

## Preface

In 2004 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) sponsored a two-day meeting on parental monitoring of adolescents. The CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health invited the leading researchers in the field to meet and discuss current knowledge about parental monitoring, what we still need to learn about parental monitoring, and how what we know can best be practically applied in public health intervention efforts. Although public health scientists have long recognized the powerful impact parental monitoring efforts can have on adolescent risk behavior, the public health approach to studying parental monitoring, with some exceptions, has been atheoretical and unsophisticated in nature. We hoped the discussion and exchange of ideas at the meeting would help us to move the public health field forward by identifying common definitions for parental monitoring, improving our understanding of the antecedents and outcomes associated with parental monitoring efforts, and by developing specific ways to help parents become more effective monitors of their children and adolescents.

The meeting sparked such lively discussion and brainstorming of ideas that we decided a book was needed in order to reach a broader audience. We anticipate that audience will include public health researchers and practitioners as well as other applied researchers in the fields of social work,

psychology, and sociology. However, we also hope to reach a large non-scientific audience—professionals working in school settings, in community and faith-based organizations, in health care settings, and other settings in which there is frequent contact with parents and adolescents.

The first part of the book presents current research and theorizing about parental monitoring by some of the world's leading experts in this area. The second part of the book is somewhat unorthodox in that it contains a Question and Answer section in which the volume's contributors have each addressed a series of questions concerning research on parental monitoring. Our overall goals are to spark further discussion of parental monitoring, both in terms of research, program, and practice, and to provide useful information for improving parental monitoring practices.