

Youth Problem Gambling

Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms



Paul R. LePage, Governor Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

41 Anthony Avenue
11 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0011
1-800-499-0027
maine.gov/safebet

The Department of Health and Human Services does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age or national origin in admission or access to or operations of its programs, services, or activities, or its hiring or employment practices. This notice is provided as required by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Maine Human Rights Act. Questions, concerns, complaints or requests for additional information regarding the ADA may be forwarded to DHHS ADA Compliance/EEO Coordinator, SHS #11, Augusta, ME 04333; (207) 287-4289 (V) or (207) 287-3488 (V), TTY: 800-606-0215. Individuals who need auxiliary aids or services for effective communication in programs and services of DHHS are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance/EEO Coordinator. This information is available in alternate formats upon request.

Caring...Responsive...Well-Managed...We Are DHHS.

As many as

**10-15% of youth may develop a
problem with gambling**

and face serious legal,
academic and financial trouble.



From scratch tickets and sports events to online games – youth gambling may start innocently enough, but for some young people it will develop into a problem. Young people are more

likely than adults to develop a serious gambling problem.

Could a young person you know be at risk for problem gambling?

If you suspect a teen has a gambling problem, dial the confidential **Maine help line 211**.

What Is Youth Problem Gambling?

Adult gambling has become more socially acceptable and available, youth may get the message that gambling is harmless fun. The list of gambling temptations is growing all the time: new games on the Internet and social media sites; poker, dice or board games played for money; sports bets; lottery games; and casinos, racinos and bingo halls where underage gamblers may not be detected.

The earlier a child starts to gamble, the more likely he or she is to develop a gambling problem. That's why it's so important to recognize the signs of youth gambling and carefully monitor your child.

Warning Signs

A Fixation on Gambling

Is your child preoccupied with gaming/gambling? Problem gamblers think about little else and may not be able to stop. When they do try to stop gambling, they may become anxious and irritable.

Hiding and Denying the Problem

Has your child's behavior become a concern? Problem gamblers will often lie or hide their gambling activity and may steal money or commit other crimes to support their habit.

Strained Relationships

Does your child spend a lot of time alone? Problem gamblers tend to isolate themselves from family and friends. They may have unexplained absences and become moody and withdrawn. Watch for problems and neglected responsibilities at school, work and home.

For **help** in treating youth gambling, call 211 or visit **211maine.org**

Mounting Debts

Does your child suddenly have a great sum of money, or just as suddenly be in debt? If there's no reasonable explanation for these ups and downs, this could signal a gambling problem.

A Slippery Slope

Early intervention is very important! Gambling can take over a young person's life, it can lead to falling grades, legal troubles, depression, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Why it Happens.

Gambling can be an addiction, just like drugs or alcohol. A young person who gambles might be filling a void in his or her life caused by these and other factors:

- **problems at home and school**
- **low self-esteem and emotional pain**
- **stress or boredom**
- **loneliness**
- **thrill-seeking**
- **a need for money**
- **peer pressure and the desire for acceptance**

How to Identify a Gambling Problem

Does your child:

1. Borrow money and not pay it back?
2. Steal money?
3. Sell personal belongings?
4. Act secretly about how he or she spends time?
5. Become moody and withdrawn for no known reason?
6. Neglect responsibilities?
7. Have unexplained absences from school or work?
8. Show an unusual interest in sports scores?
9. Seem overly interested in conversations about gambling?
10. Have large unexplained debts?
11. Suddenly have a large sum of money?
12. Buy expensive items or go on shopping binges?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, your child may be at risk for a gambling addiction. Be sure to monitor your child carefully and discuss your concerns with him or her. If you feel there is a need for treatment, visit 211maine.org for assistance and a list of resources.

