

# The Tiger's Roar

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## Don't Bet on Underage Gambling

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### Special points of interest:

- Gambling underage is an illegal activity.
- In order to purchase lottery tickets legally, one must be 18 years of age.
- Also, one must be 21 years old to gamble on the casino floors.

*Johnny's hand quivers in anticipation. A steam of cold sweat runs down his face as he clutches the small white die in his clammy palm. He rolls the die and crosses his fingers. In seconds, Johnny has lost his entire weekly allowance. He has no money left to buy a bus ticket home from the casino, so he needs the money immediately. Maybe he can get lucky the next time he shoots the dice. He takes another gamble and rolls the dice once again.*

Gambling has recently found its way into middle schools, high schools, and college campuses. It can eventually lead to serious problems such as financial debt, crime, and violence for the youth who illegally partake in gambling. Underage gambling is especially dangerous because the youth who partake in the sport do not develop a sense of financial well-being. Children often steal and lie in order to gamble with friends. Moreover, these children tend to be more disruptive in class and defiant towards authority figures.

Parents and adults who should be teaching their children financial independence and sufficiency are often the people teaching their children how to gamble. In fact, 75 percent of problem gamblers' children reported that their first gambling experience occurred before the age of 11.

Their children subsequently perceive gambling to be cool, and they do not know that they are illegally partaking in gambling.

Children as young as 10 years old have become efficient in online poker, sports gambling, shooting dice, and gambling on casino floors. Studies conducted in 2000 by the American Psychological Association states that 4 to 6 percent of children aged 12 to 17 are pathological gamblers.

The newest and most dangerous form of gambling is taking place on the internet. Although some gambling websites require students to have birth certificates or identification, most children simply present false information about themselves online.

The legal age to purchase lottery tickets is 18 and 21 for gambling on a casino floor. Until that age, most children are not mature enough to manage their finances responsibly. In direct correlation, a recent national study by the University of Chicago showed that nearly 6 percent teenagers under 18 have serious gambling problems. The best method for prevention of illegal underage gambling is improving the policies against illegal underage gambling. Legislators should perceive underage gambling as a threat to the well-being of today's

youth. Moreover, teachers and parents should make children aware of the dangers of underage gambling, including betting on sports, online gambling, and gambling on casino floors.

The temporary thrill that comes from gambling can eventually have grave consequences. Performing poorly in school, debt, addiction and misdemeanor theft are some of the effects of underage gambling. Rather than gambling, teens should find safe alternatives such as shopping, playing sports, reading, or watching a movie with friends. More information is available about underage gambling on ([www.Lostbet.com](http://www.Lostbet.com)). Choosing not to partake in illegal underage gambling is always the best bet.

***Fiona Odu, formerly of Lincoln College Preparatory Academy High School, won a \$1,500 scholarship to attend the University of Missouri-Columbia for her article that appeared in her high school newspaper "The Tiger's Roar."***