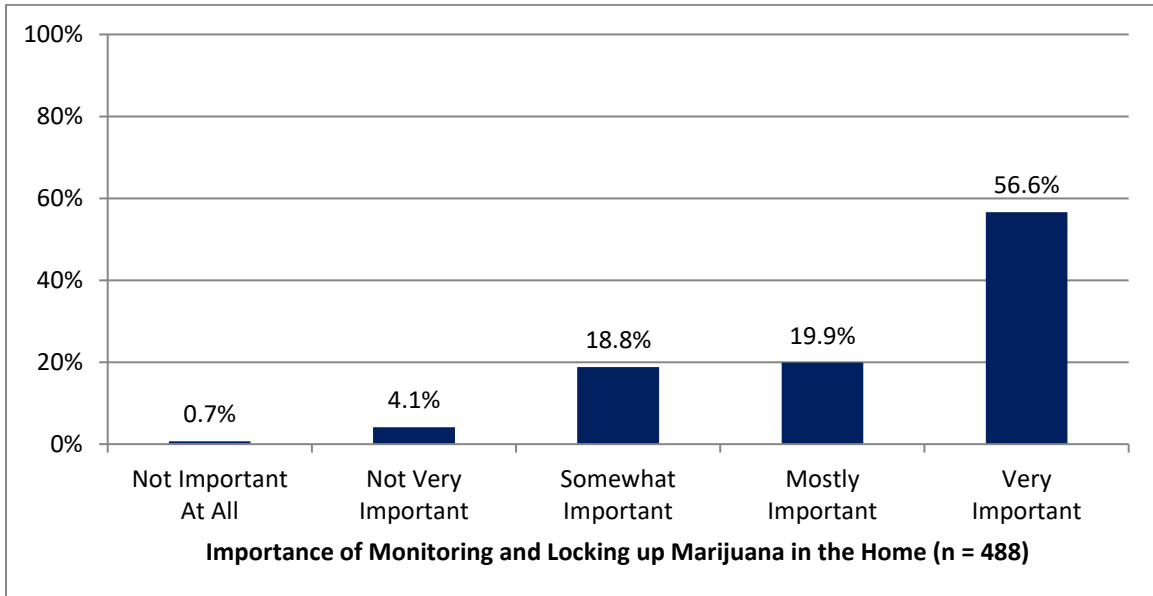
**Table 16: Trends in Alcohol and Prescription Drug Means Restriction Efforts**

	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019
Actively Monitor or Take Stock of Any Alcohol Present in the Home	55.0%	61.5%	58.6%	57.4%	57.6%
Secure or Lock-Up Any Alcohol Present in the Home	13.9%	12.8%	11.6%	11.5%	12.6%
Actively Monitor or Take Stock of Any Prescription Medication in the Home	56.8%	55.3%	53.5%*	54.1%*	61.0%*
Secure or Lock-Up Any Prescription Medication Present in the Home	13.5%	16.2%	11.8%	13.1%	15.6%

\* Denotes a statistically significant difference between 2019 and an earlier year.

A new item in the 2019 survey asked parents how important they feel it is for individuals to actively monitor and lock-up any marijuana they choose to keep in their home now that it is legal for adults to have marijuana in their home for medical or recreational reasons. As shown in Figure 22, three-quarters of respondents (76.5%) think it is *mostly* or *very important* for individuals to actively monitor and lock-up any marijuana they choose to keep in their home.

**Figure 22: Importance of Monitoring and Locking-Up Marijuana in the Home**



**Age/Grade.** Parents of middle and high school students did not vary significantly in their response to this question (MS: 74%; HS: 78%),  $\chi^2(1, N=458) = .931, p=.348$ .

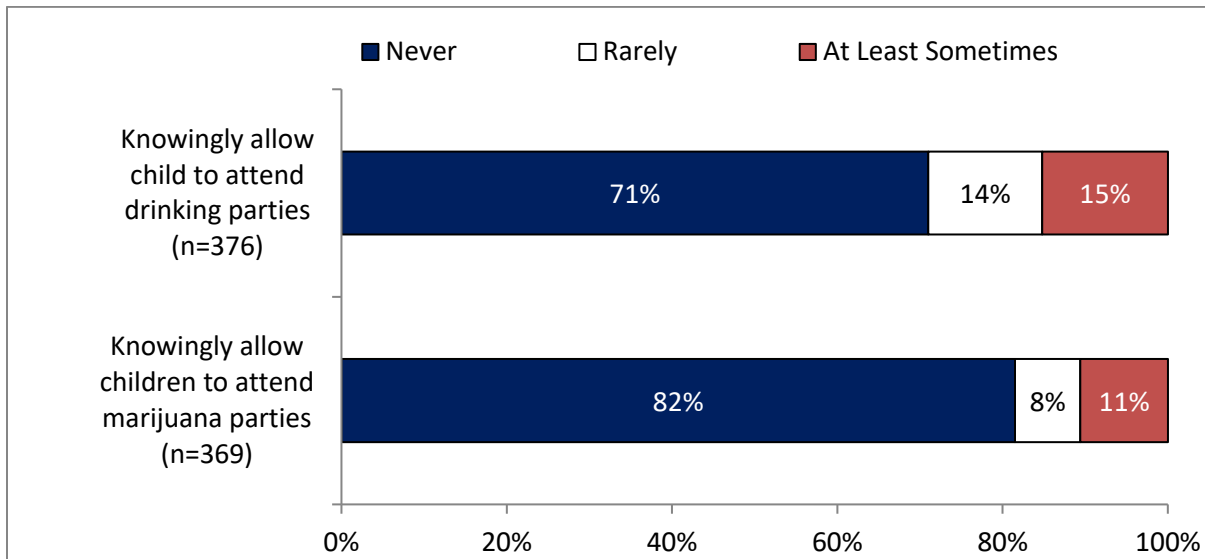
**Trend [2019 Only].** This question was first asked in the 2019 survey. Trend data are not available.



## Behaviors – Parties and Gatherings

Two questions in the survey asked about parents knowingly allowing their child to attend parties. As shown in Figure 23, one-quarter of respondents (29.0%) have knowingly allowed their child to attend parties where underage drinking likely occurs and 18.4% have knowingly allowed their child to attend parties where marijuana use likely occurs.

**Figure 23: Parties and Gatherings**



**Age/Grade.** Parents of high school students were significantly more likely than parents of middle school students to report that they have knowingly allowed their child to attend parties where underage drinking likely occurs (MS: 2%; HS: 41%) and to attend parties where marijuana use likely occurs (MS: 2%; HS: 26%).

**Trend [2013-2019].** Parents did not vary significantly between 2017 and 2019 in their propensity to knowingly allow their children to attend parties where underage drinking or marijuana use likely occur.

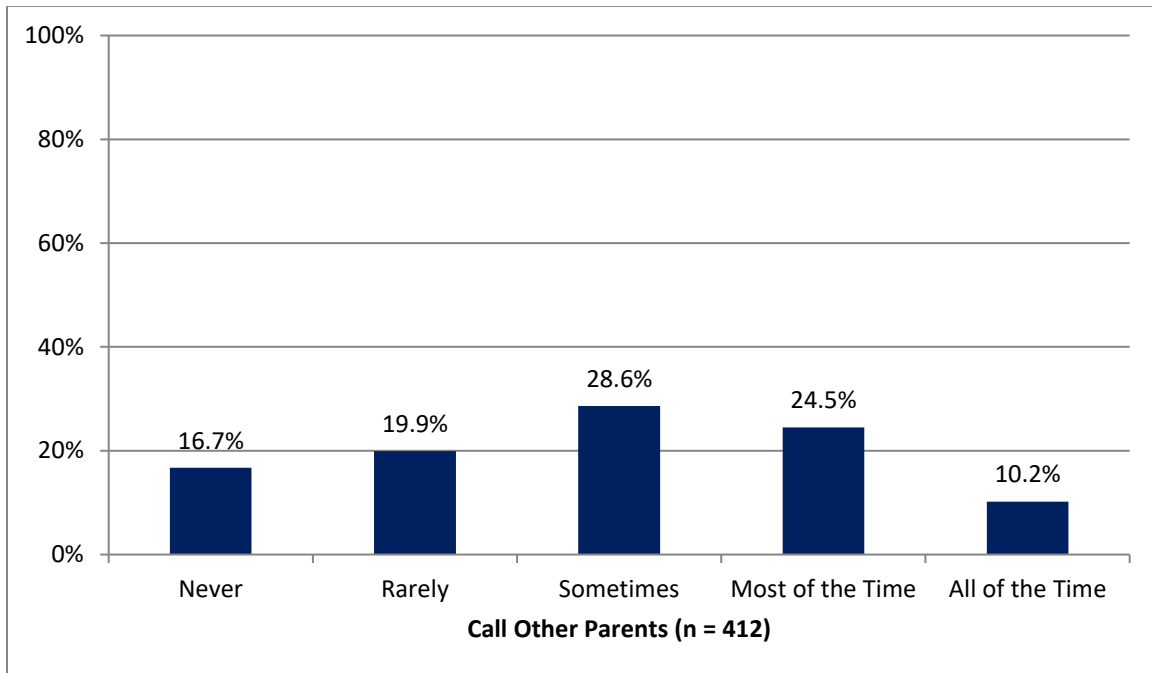
**Table 17: Trends in Parties and Gatherings**

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Knowingly Allowed Child to Attend Underage Drinking Party At least Once	22.0%	18.1%	24.3%	29.0%
Knowingly Allowed Child to Attend Party with Marijuana At Least Once	15.3%	12.0%	15.2%	18.4%

### Behaviors – Calling Other Parents

Another item in the survey assessed the frequency of parents calling other parents prior to allowing their child to attend a social gathering. This question asked, “How often do you call other parents to make sure they will be home before you allow your child to go to their house for a social gathering?” Over one-third of respondents (34.7%) reported that they call other parents either *most of the time* or *all of the time* to make sure a parent will be home.

**Figure 24: Frequency of Calling Other Parents**



**Age/Grade.** Parents of middle school students were significantly more likely than parents of high school students to report that called other parents *most of the time* or *all of the time* prior to letting their child attend a social gathering (MS: 52%; HS: 27%),  $p \leq .001$ .

**Trend [2013-2019].** Parents did not vary significantly between 2019 and 2017 in their reports of calling other parents prior to letting their child attend a social gathering.

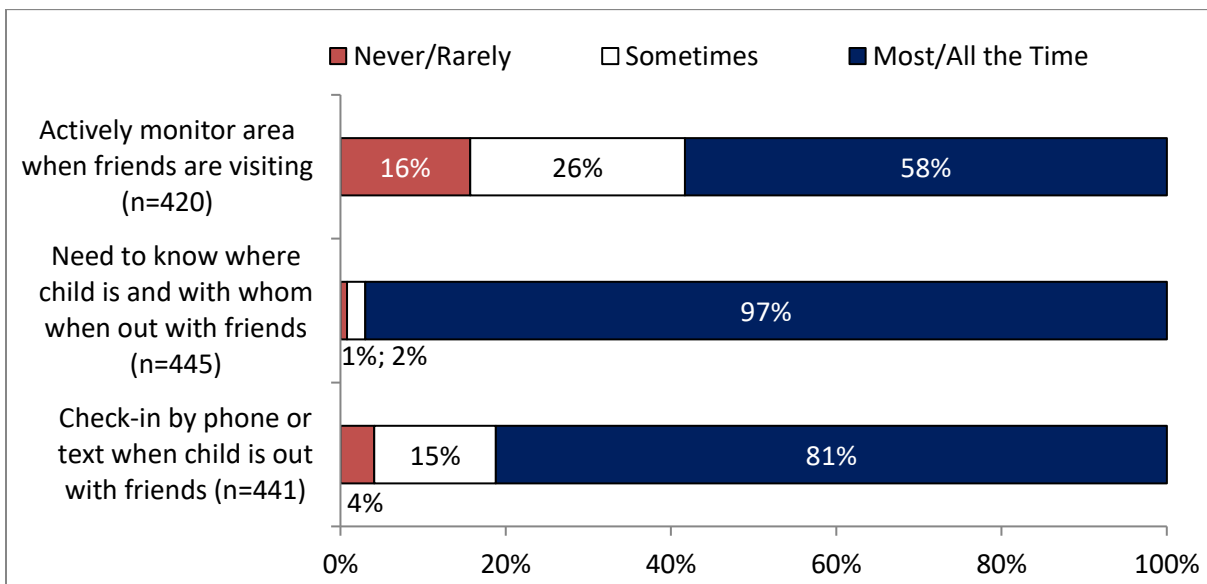
**Table 18: Trends in Frequency of Calling Other Parents**

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Report Calling Other Parents Most or All of the Time Before Letting Child Attend Gathering	38.1%	42.9%	38.5%	34.7%

### Behaviors – Parental Monitoring (While Child is with Friends)

Respondents were asked three questions related to parental monitoring when their child is engaged in a social activity with friends. As shown in Figure 25, over half of parents (58.3%) reported that they monitor the activity of their child and his/her friends by walking through the area in which they are congregating and visually assessing for signs of substance use either *most of the time* or *all of the time* when their child has friends over the house. Almost all of the respondents (96.9%) reported that they require their child to tell them with whom and where they will be either *most of the time* or *all of the time* if they are out with friends. The majority of respondents (81.1%) reported that they check-in with their child by phone or text message either *most of the time* or *all of the time* while they are out with friends.

**Figure 25: Parental Monitoring (While Child is with Friends)**



**Age/Grade.** Parents did not differ significantly in their reports of monitoring the activity of their child and his/her friends (MS: 61%; HS: 57%) or requiring their child to tell them with whom and where they will be when they are out with friends (MS: 99%; HS: 96%). Middle school parents were significantly more likely to check-in with their child by phone or text message at least once time while they are out (MS: 88%; HS: 78%),  $p \leq .01$ .

**Trend [2013-2019].** Parents did not differ between 2017 and 2019 on any of these items.

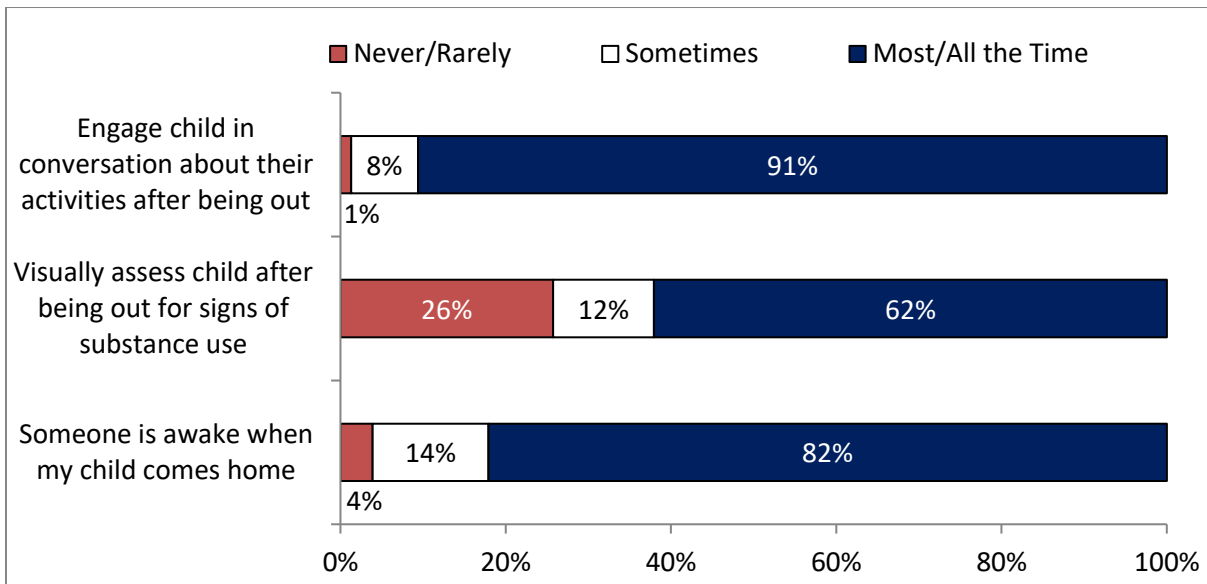
**Table 19: Trends in Parental Monitoring (While Child is with Friends)**

	2013	2015	2017	2019
Monitor Activity When Child Has Friends Over	66.1%	66.0%	61.5%	58.3%
Require Child to Reveal Location and Companions	96.9%	97.5%	96.7%	96.9%
Check-In with Child by Phone or Text	81.1%	81.2%	83.2%	81.1%

### Behaviors – Parental Monitoring (After Child is Out with Friends)

A second series of questions asked respondents about parental monitoring behavior after their child returns home from being out with friends. As shown in Figure 26, over half of parents (62.0%) report that they visually assess their child for signs of substance use (e.g., bloodshot eyes, pupil dilation, coherence of speech, physical coordination, odor) either *most of the time* or *all of the time*, 82.1% report that someone is awake when their child comes home from being out with friends, and 90.6% report that they engage their child in a conversation to learn about their activities when their child returns home from being out.

**Figure 26: Parental Monitoring (After Child is Out with Friends)**



**Age/Grade.** Parents of middle school children were significantly more likely than parents of high school children to report engaging their child in a conversation when they return home from being out with friends to learn about their activities (MS: 94%; HS: 89%),  $p \leq .05$  and to report that someone is awake when their child comes home from being out with friends (MS: 93%; HS: 77%).  $p \leq .001$ . Parents of high school children were significantly more likely than parents of middle school children to report visually assessing their child for signs of substance use (MS: 52%; HS: 66%),  $p \leq .05$ .

**Trend [2013-2019].** Parents did not vary significantly between 2017 and 2019 in their reports of parental monitoring after their child returns home from being out with friends.

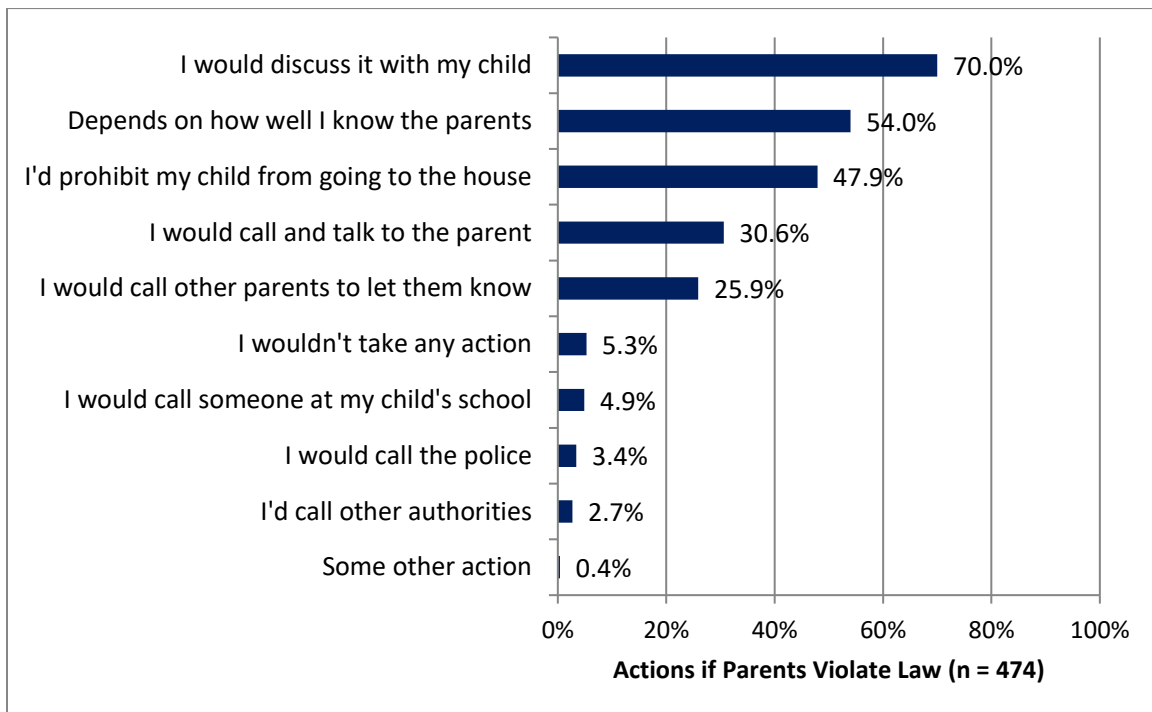
**Table 20: Trends in Parental Monitoring (After Child is Out with Friends)**

	2013	2015	2017	2019
All Adults Are Awake When Child Returns	83.6%	88.0%	85.9%	82.1%
Visually Assess Child for Signs of Substance Use	57.7%	60.7%	61.0%	62.0%
Engage Child in Conversation About Activities	90.2%	92.6%	93.0%	90.6%

### Behaviors – Actions Supported if Parents Violating Underage Drinking Laws

Respondents were asked what they would do, if anything, if they learned that another parent of a child at their child’s school was allowing teens to drink at their home. As shown in Figure 27, parents were most likely to report that they would *discuss it with their child* (70.0%), the action(s) they would take *depends* on how well they know the other parents (54.0%), *prohibit their child from going to that house* (47.9%), *call and talk* to the other parent (30.6%), and/or *call other parents* to let them know (25.9%). Few indicated that they would call the police, call the school, or call other authorities. Only 5.3% reported that they wouldn’t take any action.

Figure 27: Action(s) if Parents Violate Underage Drinking Laws



**Age/Grade.** Parents high school children were significantly more likely than parents of middle school children to report that they would not take any action (MS: 3%; HS: 7%),  $p \leq .05$ .

Parents of middle school children were significantly more likely than parents of high school children to report that they would call the police (MS: 6%; HS: 2%),  $p \leq .05$ , call someone at their child’s school (MS: 9%; HS: 3%),  $p \leq .01$ , call and talk to the other parent (MS: 36%; HS: 28%),  $p \leq .05$ , call other parents to let them know (MS: 34%; HS: 21%),  $p \leq .01$ , and prohibit their child from going to that house (MS: 65%; HS: 40%),  $p \leq .001$ .

**Trend [2015-2019].** Respondents in 2019 were significantly less likely than their peers in 2017 and 2015 to report that they would prohibit their child from going to the other house (2015: 60%; 2017: 57%; 2019: 48%). Respondents in 2019 were significantly less likely than respondents in 2015 to report that they would discuss it with their child (2015: 77%; 2019: 70%).

Respondents in 2019 were significantly more likely to report that they would not take any action (2015: 2%; 2019: 5%).

**Table 21: Trends in Actions if Parents Violate Law**

	2015	2017	2019
I would discuss it with my child	76.5%*	73.8%	70.0%*
I'd prohibit my child from going to the house	59.6%*	56.5%*	47.9%*
Depends on how well I know the parents	48.1%	51.3%	54.0%
I would call and talk to the parent	34.0%	31.1%	30.6%
I would call other parents to let them know	30.0%	28.9%	25.9%
I would call the police	5.6%	5.0%	3.4%
I would call someone at my child's school	4.9%	4.8%	4.9%
I wouldn't take any action	2.0%*	3.8%	5.3%*
I'd call other authorities	4.9%	2.7%	2.7%
Some other action	1.6%	2.0%	0.4%

\* Denotes a statistically significant difference between 2019 and an earlier year.

## FINDINGS – HELP SEEKING

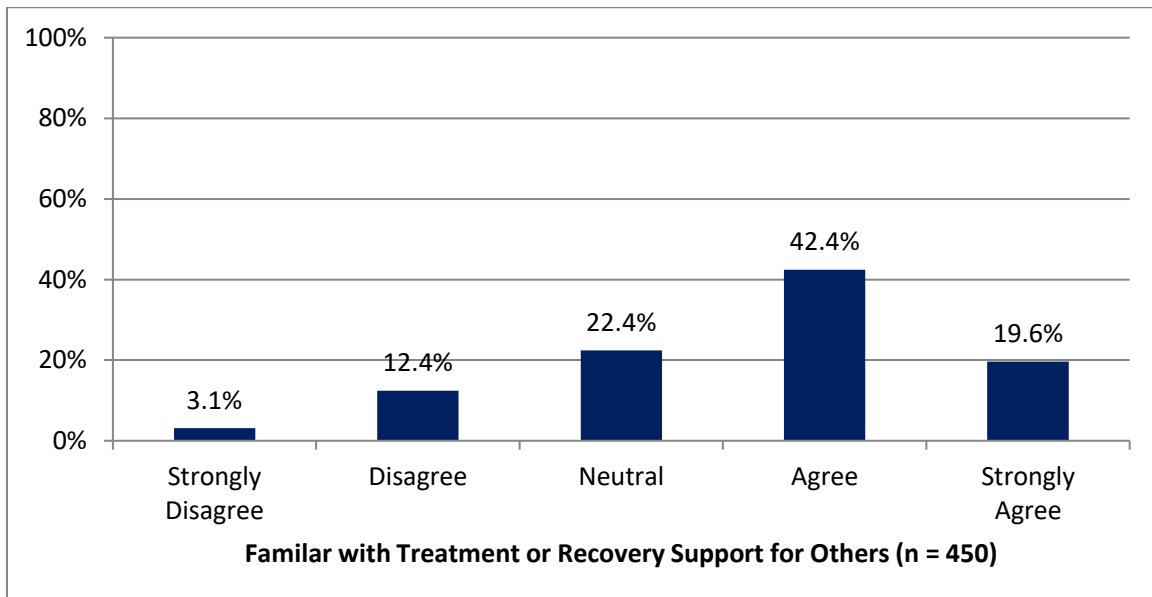
Three questions in the survey asked respondents about help-seeking.

### Help Seeking – Familiar with Treatment or Recovery Support Services for Others

Respondents were asked whether they are familiar with places to find treatment or recovery support services if they became worried that their child or another member of their family was having problem with substance use (e.g., alcoholics anonymous, narcotics anonymous, detoxification services, treatment services, etc.).

As shown in Figure 28, roughly two-thirds of respondents (62.0%) either *agree* or *strongly agree* that they are familiar with treatment or recovery support services for other individuals. An additional 22.4% were *neutral* and 15.5% either *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that they are familiar with these services.

**Figure 28: Familiar with Treatment or Recovery Support Services for Others**



**Age/Grade.** Parents of middle school and high school students did not differ significantly in their level of familiarity with treatment and recovery support services for others (MS: 57%; HS: 64%),  $\chi^2(1, N=450) = 1.953, p=.179$ .

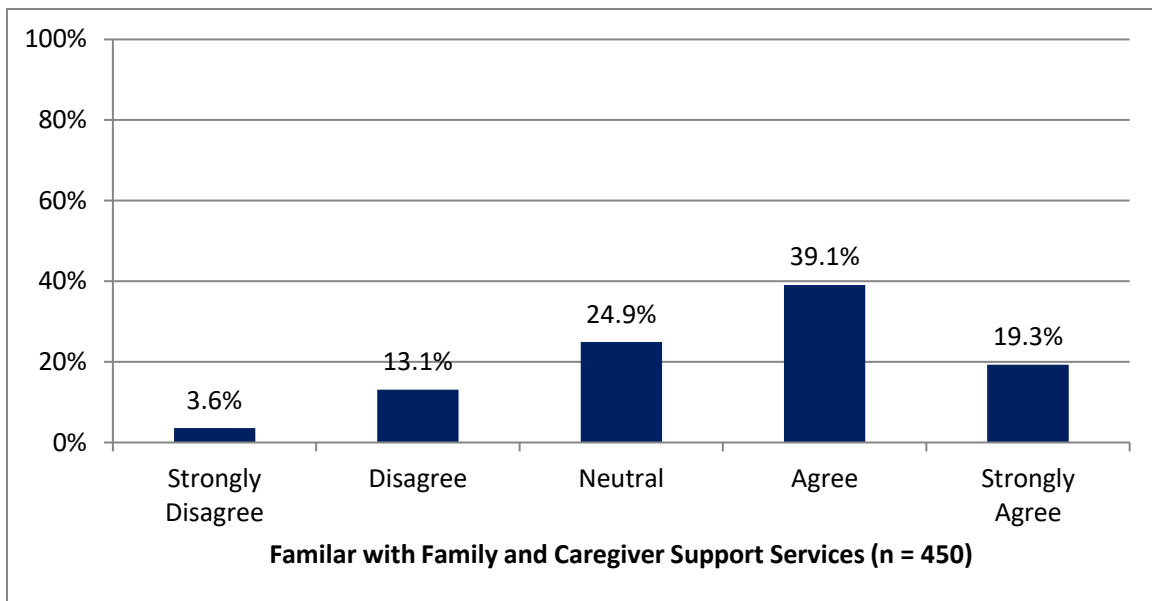
**Trend [2019 Only].** This item was first added in 2019. Trend data are not available.

### Help Seeking – Familiar with Family and Caregiver Support Services

Respondents were asked whether they are familiar with places to find family and caregiver support services if they became worried that their child or another member of their family was having problem with substance use (e.g., Al-Anon, Learn to Cope, etc.).

As shown in Figure 29, over half of respondents (58.4%) either *agree* or *strongly agree* that they are familiar with family and caregiver support services for themselves or for other family members if they became worried about their child’s or another family member’s substance use. An additional 24.9% were *neutral* and 16.7% either *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that they are familiar with these services.

**Figure 29: Familiar with Family and Caregiver Support Services**



**Age/Grade.** Parents of middle school and high school students did not differ significantly in their level of familiarity with treatment and recovery support services for others (MS: 57%; HS: 59%),  $\chi^2(1, N=450) = .259, p=.612$ .

**Trend [2019 Only].** This item was first added in 2019. Trend data are not available.

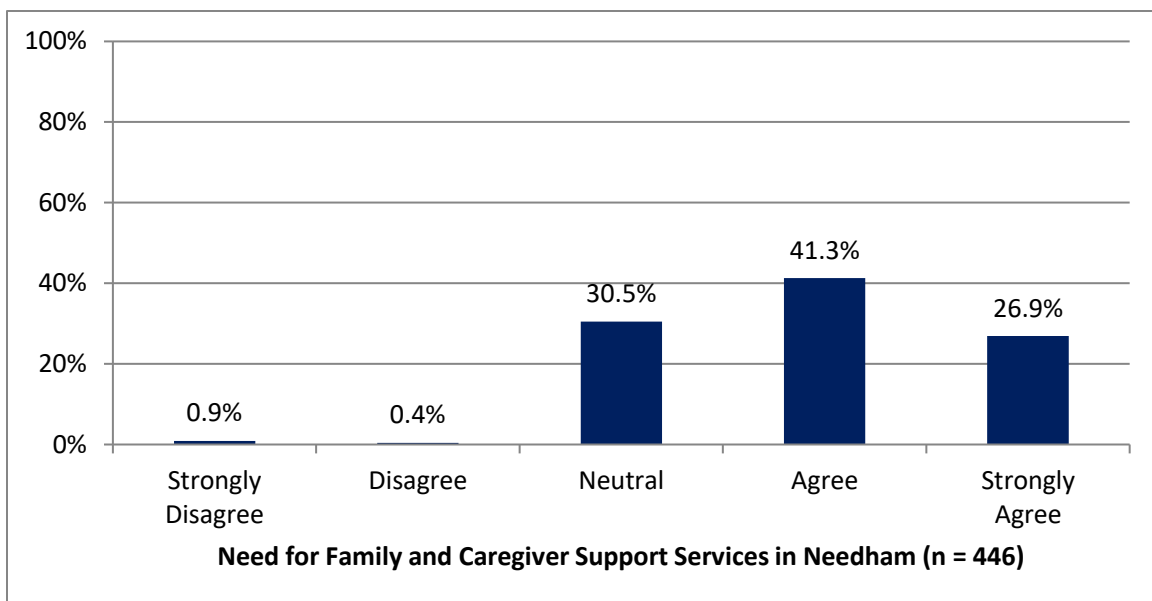


### Help Seeking – Perceived Need for Family and Caregiver Support Services in Needham

Respondents were asked whether they believe there is a need for support groups such as Al-Anon in Needham for family members and caregivers of individuals experiencing substance use addiction.

As shown in Figure 30, over two-third of respondents (68.2%) either *agree* or *strongly agree* that there is a need for support groups such as Al-Anon in Needham for family members and caregivers of individuals experiencing substance use addiction. An additional 30.5% were *neutral* and 1.3% either *disagree* or *strongly disagree* of the need for these services in Needham.

**Figure 30: Need for Family and Caregiver Support Services in Needham**



**Age/Grade.** Parents of middle school and high school students did not differ significantly in their perception of the need for family and caregiver support services in Needham (MS: 67%; HS: 69%),  $\chi^2(1, N=446) = .108, p=.746$ .

**Trend [2019 Only].** This item was first added in 2019. Trend data are not available.

## **FINDINGS – POSITIVE ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES**

Respondents were asked to indicate what, if any, additional services, activities, or programs they would like to see in Needham to provide youth with *positive alternatives* to engaging in substance use.

Forty-four (44) of the respondents to the survey provided recommendations for positive alternatives to engaging in substance use. These included ideas for activities (21), places to congregate (10), wellness/education activities (9), and interest groups (4). The complete list of themes and sub-themes appears below:

### **Activities (21)**

- Weekend Activities/Alternative Activities (6)
- Opportunities for Community Service (4)
- Social Activities/Dances (4)
- Intramural Sports (3)
- Open Gym Time (2)
- Early Release Day Activities (1)
- Planned Outings (1)

### **Places to Congregate (10)**

- Places to Hang Out in Town (6)
- Teen Center/Youth Center/Community Center (4)

### **Interest Groups (4)**

- Clubs/Music/Art/Drama (4)

### **Wellness Education/Activities (9)**

- Wellness Education/Health and Mental Health Promotion Activities (9)

## CROSS-WALK OF ITEMS SIMILAR TO THOSE IN THE STUDENT SURVEY

Several of the items that appeared in the 2017 parent survey are roughly parallel to questions that appeared in the 2016 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey. The table identifies common items in each respective survey. These are not perfect comparisons. Please refer to the original question wording in each instrument to avoid inappropriate statements.

Question	Parents of 6-8 <sup>th</sup> Graders	7-8 <sup>th</sup> Graders (2016)	Parents of 9-12 <sup>th</sup> Graders	9-12 <sup>th</sup> Graders (2018)
Ate dinner at home with family on 5 or more of the past 7 days	67.2%	82.8%	52.8%	71.5%
Parents feel it is very wrong for child to smoke tobacco	84.8%	90.9%	77.6%	77.6%
Parents feel it is very wrong for child to have 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks nearly every day	94.9%	83.8%	96.1%	75.1%
Parents feel it is very wrong for child to use marijuana	72.8%	90.3%	68.9%	66.1%
Parents feel it is very wrong for child to use Rx drugs not prescribed to them	96.8%	92.6%	96.7%	86.5%
Drank at least one drink of alcohol (not including religious ceremonies) in the last 30 days	18.0%	3.7%	49.0%	29.2%
Drank 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row (within a couple of hours) in the last 30 days	7.6%	0.8%	24.6%	18.5%
Rode in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been using alcohol in the last 30 days	23.2%	N/A	22.2%	11.0%
Used marijuana in the last 30 days	14.2%	1.6%	38.7%	19.6%
Ever used a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription	12.0%	N/A	19.6%	4.3%

**APPENDIX A:  
Spring 2019 Survey Instrument**

**Substance Prevention Alliance of Needham (SPAN)  
Parent/Guardian Survey of Norms, Attitudes, and Behaviors**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Substance Prevention Alliance of Needham (SPAN) and the Needham Public Health Department are conducting a survey of parents/guardians of 6th - 12th graders. The purpose of this survey is to help us learn more about parent/guardian beliefs and perceptions regarding underage drinking and substance use. Your candid feedback will enable us to structure and implement targeted prevention initiatives to enhance the health and safety of Needham youth. The results of this survey will be shared with you through our website and during the next academic year through health promotion activities and community-wide messaging.

It should only take about 10 minutes to answer the questions.

This survey is anonymous. Your responses cannot be traced to you. The data are being handled by Social Science Research and Evaluation, Inc., a non-profit research firm in Burlington, MA. No one will know how you answered the items in this survey. Please answer the questions based on what you actually think and do. Completing the survey is voluntary. You may skip any question you choose not to answer.

Thank you very much for your time and support.

Catherine Delano, LCSW, MPH  
Drug Free Communities Program Director  
[cdelano@needhamma.gov](mailto:cdelano@needhamma.gov)

**Background Information**

These first questions will help determine your eligibility to participate and will help us describe which groups of parents/guardians took part in the survey.

1. Do you currently live in Needham? (choose *one*)

No       Yes

2. Please indicate how many children you have in each of the following grade/age ranges.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	More Than 5
Pre-Kindergarten	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kindergarten – 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade – 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graduated High School/College/Working	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**[Note:** Those with no children in grades 6-12 are sent to the disqualification page at the very end of the survey.

Think about your oldest child in grades 6-12.

3. What grade is this child currently in?\*( this question is required)

6<sup>th</sup> grade    7<sup>th</sup> grade    8<sup>th</sup> grade    9<sup>th</sup> grade    10<sup>th</sup> grade    11<sup>th</sup> grade    12<sup>th</sup> grade

4. Does this child attend school in Needham? (choose *one*)

No       Yes

5. Does this child attend public school? (choose *one*)

No       Yes

## Communication

This first series of questions asks about different types of communication you may have had with your child and/or with other parents/guardians. Please think about your oldest child in 6th-12th grade when answering these items.

6. During the past 7 days, on how many days did you eat dinner at home with your child? (choose *one*)

- |                                 |                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 days | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 days | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 days |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 day  | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 days | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 days |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 days | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 days |                                 |

7. Have you communicated your family's guidelines and expectations around youth alcohol and drug use to your child? (choose *one*)

- No       Yes

8. During the past 30 days, have you talked to your child about the potential negative consequences associated with... (choose *one* per row)

	No	Yes
underage alcohol use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
using tobacco products such as cigarettes or smokeless tobacco?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
using marijuana?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
using an electronic vapor product (e.g., Juul)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
using prescription drugs that were not prescribed to them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
using other illegal drugs (such as cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines, and ecstasy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Which of the following topics, if any, have you discussed with your child? (choose all that apply)

- Never riding in a vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking or using drugs
- Never driving a vehicle if they have been drinking or using drugs
- Never using alcohol or other drugs while they are a minor (abstinence)
- Only using responsibly or in moderation if they do choose to use alcohol or other drugs
- Refusal strategies – ways to say no if someone offers them alcohol or other drugs
- Call home or send a text message if they feel unsafe
- Call a taxi or a ride service like Uber or Lyft if they have been drinking or using drugs
- Always have a close friend present if they choose to use alcohol or other drugs
- Never feeling like they can't call home for help because they are scared they might get in trouble
- Not feeling afraid to call the police or emergency medical services (911) if there is a medical emergency (e.g., alcohol poisoning, someone gets hurt, etc.)

10. Have you ever talked with the parents/guardians of your child's close friends to share and compare parental philosophies and standards regarding alcohol and drugs? (choose *one*)

- No       Yes

11. I believe that I can have an influence on whether my child uses alcohol or drugs. (choose *one*)

- |  |                                     |   |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> No Opinion | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree          | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree      |   |

## Attitudes and Beliefs

These questions ask about your attitudes and beliefs about youth substance use. Please think about your oldest child in 6th-12th grade when answering these items.

12. Which of the following statements best represents your own belief about underage alcohol use? (choose *one*)

- Youth drinking is never a good thing  
 Occasional youth drinking under supervision of a parent/guardian is OK  
 Occasional youth drinking without adult supervision is OK as long as there is no driving involved  
 Any type of youth drinking is OK.

13. Which of the following statements best represents your own belief about youth marijuana use? (choose *one*)

- Youth marijuana use is never a good thing  
 Occasional youth marijuana use under supervision of a parent/guardian is OK  
 Occasional youth marijuana use without adult supervision is OK as long as there is no driving involved  
 Any type of youth marijuana use is OK

14. I think it is OK to allow underage alcohol use at home as long as it is responsible and not excessive. (choose *one*)

- Strongly Disagree                       No Opinion                       Strongly Agree  
 Disagree                                       Agree

15. I think it is OK to allow youth marijuana use at home as long as it is responsible and not excessive. (choose *one*)

- Strongly Disagree                       No Opinion                       Strongly Agree  
 Disagree                                       Agree

16. In 2016, Massachusetts legalized recreational marijuana use for adults 21 and older. Which of the following statements, if any, do you agree with? (choose all that apply)

- The change to the law has probably not had much of an effect on youth  
 Marijuana is more available to youth now that the law has changed  
 The change to the law has caused more youth to try marijuana  
 The change to the law has caused youth to start using marijuana at a younger age  
 The change to the law has caused youth who were already using marijuana to increase their level of use

17. How wrong do you think it would be for your child to... (choose *one* per row)

	Not At All Wrong	A Little Bit Wrong	Wrong	Very Wrong
smoke tobacco?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
drink alcohol occasionally?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
have one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
use marijuana?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
use an electronic vapor product (e.g., Juul)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
use prescription drugs not prescribed to them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. Many parents/guardians in Needham set a bad example for their children by their own excessive alcohol use.

(choose *one*)

- Strongly Disagree                       No Opinion                       Strongly Agree  
 Disagree                                       Agree

19. Too many parents/guardians in Needham either provide alcohol for their children or turn a blind eye to underage alcohol use. (choose *one*)

- Strongly Disagree                       No Opinion                       Strongly Agree  
 Disagree                                       Agree

20. Many parents/guardians in Needham set a bad example for their children by their own excessive marijuana use. (choose *one*)
- |  |                                     |   |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> No Opinion | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree          | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree      |   |
21. Too many parents/guardians in Needham turn a blind eye to youth marijuana use. (choose *one*)
- |  |                                     |   |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> No Opinion | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree          | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree      |   |
22. I am concerned that the increase in use of electronic vapor products (e.g., Juul) by some youth and adults increases the likelihood that more youth will begin vaping. (choose *one*)
- |  |                                     |   |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> No Opinion | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree          | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree      |   |
23. I believe schools should provide education programs for students my child's age that are designed to help prevent and reduce underage drinking and substance abuse. (choose *one*)
- |  |                                     |   |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> No Opinion | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree          | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree      |   |
24. In which grade levels should schools provide evidence-based, age/developmentally appropriate substance abuse awareness and prevention curricula through health classes? (choose all that apply)
- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Never                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> grade | <input type="checkbox"/> 9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> grade  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> K-1 <sup>st</sup> grade                | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <sup>th</sup> grade                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> grade | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> grade |   |
25. I believe that the substance abuse awareness and prevention curriculum in my child's school is comprehensive and effective. (choose *one*)
- |  |                                     |   |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> No Opinion | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree          | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree      |   |
26. What are some effective ways / places to reach parents/guardians like you with prevention messages? (choose all that apply)
- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bank, grocery store, or convenience store | <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook or Twitter | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent Newsletter from the school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cable television                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Commuter Rail       | <input type="checkbox"/> PTC Email/Newsletter              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church, mosque, or synagogue              | <input type="checkbox"/> MBTA Bus            | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor's Office                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper (online)  | <input type="checkbox"/> School Website                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civic clubs/organizations                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper (print)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Take-out restaurants              |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> The Needham Patch   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                      |
27. If the police became aware that Needham teens were drinking alcohol, what action(s) would you support regarding the teens? (choose all that apply)
- There should be no action against the teens
  - Police should issue a verbal warning to the teens
  - Police should call or contact the teens' parents
  - Police should issue a ticket/notice to appear in court
  - Police should arrest the offending teens
  - Police should inform school personnel
  - If on a Needham sports team, the school should enforce MIAA sanctions
  - Police should refer the teens to a mandated substance abuse education class
28. How likely are you to contact law enforcement if you witnessed or became aware of Needham teens drinking, using substances, or engaging in other illegal behaviors? (choose *one*)
- |  |  |                                      |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not At All Likely | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Likely | <input type="checkbox"/> Very Likely |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Very Likely   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly Likely   |                                      |



29. Are you familiar with the Needham Youth Diversion Program? (choose *one*)

No       Yes [sent to #37a]

a. Has the presence of a new Youth Diversion Program in Needham increased your willingness to contact law enforcement if you witnessed or became aware of Needham teens drinking, using substances, or engaging in other illegal behaviors? (choose *one*)

No       Yes

30. What is the main reason you think some parents/guardians may allow their and other children to drink alcohol in their home? (choose *one*)

- So the youth don't drink and drive
- So the drinking is supervised
- So the youth don't get arrested
- To teach youth to drink responsibly
- To be perceived as being the "cool" parent/guardian
- They don't view underage drinking as being a big deal
- Other (type-in): \_\_\_\_\_

31. 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. (choose *one*)

Strongly Disagree       No Opinion       Strongly Agree  
 Disagree       Agree

### Perceptions

These questions ask about your perceptions about what actually occurs in Needham.

[**Note:** Question #28 and #29 are based on the answer to Question #5. If the oldest child is in grades 6-8 the questions asks about grades 6-8. If the oldest child is in grades 9-12 the questions ask about grades 9-12]

32. Estimate the percentage of Needham students in [grade range] who did each of the following during the last 30 days by moving the slider to choose a percentage between 0% and 100%.

	Grade Range
% who drank at least one drink of alcohol (not including for religious ceremonies) in the last 30 days	[sliding scale]
% who drank 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row (within a couple of hours) in the last 30 days	[sliding scale]
% who rode in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol in the last 30 days	[sliding scale]
% who used marijuana in the last 30 days	[sliding scale]
% who used an electronic vapor product (e.g. Juul)	[sliding scale]
% who used any illegal drug <u>other than</u> marijuana or inhalants (such as cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines, ecstasy, and other illegal drugs) in the last 30 days	[sliding scale]

33. Estimate the percentage of Needham students in [grade range] who did each of the following by moving the slider to choose a percentage between 0% and 100%.

	Grade Range
% who ever used a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription	[sliding scale]

34. What percentage of parents at your child's school do you think...

	% of Parents
% who knowingly allow their children to attend parties where underage drinking occurs?	[sliding scale]
% who knowingly allow their child to attend parties where marijuana use occurs?	[sliding scale]
% who call to make sure that a parent/guardian is home before they allow their child to go to another home for a social gathering?	[sliding scale]
% who want to receive a call (from other parents/guardians) if their own child is hosting a social gathering?	[sliding scale]

35. Among Needham youth my child's age who drank alcohol in the last 30 days (not including for religious ceremonies), I believe they usually acquired the alcohol: (choose *one*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	From a party
<input type="checkbox"/>	From an underage friend (not at a party)
<input type="checkbox"/>	From home <u>with</u> parental knowledge
<input type="checkbox"/>	From home <u>without</u> parental knowledge
<input type="checkbox"/>	By him/herself from a store, tavern, bar, or public event (like a concert or sporting event)
<input type="checkbox"/>	From someone they know <u>over 21</u> giving it to them or buying it for them
<input type="checkbox"/>	From asking a stranger to buy it
<input type="checkbox"/>	Having a friend purchase it or purchasing it themselves <u>online</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Some other way

**Behaviors**

These questions ask about things that you currently do. Remember, your answers are anonymous and cannot be linked back to you.

[Note: Question #34 only appears if the answer to #33 is "Yes" or "No." Question #36 only appears if the answer to question #35 is "Yes" or "No."]

36. Do you actively monitor or take stock of any alcohol present in your home? (choose *one*)

There is no alcohol in my home     Yes     No

37. Do you secure or lock-up any alcohol present in your home? (choose *one*)

Yes     No

38. Do you actively monitor or take stock of any prescription medications in your home? (choose *one*)

There are no prescription medications in my home     Yes     No

39. Do you secure or lock-up prescription medications in your home? (choose *one*)

Yes     No

40. The change to the Massachusetts marijuana laws makes it legal for adults to have marijuana in their home for medical or recreational reasons. How important do you feel it is for individuals to actively monitor and lock-up any marijuana they choose to keep in their home? (choose *one*)

Not Important At All                       Somewhat Important                       Very Important  
 Not Very Important                       Mostly Important

41. How often do you or any other adults in your home do the following... (choose *one* per row)

	Not Applicable	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	All of the Time
knowingly allow your child to attend parties where underage drinking occurs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
knowingly allow your child to attend parties where marijuana use occurs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
call other parents/guardians to make sure they will be home before allowing your child to go to their house for a social gathering?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
allow your child to have friends over when you or another adult are not at home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
monitor the activities of your child and their friends in your home by doing things like walking through the area in which they are congregating and visually assessing for signs of substance use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



47. What, if any, additional services, activities, or programs would you like to see in Needham to provide youth with positive alternatives to engaging in substance use? [type-in]: \_\_\_\_\_

### **End of Survey**

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact:

Catherine Delano, LCSW, MPH  
Substance Prevention Alliance of Needham (SPAN)  
Needham Public Health Department  
1471 Highland Avenue Needham, MA 02492  
781-844-7029  
cdelano@needhamma.gov

You may now close this window. Please visit the SPAN webpage at <http://www.spanneedham.org/>.

### **Disqualification Page – For those who answered “No” to Question #1**

You have indicated that you do not currently have any children in grades 6-12.

In an effort to better target prevention initiatives to enhance youth health and safety, this survey is currently only open to parents with at least one child in grades 6-12.

We appreciate your interest. Thank you for visiting.

You may close this window now.

If you are interested in this issue, you may want to visit the SPAN website at <http://www.spanneedham.org/>.