

Parents encouraged to avoid purchasing lottery tickets as gifts for minors

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(PhysOrg.com) -- In the flurry of activity before the holidays, some well-meaning family members consider buying lottery tickets and scratch cards as affordable, colourful, and potentially promising gift options for the children and teens on their list.

This season, McGill University researchers, the National Council on Problem Gambling and a number of Canadian and U.S. lotteries are actively working together to ask families to reconsider purchasing [lottery](#) tickets as gifts for minors.

Results from a recent study showed that 19% of high school students received one or more lottery tickets or scratch cards as gifts, of which 86% of these came from [family members](#). These rates have fallen from a high of 30% in 2004 - perhaps coincidentally the year McGill University began this annual holiday campaign with Loto-Québec out of concerns about adolescent problem gambling.

Working with lottery corporations increases the effectiveness of this very important message. "We ask parents to use their judgment and offer their youngsters gifts unrelated to games of chance," states Alain Cousineau, president and CEO of Loto-Québec.

Other provincial lotteries endorsing this year's campaign with the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill University include: the Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation (NSGC), Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG),

Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC), Atlantic Lottery and BCLC. Thirteen U.S. lotteries have joined our holiday campaign as well, giving this year's campaign our widest reach yet.

Gambling remains a familiar activity for a majority of adolescents, with research suggesting that 70-80% of adolescents report having gambled for money in the past year, 30% report gambling on a weekly basis, and current problem gamblers report beginning gambling during childhood, at ages as young as 9 or 10.

"We're challenging [parents](#) to act responsibly by not giving lottery products to anyone who is underage," explained Michael Graydon, president and CEO of BCLC.

This year, give children the gift of responsibility. The sale of lottery products is reserved to those 18 or 19 years of age and older, depending on the provincial jurisdiction, similar to age restrictions placed on the sale of alcohol and tobacco.

This holiday season, if you choose to offer a lottery product as a [gift](#), remember that [gambling](#) is only for adults.

Provided by McGill University

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