

One-Third of Ontario Teens Gamble for Money

New Responsible Gambling Council Survey Explores Teen Gambling

Ontario teenagers are gambling according to a new study of teen gambling in Ontario released by the Responsible Gambling Council (RGC).

The ***Responsible Gambling Council's Teen Gambling in Ontario*** survey of 2,140 Ontario youth aged 15 to 17 shows that more than one-third (34.9 per cent) of Ontario teens gamble for money.

The study reveals that more than 40 per cent of teens who gamble play poker, 39 per cent buy raffle tickets, 26 per cent are betting on sports, 16 per cent play dice and 11 per cent gamble online.

One-in-Ten Teens Spends More Than They Can Afford on Poker

“Thirteen per cent of teenagers who play poker say they sometimes spend more money than they can afford on gambling and that’s a particular concern,” says Jon Kelly, CEO, Responsible Gambling Council.

“We know that one-third of teens gamble today,” explains Kelly. “By the time they’re 20, twice as many of these young people will be gambling. Teens are absorbing information about gambling from the internet, parents, friends and TV. This includes erroneous messages like, ‘Gambling is a good way to make money,’ or, ‘If you lose, you can win your money back.’ We have to address these kinds of false beliefs early.”

Based on the survey findings, approximately 3.9 per cent of teens who gamble are experiencing gambling problems. Once they reach the age of 18, the risk of developing a gambling problem will almost double (6.9 per cent of 18-24 year-olds have moderate to severe gambling problems).

The study also looked at the reasons these teens are gambling. Most teens reported that they gambled for entertainment, but a large number of teens said they gambled because they needed money (20.7 per cent), and because they wanted to win back lost money (15.3 per cent).

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“Kids are spending more money and time gambling, so we need to let them know about the risks,” says Laurie Bell, Director of Prevention Programs, Responsible Gambling Council. “That’s why it’s so important to reach out to kids in high school with prevention programs like ***house of cards***, our theatrical drama that tours Ontario high schools.”

Responsible Gambling Council

The Responsible Gambling Council is an independent, non-profit organization committed to problem gambling prevention. RGC designs and delivers highly-effective awareness programs. The Council promotes the identification and adoption of best practices in problem gambling prevention through research and information dissemination. For more information and assistance with a gambling problem, please visit www.responsiblegambling.org or call the Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-888-230-3505.

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