



PARENT POST

Talk with your child about underage drinking

While underage drinking may not seem like a very pressing conversation topic for a middle schooler, it is vital that parents establish an open line of communication about alcohol use early. This makes sure that teens feel supported as they grow older and are exposed to more challenges surrounding alcohol use. Parent-child relationships have a large impact on children's drinking habits, so maintaining a healthy connection with your child is also a powerful contributing factor to preventing teen drinking. With this in mind, your conversation with your child about underage drinking will help contribute to a much larger effort to build a strong relationship.

Give Your Child Space to Talk

Be clear as you start the conversation that it isn't about lecturing your child, it's truly a *conversation*, meaning that you also want to hear their perspective. Ask open-ended questions to encourage your child to share their thoughts and feelings about underage drinking. Be an active listener and show them that you care about what they are saying. If you show respect for your child and their perspective, they are much more likely to listen to and respect yours.

Know the Facts

Many kids—and parents—might think they already know all they need to about underage drinking and general alcohol use, but there are a lot misconceptions and underdiscussed facts surrounding these topics. Before you talk with your child, try to learn about the topics that might come up, like the risks of underage drinking, how to handle peer pressure, reasons teens choose not to drink, and common myths about alcohol. The “Additional Resources” section at the bottom of this page provides some helpful sites for beginning your research. During your conversation, in addition to sharing what you’ve learned with your child, ask them what they know about alcohol and investigate more about the truths of underage drinking together.

Normalize Not Drinking

Even though studies have shown that the majority of 8th graders, and teens in general, don’t drink, teens often still feel like many people around them are drinking. This perceived social pressure to fit in by drinking is a large contributing factor for underage drinking. If children believe that many of their peers and teens at large are drinking, they may feel pressured to do so too. Tell your child that most students do not use alcohol and share the facts about low rates of teen alcohol use with them. It’s important that children know they are not alone in making the healthy decision to not drink.

Prevention at Your Child's School

Check out the latest Power of Choice Middle School vaping campaign poster! Students will see these posted, along with newsletters, throughout their hallways, reminding them that their health matters. Each sign provides facts and information on the potentially harmful effects that vaping can have on their growing bodies.



Additional Resources

- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)
- [Illinois Liquor Control Commission](#)
- [Prevention First](#)
- [Drugfree.org](#)

Connect With Us!

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