



# Junior Achievement<sup>®</sup>

## Teaching Teens Financial Sense

(NAPSA)—A growing number of parents buy into the idea of teaching financial responsibility to their teens—but are teens still writing checks that their money skills can't cash?

A recent poll says that might be the case. It found that today's teens use credit cards in surprisingly high numbers, with those numbers increasing as teens grow older. Among teens ages 13 to 14, 2.7 percent report having credit cards. That percentage nearly doubles for teens 15 to 16. More than 28 percent of teens have credit cards by the time they're 18.

### **The Cost For Mom And Dad**

How do teens pay their credit card bills? According to the poll—called the eighth annual JA Worldwide (Junior Achievement) poll and sponsored by The Allstate Foundation—more than 10 percent turn to their parents, while 2.4 percent admitted to occasionally skipping payments. Just over 15 percent make the minimum monthly payment.

Additionally, despite widespread financial illiteracy among their age group, more than three-quarters of teens indicated that they wield strong influence over household buying decisions.

### **Valuable Lessons**

In a new question added to this year's poll, the survey attempted to discover if parents were conducting regular family discussions about money and, if so, what the effect was on teen spending and saving habits. Nearly three-quarters of teens indicated that they have regular family discussions about money.



**Today's teens have credit cards and a "strong influence" over household buying decisions.**

The most popular topic in these discussions was the importance of saving (80 percent) followed by the importance of paying bills on time (55.3 percent)—both are valuable lessons, according to Gerald M. Czarnecki, president and chief executive officer of JA Worldwide. However, Czarnecki says there's plenty of room for improvement.

"We need to do a much better job of preparing our children to avoid the financial pitfalls that so many adults have faced," he explains.

### **A Smart Approach**

JA Worldwide offers programs to help students in grades K-12 devise and adhere to a budget, learn about the cost of credit, and become informed consumers who make smart choices. The group is the world's largest organization dedicated to educating young people about work readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy.

For more information about the organization or the poll, visit [www.ja.org](http://www.ja.org).