GAMBLING & SPORTS BETTING

Loot boxes, lottery tickets and betting apps: what Indiana teens really do.

Know the Basics

What counts

Betting money or valuables on an uncertain outcome. The Indiana survey includes lottery tickets, card games, sports pools, fantasy sports, betting apps and video game loot boxes.

Why it matters for teens

Teen brains are still developing impulse control, and people who start gambling young are at higher risk of later gambling problems.

Built to keep you playing

Apps, loot boxes and near-misses are designed to feel exciting and keep people spending.

Warning signs

Chasing losses, lying about betting, borrowing money to gamble or feeling restless when not gambling.

BY THE NUMBERS

62–70%

of Indiana 7th–12th graders did **not** gamble in any way in the past year, even counting loot boxes.

20.3%

of Indiana 12th graders bought lottery tickets in the past year, the most common form of gambling for seniors.

6.3%

of Indiana 12th graders used online sports betting apps, which are for adults 21 and older.

2026 Indiana Youth Survey

Data Check: Using These Numbers Right

- **Definitions change the number.** The survey counts video game loot boxes as gambling. Saying "1 in 3 teens gamble" without explaining that can mislead.
- **It's a past-year measure,** unlike the past-month measures for most substances. Don't compare gambling rates directly with drug use rates.
- **Lead with the majority:** most Indiana students didn't gamble at all, and betting apps are among the least common forms.

Laws & Safety in Indiana

- **21** is the minimum age for sports betting and casinos in Indiana. **18** is the minimum age for the lottery.
- **Betting apps require users to be 21.** Underage accounts can be closed and winnings voided.
- **Need help?** Call or text 1-800-GAMBLER, free and confidential, 24/7.

Campaign Angles

- **Use the majority norm:** most Indiana students don't gamble.
- **Talk about design:** help peers spot how apps and loot boxes are built to keep them spending.
- **Time it right:** big games and tournaments are natural campaign moments.

Sources: 2026 Indiana Youth Survey, Prevention Insights, IU School of Public Health-Bloomington; National Council on Problem Gambling; Indiana Gaming Commission; Hoosier Lottery.