



Underage drinking
meets its match.

You.

You are the #1 influence in your child's life. Take the lead in preventing underage drinking with the tips below.

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1. Talk often

Make it a habit to talk with your kids daily about everyday stuff. Ask them questions. Listen attentively. Talking about alcohol is not a one-time conversation; instead, weave it into those everyday talks.

2. Be a good role model

If you use alcohol, be mindful of the message you are (often unknowingly) sending to your kids. Avoid giving them sips of alcohol, asking them to grab you a beer, or taking them to a bar/liquor store. This will help reinforce your message that alcohol is not for kids and is dangerous for growing bodies.

3. Praise your child

Your kids need to hear positive comments about who they are as an individual. Let them know you are proud of them and tell them what makes them special. Positive reinforcement can go a long way in preventing alcohol use.

4. Communicate values

When your kids know that you disapprove of underage drinking and why, it is more likely they will choose healthy behaviors. Social, family, and religious values give children reasons to refuse alcohol and stick to their decisions.

5. Set rules

Research shows children are more likely to follow rules that they have helped create. Hold a family meeting to allow your kids to share their opinions about certain rules. Remember, though, you still are the parent and have the final say in setting rules. Focus on clarity and consistency.

6. Encourage after-school activities

Arrange for your kids to be involved in after-school activities or something that keeps them busy during unsupervised hours. Encourage them to volunteer in the community, join a youth group, or participate in something that interests them, such as music, arts, sports, or academic clubs.

7. Monitor closely

Do your best to know where your child is and what they are doing. Get to know their friends and their friends' parents. Learn the technology your child is using, and use it. Text message, email, instant message, and social networking sites are all great ways to check in with your child.

8. Teach problem solving

Help your kids find long-term solutions to homework or friend trouble. Listen and give your child an active role as you guide them in finding a solution. Be sure to point out that quick fixes are not always lasting solutions.