

Teach Your Kids Not to Drink



Underage drinking is a growing problem. All too often, teenage drinking leads to:

- Traffic accidents (many of them fatal).
- Destruction of property.
- Violent or antisocial behavior.
- Poor academic performance.
- Disciplinary problems.
- Withdrawal from social activities.
- Problems coping with stress.

If you suspect (or know) your teenager drinks, don't ignore it. To discourage or prevent underage drinking:

- Be a good role model. The best example you can set is to not drink. But if you choose to drink, drink responsibly. Children of alcoholics are four times as likely to develop a drinking problem as children of nonalcoholic parents.

- Show your children that you love them. Be affectionate, and show them you care and are interested in them.
- Make an effort to organize family activities. It may be hard to compete with your son's or daughter's peers for their attention at times, but make the effort anyway. Shared hobbies and sports can create bonds and strengthen a teen's resistance to outside influences.
- Discuss the potential risks and consequences of alcohol use before it becomes a problem. Answer questions honestly and let your children know how you feel about them drinking before the situation arises.
- Tell your children to never get into a car with a drunk driver. Promise you'll pick them up anytime, anywhere, no questions asked, if they call you instead of putting themselves at risk.