

Parental Attitudes About Cigarette Smoking and Alcohol Use in the Motion Picture Association of America Rating System

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Table 1. Parental Reasons for Wanting to Be Informed or Not About Movie Smoking and Drinking^a

Parental Preference and Reason	No. (%)	Illustrations ^b
Prefers to be informed	38 (61.3)	
Contrary to family values	10 (26.3)	<p>"We don't do that [smoke or drink]. . .we try to teach our children to be helpful and to have good morals and good sense. It's only glamorizing it if it's in a movie. It's glamorizing something that they shouldn't be doing and something that I would be counseling them not to do."</p> <p>"Our family does not believe in it [smoking]. We disapprove of it, so seeing it just downplays the movie to us."</p>
Movies promote smoking/drinking	7 (18.4)	<p>"I don't like their smoking in all of their PG-13 movies. That's an irritant for me. I'm a nonsmoker, so I don't think that it's very good for my children to be smoking, and I think that would promote it."</p> <p>"If [in a movie] you've got kids underage and they're drinking a lot, and then they get in a car, it's just promoting that irresponsibility of drinking and driving."</p>
Movie images can influence child behavior	7 (18.4)	<p>"I believe there's certain things that you can influence a kid with. I don't think most kids look at a violent movie and say, 'I want to go out and shoot people now.' But I think when a kid sees, you know, Brad Pitt smoking on a movie, he's going to say, 'Damn, that looks cool,' and maybe start smoking."</p> <p>"I have 2 very impressionable teenagers, who right now say that they are never going to drink and they are never going to smoke. But who knows? I'm not going to be foolish to think that my children aren't going to try it. But it doesn't mean that I have to let them watch it on TV, to put the thought back into their head to do it."</p>
Opportunity for discussion	5 (13.2)	<p>"Sometimes I like my kids to see how it can affect you and how it can harm you or harm others, teach a lesson, because after the movie's done we'll sit down and talk about it. It gives kids the ability to see what can happen and to discuss with us what their feelings are about it."</p> <p>"It [movie portrayals of smoking or drinking] kind of opens up the subject, and then they can talk too, without being accused of anything."</p>
Prefers not to be informed	24 (38.7)	
Parent already talks to child about smoking/drinking	11 (45.8)	<p>"We have already talked so much to our children about smoking and drinking. That is a subject I talk with them all the time about. They already know how we view it, and that's been happening since they were little."</p> <p>"I pretty much educate my kids about that myself."</p>
Child sees smoking/drinking in real life	8 (33.3)	<p>"They're going to see that [smoking and drinking] everywhere anyway. That's part of the real world."</p> <p>"In my household my husband and I smoke already. So they're already exposed to that. We'll have an occasional drink."</p> <p>"That's not something I would want her to not see or not think that is out there. I feel like it's a fact of life. I feel like she has to own up to that and face that part of the real world."</p>
Child holds negative attitudes about smoking/drinking	5 (20.8)	<p>"She pretty much realizes that smoking and drinking is not the appropriate thing to do."</p> <p>"I guess I'm not as worried about the smoking, because both of my kids think it's disgusting."</p>
No smoking/drinking in movies	5 (20.8)	<p>"That doesn't bother me as much. And the reason being is, I, the movies that we watch, I don't see excessiveness of it. . . I don't really see a lot of movies with, like, a lot of drinking or smoking in it."</p> <p>"I rarely ever see people smoke on TV or in movies."</p>

^aSixty-two participants in the qualitative study.

^bEach quoted illustration represents a unique study participant.

eTable 2. Movie Smoking and Drinking Scenarios of Greatest Concern to Parents

Movie Scenario of Concern to Parents	No. (%) ^a	Illustrations ^b
Context in which smoking or drinking occurs	12 (31.6)	<p>"If it's people standing around at a cocktail party with a glass of champagne, I don't think they'll be too concerned about it. If it's a frat party with a funnel going on, I may be a little concerned. What is the situation? Are they at a wine tasting? Then I'd say, well, I guess that kind of fits the movie."</p> <p>"If there's drinking games and, you know, it's college frat parties, that's not something you want a 13-year-old to be watching. But if people are sitting around having a couple of glasses of wine or a couple of beers, that's not enough to deter me from the movie."</p> <p>"Smoking an occasional cigarette is, in my opinion, not a big deal in a movie. But someone who's sitting there smoking pack after pack after pack, that's ridiculous."</p>
Teenagers engaged in smoking or drinking	11 (28.9)	<p>"Alcohol and tobacco use. I think I'd like to know specifically whether it was by teens. I think we all see that adults smoke, but I think a teenager seeing another teenager smoke, there's almost a different message in that."</p> <p>"My really biggest concern is the fact that a lot of the movies now show teenagers smoking cigarettes. That's my biggest concern, is that they'll see, oh, you know, it's okay for kids to do these things."</p>
Positive vs negative portrayals	11 (28.9)	<p>"<i>Leaving Las Vegas</i>, you had Nicholas Cage drinking, but it was portrayed in a negative light. Say any teenage movie where they're just having a party, and they're all there at a keg party, I mean, that's portrayed in a different light."</p> <p>"The drug and alcohol use, sometimes I like my kids to see how it can affect you and how it can harm you or harm others, teach a lesson."</p>
Smoking or drinking in youth-rated movies	7 (18.4)	<p>"I don't like their smoking in all of their PG-13 movies. That's an irritant for me. It's in most of the movies that are supposedly PG/PG-13."</p> <p>"When kids are seeing in a PG movie that someone lights up a cigarette, I mean, that's—well, you know, we're not smokers, so we're probably pretty prejudiced, but it turns me off of the movie. I think it's irresponsible."</p>
Hero/main character/popular star engaged in smoking or drinking	5 (13.1)	<p>"It might make them [children] think it's [smoking/drinking] cool if they see somebody or their favorite actor Johnny Depp doing, you know, they might think it's cool and awesome and they might think it's okay."</p> <p>"It's hard to be, you know, the hero doing things that are so unhealthy. Because they look up to, the kids look up to the heroes in movies."</p>

^aOnly 4 of 24 parents who preferred not to be informed of movie smoking/drinking discussed a depiction of concern; therefore, the eTable includes only those 38 parents who reported that they wanted to be informed about movie smoking and drinking.

^bEach quoted illustration represents a unique study participant.