

## Attributes of Adolescent Teen Gamblers

### **Males: 95%**

Are competitive, intelligent, risk-takers, impulsive, high energy, good students with top math skills, have part-time jobs (income), are popular, participate in athletics, prioritize money and material goods and bet on sports, cards, dice, lottery, horses and casinos.

### **Females: 5%**

Are competitive, popular, good students, leaders, organizers of activities, athletic and bet on lotteries, casinos, horses, cards and bingo.

## STATUS OF PROBLEM

This is the first generation to be raised in a society where gambling is glamorized on television and encouraged by government. Most gambling is illegal for youth. Studies reflect that adolescents are 2-3 times more at risk than adults to become compulsive gamblers. Schools are calling the Council with increasing frequency reporting greater problems with gambling; Texas Hold Em is becoming the game of choice.

Calls made by adolescents to 1-800-GAMBLER® Helpline reflect a yearly increase in the percentage of callers identifying card playing as a problem, from 13.2% in 2002 to 21.2% in 2005. No other form of wagering has shown a yearly increase.

A 1998 study showed the percentage of 7<sup>th</sup> graders gambling weekly as 4 times the rate of alcohol or smoking, 2.5 times in grade 9 and substantially higher at grade 11.

Fantasy football is not perceived as gambling but it can lead to betting on sports. It is gambling when you risk money to win money or prizes. It is not about the sport, rather about winning money and it can lead to illegal gambling. Preoccupation with fantasy football is much like preoccupation with gambling, resulting in loss of time and other activities.

**ADOLESCENT  
GAMBLING  
ON THE  
RISE:  
A  
CONCERN  
FOR  
PARENTS**

## HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

Most parents worry about the involvement of their children in drugs, alcohol and unsafe sex and address these issues with their kids. There is the same need to do so with gambling.

Many parents see gambling as a safe activity, they know where their child is. Time Magazine recently featured an article entitled "Parents for Poker", citing parents as encouraging poker as a way to keep kids off the dangerous streets, as sharpening math skills and helping to develop personal interaction and emotional intelligence.

Adolescents need to be advised to practice moderation and to be made aware of the risks of gambling. They need to learn to make good decisions. The job of teaching kids to be smart about gambling falls to the parents... Introduce gambling awareness at home; Create a dialogue as to lottery and gambling related content on television news and drama; Observe your child's reaction to winning and losing and share your concerns.

Educate by example, if you have a relaxed and familiar relationship with gambling your kids will adopt it as their own. Observe your own actions - do you buy lottery tickets while shopping with your kids?

Set an example of hard work and valued earnings. Teach children to be smart savers and smart consumers.

Encourage your school to teach gambling awareness programs. (The Council has developed the GAP Program, a gambling awareness program for grades K-12).

## WARNING SIGNS FOR PARENTS OF ADOLESCENTS WHO MAY HAVE A GAMBLING PROBLEM

- Grade performance decline
- Excessive spending
- Irritability when engaged in family activities (kept away from gambling)
- Mysterious phone calls
- Selling personal belongings
- Depression
- Unexplained need for money
- Missing monies or valuables from home
- Significant time watching sports on television
- Intense interest in gambling conversation
- Change of personality
- Unaccountable time away from home

**THE COUNCIL ON COMPULSIVE GAMBLING OF NEW JERSEY, INC. is a private, non-profit organization committed to the prevention, education and awareness of compulsive gambling. The Council created and maintains the 1-800-GAMBLER® Helpline, which received over 20,000 calls last year.**

**The Council's website, [www.800gambler.org](http://www.800gambler.org), received over 900,000 hits in 2008. The Council is committed to educating the public about the potential dangers of gambling, in the hopes of raising the awareness and prevention levels of compulsive gambling. Compulsive gambling is both diagnosable and treatable. For help call 1-800-GAMBLER® or visit our website [www.800gambler.org](http://www.800gambler.org).**