

**UNDERAGE
DRINKING**

Not a minor problem



UNDERAGE DRINKING— DON'T BE A PARTY TO IT.

Fatal car crashes, unplanned pregnancies, violent behavior, alcohol dependency. Underage drinking causes very serious problems. And adolescents who drink are more likely to be heavy drinkers.

Too many well-meaning parents underestimate the consequences of teen drinking and think that by supervising teen parties or events where alcohol is served, they are communicating their concern and reducing the risks.

But research shows that communicating disapproval of underage drinking is the most effective thing parents and parental figures can do. Kids are less likely to drink if parents set boundaries, voice clear no-use expectations, and hold regular discussions about alcohol.

MIXED MESSAGES MAY LEAD TO MIXED DRINKS.

Be straight with your kids when it comes to the dangers of alcohol:

- Be a good role model. Don't engage in illegal or unhealthy behavior and don't host drinking parties for your kids or anyone else's.
- Set and enforce rules against underage drinking and keep alcohol out of reach of children too young to follow them.
- Be clear and concise when it comes to your position on underage drinking. Let others know your views if your child will be a guest in their house.
- Listen to your teens and provide love, support, and encouragement.
- Be aware of the connection between alcohol and other drugs and sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS.
- If a young family member shows signs of alcohol problems, know the alcohol addiction resources available in your community.
- Help children learn the consequences. Alcohol use is illegal and dangerous under age 21 and can have devastating health, safety, and legal consequences.
- Be sure children have access to a variety of alcohol-free alternatives and safe, monitored places they can gather.
- Discuss alcohol advertising and marketing with youths. Seek their opinions on these messages, ask if they understand the purpose and if they recognize why harmful effects of drinking aren't shown.
- Support public policy programs that make your community, state, and country safer and healthier.



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