

Gambling today is more accessible than ever. It is portrayed through television and other media as exciting and easy money. However, gambling can lead to serious problems. Your child needs to know that gambling can easily get out of control and lead to serious losses, not only of money and possessions, but also the loss of trust and respect from family and friends or educational opportunities. Studies show that the earlier a child engages in risky behaviors, the greater the likelihood those behaviors will become problematic.

Youth are exposed to gambling images almost every day. Just by going onto the internet, gambling opportunities pop up. Walking into a grocery store exposes them to lottery ticket sales and by turning on the television they can watch a Texas Hold 'Em tournament.

The 2006 NYS OASAS school survey estimates that nearly 20 percent of New York's adolescents in grades 7 through 12, that's over 300,000 youth, currently have or are at risk for gambling problems.

## What are the Warning Signs?

- Low mood or feelings of anxiety. Adolescents have reported gambling to escape worries or frustration.
- Lying, cheating and/or stealing.
- Preoccupation with gambling.
- Unexplained absences from school and/or work.
- Intense interest in gambling conversations, uses gambling lingo.
- Interrupts time spent with family or friends because of gambling.



New York State Office of  
Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services

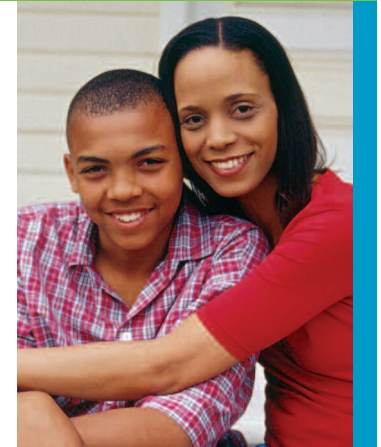
[www.oasas.state.ny.us/gambling/](http://www.oasas.state.ny.us/gambling/)

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo  
Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez, M.S., L.M.S.W.

Problem Gambling Helpline  
1-877-8 HOPENY



# Talk With Your Children About Gambling



# What Can Parents Do?

Research shows that parents CAN make a difference in how their children respond to risky activities such as gambling.

Research indicates the best ways to guide your children from risky behaviors are:

- Start early – talk with your kids now about gambling and other risky behaviors.
- Listen – let them know that they can come to you and you will listen.
- Educate yourself and your kids.
- Know what behavior is normal.
- Establish family rules and enforce them.
- Monitor your children’s activities, know where they are and with whom.
- Be involved.
- Help your child develop coping skills.
- Be a good role model, demonstrate the behavior that you want your children to learn.

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## Who is at Risk?

Children who engage in gambling behaviors are at risk for developing a gambling problem. Studies show youth are considered at a higher risk if they have one or more of the following:

- Early initiation of antisocial behavior.
- Depressive symptoms.
- Rebelliousness.
- Moral disengagement.

# How Do You Start?

The following are some tips for raising this issue with your child:

- 1** Look for a time to discuss the topic naturally; for example, after hearing an ad for the Lottery or learning about someone who just won or lost money.
- 2** Ask questions first. Listen and learn what your child thinks about gambling before giving him or her information or offering your opinions and thoughts.
- 3** Gambling is a topic that can have many mixed messages. Be specific about your own values when you talk about gambling.
- 4** Be patient, it may take several discussions before your child understands the ideas that you want to convey and that gambling is not a risk-free behavior.



## How Can You Protect Your Child?

- Youth who understand that gambling has risks are less likely to develop a gambling problem.
- Parents can help protect their children by talking with them about those risks.
- Children who perceive strong parental disapproval if they gamble are less likely to develop a gambling problem.

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## What Does Your Child Need to Know?

- Gambling is not a way to make money.
- Gambling establishments are set up to take in more money than they pay out. This means over time people will lose more money than they win.
- All forms of gambling (slot machines, lotteries, online poker games, etc.) have the same principle. The vast majority of gamblers will lose so that a very small minority can have big wins.