Appendix B: Adolescents and Television

Teenagers are major consumers of entertainment media, and so it is widely believed that they may be influenced by the depiction of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs on television. The following statistics indicate the importance that television plays in the lives of young people.

- 98 percent of American households have a television set. 29
- Nearly 87 percent of households with young people ages 2-17 years have two or more television sets. 30
- More than 60 percent of teenagers have television sets in their bedrooms. 31 Young people who have sets in their bedrooms watch 21 more minutes per day than those without. 32
- Young people (ages 8-18) watch TV more than 3 hours per day. 33
- White youth (ages 8-18) watch television nearly 3 hours per day. 34
- Hispanic youth watch television nearly 4 hours per day. 35
- African-American youth watch television over 4 ½ hours per day. 36
- 77 percent of families have cable/pay TV. 37
- 78 percent of Americans consider watching TV with their children to be a family activity. 38
- Two-thirds of children 8 years and older say that the TV is usually on during meals. 39
- Teenage boys spend nearly twice as much time watching MTV as reading for pleasure. 40 Girls ages 11-19 watch MTV more than any other network. 41
- Nearly 30 percent of young people (ages 10-17) say they watch shows their parents would not approve of. 42
- More 10- to 17-year-olds recognize the Budweiser frogs and lizards (67 percent), Joe Camel (69 percent), and "The Simpsons" (91 percent) than know the name of the Vice President of the United States (62 percent). 43
- Studies suggest that higher rates of television viewing are correlated with increased tobacco usage, increased alcohol intake and younger onset of sexual
activity.44

- 61 percent of young people (ages 10-17) say television does more than harm.45


34 Roberts, D.F., Foehr, U.G., Rideout, V.J., & Brodie, M.


36 Roberts, D.F., Foehr, U.G., Rideout, V.J., & Brodie, M.

37 Stanger, J. D. and Gridina, N.


39 Jensen, E. "Study Finds TV Tops Kids' Big Diet of Media" (as cited from the "Kids & Media @ the New Millennium" study by the Kaiser Family Foundation). Los Angeles Times, November 18, 1999.


