

# Tips for Parents: Underage Drinking in California

## What Can You Do?



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# ALCOHOL: A PROBLEM FOR TODAY'S YOUTH?

## How common is drinking among youth?

Drinking among teenagers is a serious problem in the United States. Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among teens.

- ✘ 52% of eighth graders and 80% of high-school seniors have used alcohol at some time.
- ✘ 25% of eighth graders and 62% of high-school seniors have been drunk.

Even though it is illegal for teens to drink, most say that it is easy to get alcohol. 71% of eighth graders and 95% of high-school seniors say that it would be easy to get alcohol if they wanted some.

## Why is drinking a problem?

Teens often underestimate the risk that drinking can pose. In a recent survey, only 56% of eighth graders and 43% of high-school seniors said that they thought drinking heavily once or twice a weekend was a great risk.

**What are some of the real risks?** Alcohol is a powerful, mood-altering drug. Not only does alcohol affect the mind and body in often unpredictable ways, but teens lack the judgment and coping skills to handle alcohol wisely. As a result:

- **Alcohol-related traffic accidents** are a major cause of death and disability among teens, and alcohol is linked with deaths of youth by **drowning, fire, suicide, and homicide**.
- Teens that use alcohol are more likely to become **sexually active** at earlier ages, to have sexual intercourse more often, and to have unprotected sex.
- Young people who drink are more likely than others to be **victims of violent crime**, including rape, aggravated assault, and robbery.
- Teens that drink are more likely to have **problems with school work and school conduct**.
- Youth who begin drinking before the age of 15 are **four times more likely** to be dependent on alcohol as adults than those who wait until age 21.



One national survey found that of the teens who reported drinking regularly (at least once a week) in the past month:

- ✘ 49% had **used marijuana**, while 21% had **used other illegal drugs** in the last month
- ✘ 50% had **been in a physical fight** in the past year
- ✘ 16% had **carried a weapon to school** in the past month, and
- ✘ 27% had **engaged in risky sex**.

### California Youth Alcohol Use

According to the 2004 California Student Survey, administered to a random sample of 112 schools across the state, the following alcohol use was reported by 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders.

Having ever consumed a full drink of alcohol in lifetime was reported by 16% of 7<sup>th</sup> graders; 42% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders; and 63% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders.

Use of any alcohol in the past six months was reported by 26% of 7<sup>th</sup> graders; 49% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders; and 62.5% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders.

Binge drinking—drinking 5 or more drinks in a row in the prior 30 days—was reported by 11.5% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 23% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders.

Drinking at least one alcoholic beverage in the prior 30 days was reported by 10% of 7<sup>th</sup> graders; 25% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders; and 37% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders.

*The message is clear: Alcohol use is risky for young people. The longer children delay alcohol use, the less likely they are to develop problems associated with it, which is why it is so important for you to help your child avoid any alcohol use.*

# Common Myths About Alcohol

-  **Myth: All teenagers will drink at some point, no matter how we try to stop them.**  
*Fact: Although underage drinking is a serious problem, 81 percent of adolescents ages 12 to 17 have chosen NOT to drink in the past year.*
-  **Myth: My son or daughter knows everything about drinking, so we don't need to talk about it.**  
*Fact: Many teenagers have dangerous misconceptions about alcohol—for example, they don't realize that wine coolers have the same alcohol content as a shot of distilled spirits, or they think they can sober up by drinking coffee or getting fresh air.*
-  **Myth: What parents say or do won't make any difference; teens only listen to their friends.**  
*Fact: Parents can be very influential. A study of adolescents and their families conducted by the Research Institute on Addictions revealed that adolescent girls and boys, regardless of race or income level, whose parents supervise their friendships and activities, are less likely to engage in problem behaviors, including drinking.*
-  **Myth: He only drinks beer. It's a phase—he'll get over it, just like I did.**  
*Fact: Adolescents who begin drinking before age 15 or younger are four times more likely to develop problems of alcohol use and dependence than those who begin drinking at age 21 or older. Many engage in binge drinking, which is drinking five or more drinks on one occasion. Some people mistakenly believe that beer and wine are light in alcohol content, when in fact they have the same alcohol content.*
-  **Myth: It's okay for young people to drink, just as long as they don't drive. The worst that can happen is that he'll wake up with a terrible hangover.**  
*Fact: Wrong. If you drink a lot of alcohol quickly, it can build up in your body so much that you can die from alcohol poisoning within only a few hours. As well, you're more prone to injury, which can be serious or fatal. And, anyone who drinks and drives could severely injure or kill someone—including themselves.*
-  **Myth: Alcohol is not such a big deal, compared with illicit drugs.**  
*Fact: Alcohol is a factor in the three leading causes of deaths among 14- and 15-year olds: unintentional injuries, homicides, and suicides.*
-  **Myth: Teens can't become alcoholics because they haven't been drinking long enough.**  
*Fact: You can develop alcoholism at any age. It depends on how much and how often you drink. As well, heavy drinking and binge drinking by anyone can be very harmful, whether or not they're alcohol-dependent.*

Source: SAMHSA; Napa County Resource Guide for Parents

## Alcohol and Brain Development

Can drinking stop the teenage brain from growing? Duke University researchers scanned the brains of teens recovering from drinking problems. They found that teens that drank a lot had a smaller prefrontal cortex than those who did not. The prefrontal cortex is the part of the brain responsible for judgment and critical thinking. Dr. Michael Fishman, the director of the adult addiction medicine program at Ridgeview Institute in Atlanta says, "If you have a prefrontal cortex that does not mature as it's supposed to as an adolescent and young adult, it could possibly impede many different areas of our lives. We could become more impulsive, have poor decision-making, our judgment could be off, and we might not be able to learn as well as other people." And—the research suggests—the damage is permanent. Dr. Fishman says, "You only have so much time for the brain to mature, and the brain is not as forgiving of an organ as the liver that might regenerate after damage." He says parents should explain that the brain does not fully mature until age 25—and that binge drinking—even once a month—may cause damage. Dr. Fishman says, "This really isn't even a scare tactic. It just is what it is, and it's very, very damaging."

Source: [www.connectwithkids.com](http://www.connectwithkids.com)

# WHAT DO KIDS DRINK?

The alcohol industry makes an estimated \$22.5 billion by selling to underage drinkers, accounting for 17.5 percent of all alcohol sales in the U.S, according to a report from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse.

Source: <http://www.jointogether.org>

## Alcopops: The drink of choice among today's teens



Alcopops are the newest trend in underage drinking. These fruit-flavored malt beverages come in colorful packaging similar in design to many teen-friendly soft drinks. They are called “flavored malt beverages” or “low-alcohol refreshers” by the alcohol industry, even though they contain 5-7 percent alcohol by volume, rivaling most beers.



The American Medical Association (AMA) reported the extent of underage consumption and marketing exposure to “alcopops” based on the results of two nationwide polls. A majority of teens 17-18 years old (51%) and many teens 14-16 years old (35%) have tried alcopops. These sweet malt beverages are considered to be a “gateway” beverage to attract younger and newer drinkers. When asked what one type of alcoholic drink they would most prefer to drink, nearly a third of teens (30 percent) said “alcopops” compared to only 16 percent for beer and 16 percent for mixed drinks. As an alcohol industry representative admitted, “The beauty of this category [alcopops] is that it brings in new drinkers, people who really don’t like the taste of beer.”

Source: <http://www.alcoholpolicymd.com>



### FACT

*Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among young people.*  
([www.nodrugs.info](http://www.nodrugs.info))

### FACT

*By the time a young person finishes eighth grade, more than half will have tried alcohol. 52% of 15-year-olds say they either drink at home or at a friend's house.*

### FACT

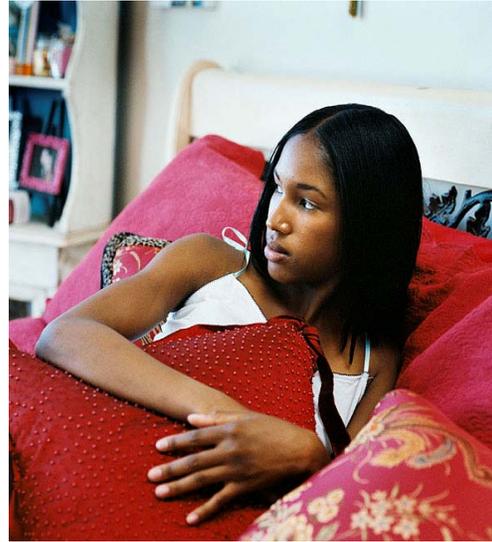
*Only 31% of parents of 15-16-year olds believe their child had a drink in the past year, compared to the 60% of teens in that age group who reported drinking.*

# WARNING SIGNS

## Is Your Teenager Using Drugs or Alcohol?

If your child is using alcohol and drugs, it's a good bet he or she is doing everything possible to keep that activity hidden. But continued alcohol and drug use will affect your child's behavior, attitudes, and even choice of friends. The following list describes some signs to look for if you think that your child may be using.

- ☑ **Mood swings** *Most teenagers go through normal mood swings. But look for extreme changes—one minute happy and giddy followed by withdrawal, depression, or fits of anger or rage.*
- ☑ **Secrecy** *Pay attention to your child's behavior. If he or she begins to act with increased secrecy about possessions or activities, or engages in subtle conversations with friends, this may be a cause for concern.*
- ☑ **New Friends** *If your child is using, chances are he or she will be hanging out with others with similar interests. Has your child suddenly turned away from his or her old friends? Is he or she hanging out with an older (driving age) group or with those that you suspect are using drugs?*
- ☑ **Bad Performance in School** *Has your child's attitude toward school suddenly changed? Have his or her grades gone from pretty good to very bad? Has he or she been skipping classes or school altogether?*



- ☑ **Physical Health** *Have you noticed a change in appetite? Does your child suddenly have digestive problems? Has he or she been treated for medical conditions that might be attributed to substance abuse, like gastritis or ulcers? Have his or her sleeping patterns changed?*
  - ☑ **“Evidence”** *Have you noticed any alcoholic beverages missing? Have you found unexplained empty containers around the house or grounds? What about the increased presence of “masking agents” such as mouthwash and breath mints, which could cover up the smell of alcohol?*
  - ☑ **Attitude** *Has your child developed a negative attitude against anti-drug or anti-alcohol programs, materials, or literature? Has he or she developed a bad attitude toward any authority figures in his or her life? Have you found your child has generally become dishonest?*
  - ☑ **Little Things** *Have you noticed a change in hairstyle or “fashion” choices? Has your child lost interest in tidiness in his or her room, or does he or she pay less attention to personal hygiene?*
- ☑ **Overt signals** *Has anyone ever told you your child is drinking or using drugs? Has your child suddenly developed the need for additional money, and for vague or unexplained reasons? Have you ever seen your child stagger, or have you noticed any slurred speech, changes in the pupils of his or her eyes, or redness or bloodshot eyes?*

Source: [alcoholism.about.com](http://alcoholism.about.com)

**Keep in mind that many of these changes, alone, could be attributed to being simply part of growing up, but if you have noticed a pattern of several of these “signals,” your child may be using alcohol or drugs.**

## Other behaviors of concern

Parents should also be watchful of their teens' friends and dating practices, as well as keeping an eye out for any self-destructive behaviors.

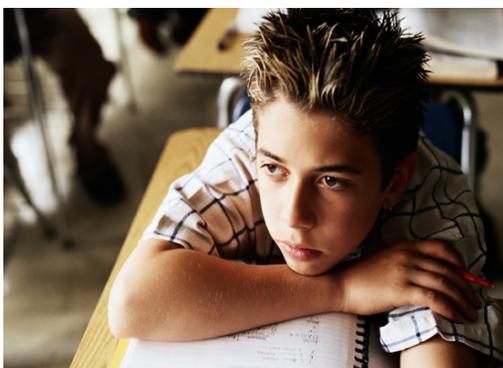


The more **sexually active friends** a teen has and the more time a teen spends with a **boyfriend or girlfriend**, the greater the risk that teen will smoke, drink, get drunk or use illegal drugs, according to the National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse IX: Teen Dating Practices and Sexual Activity.

The survey found:

- Compared to teens with no sexually active friends, teens who report half or more of their friends are sexually active are more than six and one-half times likelier to drink, and 31 times likelier to get drunk.
- Teens who spend 25 or more hours a week with a boyfriend/girlfriend are two and one-half times likelier to drink, and five times likelier to get drunk than teens who spend less than 10 hours a week with a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Girls with boyfriends two or more years older are more than twice as likely to drink, and almost six times likelier to get drunk than girls whose boyfriends are less than two years older or who do not have a boyfriend.
- Forty-four percent of high school students think that boys at their school often or sometimes "push girls to drink alcohol or take drugs in order to get the girls to have sex or do other sexual things."

Source: Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University 2004 Teen Survey



### Low Self-Esteem

Parents who have boys with low self-esteem at age 11, and who have friends who approve of drug and alcohol use, should be concerned that self-derogation could turn into drug dependency by age 20, according to Florida State University researchers. Children with very low self-esteem, what the researchers termed "self-derogation," were 1.6 times more likely to meet the criteria for drug dependence nine years later than other children. Source: *Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse*

## Risk Factors

Some teens are more likely to drink than others. For example, although teenage girls are almost as likely to drink as boys, teenage boys are much more likely to drink heavily on a regular basis. Other factors that put teens at risk for drinking include the following.

Sources: *Make a Difference*, from National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism; National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center

<b>Childhood behavior</b>	<i>Teens that were aggressive, anti-social, or impulsive, restless, and easily distracted as young children are more likely to have alcohol-related problems.</i>
<b>Mental or emotional problems</b>	<i>Teens that suffer from anxiety and depression disorders are much more likely to abuse or be dependent on alcohol, as are teens with conduct disorders or certain attention-deficit disorders.</i>
<b>A family history of alcoholism</b>	<i>Children of alcoholics are much more likely than other teens to start drinking during their teenage years.</i>
<b>Positive parental attitudes toward drinking</b>	<i>Teens with parents who drink or express favorable attitudes towards drinking are more likely to start drinking sooner and to continue drinking. Teens that are warned about alcohol by their parents are less likely to start drinking.</i>
<b>Home life</b>	<i>Teens that come from homes where parents provide little emotional support, fail to monitor their activities, or have little involvement in their children's lives, are more likely to drink, and to drink heavily. Harsh, inconsistent discipline and hostility or rejection towards children has also been found to lead to adolescent drinking and alcohol-related problems.</i>
<b>Positive peer attitudes towards drinking</b>	<i>When a teen's friends drink, accept, or encourage drinking, the teen is more likely to drink.</i>
<b>Trauma</b>	<i>Adolescents in treatment for alcohol abuse or dependence report higher rates of physical abuse, sexual abuse, violent victimization, witnessing violence, and other traumas than other teens.</i>

# FACTS ON HOW YOUTH OBTAIN ALCOHOL

## How Do Underage Drinkers Obtain Alcohol?

Most underage drinkers report it is “very easy” to obtain alcohol. Underage drinkers obtain alcohol from two main sources:

- Third parties, such as **legal-age friends, siblings, and strangers**<sup>1</sup>; and
- **Commercial outlets**, such as stores, bars, and restaurants (often by using a fake ID)

Studies of alcohol purchases across the country reveal that, depending on the location and the environmental context, 40 to 90 percent of **retail outlets** have sold alcohol to underage buyers.



**Home** is the primary source of alcohol among the youngest drinkers. Some youth take alcohol from their parents’ liquor cabinets without their parents’ knowledge. Some parents even supply their underage children with alcohol at special events such as graduations, weddings, or holiday parties. *Source: Center for Problem-Oriented Policing*

## Where do young people go to drink alcohol?

Underage people drink at a variety of locations:

**Parties in private residences.** Large numbers of young people may gather in a home, often while parents are away, or in a college student’s off-campus residence. House parties are popular among both high school and college students, and underage non-students.

**Parties at outdoor venues such as beaches, parks, fields, or parking lots.** The remoteness of these locations may reduce the chances that residents will be bothered, but also usually means that partygoers will have to drive home after drinking.

## How can a community reduce youth access to alcohol?



A community can make strides to reduce youth access to alcohol in several ways. The **enforcement of laws against underage drinking**, or the **establishment of new laws**, such as **social host ordinances**<sup>2</sup>, can help reduce underage drinking. **Reducing the overall availability of alcohol in a community** will also help diminish alcohol use among young people because younger drinkers obtain alcohol from older people (friends, siblings, parents, and other adults). One important way to reduce the overall availability is to **reduce the number of alcohol outlets** relative to community size and population. Lessening the overall presence of alcohol in a community sends a message to young people that alcohol does not have to be the central feature of social life. *Source: [www.alcoholfreechildren.org](http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org)*

<sup>1</sup> Underage drinkers sometimes ask strangers to buy alcohol for them, often in exchange for a fee or a portion of the alcohol purchased. This practice is called “*shoulder tapping*”.

<sup>2</sup> Social host ordinances hold criminally liable adults who serve or provide alcohol to minors if that minor kills or injures themselves or someone else. For more information on social host ordinances, visit <http://www.alcoholpolicypanel.org/>

# HOW TO HELP PREVENT YOUR CHILD FROM DRINKING

This toolkit has provided you a basic overview of information on the extent, dangers, and warning signs of youth alcohol use. You can use this knowledge, along with the following tips and guidelines, to improve your communication with your child, initiate a discussion about alcohol and its dangers, establish rules and boundaries concerning alcohol and its presence in your child's life, and to adapt your own behavior and parenting practices to help keep your child and the environment in which they live as safe and alcohol-free as possible.

## Talk with your Teen about Alcohol

For many parents, bringing up the subject of alcohol is difficult. Your teen may try to dodge the discussion, and you yourself may feel unsure about how to proceed. To boost your chances for a productive conversation, take some time to think through the issues you want to discuss before you talk with your child. Also, think about how your child might react and ways you might respond to your child's questions and feelings. Then choose a time to talk when both you and your child have some "down time" and are feeling relaxed.

Keep in mind that you don't need to cover everything at once. In fact, you're likely to have a greater impact on your child's drinking by having a number of talks about alcohol use throughout his or her adolescence. Think of this discussion with your child as the first part of an ongoing conversation. And remember—do make it a conversation, not a lecture!

### FACT

*Teenagers whose parents talk to them regularly about the dangers of drugs are 42% less likely to use drugs than those teens whose parents don't, yet only 1 in 4 teens report having these conversations.*  
([www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org))

## Tips for talking to your kids

**Listen.** The key to effective communicating is being a good listener. With kids, it is important to make the time to listen to them, especially when they're ready to talk; responding with "just a minute" or "not right now" only discourages them from opening up to you. When your kids want to talk, try to drop what you're doing and devote your full attention to what they are saying.

**Know what to say.** You've listened and now you want to try to get the conversation going. Perhaps most important is finding your own words, times and places that are comfortable for you to talk.

**Make time.** Establishing regular "together time" with your child does a lot to encourage talking. It doesn't have to be elaborate—taking a walk, going out for ice cream, or being together in the car when it's just the two of you are all great opportunities to listen. Remember, if your child isn't in the habit of opening up with you, be patient.

**Talk one on one.** If you have more than one child, try to talk to each one separately, even when it's about the same topic. Children of varied ages are often at different developmental levels and need different information, have different sensitivities and require different vocabularies. *Source: MADD*



## Topics to discuss with your child

### Your child's views about alcohol

Ask your young teen what he or she knows about alcohol and what he or she thinks about teen drinking. Ask your child why he or she thinks kids drink, and listen carefully. This approach can help your child to feel heard and respected, and also serve as a natural “lead-in” to discussing alcohol topics.



### Important facts about alcohol

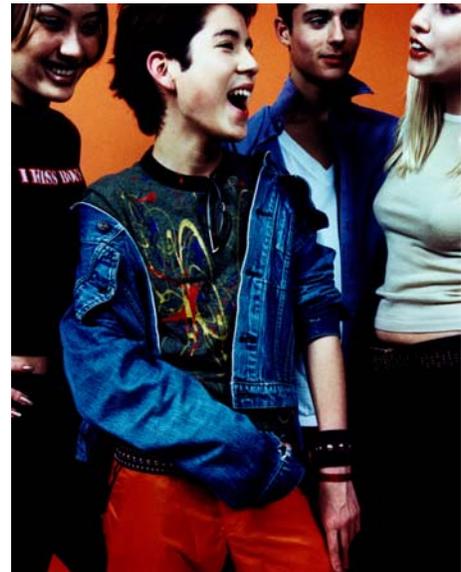
Although many kids believe they already know everything about alcohol, myths and misinformation abound.

Share these important facts:

- ⇒ *Alcohol is a powerful drug that slows down the body and mind. It impairs coordination, slows reaction time, and impairs vision, clear thinking, and judgment.*
- ⇒ *Beer and wine are not “safer” than hard liquor. A 12-ounce can of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, and 1.5 ounces of hard liquor all contain the same amount of alcohol and have the same effects on the body and mind.*
- ⇒ *On average, it takes 2 to 3 hours for a single drink to leave the body's system. Nothing can speed up this process, including drinking coffee or taking a cold shower.*
- ⇒ *People tend to be very bad at judging how seriously alcohol has affected them. Many individuals who drive after drinking think they can control a car—but cannot.*
- ⇒ *Anyone can develop a serious alcohol problem.*

### How to Handle Peer Pressure

It's not enough to tell your young teen that he or she should avoid alcohol—you also need to help your child figure out how. What can your daughter say when she goes to a party and a friend offers her a beer? Or what should your son do if he finds himself in a home where kids are passing around a bottle of wine and parents are nowhere in sight? What should their response be if they are offered a ride home with an older friend who has been drinking? Brainstorm with your teen for ways that he or she might handle these and other difficult situations, and make clear how you are willing to support your child. An example: “If you find yourself at a home where kids are drinking, call me and I'll pick you up—and there will be no scolding or punishment.” The more prepared your child is, the better able he or she will be to handle high-pressure situations that involve drinking.



### Mom, Dad, Did you Drink When you Were a Kid?

This is the question many parents dread—yet it is highly likely to come up in any family discussion of alcohol. The reality is that many parents did drink before they were old enough to legally do so. So how can one be honest with a child without sounding like a hypocrite who advises, “Do as I say, not as I did”? This is a judgment call. If you believe that your drinking or drug use history should not be part of the discussion, you can simply tell your child that you choose not to share it. Another approach is to admit that you did do some drinking as a teenager, but that it was a mistake—and give your teen an example of an embarrassing or painful moment that occurred because of your drinking. This approach may help your child better understand that youthful alcohol use does have negative consequences.

Source: *Make a Difference*, from National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

## Keep Your Child Away from Alcohol

You can also help prevent your child from drinking by reducing their access and proximity to alcohol. Use the following suggestions:

- **Keep your supply under lock and key.** Notice fewer beers in the fridge? Liquor taste watered-down? Half of ninth graders say they get alcohol from their parents or another adult. Keep your supply in a locked cabinet or beer in a separate locked refrigerator.
- **Connect with other parents.** Knowing the parents makes it easier to call and make sure that alcohol isn't available, and that parties are supervised. You're likely to find that these adults share your concerns.
- **Teach your child to choose friends wisely, and know your child's friends.**
- **Always be attuned to your child's whereabouts...** Know WHO your child hangs out with, WHAT they are doing, WHERE they will be, and WHEN they will be home. And, when it's curfew time, be awake to greet them.
- **Keep 'em busy.** Especially right after school, summer, weekends, and holidays. The "danger zone" for drug use is between 4 and 6 pm, when no one's around. Arrange flexible time at work and try to be there after school when your child gets home. If your child will be with friends, ideally they have adult supervision—not just an older sibling. Bored teens are more likely to make risky choices. Talk to them—discover their passion and support it by enrolling them in training, sports, school or church activities, whatever keeps them active and engaged.
- **Establish clear rules.** Don't leave your kids guessing. Tell them very clearly that you don't want them drinking alcohol. Setting a firm no-drinking rule will help your child deal with peer and other pressures to drink. Here are some examples of rules that parenting experts recommend:

*"If you're at a party and see that drugs and alcohol are being used, the rule is to leave that party. Call me and I'll come and get you."*

*"I've been thinking lately that I've never actually told you this: I don't want you to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes or marijuana or try any other illegal drugs."*

*"I love you and I want the best for you, so I don't want you drinking."*

*"The rule in our house is that kids don't drink."*

Some parents even create **formal contracts** with their children stipulating that no drugs or alcohol will be used, along with predetermined consequences should the contract be violated by the youth.<sup>3</sup>

- **Spend more time together.** Get involved, and stay involved, in your child's life. Taking time for family and doing things that your child enjoys sends the most powerful message—you love your child and want to build a relationship. It makes setting limits and enforcing consequences less stressful.



Sources: [www.nodrugs.info](http://www.nodrugs.info), MADD, LCBO available at <http://www.lcbo.com/talktokidsaboutalcohol/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> For more information and a sample parent/child contract, visit <http://www.sadd.org/contract.htm>

## Children Learn Attitudes About Drinking from YOU

Children learn their attitudes about drinking from those around them, not only from their peers, but also from parents or other adults. Although there is scientific evidence that genetic factors play a role in how alcohol will affect your children if and when they drink, *how* they drink is probably more influenced by the attitude toward drinking of those they grow up around. Warning children about the dangers of drinking and substance abuse will have little effect if parents do not set a good example.

### Types of Drinkers

The following is a list of “types” of adult drinkers and how these drinking patterns could influence children’s own views on alcohol consumption. *Source: [alcoholism.about.com](http://alcoholism.about.com)*



#### Stress Busters

If children see a parent come home from work and immediately grab a drink and hear them say, “I need a drink after my day today!” chances are they are going to see alcohol as a way of dealing with stress and with other emotions. It sends a message that alcohol can “relieve” problems of depression, anxiety, and even fear, and the child may someday say to themselves, “Boy, I need a drink after that test!”

#### Mood Enhancers

If a child sees a parent significantly change moods when they drink, going from a sullen or quiet mood to happiness or euphoria, the message is sent that drinking is the way to have fun. If the parent drinks to “loosen up” and have a good time, the child is probably likely to draw the conclusion that alcohol is a quick and easy way to adjust their moods.

#### Inappropriate Drinking

If children see adults drinking and breaking the law they are probably going to develop the attitude that it is “okay, unless you get caught.” If a child sees his parent drink at a gathering and then say, “I’m okay, I can drive” the message is sent that the law can be ignored and risk-taking is permissible.

#### Binge drinkers

If there is an adult in the household who regularly drinks to the point of getting drunk, the chances are the message the children are going to receive is that the reason you drink is to get drunk. If there is an alcoholic in the house, the only drinking pattern the children see is “alcoholic drinking.” They may not be alcoholics themselves, but they may drink “alcoholically”.

As a parent or caregiver, you play a vital role in influencing your child. You serve as a role model on the use of alcohol, control the availability of alcohol in your home, and help set your child’s expectations concerning drinking behaviors.

- Set a good example for your children regarding the use of alcohol.
- Talk to other parents about ways to send a consistent, clear message that underage drinking is not acceptable behavior or a “rite of passage.”
- Encourage your children to participate in supervised activities and events that are challenging, fun and alcohol-free.
- Make sure you’re at home for all your children’s parties and be sure those parties are alcohol-free. *Source: Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free, [www.alcoholfreechildren.org](http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org)*



# ADDITIONAL INTERNET RESOURCES

## Parent Resources:

[www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/](http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/)

[www.family.samhsa.gov/](http://www.family.samhsa.gov/)

[pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/children.pdf](http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/children.pdf)

[www.girlsanddrinking.org/index.php](http://www.girlsanddrinking.org/index.php)

[www.nida.nih.gov/students.html](http://www.nida.nih.gov/students.html)

[www.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/drugfree/drugfree.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/drugfree/drugfree.pdf)

[www.theantidrug.com/](http://www.theantidrug.com/)

## How to Talk To Your Son or Daughter:

[captus.samhsa.gov/western/resources/prevtalk/documents/newsletter-2006-01.pdf](http://captus.samhsa.gov/western/resources/prevtalk/documents/newsletter-2006-01.pdf)

[www.promtips.org/](http://www.promtips.org/)

## Youth and Young Adult Drinking Statistics and Information:

[www.nida.nih.gov/infofacts/hsyouthtrends.html](http://www.nida.nih.gov/infofacts/hsyouthtrends.html)

[www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/statssummaries/snapshot.aspx](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/statssummaries/snapshot.aspx)

[www.camy.org/](http://www.camy.org/)