

# Parents Who Smoke: Tobacco Attitudes and Practices that Affect Children

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## Abstract

### Background:

Adverse health consequences of child environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) exposure have been well documented, yet 42% of US children live in households with smokers, and most are exposed in multiple public settings.

### Objective:

To compare tobacco attitudes and practices toward restriction of child ETS exposure by smoking and non-smoking parents.

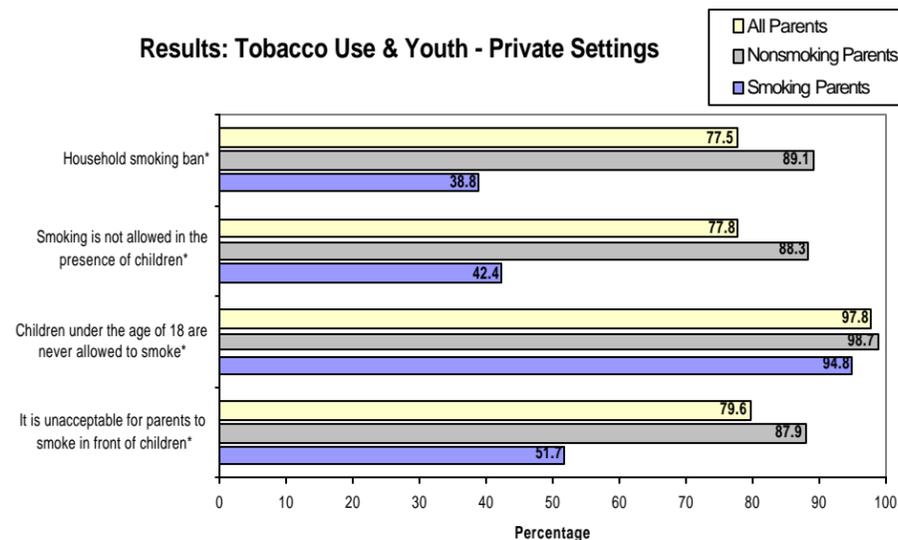
### Methods:

Data come from a random household telephone survey of adults conducted in the summer of 2001 using a national probability sample. The analysis compared attitudes and practices regarding child ETS exposure of smoking and non-smoking parents.

### Results:

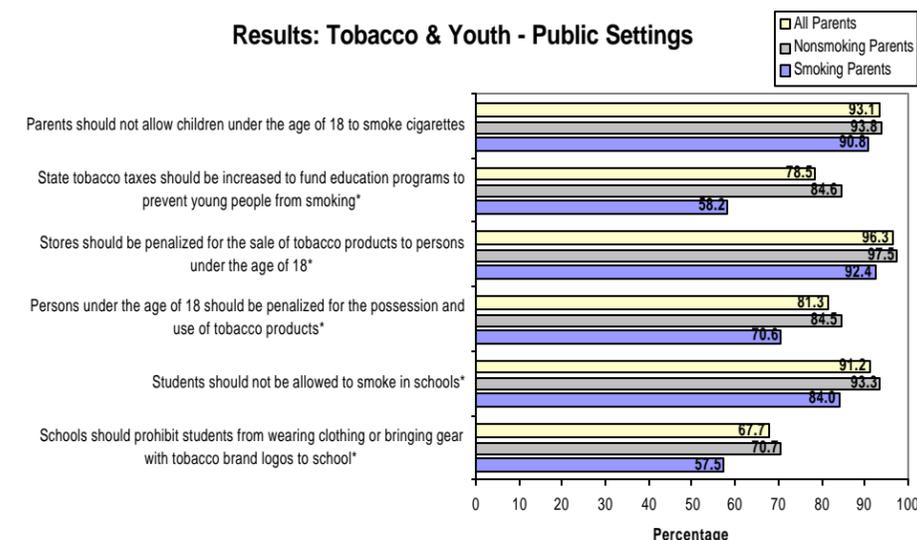
Of 3,566 eligible respondents contacted, 3,002 (84%) completed surveys and 900 (30%) were parents who had children living at home. Of these parents, 180 (20%) were current smokers. Overall, most US households ban smoking when children are present (88%) and most adults recognize the danger of ETS (95%). Smoking prohibition inside the home was more prevalent among non-smoking parents than smoking parents (89% vs 39%). More non-smoking parents than smoking parents reported that it is not acceptable for parents to smoke in front of children (88% vs 52%), and more supported smoke free shopping malls (81% vs 64%), convenience stores (90% vs 83%), and fast food restaurants (86% vs 63%). Support for youth tobacco prohibition in schools was greater among non-smoking parents than smoking parents (93% vs 84%), as was support for penalties for the sale of tobacco to minors (98% vs 93%) and youth possession (85% vs 71%),  $p < .05$  for all comparisons. Multivariate logistic regression analyses indicate that these differences between parents who smoke and those who do not remain after controlling for region, gender, race, age, and education factors.

## Results: Tobacco Use & Youth - Private Settings



\* denotes a significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level

## Results: Tobacco & Youth - Public Settings



\* denotes a significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level

## Detailed Methods:

### Respondents

The Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control (SCS-TC) was administered to a representative sample of U.S. adults in July-September of 2001. Households were selected using random digit dialing procedures. Once a household was reached, the adult to be interviewed was selected by asking to speak with the person in the household who is 18 years of age or older, and who will have the next birthday. The sample was weighted by race and gender within each census region, based on the most current US Census estimates.

### Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control

The SCS-TC is an annual cross-sectional survey designed to operationalize the concept of social climate into a comprehensive set of quantifiable social and environmental indicators across the social institutions that characterize society. These social institutions include 1) family and friendship groups; 2) education; 3) workplace; 4) government and political order; 5) health and medical care; 6) recreation, leisure and sports; and 7) mass culture and communication.

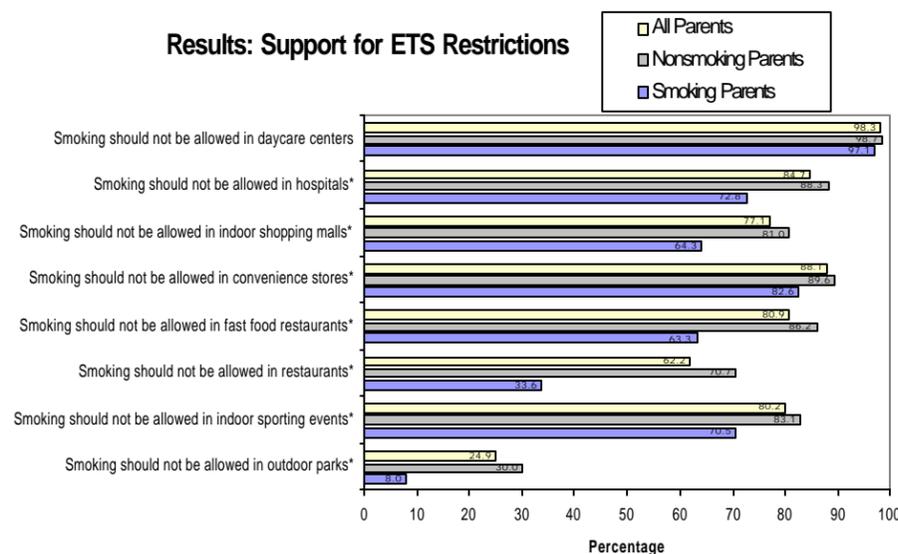
### Measures

Two questions from the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) were used to assess the current smoking status of respondents. Respondents were asked, "Have you smoked at least 100 cigarettes in your entire life?" Respondents who reported that they had were then asked, "Do you now smoke cigarettes every day, some days, or not at all?" Respondents who reported that they now smoke every day or some days were categorized as current smokers. Four questions assessed household smoking restrictions in the presence of children, while eight questions assessed respondents' attitudes about smoking bans in public places. Six questions measured respondents' attitudes and beliefs about youth cigarette smoking.

### Analyses

Chi-square procedures were used to examine differences between smoking and non-smoking parents. Associations were considered significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

## Results: Support for ETS Restrictions



\* denotes a significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level

## Conclusions:

These nationally representative data demonstrate that a substantial percentage of US children continue to be exposed to preventable sources of ETS. Although significant differences in tobacco control attitudes and practices exist between non-smoking parents and smoking parents, a broad majority favor greater prohibition of child ETS exposure. This parental consensus, that includes even smoking parents, should help guide public policy regarding child exposure to tobacco smoke. These findings provide information that should be useful for pediatricians in their roles of educating parents and as community advocates for stricter tobacco regulations in the communities in which they practice.

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