

Youth Gambling in Oregon – What We’re Seeing in Oregon

More students are gambling, and they’re encountering gambling-like features in everyday places – especially online. In recent student surveys, nearly one in four reported gambling, and activities like online betting and video gaming-related gambling features are growing quickly.

How Youth Are Gambling

For most students, gambling doesn’t look like a trip to a casino or playing the Lottery. Instead, it shows up in everyday environments and digital spaces they already use. Common ways youth gamble include:

- Sports bets with friends
- Prediction Markets
- Scratch tickets or card games
- Online fantasy sports
- “Loot boxes” and in-game purchases that feel like gambling
- Social media challenges and influencer content

Much of this happens casually with peers, during family gatherings and in school settings. Many parents and other adults aren’t aware of how often this comes up or how easy it is for young people to participate.

Why It Matters

Youth who gamble—even occasionally—are more likely to engage in other risky behaviors. We also see higher levels of stress, sadness, and trouble managing school and relationships. For some students, gambling can become a coping mechanism or a way to fit in socially, which makes prevention and early conversations important.

Age Guidelines in Oregon

Legally, youth cannot participate in regulated gambling, but they may still access informal or digital forms. Oregon's minimum age for most gambling activities is 18, and 21 for casino gambling, and sports betting on Draft Kings app. This doesn't stop exposure, but it helps frame conversations around healthy boundaries.

What Educators Can Do

You don't need to be a gambling expert. The most helpful role educators play is simply creating space for awareness and dialogue. Helpful approaches include:

- Bringing up gambling when discussing digital safety, money habits, or media literacy
- Spotting “gambling-like” features in games kids already play
- Supporting financial literacy lessons that touch on odds, risk, and decision-making
- Offering guidance on managing peer pressure and stress
- Encouraging conversations at home by providing parent-friendly resources
- Connecting students to support when they express concern about their own or a friend's gambling

Statewide Support & Resources

Oregon's prevention specialists, school partners, and community organizations offer free resources to help guide both youth and families. Educators can access:

- Classroom-friendly prevention materials
- Financial literacy tools with gambling-risk examples
- Parent conversation guides
- Youth leadership activities
- Referral pathways for students who may need extra support

The Big Picture

Youth gambling doesn't need to be a scary topic – just one more area where we help students think critically and make healthy choices. A few simple conversations about money, online behavior, and risk can make a meaningful difference. When students feel informed and supported, they're better equipped to avoid harm and stay focused on what matters most.

If you or someone you care about wants to make a change to their gambling, call the Helpline at **[1-877-695-4648](tel:1-877-695-4648)** or visit www.OPGR.org. All information shared is confidential and this service is FREE to Oregon residents.

If you want more information or educational materials on problem gambling, visit www.Oregoncpg.org.

OREGON PROBLEM GAMBLING RESOURCE
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