

Survey of Kids and Teens In Virginia

Highlights from Survey B

Prepared for Work, Inc.

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Introduction

This is the second of two top-line reports prepared by RoperASW on the results of research conducted on behalf of the Virginia Tobacco Settlement Foundation (VTSF).

To aid VTSF and its agency Work, Inc. in the development of a communications campaign designed to help reduce the levels of youth smoking in the state, RoperASW was commissioned to conduct two research studies. The first study explores general attitudes and lifestyles. The second study covers media consumption questions and questions designed to help with strategic positioning and message development. Both studies cover smoking specific questions. When possible, the data are benchmarked against national figures from the Roper Youth Report.

This report explores the following topics:

- Risk taking and sensation seeking behavior
- Importance of brand identity and favorite brands
- Media and entertainment habits
- Attitudes about non-traditional advertising and promotions
- Smoking attitudes and behaviors
- Experience with anti-smoking commercials
- General information that would cause youth to stop and think before smoking
- Evaluation of specific message points

A full presentation of all results, including the results of multivariate analysis on the data, will be available in December.

Survey Highlights

Risk Seeking Among Virginia Kids

Most Virginia kids like a bit of adventure and risk taking in their lives. Virginia kids "get restless when they spend too much time at home" (78%), "prefer friends who are exciting and unpredictable" (76%) and would like "to explore strange places" (67%) and to "take a trip with no pre-planned routes or schedules" (66%). Most "like wild parties" (63%) and agree that they "sometimes forget to look before (they) leap" (58%). They're divided on whether they like "new and exciting experiences, even if (they) have to break the rules" (53%) or "doing frightening things" (50%). Despite the lure of adventure and the thrill of taking risks, though, two thirds of kids also say the "like to play it safe" (67%).

Desire for adventure and risk taking are more prevalent among teens than younger kids. Ten to twelve year olds are much more likely than older kids to say they "like to play it safe" (92% vs. 41% of teens). Fewer than half of these younger children "like wild parties" (46% vs. 73%), like doing frightening things (42% vs. 54%) or "like new and exciting experiences even if (they) have to break the rules" (39% vs. 62%). These younger kids too, though, say they get restless when (they) spend too much time at home" (71% vs. 83% of teens), "prefer friends who are exciting and unpredictable (70% vs. 83% of teens), "would like to explore strange places" (62% vs. 71%), "would like to take a trip with no pre-planned routes or schedules" (57% vs. 72%), and "sometimes forget to look before they leap" (55% vs. 60%).

Girls in Virginia agree with boys on many of the adventure/risk seeking questions, but most girls are not inclined toward doing frightening things (36% of girls vs. 64% of boys) or new and exciting experiences that might mean breaking the rules (45% vs. 62%). They are also less likely than are boys to like wild parties (57% vs. 69%) or exploring strange places (58% vs. 76%).

The survey sought to help explain what relationship might exist between kids desire for adventure and risk and their vulnerability to smoking. Kids who smoke were in fact found to be bigger risk seekers than non-smoking kids. On nearly all of the risk-related questions, kids who smoke

were significantly more inclined toward adventure and risk than were non-smoking kids. Overwhelmingly, kids who smoke "prefer friends who are exciting and unpredictable" (89%), "like wild parties" (86%), "like new and exciting experiences, even if (they) have to break the rules" (84%), and "would like to take a trip with no pre-planned routes or schedules" (84%). Unlike non-smoking kids, most kids who smoke do not say they like "to play it safe" (52% disagree compared with 27% of non-smoking kids).

A group of "Risk Seekers" was identified by their answers to the series of risk-related questions. Scores were assigned based on their level of agreement with eight pro-risk statements. The approximately half of all kids who averaged at least a 3 on a 4-point agreement scale (where 1 is "completely disagree," 2 is "mostly disagree," 3 is "mostly agree," and 4 is "completely agree") were assigned to the "Risk Seekers" group. As was expected, this group was found to be much more likely to smoke than other kids (22% vs. 7%).

Kids and Brands

Brand Identity Important to Kids In Virginia

Kids in Virginia are very conscious of brand names when they are buying products. Three-fourths of Virginia youth (76%) say brands names are "very" or "somewhat" important in their purchase decisions, and for one-third (34%), brand is "very important."

While brand names are at least somewhat important to both boys and girls, they appear to be somewhat more important to boys. Nearly four in ten boys (39%) say brand names are "very important" to them in their purchase decisions compared with three in ten girls (30%) who feel this strongly.

Virginia Kids' Favorite Brands

Kids were asked to pick their two or three favorite brands of products from a list of twenty. The five most often chosen are Nike (42%), Adidas (35%), Polo (30%), The Gap (29%), and Tommy Girl (28%).

Choices vary somewhat between boys and Girls. Among the top five choices of both boys and girls are Nike (47% of boys and 41% of girls), Adidas (33% and 38%), and Polo (32% and 27%). But the number one choice among girls, from the brands on the list, is Tommy Girl (49%). The

Gap (35%) is also among girls' five most popular brands. For boys, Playstation (41%) ranks second (behind Nike) and FUBU (29%) is their fifth most popular brand.

Age also plays a part in kids attitudes toward brands, although the difference is more attributable to the type of product chosen than the brand of product. Nike and Adidas are the two brands most often chosen from the list by kids of all ages. For the youngest kids (10 to 12 year olds), McDonalds (30%), Pepsi (29%), and Playstation (27%) are also among the top 5 – rather than clothing brands. For 13 and 14 year olds, clothing brands win out, with Polo (35%), Tommy Girl (34%), and The Gap (29%) all making the top five list. Older teens (15 to 17 year olds) also favor clothing brands – The Gap (31%) and Polo (30%) both make the top five list – but MTV (28%) beats all others for fifth place.

Media and Entertainment Habits of Virginia Kids

Kids in Virginia report watching, on an average school day, more than 5 hours of TV – about one hour more than kids nationwide. Their attention is on the TV even more on the weekend, watching nearly 7 hours per day – 2½ hours more than kids across the country.

Afternoon and Early Evening Popular TV Times on School Days

School, of course, limits the times kids can watch TV during the week, but it appears that many drop their books and pick up the remote not long after they get home. On school days, two-thirds (67%) of kids in Virginia report watching television in the afternoon. On average, Virginia kids watch 1½ hours during this time period per day.

At any point in time in the early evening (between 6:00pm and 8:00pm) on a school day, a Virginia teen is more likely than not watching television. During this two hour period they watch, on average, about 1.2 hours (very similar to teens nationwide), with about two-thirds (65%) watching at least some during this time.

Prime time (between 8:00pm and 11:00pm) also gets its share of young viewers on school nights, with two thirds (65%) watching at least some, and the average kid watching 1.3 hours per day during this three hour period.

Morning (before noon) and late night (after 11:00pm) are less popular TV times for Virginia kids, with fewer than half tuning in at all during these times.

More Morning and Afternoon TV on the Weekend

As might be expected, kids watch more daytime TV on the weekend than they do during the school week. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of ten to seventeen year olds in Virginia watch at least some TV on weekend mornings, with an average of nearly 1½ (1.4) hours of morning viewing per day.

Afternoons are also popular on the weekend, with nearly 2 hours (1.8) TV viewing on average, and seven in ten Virginia kids (70%) watching.

Early evening (6:00 pm until 8:00 pm) is a little less popular time for Virginia kids on the weekend than during the week, although more than half (54%) of all kids in Virginia watch during this time on weekend evenings as well, and kids average an hour's viewing during this two hour period.

Prime time viewing occupies about the same amount of kids time (1.4 hours) on a weekend night as it does on a school night. About two-thirds (64%) of Virginia kids watch TV during prime time on the weekend.

Late night TV viewing (after 11:00pm) is a common activity for kids on the weekend. Nearly six in ten (57%) report watching after 11:00 on a Saturday or Sunday night and Virginia kids average 1.3 hours during that time.

MTV Most Watched TV Channel

Kids report watching a wide variety of television channels, which is not unusual given how much time they are spending watching television. When asked to indicate the channels they had watched in the previous week, channels that specifically target kids, not surprisingly, come out on top. MTV is the most popular channel, although many others are also viewed by large numbers of kids in Virginia. The ten most popular channels include:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. MTV (66%) | 6. Disney Channel (48%) |
| 2. Fox (54%) | 7. ABC (47%) |
| 3. BET (51%) | 8. HBO (46%) |
| 4. The Cartoon Network (50%) | 9. Comedy Central (43%) |
| 5. Nickelodeon (49%) | 10. USA (36%) |

When comparing the cable viewing patterns¹ of Virginia youth to national statistics², Virginia youth are more likely than others to say they watch most of the channels about which they were asked. Virginia youth are especially more likely than kids across the country to watch BET (51% of Virginia youth have watched in the past 7 days vs. 18% of kids throughout the country), HBO (46% vs. 29%), the Cartoon Network (50% vs. 33%), and Comedy Central (43% vs. 27%).

Not surprisingly, younger kids in Virginia (those 10 to 12 years of age) are more likely to watch television channels that are geared toward children than are teenagers. For the youngest kids (those 10 to 12), the three most popular channels are Nickelodeon (68% of 10 to 12 year olds watch vs. 37% of teens), the Disney Channel (64% vs. 39%), and the Cartoon Network (57% vs. 45%). In contrast, the top three channels for teens are MTV (76% of teens vs. 50% of younger kids), BET (58% vs. 40%), and Fox (56% vs. 50%).

MTV is the most popular channel among both girls and boys in Virginia, although girls are more likely to have watch the channel in the past week than are boys (72% vs. 60%). The two groups are very similar in their viewing of most other channels although there are a few notable exceptions. Girls are more likely than boys to watch the Disney Channel (59% vs. 36%) and Nickelodeon (55% vs. 42%), and these are, in fact, the second and third most watched channels for girls. HBO is a more popular channel among boys (second only to MTV and watched by 54% of boys compared with 39% of girls), as is Comedy Central (49% vs. 38%).

Virginia Kids Listen to the Radio a Lot as Well

Kids in Virginia are nearly as likely to listen to the radio during different periods of the day as they are to watch television, although they listen for shorter periods than they watch TV. On average, Virginia kids listen to about 3½ hours of radio on a school day and about 4 hours on a Saturday or Sunday.

¹ Comparisons can only be made for cable television viewing habits and analyses do not include differences for broadcast viewing habits.

² All comparisons to national data are made using ROPER YOUTH REPORTS data from 2000. ROPER YOUTH REPORTS is an annual syndicated research project sponsored by RoperASW and is a nationally representative survey of 8 to 17-year-old kids in the US. The ROPER YOUTH REPORTS data is based on 1,000 in-person interviews. For the purpose of this report comparisons are made to the national survey of 10 to 17-year-olds (n=832)

On a school day, Virginia kids listen to the radio, on average, less than one hour (0.7) before starting their school day. About half (51%) of all kids listen during this time – more than watch TV (40%).

After school is a more popular time, with kids averaging 1.3 hours of radio listening between the hours of 2:00pm and 6:00. More than six in ten (63%) say they listen during this time period.

Six in ten (61%) of Virginia kids say they listen to the radio on school nights, between 6:00 pm and 11:00 pm. On average, kids listen 1½ hour on a school night.

On the weekends, about half (48%) of all kids listen to the radio in the morning and they listen somewhat longer than they do on weekday mornings. The average Virginia youth listens to the radio for about 1 hour on weekend mornings.

On a Saturday or Sunday afternoon (between noon and 6:00 pm), Virginia kids listen to, on average, 1½ (1.6) hours of radio. Nearly two third (65%) of kids are weekend afternoon listeners.

On weekend nights (6:00 pm to 11:00 pm) kids average 1½ hours listening, with six in ten kids (61%) tuned in.

Rap and Hip Hop Top the List of Virginia Kids' Music Choices

The five most popular types of music for kids in Virginia – each among the favorites of at least one fourth of all kids – are rap (72%), hip hop (54%), pop (42%), alternative rock (28%), and reggae (25%).

Once again there are some noticeable differences between Virginia youth and youth throughout the rest of the country. As was seen when comparing television-viewing habits, generally a larger percentage of youth in Virginia compared to kids throughout the rest of the country say each musical genre is one of their favorites. The biggest differences are Virginia kids preferences for rap (72% vs. 50% nationwide), hip hop (54% vs. 36%), pop (42% vs. 32%), and reggae (25% vs. 8%).

Younger and older kids in Virginia generally like the same kinds of music, with different genres raked in much the same way across the age groups. One notable difference is reggae, which is much more popular among older kids (41% of 15 to 17 year olds compared with just 9% of 10 to 12 year olds).

There are some important gender differences, however. Girls in Virginia are more likely than boys in Virginia to prefer genres such as hip hop (60% vs. 48% respectively), pop (56% vs. 27%), dance music (27% vs. 15%), country (24% vs. 11%), and gospel (22% vs. 12%). Boys, on the other hand, are more likely than girls to prefer hard rock (23% of boys vs. 16% of girls) and heavy metal (21% vs. 11%).

A comparison of Virginia youth who smoke and those who do not smoke shows some similarities and a few differences. First the musical preferences of both groups are very diverse as significant portions of both groups like music ranging from hip hop, to alternative rock, to country. Second both groups equally enjoy the top two musical preferences – rap and hip hop.

There are differences between the two groups, however. Kids who do not smoke are more likely than those who do smoke to listen to more mainstream, less “edgy” types of music such as pop (44% vs. 33% respectively) and gospel (19% vs. 9%). Kids who smoke, however, are more likely than those who do not smoke to listen to such a wide variety of music that their preferences cannot be categorized into one specific “type”. Kids who smoke are more likely than kids who do not smoke to listen to alternative rock (40% vs. 26% respectively), reggae (40% vs. 21%), hard rock (30% vs. 17%), heavy metal (31% vs. 12%), techno (22% vs. 8%), classic rock (17% vs. 8%), house (11% vs. 4%), and 60’s hits (9% vs. 4%).

Most Virginia Kids Head to the Movies At Least Once a Month

Close to six in ten Virginia kids (58%) say they go to the movies once a month or more including 14% who go once a week or more, one-fourth (26%) who go a couple of times a month and 18% who go once a month. Nearly one in five (19%) go once a year or less – if ever.

Teens go to the movies slightly more often than do 10 to 12 year olds, although the differences are small. Boys and girls differ little in the frequency of their movie going.

Television the Most Popular, But Not Only News Sources

Given the amount of time Virginia kids spend watching television, it is not surprising that the medium is also their number one source of news. More than three fourths (77%) of all kids say they get news about what's

going on in the world from television. At least half say they also get news from the radio (58%), friends (55%), parents (53%), and newspapers (51%).

When compared to national statistics, Virginia kids are as likely as, and in many cases even more likely than kids throughout the country, to use each of the different news sources. They are considerably more likely than kids nationwide to get news from the radio (58% of Virginia kids vs. 28% of American kids as a whole), magazines (32% vs. 13%), online sources (29% vs. 11%), and newspapers (51% vs. 35%).

Teenagers are more likely than younger kids to use newspapers (55% vs. 43%), magazines (38% vs. 22%), online sources (34% vs. 21%), and e-mail (23% vs. 25%).

Also kids in Virginia who smoke and those who do not generally use the same resources for their news information, with a few minor exceptions. Kids who smoke are significantly less likely than those who do not smoke to regularly use the adults in their lives (parents and teachers) as sources of news information.

Attitudes About Non-Traditional Advertising and Promotions

Kids Aware of Some But Not All Non-Traditional Advertising and Promotions

While at least half of all kids in Virginia have heard of most of the non-traditional types of advertising or promotion asked about in the survey, sizeable minorities not. The types most familiar to kids (ever seen by at least 50%) include posters (67% have ever seen them), stickers (63%), mall advertising (63%), direct mail (59%), advertising on grocery carts (59%), merchandise handed out at sporting events or concerts (57%), promotions/contests (56%), web-enabled wireless messaging (56%), event sponsorship (53%), mobile billboards (53%), web site content sponsorship (52%), and screensavers (50%).

Kids in Virginia are least likely to have seen sidewalk drawings (31%), street teams (41%), or logo projections (42%).

While there aren't any significant gender differences, age is associated with the types of ads kids recall having seen. Teenagers are more likely than their younger counterparts to have seen many of the different types of non-traditional advertising including stickers (68% vs. 55%), merchandise

handed out at concerts (60% vs. 52%), promotions (60% vs. 50%), web-enabled wireless messaging (61% vs. 48%), web site content sponsorship (58% vs. 43%), flyer drops (55% vs. 39%), and logo projections (48% vs. 33%).

Posters and Stickers Seen as the Best Way to Advertise to Kids

None of the non-traditional types of advertising asked about in the survey garner enthusiasm from large majorities of kids as being good ways to advertise to people their age, although some fared better than others. Only one of the twenty types asked about – posters – was chosen by half or more of Virginia kids as a good way to advertise to kids, nominated by 54%. Stickers, the second ranking method was deemed a good one by 49%. Promotions and contests (46%), mall advertising (41%) and paintings in school hallways or gymnasiums (41%) were also reasonably popular.

Lowest of the list of “good ways to advertise to kids” are and web site content sponsorship (25%), ads on grocery carts (26%), and screen savers (28%).

Teenagers are more likely than 10 to 12 year olds to feel that mall ads (44% vs. 35%), merchandise handed out at sporting events (41% vs. 30%), painted buses or vans that go where kids hang out (41% vs. 26%), street teams (38% vs. 30%), or painted buildings/building murals (35% vs. 26%) are good ways to advertise to people their age.

Smoking Habits Among Virginia Kids

One in Seven Kids in Virginia Smoke Cigarettes

One out of seven (14%) of Virginia's kids between the ages of 10 and 17 say they smoke cigarettes now, although more than one in three (36%) say they have smoked a cigarette at some point in their young lives.

The survey found no significant differences between girls and boys, whites and blacks, or Hispanics and non-Hispanics, in their likelihood of smoking. Kids who live with other smokers, however, were found to be much more likely to be smokers than others (23% vs. 6%) and to have smoked at least once (50% vs. 25%).

For most kids in Virginia who smoke, however, smoking is less than a daily habit. On average, they say they have smoked on about 17 of the past 30 days. Nearly one third (32%) of kids who smoke have done so only about once a week over that past month period.

For Most, Smoking Begins In the Tweens

Not surprisingly older kids are much more likely to smoke than are younger kids. Nearly one quarter (24%) of Virginia kids between the ages of 15 and 17 say they smoke, compared with 12% of 13 to 14 year olds and just 4% of kids 10 to 12 years of age. About six in ten (59%) of 15 to 17 year olds in Virginia say they have smoked at least one cigarette, compared with 35% of those 13 to 14 and only 14% of 10- to 12-year olds.

About half (52%) of kids who smoke say they started smoking before the age of 13. About twenty percent of Virginia kids who smoke were smoking by the time they were 10 years old and only 14% started when they were 15 or older.

Smoking Influences in the Lives of Virginia Kids

Kids' Reasons for Smoking

When asked why they smoke, kids in Virginia most often cite their addiction to cigarettes (22%), the calming effect they get from smoking (18%), because they like to (18%), and peer pressure or the desire to be "cool" (13%).

Kids' Reasons for Not Smoking

Kids who do not smoke are most likely to cite health concerns as a major factor in their decision. More than half of kids who do not smoke (57%) say they don't because smoking shortens a person's life span, damages lungs, can cause cancer, or is just bad for one's health generally.

Among the many other reasons kids give for not smoking are their dislike of the smell (8%), their opinion that smoking is "not cool" or looks stupid (6%), and the bad breath that accompanies smoking (6%). About 1 in 20 (4%) say they don't smoke because their parents or other family members don't want them to.

Parents' Opinions About Smoking Are Important to Most

When Virginia kids have to make critical decisions they very often turn to their parents to discuss their decision and seek advice. One of the topics kids are likely to discuss with their parents is smoking, and kids say the advice they get from their parents is important to them when deciding whether or not to smoke. A vast majority of Virginia youth (83%) says their parents' opinion about whether or not they should smoke is at least somewhat important. In fact six in ten (62%) say their parents' opinions are *very* important.

Parents are less influential with older children's decision to smoke than they are with younger kids. While a majority of older Virginia kids say their parents opinions about smoking are important, they are less likely than their younger counterparts to feel this is true. More than nine in ten kids 10 to 12-year-old (93%) say their parents' opinions about smoking are at least somewhat important to them in their decision to smoke or not, and eight in ten (80%) say their parents' opinions are "very important". In contrast, seven in ten (71%) of those 15 to 17-year-old say their parents opinions on smoking are even somewhat important and fewer than half of these older kids (44%) say their parents' opinions are "very important."

Virginia youth who do smoke are much less likely than others to place much value on their parents' opinions about smoking. While nearly nine in ten non-smokers (88%) say their parents' opinions about smoking are somewhat or very important, this is true for only about six in ten (61%) of kids who smoke. Only three in ten smokers (29%) say their parents' opinion on the subject is "very important," compared with seven in ten (69%).

Friends' Opinions about Smoking Are Important as Well

While not rated as important as their parents' opinions on the subject, friends' opinions about smoking are also important to Virginia kids. Nearly two thirds (65%) of all kids in Virginia say their friends' opinions are very or somewhat important in their own decision about smoking and more than one third (36%) say "very" important.

As another sign of their independent thinking, not only are older kids less likely to say their parents' opinions are important, but they say their opinions are less important as well. While 70% of 10 to 12 year olds say their friends' opinions are at least somewhat important, only 58% of 15 to 17 year olds feel this way. Four in ten (43%) of younger kids say friends' opinions are "very important" compared with less than three in ten (28%) older kids.

Perhaps reflecting a difference in their friends' opinions, smokers differ little from non-smokers in their assessments of the importance of friends' opinions about smoking on their own decision about smoking. Nearly equal numbers of smokers (63%) and non-smokers (66%) say friends' opinions about smoking are important.

Many Kids Have a Model for the Habit

Nearly half of Virginia kids (45%) live in a home where there is someone else who smokes. Those who do are much more likely to be smokers (23%) than those in non-smoking households (6%).

In most homes where someone else smokes, it is the mother (55%) or father (48%) who does so. Many kids also report that they have an older brother (16%) or sister (14%) at home who smokes. Smaller proportions name other relatives such as grandparents, other siblings, or stepparents.

Kids Also Have Friends Who Smoke

In addition to living with parents who smoke, many kids also say they have friends who smoke as well. Four out of ten kids in Virginia (42%) say at least one of their four best male friends smokes, while 45% say none of those four do. A similar number of Virginia youth have close female friends who smoke. Nearly four in ten (37%) say at least one their four best female friends smokes, while half (51%) say none of their best female friends smoke.

Kids who smoke are more likely than those who do not to say that at least one of their four best male friends (80% vs. 32%) or four best female friends (78% vs. 27%) smoke.

Few Kids Could Get Cigarettes at Home

Most kids would have a hard time getting cigarettes at home. Only 15% of Virginia kids say a member of their family would give them a cigarette if they asked for one. Even among those living in households where someone else smokes, seven in ten (69%) say no one in their home would give them one.

Older kids are more likely to get a cigarette from a family member than are younger ones. One fourth of 15 to 17-year-olds (25%) say a family member would give them a cigarette if they asked for one, compared with just 5% of 10 to 12 year olds. Boys also report they would have more success if they asked. Seventeen percent of boys could get a cigarette, compared to only 12% of girls.

A Friends' Offer Would Tempt Few

If one of their best friends offered them a cigarette, say most Virginia kids (63%), they definitely would not smoke it. An additional 15% say they probably would not. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of kids who smoke (81%) say the definitely or probably would smoke a cigarette offered by a friend, while an even greater percentage of non-smokers (92%) say they probably would not.

Most Don't Believe They'll Smoke in the Future

Six in ten Virginia kids (60%) say they definitely will not be smoking one year from now and nearly as many (58%) believe the same will be true in five years. Almost one-fourth of all Virginia kids (23%) say they will probably or definitely be smoking a year from now, and 20% believe they are likely to be smoking in five years.

It is interesting to note that 10% of the Virginia youth who are not currently smokers say they probably will be smoking one year from now and about the same number (11%) believe they're likely to be smoking in five years. Many smokers, on the other hand, believe they will stop. One fourth (25%) of the kids who are smokers right now say they probably or definitely will not be smoking in one year and four in ten (41%) believe they will have probably kicked the habit in five years.

Older kids are more likely than younger kids to believe they will be smoking in the future. About one third (35%) of those 15 to 17 years of age say they definitely or probably will be smoking a year from now and one fourth (27%) believe they'll be smoking in five years. In contrast, just 10% of 10 to 12 year olds believe that they'll be smoking one year from now and 12% believe they'll be smoking in five years.

Boys are much more likely than girls to predict that cigarettes will be a part of their future. Nearly three in ten boys (29%) compared with 17% of girls believe they'll be smoking one year from now and one quarter of boys (25%) compared with 16% of girls believe they'll be smoking in five years.

Virginia Kids Perceptions of Smokers and Smoking**Divergent Attitudes about Smokers**

Not surprisingly, a child's impression of smokers is very much related to whether or not he or she smokes. Non-smoking kids apply much more negative descriptors to smokers than do smokers themselves.

The words that non-smoking kids in Virginia are most likely to choose as descriptors of a typical smoker are stupid (50%), unattractive (42%), lazy (42%), nervous (42%), not confident (41%), immature (33%), and a follower (32%).

Smokers, on the other hand, use mostly – but not entirely – more positive descriptors. Kids who smoke are most likely to say that a typical smoker is friendly (51%), lazy (33%), nervous (27%), mature (26%), outgoing (26%), adventurous (24%).

Attitudes About Smoking Are Negative for Most

Large majorities of kids in Virginia agree with the negative statements about smoking asked about in the survey and reject more positive ones.

Overwhelming numbers of Virginia teens agree that smoking can cause cancer (87%) and that breathing smoke from other people's cigarettes can be harmful (80%). A large majority (72%) also agrees that it is really hard to quit smoking. Majorities say they really dislike being around people who are smoking (60%) and don't like it when people they know smoke (59%).

Very small minorities, on the other hand, agree that smoking makes kids look more attractive (17%), that smoking is a "cool" thing to do (17%), or that kids who smoke are more popular (18%). They reject the idea that smoking helps people keep their weight down (only 27% agree), can help people when they're gored (27%), helps reduce stress (32%), makes people feel good about themselves (32%), or helps people feel more comfortable at parties (33%), makes them seem older (32%), or helps people relax (35%). Just one third (34%) believe that kids who smoke could stop anytime they wanted.

Smokers' and non-smokers' attitudes about smoking are somewhat complex. There are a number of attitudes with which the two groups share and there are many other things about which the two groups disagree. Generally smokers and non-smokers agree on the dangers of smoking and the addictive nature of smoking. They are much less likely to agree, however, on the benefits of smoking and whether or not they want to be around people who smoke.

Overall, smokers and non-smokers are most likely to agree on the dangers associated with smoking. Both groups agree that smoking cigarettes can cause cancer (90% and 86% respectively) and that breathing smoke from other people's cigarettes can be harmful (85% and 79%). They also agree on the addictive power of cigarettes. About three fourths of smokers (77%) and 71% of non-smokers agree that it is really hard to quit smoking.

Beyond these, however, smokers and non-smokers disagree on many issues related to smoking. A majority of smokers, but only small minorities of non-smokers, agree that:

- Smoking helps people relax (81% of smokers agree and 24% of non-smokers agree)
- Smoking helps people reduce stress (77% vs. 21%)
- Smoking help people be more comfortable at parties (64% vs. 26%)
- Smoking helps people when they are bored (61% vs. 19%)
- Having an occasional cigarette is not harmful (55% vs. 21%)
- Smoking helps people keep their weight down (50% vs. 21%)

A majority of non-smokers, but only minorities of smokers agree that they:

- Don't like it when people they know smoke (34% of smokers agree vs. 65% of non-smokers)
- Dislike being around people who are smoking (36% vs. 66%)

There are a few positive statements about smoking that neither group agrees with. A minority of smokers and non-smokers agree that:

- Smoking makes kids look more attractive (27% vs. 14%)
- Kids who smoke are more popular (36% vs. 13%)
- Kids could stop anytime (42% of smokers agree and 31% of non-smokers agree)
- Smoking makes people feel good about themselves (44% vs. 29%)
- Smoking makes kids seem older (47% vs. 28%)

Advertisements Discussing Risks of Smoking

Most Virginia Youth Have Seen or Heard An Anti-Smoking Ad

Virginia youth are not strangers to ads designed to educate them about the risks of smoking. Almost all Virginia young people (95%) say they have seen or heard some type of commercial or ad talking about the risks of cigarette smoking. Nearly nine in ten (89%) say they have seen an anti-smoking ad on television and approximately half have heard one on the radio (52%) or seen one in a magazine (48%). Large minorities also recall seeing ads in newspapers (26%) and less traditional types of advertising, including billboards (33%), posters (32%), and ads on the Internet (27%).

Teens are more likely than kids ages 10 to 12 to say they have seen the ads in various locations

The “truth” Campaign Familiar to Almost All

Nine in ten Virginia youth say they have seen or heard ads or commercials from the “truth” or “whole truth” campaign. The vast majority has seen a “truth” ad on television (82%). Far fewer mention being exposed to such ads in other traditional advertising mediums such as radio (37%), magazines (33%) or newspapers (16%) or in less traditional mediums like the Internet (24%), billboards (21%), or posters (17%).

Youth Have Mostly Positive Perceptions of Anti-Smoking Ads, But Many Think the Ads Miss The Mark at Least “A Little”

Young people tend to have more positive opinions than negative ones about the anti-smoking ads that they have seen, but many still find some fault in the execution of current ads.

More than half of Virginia youth (56%) say the ads have done “a lot” to make them more aware of the risks of smoking cigarettes and 38% say they have done “a lot” to give them new information or things they didn’t know before about smoking cigarettes. Moreover, many mention potential changes in their behavior because of seeing the ads. More than four in ten (44%) say the ads have done “a lot” to make them less likely to try or use cigarettes and 38% say they have done “a lot” to encourage them to talk to someone else about the risks of smoking cigarettes.

Fewer say the ads have done the following things “a lot”:

- exaggerated the risks or dangers of smoking cigarettes (27%)
- not told them anything new (28%)
- annoyed or irritated them (26%)
- talked down to them (25%)
- not shown kids as they really are (23%)
- tried too hard to be cool (23%)

However, when it comes to the proportion who say the ads have done these things “a lot” or “*a little*,” well over half of kids say the ads have stumbled in these areas:

- not shown kids as they really are (71%)
- not told them anything new (65%)
- annoyed or irritated them (64%)
- exaggerated the risks or dangers of smoking cigarettes (63%)
- talked down to them (62%)
- tried too hard to be cool (56%)

Younger kids (ages 10 to 12) are more likely than teens to say that they ads have done “a lot” to make them more aware of the risks of smoking cigarettes (67% vs.49%), make them less likely to try or use cigarettes (56% vs. 36%), and encourage them to talk to someone about the risks of cigarette smoking (47% vs. 33%). However, younger kids are also more likely than older ones to say the ads exaggerate the dangers of cigarette smoking (34% vs. 24%) and talk down to them (32% vs. 21%) “a lot.”

While smokers are more likely than non-smokers to have negative perceptions of the ads and less likely to have positive perceptions, many smokers still admit to being positively impacted by the ads.

Nearly half of smokers (44% vs. 58% of non-smokers) say that seeing the ads has done “a lot” to make them more aware of the risks of smoking cigarettes and a total of 92% of smokers (and 91% of non-smokers) say the ads have done “a lot” or “a little” to increase their awareness of such risks.

Two in ten smokers (19%) also say the ads have done “a lot” to make them less likely to use cigarettes and nearly two-thirds of smokers (63%) say the ads have done “a lot” or “a little” to make them less likely to use cigarettes. One-third of smokers say the ads have done “a lot” to

encourage them to talk to someone else about the risks of smoking and a total of more than two-thirds say they have done “a lot” or “a little.” While these proportions significantly trail the proportion of non-smokers who say the same things, they are still welcome indications that the ads’ messages are getting through to young smokers.

It is important to note that while few smokers or non-smokers accuse the ads of doing various negative things “a lot,” majorities of both groups say they do them “a lot” or a “little.” Therefore, while only 30% of smokers and 25% of non-smokers say that anti-smoking ads annoy or irritate them “a lot”, 76% and 61% respectively say they do so “a lot” or “a little.” The same is true for claims that the ads do not show kids like they really are (30% of smokers and 21% of non-smokers say the ads do this “a lot” and 76% and 70% say they do it “a lot” or “a little”) and that they exaggerate the risks or dangers of smoking cigarettes (26% and 28% respectively say the ads do this “a lot” and 76% and 61% say “a lot” or “a little.”)

Impact of Information Used in Advertisements

Real Stories and Information about the Physical Effects of Smoking Would Most Cause Virginia Youth to Stop and Think

When asked how much several types of information would make them stop and think about their decision to smoke, Virginia youth are most swayed by advertisements that focus on the *health* and *physical effects* of smoking and on *real stories* about people who have suffered consequences from smoking cigarettes.

More than half say they would “stop and think a lot” if they saw an advertisement that showed the *health effects* of smoking cigarettes on an adult who started smoking when they were young (60%), stories about *real people* who have suffered poor health or died from smoking cigarettes (58%), and information about the *physical effects* of smoking that people often don’t know about, such as more wrinkles and bad breath (54%).

Many (48%) also say they would be influenced a lot by an ad that emphasizes *personal responsibility* and encourages young people to make their own decisions, rather than doing what other people might tell them they should do.

Fewer, but still large proportions would “stop and think a lot” after seeing warnings from *athletes* about how cigarette smoking would harm their ability to succeed in their sports (45%), *anti-tobacco company* ads that show how much money tobacco companies make from kids smoking (41%), or by anti-smoking messages communicated by *celebrities* (39%). Kids ages 10 to 12 are an average of 14 points more likely than teens to say that all of these types of information would make them “stop and think a lot.” Younger kids are particularly more likely to be swayed by advertisements featuring *athletes* (59% say that type of ad would make them “stop and think a lot” vs. 36% of teens).

The rank order of the impact of the information is the same among smokers and non-smokers with the exception that *real stories* are more likely to make smokers “stop and think a lot” (46%) than information about the *health effects* of smoking on someone who started smoking at their age (40%), the reverse of what is true for non-smokers. Not surprisingly, smokers are less likely than non-smokers to say that any of the types of information would cause them to “stop and think a lot.” However, when we look at those people who say the information would make them “stop and think a lot” and those who say the information “stop and think a little” together we find that majorities of smokers would be prompted to stop and think at least a little when provided with all of the different types of information, and very large majorities (90% and 84% respectively) would stop and think at least a little when told about *health effects* or *real stories*.

Message Testing

As a final exercise in the study we asked Virginia young people to evaluate twelve possible messages that could be communicated in the Virginia tobacco prevention campaign. The messages fall into six general areas, although some of the messages cover more than one area. These areas are health effects, stupidity, socially unacceptable, empowerment, alternatives, and Virginia heritage. Youth were asked to evaluate each message in terms of believability and in terms of how much it would make them stop and think.

The messages tested, as well as the abbreviations we will use to discuss them, follow:

Health Effects

1. When you're young you don't think much about getting really sick or dying so smoking doesn't seem so bad. But starting to smoke now will probably lead to serious disease or death. (*Serious disease & death*)
2. Most teens who smoke think they can quit anytime but quitting isn't as easy as you might think. Out of all young people ages 11 to 17 who start smoking half of them will become regular smokers. (*Become regular smokers*)

Stupidity/Physical effects

3. Okay. Smoking gives you bad breath, smelly hair and wrinkles not to mention 50 different illnesses and 20 ways of dying early. Somebody explain why smoking doesn't sound stupid. (*Physical effects/smoking sounds stupid*)

Stupidity

4. They say teenagers are rebellious. So, why not refuse to smoke and rebel against stupidity. (*Rebel against stupidity*)

Socially Unacceptable

5. Your real friends don't care whether you smoke or not. They judge you by other things like whether you're fun and a person they know they can count on. (*Friends don't care*)
6. Teens who can't be cool some other way think smoking makes them cool. (*Lack of coolness*)
7. Most teens think teens who smoke are losers (*Smokers are losers*)

Empowerment

8. When your parents and other adults see you making smart choices like not smoking they cut you some slack and trust you to make more of your own decisions like staying out late, driving a car, and going places by yourself. (*Parents trust choices*)
9. Throughout your life companies will try to get you to do things. Eat more burgers. Buy more CDs. Wear this makeup. Drive this car. Smoke these cigarettes. But you aren't helpless. You have the power to say yes or no. (*Not helpless*)
10. We refuse to be manipulated by tobacco companies. We are smarter and stronger than that. We were born with tobacco and we don't smoke because we choose not to. (*Refuse to be manipulated*)

Alternatives

11. Let's see. Gas for the car or cigarettes; movies or cigarettes; new clothes or cigarettes; cool makeup or cigarettes; hot prom date or cigarettes; good health or cigarettes. There are alternatives to smoking. (*Alternatives*)

Virginia Heritage

12. Smoking started in Virginia. Wouldn't it be great if kids here decided that this is where it will stop? (*Stop in Virginia*)

Physical Effects and Alternatives Themes Resonate Most

For the most part those ads with the greatest stopping power are also the ones that are deemed the most believable. However, in general ads are more likely to be seen as “very believable” than as causing youth to “stop and think a lot”. The exception to this is *Smokers are losers* which is considered neither “very believable” nor likely to cause youth to “stop and think a lot.”

The most impactful messages fall into the health/physical effects, alternatives and empowerment categories. The least effective are in the socially unacceptable category. The stupidity category gets mixed reviews: overall it appears that youth react well to those ads that portray *smoking* as stupid (*Physical effects/smoking sounds stupid*,) but poorly to ones that insult the *smokers* themselves (*Smokers are losers*).

Four of the twelve messages would cause one half or more young people to “stop and think a lot.” These messages are:

- *Physical effects/smoking sounds stupid* (56%)
- *Serious disease or death* (52%)
- *Alternatives* (50%)
- *Become regular smokers* (49%)

These four messages also score very high on believability, with at least one half of kids calling each “very believable”:

- *Physical effects/smoking sounds stupid* (67%)
- *Serious disease or death* (62%)
- *Alternatives* (58%)
- *Become regular smokers* (62%)

- *Friends don't care* (41% “stop and think a lot”; 46% “very
- *Lack of coolness* (37% “stop and think a lot”; 46% “very believable”)
- *Smokers are losers* (36% “stop and think a lot”; 34% “very

The *Virginia heritage* message, considered “very believable” by 44%, is the second least credible message. Four in ten say the message would make them “stop and think a lot.”

Rebel against stupidity ranks 10th for both impact and believability. Approximately four in ten say the message would make them “stop and think a lot” (39%) and that it is “very believable” (45%).

Impact of Messages on Demographic Groups

As seen earlier, younger kids are more likely than teens to say that all of the different messages would cause them to “stop and think a lot.” Teens are more drawn to the *Alternatives* messages than they are to all of the health messages except *Physical effects/smoking sounds stupid*. Also reflecting their greater push toward independence, empowerment messages are more important to teens than they are to younger kids.

Kids in the Tidewater Eastern Shore are more likely than kids in other parts of Virginia, particularly Northern Virginia, to be moved to “stop and think a lot” by all of the messages.

Messages that Resonate Best with At-Risk Youth

In order to help us better understand the impact of these messages on key groups of Virginia youth, we divided youth into three groups based on their current smoking status and their stated likelihood of smoking in the future. The three groups are:

<i>Smokers</i>	(defined as those who either say they smoke or who have had a cigarette in the past 30 days)
<i>Vulnerable</i>	(non-smokers who say that it is at least probable that they will be smoking within the next one or five years or that they would accept a cigarette from a friend)
<i>Less vulnerable</i>	(non-smokers who don't think they will be smoking in the next one to five years and who would not accept a cigarette from a friend.)

As we might expect, smokers are the least likely to find the messages to be believable or to say that they would cause them to “stop and think a lot.” The less vulnerable are the most likely.

The same messages tend to rise to the top for all of the groups, but the rank order of the top five messages differs across the three groups. Notably for smokers a message that addresses alternatives and one that looks at empowerment are more powerful than ones that focus exclusively on health effects. This may be driven by the fact that many smokers have heard the straight health claims before and may be more immune to them.

- *Alternatives* (42% “stop and think a lot”; 52% “very believable”)
- *Friends don’t care* (40% “stop and think a lot”; 41% “very
- *Physical effects/smoking sounds stupid* (39% “stop and think a lot”; 52% “very believable”)

Less Vulnerables focus more directly on health effects than either of the other two groups, but are also strongly influenced by the alternative and empowerment messages. The *Friends don’t care* message is less important to this group than it is to the other two:

Physical effects/smoking sounds stupid (64% “stop and think a lot”; 71% “very believable”)

Serious disease or death (60% “stop and think a lot”; 68% “very believable”)

Become regular smokers (56% “stop and think a lot”; 64% “very

Not helpless (52% “stop and think a lot”; 71% “very believable”)

Alternatives (52% “stop and think a lot”; 60% “very believable”)