

START THE CONVERSATION.



STOP UNDERAGE DRINKING.

Why Small Conversations Make A Big Impression

Talking to your child at an early age about drinking is the first step toward keeping them alcohol-free. But as they enter middle school and high school, the pressure to try alcohol will increase.¹ It's important to continue the conversation throughout adolescence.

Talking often builds an open, trusting relationship with your child.

Children are more likely to avoid drinking when they have a strong, trusting relationship with their parents.^{2,3} Get into the habit of chatting with your child every day. It will make it easier to have serious conversations about things like alcohol, and will make your child more comfortable coming to you for advice.

Lots of little talks are more effective than one "big talk."

Sitting down for the "big talk" about alcohol can be intimidating for both you and your child. Try using everyday opportunities to talk – in the car, during dinner, or while you and your child are watching TV.

Remember that the conversation goes both ways.

Although talking to your child about your thoughts about alcohol is essential, it's also important to listen to their point of view.

What you do is just as important as what you say.

In addition to talking often with your child about alcohol, it's important to set a good example. If you choose to drink, you can positively influence your child by drinking in moderation and NEVER driving when you've been drinking. Be aware of where you keep your alcohol, and always remind your child that the alcohol in your house is off-limits.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking: A Guide to Action for Educators. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2007.

² Nash, S.G., McQueen, A., and Bray, J.H. (2005). Pathways to adolescent alcohol use: Family environment, peer influence, and parental expectations. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 37 (1), 19-28.

³ Barnes, G.M., Reifman, A.S., Farrell, M.P., and Dintcheff, B.A. (2000). The effects of parenting on the development of adolescent alcohol misuse: A six-wave latent growth model. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62 (1), 175-186.