

MOST Powerful Influence

PARENTS

Adapted from  SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Research shows that parents are the #1 reason young people decide not to drink alcohol. So, start talking to your children ... before they start drinking.

Even if it doesn't seem like it, they really do hear you.



Factors that may cause Children to Drink

Stress

- When children worry about things like grades, fitting in, and physical appearance, they may use alcohol as a way to escape their problems.
- What YOU Can Do:** Encourage your child to get involved in extracurricular activities as a healthier way to cope.

Peer Pressure

- The age range between 11 and 18 is an impressionable period when youth are especially susceptible to outside influences like peers, family members, and the media.
- What YOU Can Do:** Helping your child to learn different ways to say “no” and remind them that real friends would not pressure them to drink.

Transitions

- Life events such as transitioning from middle to high school, breaking up with a significant other, moving, or divorce can cause children to turn to alcohol.
- What YOU Can Do:** Reassure your child that things will get easier, and that drinking is not a solution.

Culture

- If children grow up in an environment where their parents or peers drink a lot and/or view drinking favorably, they may be more likely to drink themselves.
- What YOU Can Do:** If you choose to drink, set a good example by drinking in moderation, and make sure your child knows that underage drinking is not acceptable.

Genetics

- Children who come from a family with a history of alcoholism are at an increased risk for becoming an alcoholic.
- What YOU Can Do:** If alcoholism runs in your family, have an honest discussion with your child to make sure he or she understands the seriousness of the disease.

PREVENTION WORKS!

Underage drinking and its consequences can be prevented. Between 2002 and 2014, current, binge, and heavy drinking by 12- to 20-year-olds all declined, from 29 to 23%, 19 to 14%, and 6 to 3%, respectively.

In 2015, alcohol use and drunkenness among 8th to 12th graders reached the lowest levels recorded since 1975. Age 21 minimum legal drinking laws have reduced alcohol-related traffic fatalities by 13% and, as of 2012, have saved an estimated 29,292 lives since 1975.

START EARLY

About 10 percent of 12-year-olds say they have tried alcohol. By age 15, that number jumps to 50 percent. The sooner you talk to your children about alcohol, the greater chance you have of influencing their decision not to drink.

Most 6-year-olds know that alcohol is only for adults. Between the ages of 9 and 13, kids start to view alcohol differently. Many begin to think drinking is OK. Some even start to experiment. It is never too early to talk to your child about alcohol.

SAY SOMETHING

What you say to your child about alcohol is up to you. But remember, parents who do not discourage underage drinking may have an indirect influence on their children's alcohol use.

Learn more at:

www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov

SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES

Over the last few decades, experts have learned much more about the dangers of kids drinking alcohol. Underage drinking has many serious risks.

Kids who drink alcohol are more likely to:

- Use drugs;
- Get bad grades;
- Hurt themselves or someone else;
- Have unwanted or unprotected sex;
- Make bad decisions; and
- Have health problems.

TALK they hear you



1 Show you disapprove of underage drinking.
Over 80% of young people ages 10-18 say their parents are the leading influence on their decision to drink or not drink. So they really are listening, and it's important that you send a clear and strong message.

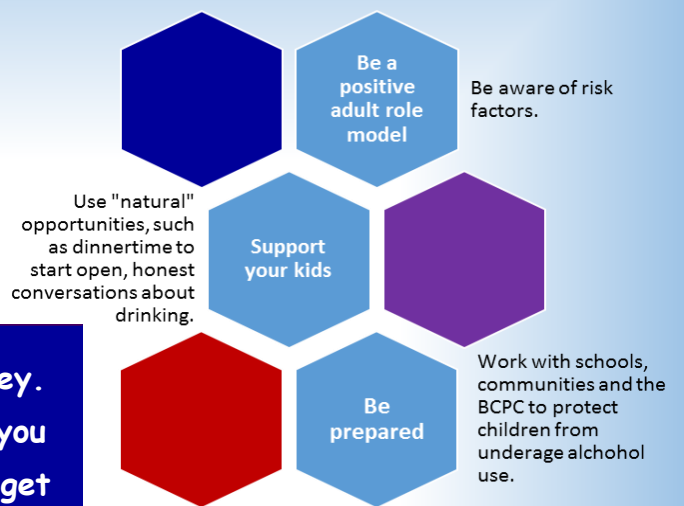
2 Show you care about your child's happiness and well-being.
Young people are more likely to listen when they know you're on their side. Try to reinforce why you don't want your child to drink—not just because you say so, but because you want your child to be happy and safe. The conversation will go a lot better if you're working with, and not against, your child.

3 Show you're a good source of information about alcohol.
You want your child to be making informed decisions about drinking, with reliable information about its dangers. You don't want your child to be learning about alcohol from friends, the internet, or the media—you want to establish yourself as a trustworthy source of information.

4 Show you're paying attention and you'll notice if your child drinks.
You want to show you're keeping an eye on your child, because young people are more likely to drink if they think no one will notice. There are many subtle ways to do this without prying.

5 Build your child's skills and strategies for avoiding underage drinking.
Even if your child doesn't want to drink, peer pressure is a powerful thing. It could be tempting to drink just to avoid looking uncool. To prepare your child to resist peer pressure, you'll need to build skills and practice them.

What YOU Can Do



**Keep it low-key.
Don't worry, you don't have to get everything across in one talk. Many small talks are better.**

The Tough Questions about Alcohol

"I got invited to a party. Can I go?"
"Did you drink when you were a kid?"
"Why do you drink?"
"What if my friends ask me to drink?"

As your child becomes curious about alcohol, he or she may turn to you for answers and advice. Use this opportunity to start an open, honest conversation about drinking. Because some questions can be difficult to answer, it is important to be prepared.

Source: Adapted from www.underagedrinking.samhsa

