

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Include this article in your newsletters and communications to the parents and carers of your students.

They're under 18 so they can't gamble, right?

Although gambling in Australia is only legal for over 18s, research shows that increasingly, young people are finding ways to gamble. A [study](#) on gambling among secondary students in Victoria and NSW revealed that:

- about **one-third** of surveyed participants (29%) had ever **gambled before the age of 18**
- **9% had bet on sport** in the past year
- The median amount spent by all students who gambled in the past year was between **\$11 and \$20 per month**
- The median amount spent on gambling by students classified as **problem gamblers** was **\$150 per month**.

Why kids gamble

For many teens, it's not about the money – it's about fun, excitement and social acceptance. And because they live in a world saturated by gambling advertising, betting can seem like a normal activity to them.

How are they gambling?

Young people can (and do) easily get around age restrictions on sports betting apps. Among Australian males aged 18 to 35 who gamble, [23% reported being under 18](#) when they first placed a bet on sports.

They may have gambled with friends or played video games that encourage gambling-like behavior such as purchasing loot boxes. And despite age checks, teens are even gambling on the pokies.

Gambling harm starts early

The younger they start, the worse the harm will likely be. [Research](#) shows that those who started gambling underage are at higher risk of experiencing gambling harm as an adult than those who started gambling when they were 18+.

Talking to them about the risks of gambling will give your kids a better chance of avoiding problems related to gambling in later life.

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For tips on how to have a conversation with the young person in your life about gambling, visit the 'Parents and carers' section of Be Ahead of the Game website:

www.beaheadofthegame.vic.gov.au

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Sources:

- Noble, N. et al (2025), The prevalence and correlates of gambling in secondary school students in Victoria and New South Wales, Australia, 2022–23, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne.
- Jenkinson, R. et al (2018), Weighing up the odds: Sports betting and young men, Australian Institute of Family Studies.