

# WebSource

## Video Short

### Overnight College Visits

By CWK Network Producer

*“As soon as their parents leave to go to the hotel or something and it’s just the students left behind, they go crazy. They go wild and they really don’t make good decisions.”*

– Jordan, 17 years old

High school seniors everywhere are in the process of deciding where to do to school next year. And a big part of that decision hinges on their visits to college campuses.

But what goes on during those visits may surprise their parents.

Jordan, 17, has visited eight college campuses this fall. She and her friends have seen the campuses, spent the night in dorms and eaten in dining halls. But, she says, many high school seniors she knows have done even more. “If their parents are with them, they’re doing the responsible things, but as soon as their parents leave to go to the hotel or something and it’s just the students left behind, they go crazy. They go wild and they really don’t make good decisions,” she says.

In fact, surveys have shown that 40 percent of teenagers who stay overnight for a college visit will drink, use drugs or have sex.

Jordan isn’t surprised at those numbers, especially after some of the wild stories her friends have brought back home. “My friend who went to freshman orientation, he ended up getting drunk, falling down a flight of stairs. A few other friends ended up losing their virginity just because they were drinking,” she says.

Experts say part of the problem is that ‘college visit’ means different things to different kids. Joy Gray Prince, a director of college counseling at a high school explains, “I have kids all the time come into my office. I’ll say, ‘well, did you visit X university?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Did you have an official tour?’ ‘No, I went to visit my buddy, so-and-so.’ That is not a visit.”

A responsible visit, she says, and a safer one, has a specific agenda that parents should know ahead of time. “What are you going to get out of this visit? Are you going to take a tour? Are you going to have an information session at the admission office? Will you make an appointment with a professor?” says Prince.

She says parents should make sure their kids *don’t* visit over a weekend *and* should always contact the admissions office in advance, “because you want that college or university to know that you’ve been on that campus. Because for some, demonstrated interest is important. They want to know to know you’ve been on campus.”

### College Road Trip

By CWK Network, Inc.

College road trips, portrayed in many sources as being fun and exciting, can often leave the participants regretting they went, especially when they involve sex. Nearly two-thirds of teens that have had sexual intercourse say they regret it and wish they had waited, according to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. The campaign also found that when it comes to making a decision about sex, teens say parents matter more than they might think.

Results of the poll of 501 teenagers:

- Most have regrets. Sixty-three percent of teens surveyed who have had sexual intercourse wish they had waited longer. Fifty-five percent of boys and 72 percent of girls said they wish they had waited longer to have sex.
- Parents are influential. When asked who influenced their decisions about sex the most, more teens cited their parents than any other influence (37 percent). Thirty percent of teens said that friends influenced their decision-making the most. An equal percentage (11 percent) of teens identified the media and their religious communities as most influential.

## What Parents Need to Know

A great way to prevent damaging and regretful actions by your teenagers while on road trips is to discuss the pitfalls and dangers of having sex. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry says talking to your children about love, intimacy and sex is an important part of parenting. Parents need to create a comfortable atmosphere in which to talk to their kids about these issues. Children and adolescents need input and guidance from their parents to help them make healthy and appropriate decisions about sex. The AACAP says, "Open communication and accurate information from parents increases the chance that teens will postpone sex and will use appropriate methods of birth control once they begin."

In talking with your child, it is helpful to:

- Encourage your child to talk and ask questions.
- Maintain a calm and non-critical atmosphere for discussions.
- Use words that are understandable and comfortable.
- Try to determine your child's level of knowledge and understanding.
- Keep your sense of humor and don't be afraid to talk about your own discomfort.
- Relate sex to love, intimacy, caring and respect for oneself and one's partner.
- Be open in sharing your values and concerns.
- Discuss the importance of responsibility for choices and decisions.
- Help your child to consider the pros and cons of choices.

## Resources

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [American Sexual Health Association](#)
- [The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy](#)
- [Students Against Destructive Decisions](#)

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