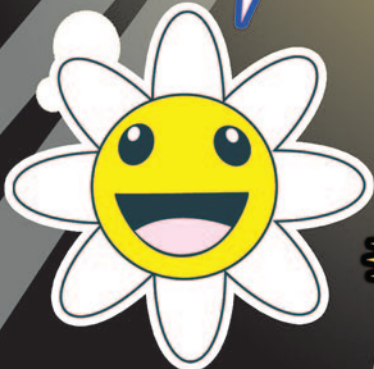




**DEFINITION**  
411: *noun*; (slang)  
information or  
knowledge.



**PROACTIVE PARENTS/  
GUARDIANS GUIDE**

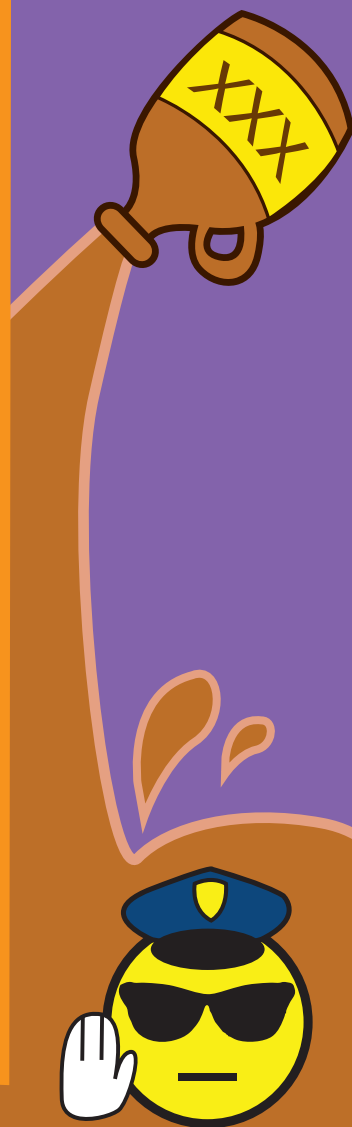
# DANGER! PITFALLS AHEAD

As the parent of a teen or preteen, you have a lot to think about when it comes to raising your child. Every child is different, and approaches that work for some won't for others. But you probably know your son or daughter better than anyone. The experience, love and history you have with your child can help shape his or her future.

When it comes to underage drinking, there's no one-size-fits-all plan for stopping it. The book *Hip Code 411: Alcohol and You* will open your child's eyes to the realities and dangers of underage drinking. These pitfalls are biological, legal and social. This book can help you enforce the lessons contained in *Hip Code 411: Alcohol and You* for your child.

**Proceed with caution.**

The topic of underage drinking is not an easy one to talk about with your teens. The facts and tips in this book will give you some valuable guidelines to use. Help your child stay alcohol-free.



**DISCLAIMER.** This book provides general information about alcohol and related issues. The information does not constitute medical advice and is not intended to be used for the diagnosis or treatment of a health problem or as a substitute for consulting with a licensed health professional. Consult with a qualified physician or health care practitioner to discuss specific individual issues or health needs and to professionally address personal medical concerns.



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# THE SOBERING FACTS

Ready for some eye-opening facts on underage drinking?

The truth isn't always pretty.



**Over 35 percent** of 15-year olds claim to have had at least one drink in their lives, as stated by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health.



About **8.7 million** youngsters aged 12-20 reported drinking alcohol in the past month.



The survey also found that **5.4 million** people in this age group took part in binge drinking. Four drinks within two hours for girls and five drinks within two hours for boys is considered binge drinking.



The risks from underage drinking are:

- Brain growth problems
- Death from alcohol-related car crashes
- Death from alcohol poisoning
- Serious injuries from falls and carelessness
- Drowning
- Impaired judgment
- Higher risk of physical and sexual assault
- Murder
- Suicide



More than **4,700 people** under the age of 21 die each year from alcohol-related causes. These include car crashes, alcohol poisoning and drowning.

## BAD IDEAS

Never mix energy drinks with alcohol. They can mask the effects of the alcohol. Without feeling these effects, people -especially teens- are more likely to drink too much.



## STONE GOLD TRUTH

Parents are still the main influence on teens in their decisions about alcohol.

### DID YOU KNOW...?

Underage drinking affects the growing adolescent brain. The brain keeps developing until the mid-20s. So “legal adults” (age 18+) are allowed to make adult decisions without fully mature brains. An 18-year old may make riskier decisions than someone who’s 28 partly because of a lack of experience, but mostly because of a brain that hasn’t fully matured yet.

### SAY WHAT?

Young adults, ages 18-20, have the highest rate of alcohol dependence among the people of the U.S., and they’re not even legally old enough to drink.

### ...THIS...?

The start of alcohol use in adolescence is influenced more by a teen’s environment than by his or her genetics.

### ...AND THIS?

Alcohol use by children and teens is many times enabled by adults. Are you enabling underage drinking for your child?

**Enabling:** Giving someone the authority or means to do something.

**MORE  
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Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention: Facts Sheet -  
Underage Drinking:  
[cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/  
underage-drinking.htm](http://cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm)

# YOUR ROLE AS A PARENT

## THE MECHANICS OF GOOD PARENTING

A person's problems with alcohol often start during the teen years. As a parent, you want to do whatever you can to make sure your child doesn't grow up to have alcohol-dependency issues. Here's your mini toolkit to help your teen through this influential period.

- Talk to your child about the dangers of drinking.
- If you choose to drink, do it responsibly and limit the amount when your child is around.
- Serve as a role model.
- Make sure alcohol is not easily accessible for your child within your home.
- Urge your child to take part in healthy activities that don't involve alcohol.
- Get to know your child's friends.
- Speak with your child on a routine basis about general life concerns.
- Talk with other parents to enforce the message of your children not drinking.
- Supervise all parties and make sure there's no alcohol.

Studies prove that children whose parents are actively involved in their lives are less likely to drink alcohol. On the flip side of that, those minors with a parent who binge drinks are much more likely to drink.

## STONE COLD TRUTH

Alcohol is the most widely misused substance among youth in the United States. Drinking by young people poses huge health and safety risks.

# REASONS WHY TEENS TRY ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

There's no magic solution to keep your child from trying alcohol. And there's no one reason that he or she may want to start using it. In fact, there could be many. Here are some:



## Other People

Teens see parents and a lot of other people drinking, smoking and misusing substances. Sometimes they see that their own social scene centers on drinking and smoking. Peer pressure can force a child into partaking in these activities. But it's just as likely for a teen to try alcohol, drugs or cigarettes because they're freely available. They may see their friends and parents enjoying these things and want to try them. Teens may see drug and alcohol use as a typical part of being a teenager.



**WHAT TO DO:** Don't drink, smoke or do drugs around your children. Be a good influence on them and show them these things are not commonplace or freely available in the home.



## Escape and Self-Medication

Teens may turn to alcohol or drugs for comfort when they're unhappy. Without a parent or friend to confide in, they may look to chemicals for their sense of happiness. The teenage years can be tough. The emotional toll can cause depression. Some teens turn to substances to feel better when they have the chance to.



**WHAT TO DO:** Look into counseling for your child. Talk openly and honestly with your child and encourage ongoing dialogue.



## Media

Movies, TV and social media make alcohol and drug use look OK. Children 12 to 17 years old who regularly watch R-rated movies are seven times more likely to smoke cigarettes, six times more likely to use marijuana and five times more likely to drink alcohol than those who don't.



**WHAT TO DO:** Limit your teen's exposure to R-rated movies and TV shows with adult content. Monitor their online use and what they're exposed to in the media.



### **Boredom**

Some teens have an inner void that they can't seem to fill. They turn to drugs and alcohol to keep from feeling alone, to stay occupied and for the excitement it may offer. Drugs and alcohol give them something to do. They also let teens bond with their peers who are into those substances. They find a community they fit into and end their boredom.



**WHAT TO DO:** Push healthy activities. Do a kind of "background check" on the group of friends your child hangs out with. Monitor their activities and know where your teen is at all times. Help fill his or her free time with activities, chores, projects or family events.



### **Rebellion**

The teen years are a natural time to start to rebel against parents, society and authority figures. The brain is still maturing during this time, and teens are pushing boundaries.



**WHAT TO DO:** Talk to your child about alcohol and drug use and their consequences. Include him or her in family discussions and decisions. Set boundaries and follow through on consequences.



### **Lack of Confidence**

Many teens are shy and lack confidence. They believe drugs and alcohol help give them confidence. They'll do things while on drugs or while drinking that they wouldn't otherwise. If their actions are foolish, they can simply blame them on the drugs or alcohol.



**WHAT TO DO:** Counselors have many proven confidence-building techniques that may help your teen. Show him or her your support and help build self-confidence. Educate your child on the dangers of substance use and how any self-confidence it bolsters is purely temporary.





## Misinformation

A lot of info about drinking and drugs that children get is just plain wrong. All teens have friends who claim to know the realities of substances. They assure and reassure that they're safe and risk-free. They're wrong.



**WHAT TO DO:** Teach your teen about alcohol. Go to reputable sources for the facts. Teach them the dangers of substance use and assure them that friends are great to have, but they don't know everything.



## They've Become Addicted

Nobody uses drugs or alcohol with the intent of getting addicted. It's an unfortunate byproduct of overusing any substance. Most teens believe that becoming an addict could never happen to them. But it doesn't take years of daily abuse to acquire an addiction. It takes a lot less to develop a dependency than most people know.



**WHAT TO DO:** Talk to your child about the real dangers of alcohol and drugs without lecturing. Keep in mind how vulnerable and easily influenced teens are. Talk openly and with compassion. If addiction has already become a reality, seek help. Contact an addiction specialist or local treatment facility. Figure out the best treatment plan for your child. Do it now. Tomorrow may be too late.

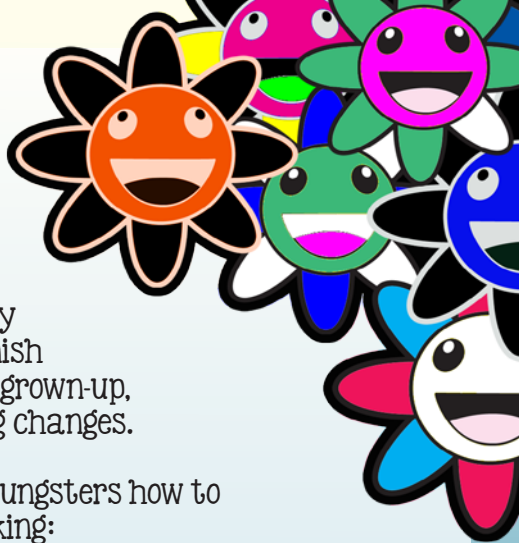
## STONE COLD TRUTH

Alcohol addiction can start at any time in life. But starting to drink as a teen increases the risk for addiction. Teens who start drinking alcohol before age 15 are five times more likely to develop a later addiction to alcohol than those who begin drinking at age 21 or older.

**MORE  
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**SAMHSA: Substance Abuse and Mental  
Health Services Administration:**  
[findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

# CHOICES AND DECISIONS



Teens face a lot of decisions, whether they know it or not. From what it'll take to finish high school to what career to follow as a grown-up, teens' lives are always on the verge of big changes.

*Hip Code 411: Alcohol and You* teaches youngsters how to use the **Three C's** of healthy decision making:

**CHALLENGE:** Identify the problem

**CHOICES:** Consider the options

**CONSEQUENCES:** What might happen based on the choice

This process is ideal for any decision a teen needs to make, and alcohol is a perfect example.

Practice this method with your child. Start with something basic.

## STEP 1: Present a CHALLENGE

You want to have friends over Saturday night but your room is a mess and there's a school assignment due Monday. Your parents won't let you have friends over without a clean room and finished assignment.

## STEP 2: Come up with the CHOICES

- You could blow off the cleaning and homework and tell friends to come over anyway.
- You could get up early Saturday to make sure you have time to clean and complete the school project.
- You could pay your little brother or sister to help you clean so you have time to focus on the school work.
- You could have a friend or two come over early to help with the chores and project.
- You could decide all that cleaning and working isn't worth it for having friends over and ditch the Saturday night plans.



### **STEP 3: Think about the CONSEQUENCES**

- A clean room and finished school project will mean happy parents and I'll get to hang with friends on Saturday night.
- A room that isn't clean means angry parents and no friends over.
- An unfinished school project means angry parents and a poor grade and angrier parents.

This kind of careful decision making leads to smart choices. Now show your child how this system can work with serious matters such as underage drinking.

### **STEP 1: Present a CHALLENGE**

You're at a party at a friend's house and her parents are out. The friend suggests trying some alcohol that someone has brought to the party.

### **STEP 2: Come up with the CHOICES**

- You could say thanks but no thanks. That kind of thing isn't for you.
- You could try just a sip or two to see what it's like and to impress your friends.
- You could throw caution to the winds and drink. A lot.
- You could leave and go home.

### **STEP 3: Think about the CONSEQUENCES**

- Not drinking could make your friends upset with you or have them think you're not cool enough to hang with them.
- You could get drunk and say or do something you'll regret.
- You could get drunk and get sick.
- The party could get busted and you could get put in jail.
- Your parents could find out and be very upset and punish you.
- You could not drink and go find better friends.

# CHALLENGE / CHOICES / CONSEQUENCES

Have your child think about decision making in this manner. It can be a great help, from minor matters like picking out shampoo to major matters like drinking or what to do after high school.

Teach your child that any decision can be made easier if you just stop and think. Tell him or her, "When a challenge comes up, use the Three G's to help you decide." Keep in mind: Decisions rushed into without a pause to think about it often end in poor judgment. And regret.

## **TAKE A HARD LOOK AT YOURSELF FIRST**

Even though we may think we know what our children are going through, chances are, we don't. Today's teens sometimes have an overwhelming amount of challenges to face and decisions to make. They have distractions, temptations and pressures that are unique to them. Be ready to listen to your child's point of view without clouding it with your own assumptions.

Look deeply at yourself first. It will help you see your son or daughter without judgment.

**MORE  
411!**

**LifeSkills Handbooks: Three G's in Decision Making**  
[lifeskillshandbooks.com/2013/07/activity-27-decision-making-the-three-cs-in-decision-making](http://lifeskillshandbooks.com/2013/07/activity-27-decision-making-the-three-cs-in-decision-making)

# READING THE SIGNS

## **WARNING! DRINKING AHEAD**

Paying close attention to your teen or preteen can help you see warning signs that could indicate underage drinking.

### Behavior Changes

- School grades going down, poor attendance
- Changing groups of friends, not letting you meet new friends
- Less of an interest in activities
- Less of an interest in appearance
- Behavior issues at home and school
- Going against family rules
- Seeming to be more withdrawn

### Emotional Changes

- Mood swings and flare-ups
- Not caring about anything
- Depression
- Memory and focus problems

### Physical Changes

- Slurred speech
- Lack of coordination
- Smelling alcohol on his or her breath, body or clothing
- Low energy
- Bloodshot eyes
- Changes in appetite
- Dressing sloppy
- Not making eye contact

Other telltale signs around the house could be always locking his or her door, missing money, more clashes and actually finding alcohol in your teen's belongings.

Though it can be hard, try not to confuse common teen attitude with drinking. Hormones in adolescence will cause him or her to be irritable and have mood swings. But watch for more of these warning signs to surface.

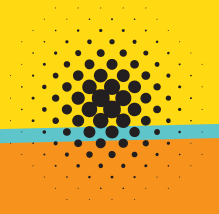
**MORE  
411!**

**TeenHelp: Warning Signs of Alcohol Abuse:**  
[teenhelp.com/teen-alcohol-abuse/warning-signs-of-alcohol-abuse](http://teenhelp.com/teen-alcohol-abuse/warning-signs-of-alcohol-abuse)



# ALCOHOL: FACT VS. FICTION

Make sure your children know the facts about alcohol. What they hear on the streets rarely turns out to be the truth and can damage brain development.



**FICTION:** Alcohol isn't as harmful as other drugs.

**FACT:** Drinking too much alcohol can lead to deadly alcohol poisoning. It raises the chances for many diseases.

**FICTION:** Alcohol is a great way to loosen up at parties.

**FACT:** Being loose is one thing. Acting like a buffoon and saying/doing things that are harmful, foolish and regrettable is another story. That's one of the results of drinking too much alcohol.

**FICTION:** Taking a cold shower or drinking coffee will sober you up fast.

**FACT:** It takes two to three hours for a single drink to leave your body. Nothing speeds up that process. Not coffee. Not cold showers.

## STONE COLD TRUTH

How much you drink matters more than what type of drinks you have or how you mix them. Drinking too much of any alcohol too quickly can make you sick, whether it's wine, beer or hard liquor.

**FICTION:** Beer and wine are safer than liquor.

**FACT:** Alcohol is alcohol, no matter what form it takes. It acts on the body's systems the same way.



**FIGTION:** Alcohol is good for relaxing and getting rid of stress. That's why they say it takes the edge off.

**FACT:** Just the opposite. Alcohol makes stress and adrenaline levels go up. While people may feel more relaxed when drinking, stress levels inside the body are on the rise.

**FIGTION:** The best thing you can do for someone who passes out from drinking is to put them in bed and let them sleep it off.

**FACT:** Since alcohol slows down the heart and breathing and lowers blood pressure, the last thing you should do is leave a passed out person alone.

## STONE COLD TRUTH

A study found that 80 percent of teens said their parents were the biggest influence on whether or not they should drink. A little disapproval goes a long way.

**FIGTION:** Passing out from drinking is no big deal.

**FACT:** Reflexes like coughing, gagging and breathing act to keep us alive. Because alcohol is a depressant, it slows these functions and can shut them down completely, which can cause death directly or can cause someone who vomits to choke on the vomit and drown.

**MORE  
411!**

Stop Alcohol Abuse: Underage Drinking:  
Myths vs. facts:  
[stopalcoholabuse.gov/media/pdf/  
mythsfactsbrochure\\_508compliant.pdf](http://stopalcoholabuse.gov/media/pdf/mythsfactsbrochure_508compliant.pdf)

# THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

## LESSON PLAN #1

Any first talk with your child on the subject of drinking should include the effects of alcohol on the human body. *Hip Code 411: Alcohol and You* covers this info for teen and preteen readers. Make sure to add your own emphasis of these dangers when you talk to your child.

### SHORT-TERM EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

VOMITING SLURRED SPEECH TIREDNESS DIARRHEA  
UPSET STOMACH BREATHING PROBLEMS  
BLURRED VISION DISTORTED HEARING BAD JUDGMENT  
UNCONSCIOUSNESS LOSS OF RED BLOOD CELLS (ANEMIA)  
BLACKOUTS AND MEMORY LOSS COMA DEATH

### LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

INJURY FROM CAR CRASHES, FALLING, BURNS, DROWNING  
INJURY FROM VIOLENCE HIGHER ON-THE-JOB INJURIES  
NOT EFFECTIVE AT WORK MORE FAMILY PROBLEMS  
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE STROKE LIVER DAMAGE  
BRAIN DAMAGE ULCERS MALNUTRITION  
CANCER OF THE MOUTH, THROAT, LIVER, BREAST DEATH

## STONE COLD TRUTH

Alcohol contributes to more than 200 diseases and injury-related health conditions. Alcohol dependence, liver cirrhosis, cancers and injuries are the most common.

Make it part of your personal lesson plan with your child to impress these points on your son or daughter:

- Because alcohol is a depressant, it slows down brain activity.
- It drains water from the brain and causes dizziness, headaches and loss of control.
- It causes weight gain.
- It can lead to liver cancer.
- It can cause blurred vision.
- Every year, thousands of people below the age of 21 end up in hospitals for injuries received from drinking alcohol.

## BODY OF EVIDENCE

It probably wasn't long ago that your child learned about the body's organs in health class at school. He or she learned the functions of vital organs and the job they do to keep the body functioning at its best. If your child hasn't learned how alcohol affects these organs, it's time.

### ORGANS

### HOW ALCOHOL AFFECTS IT

#### HEART



Drinking too much at once can cause:

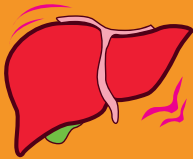
- Weakening and stretching of the heart muscle
- Irregular heart beat
- Stroke
- High blood pressure
- Heart attack

#### BRAIN



- Changes in mood
- Changes in behavior
- Thinking difficulty
- Movement and coordination problems

#### LIVER



- Fatty liver
- Hepatitis
- Liver cancer
- Cirrhosis

#### STOMACH



- Stomach ulcers
- Internal bleeding
- Gastritis (inflamed stomach)
- Stomach cancer

#### PANCREAS



- Pancreatitis (inflammation and swelling of the blood vessels, which can be fatal)
- Pancreatic cancer

## BONES



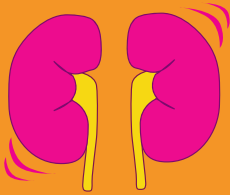
- Osteoporosis from poor calcium absorption

## INTESTINES



- Ulcers
- Cancer of the colon
- Inability to absorb nutrients and vitamins

## KIDNEYS



- Kidney damage
- Kidney failure
- Having to pee often, which can lead to dehydration

## SKIN



- Dehydration
- Red, blotchy patches from widened blood vessels
- Wrinkling

## STONE COLD TRUTH

Throughout the world, alcohol misuse is the **fifth** leading risk factor for early death and disability. For people between the ages of 15 and 49, it's the **first**.

**MORE  
411!**

Healthline: The Effects of Alcohol on the Body:  
[healthline.com/health/alcohol/effects-on-body](https://www.healthline.com/health/alcohol/effects-on-body)



# NO SUCH THING AS "RESPONSIBLE DRINKING"

## **ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER**

Some teens have parents who believe if they give their children alcohol and a safe place to drink it, they're teaching "responsible drinking." It's a myth. What these parents are providing is more teen alcohol use. And that leads to teen alcohol dependency. And that leads to alcohol poisoning, car accidents, compromised judgment and a million other pitfalls.

## **"SOCIAL HOSTING"**

Those parents who provide alcohol for their children and their friends most likely don't know that what they're doing is against the law. Enabling parents who take part in "social hosting" could find themselves liable in some states if things went bad. While parents think they're doing a good thing by offering a safe party spot for minors, the risks are still there. And the risks for minors are major.

## **Parents have a negative influence on their teens when they:**

- Don't monitor their activities while they still live at home
- Have tolerant attitudes about underage drinking
- Approve of underage drinking
- Allow unguarded access to alcohol at home
- Offer to buy alcohol for their children
- Supply alcohol for teen parties
- Let their teens drink at home, whether supervised or not

Supplying alcohol for a minor's party creates more problems than it solves. It gives teens a sense of security that it's OK to drink, with or without their parents around.

## **THE BOTTOM LINE**

Research has proven that teens who go to parties where parents supply the alcohol are at a higher risk for heavy or binge drinking and many other alcohol-related problems. Incidents of drinking and driving rise greatly for these teens.

# ALCOHOL, SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUR TEEN

**Q:** My teenager spends a lot of time on social media and watching teen-based reality shows. What kind of effect can this have on her?

**A:** Many people think these shows and social media sites are harmless. But studies have shown that exposure to these popular forms of entertainment have a deeply negative effect. They raise alcohol and drug use among teens.

## **SURVEY SAYS...**

A recent survey by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University found that regular viewers of reality TV shows are almost twice as likely to use alcohol and smoke than those who don't watch. As social network sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram reach new heights of popularity among teens, drug and alcohol awareness and use also rises.

The survey learned that 70 percent of youths aged 12 to 17 from around the U.S. used social networking sites on a daily basis. Those who used these sites were five times more likely to smoke, three times more likely to drink and twice as likely to use marijuana.

Peer pressure plays a major role in the choices that teens make. Forty percent said they had seen pictures of their friends getting drunk on Facebook and Twitter. Fifty percent of the teens in the survey reported that they had seen images or videos of people being drunk, passing out or using drugs.

The survey doesn't suggest that watching reality TV and using social media sites leads directly to substance use. But it shows that children who use these types of entertainment are more likely to report drinking and smoking. Teens may be lured into drinking and smoking by what they see as "normal".

## KEEP IN MIND

Make sure your child knows that actions have lasting consequences. Social media posts through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram can be instantly uploaded and shared with friends. Always keep in mind what you post and know what others post of you; you don't want to be known for your poor decisions.

### ALCOHOL ADVERTISING

Alcohol brands once used TV and magazines to reach their audience. Now they're extending their reach to social networking sites like Facebook and YouTube. In the past 10 years, the average person's time spent on social media sites in a month has nearly tripled. Advertisers are rushing to get their brands in front of these masses. That includes the large percentage of users who are under 21.

Youth exposure to online ads is growing. Studies show that the more youth are exposed to alcohol marketing, the more likely they are to drink, or to drink more if they already do. Advertisers use upbeat music, humor, animals and identifiable characters to appeal to youngsters.



**HOW YOU CAN HELP:** Teach yourself and your children about the media, alcohol and health. Talk to your children about alcohol marketing and make them aware of what advertisers do to appeal to them. Let them know that advertisers never tell the whole story when it comes to alcohol use and its consequences for youngsters.

### STONE COLD TRUTH

The top 10 alcohol brands on Facebook have attracted more than 16 million fans.

**MORE  
411!**

Alcohol Research Current Reviews: Influence of Social Media on Alcohol Use in Adolescents and Young Adults:  
[www.arcr.niaaa.nih.gov/arcr/arcr361/article08.htm](http://www.arcr.niaaa.nih.gov/arcr/arcr361/article08.htm)

# YOUR TEEN AND THE LAW

## LAYING DOWN THE LAW

Laws for underage drinking are designed to punish minors who illegally possess alcohol. Other laws punish adults who sell or serve alcohol to minors. Still other laws punish people who make, possess or use fake IDs.

Be aware of the laws in your area that pertain to underage drinking. Know the penalties for buying alcohol for minors, driving while drunk, making or using a fake ID and other infractions. Making sure your children know these consequences may steer them away from the risks.

The legal drinking age in all of the United States is 21. Punishment for minors in possession of alcohol can include:

- Taking away the driver's license (usually for at least 30 days)
- Payment of fines
- Having to attend alcohol-related education programs
- Community service
- Possible jail time, depending on the case

To find out about your state's profiles on underage drinking laws, visit this site: **Alcohol Policy Information System: State Profiles of Underage Drinking Laws:** [alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov/state\\_profiles\\_of\\_underage\\_drinking\\_laws.html](http://alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov/state_profiles_of_underage_drinking_laws.html)

There are factors that can influence the punishment, such as:

- The age of the minor
- If he or she was legally drunk
- Whether the minor has a history of offenses

## STONE COLD TRUTH

Some areas are so strict that they carry out penalties on adults if underage drinking happens at their house. Even if the parent isn't home or aware of the drinking, he or she can be charged and face fines and jail time.

**MORE  
411!**

**NOLO: The Juvenile Justice System:**  
[nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/juvenile-justice](http://nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/juvenile-justice)



## **WELCOME TO THAT AWKWARD AGE**

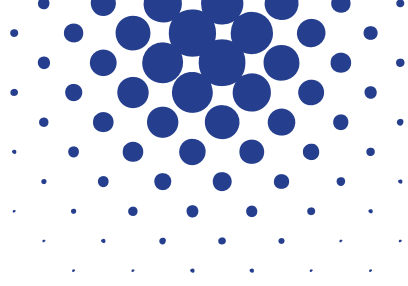
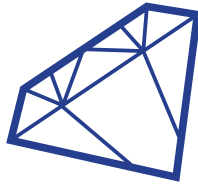
So it's come to this. The children who once held our hands and adored and depended on us will now barely speak to us. You're at that awkward age. But believe it or not, our tweens and teens are still listening to us. They're watching what we do and we still have an influence on them. To get through to them might just take a new approach.

Take a look at the traditional, closed-ended approach, compared to the open-ended coaching approach:

<b>TRADITIONAL CLOSED-ENDED QUESTIONS</b>	<b>OPEN-ENDED COACHING QUESTIONS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will there be drinking at this party?</li> <li>• Have you tried drinking alcohol?</li> <li>• Do any of your friends drink?</li> <li>• Will there be any parents at this party?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What will you do if people are drinking at this party?</li> <li>• What do you think about people your age who drink?</li> <li>• How would you handle it if your friends wanted to drink?</li> <li>• Tell me about your friend's parents. What are they like?</li> </ul>

The closed-ended questions are likely to be met with shrugs, grunts, eye-rolls and non-answers. The coaching-style questions will more likely lead to an honest conversation.





## **FIVE TALKING GOALS**

Before having a conversation with your preteen or teen, keep these five goals in mind for what you hope to achieve from such a talk.

### **1. Show that you don't approve of underage drinking**

More than 80 percent of youths ages 10 to 18 say their parents are the leading influence on their decision to drink or not drink. It's vital for you to send a clear and strong message. They really are listening.

### **2. Show that you care about your child's well-being and happiness**

If they know they have you on their side, young people are much more likely to listen. Work with—not against—your child. Repeat why you don't want your child to drink. It's not just because you say so, but because you want him or her to be happy and safe.

### **3. Show that you're a good source of info on the truth about alcohol**

Info that they can count on about alcohol's dangers will help them make informed decisions about drinking. Be the expert source of that info, not their friends or classmates, not the Internet and not the media.

### **4. Show that you're paying attention and can tell if your teen is drinking**

Let your children know you're keeping an eye on them. Young people are more likely to drink if they think no one will notice. You can do this in subtle ways so it doesn't seem like you're constantly snooping.

### **5. Build winning skills and strategies for staying away from underage drinking**

Peer pressure is powerful and very real. Even if your child doesn't want to drink, there's the temptation so friends don't deem them uncool. Teach your child to resist peer pressure. It takes practice but you can develop strategies with your child for saying no and standing up to the pressure.





## DO THIS

Keep the talk low-key. You don't have to get all the points across in one talk. Plan on many small talks and keep the topic going.

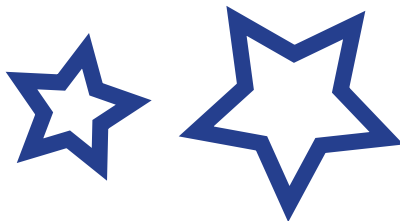


## LISTEN UP!

All children, especially teens, have a deep need to be heard. The older they get, the more they feel that their opinions and ideas should matter. Our children think about the rules and advice we offer them. They should know that those rules and advice are based on understanding their thoughts and feelings. To do that requires listening to them. Keeping the conversation always a two-way street is the key to success. If teens feel like their feelings and opinions aren't being heard or considered, they're more likely to turn to friends for validation.

**MORE  
411!**

Talk About Alcohol  
[talkaboutalcohol.com](http://talkaboutalcohol.com)



# THE ANSWER KEY

## HOW TO RESPOND TO YOUR CHILD'S TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT DRINKING

Your child will no doubt have some direct questions for you on the subject of drinking. That's a good thing. Use the opportunity to be honest and open in addressing the topic. Think about adapting answers like the ones here for your responses to your son or daughter's questions.

**YOUR CHILD:**

"I got invited to a party. Can I go?"

**YOU:**

"Will an adult be at the party?"

"Do you think your friends will be drinking at this party?"

"You know, just being at a party where there's underage drinking can land you in a ton of trouble."

"Let's go over my rules about drinking and what I expect of you..."

**YOUR CHILD:**

"Did you drink when you were my age?"

**YOU:**

"We know a lot more about drinking and the risks now than we did back then."

"I wish I had had someone when I was your age to tell me the facts about alcohol."

**YOUR CHILD:**

"Why do you drink?"

**YOU:**

"Hold on. There's a big difference between adults drinking and children drinking."

"As an adult, I enjoy a drink to enhance a meal or to share good times with my friends or to celebrate a special occasion. When I do drink, it's always in moderation."

"I rarely drink. When I do, I never drink to excess. I never drive if I've had anything to drink."

YOUR CHILD:

“What should I do if my friends ask me to drink?”

YOU:

“Saying no to peer pressure is one of the most important things you can do to stay alcohol-free.”

“Let’s think of good responses you can say if that situation comes up.”

YOUR CHILD:

“If I can vote and join the military when I’m 18, why do I have to wait until I’m 21 to drink alcohol?”

YOU:

“Because it’s the law. You can work at 14, you can vote at 18 and you drink at 21. But guess what? You can’t run for Congress until you’re 25 or president until you’re 35. Some things you just have to wait for.”

“Experts who’ve studied the data say the minimum legal drinking age delays the start of alcohol use, reduces drinking and driving, and reduces teen traffic fatalities.”

YOUR CHILD:

“Why is drinking so bad anyway?”

YOU:

“First of all, it can really mess up a child’s developing brain. There are great reasons why the drinking age starts at 21.”

“Well, it can make you sick and do all kinds of nasty stuff to your body.”

“Here. We need to read and discuss this book: *Hip Code 411: Alcohol and You*. It’s got answers to a lot of the questions you’re asking.”

**MORE  
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**NGADD: Frequently Asked Questions from Young People:**

[ncadd.org/about-addiction/underage-issues/frequently-asked-questions-from-young-people](http://ncadd.org/about-addiction/underage-issues/frequently-asked-questions-from-young-people)



# BACK ON TRACK

If your teen is already struggling with alcohol dependency, there are steps to take to get him or her back on the sober track. You can help.

**STEP 1:** Go with your child to therapy sessions or AA (Alcoholics Anonymous/Alateen) meetings weekly. Set up a regular schedule and make sure to not miss any appointments.

**STEP 2:** Help your child make the decision to stay away from the people who enable him or her to drink. Staying away from friends or family members who make access to alcohol easy should be a priority.

**STEP 3:** Work with your son or daughter to set life goals. Help him or her figure out plans and goals for the future. Write down those goals and stress to your child that getting (and staying) sober is the best way to reach those goals.

**STEP 4:** Clean out everything. Help your child get organized and clean out the things no longer needed. Having a clean living space helps a dependent person get sober.

**STEP 5:** Have your teen make a pact to not drink again until he or she has passed the legal drinking age. Teens' minds and bodies aren't ready before this time.

**STEP 6:** Have your child promise to stay away from parties where alcohol is served. He or she should make other plans. Staying away from alcohol-serving environments will help him or her fight the urge to drink.



**MORE  
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**Clean and Sober Live: 50 Essential Tips to Help You Stay Clean and Sober:**  
[cleansoberlive.com/essential-tips-to-help-you-stay-clean-and-sober](http://cleansoberlive.com/essential-tips-to-help-you-stay-clean-and-sober)





# HOME AND SCHOOL/ PARENT AND TEACHER



**Underage drinking is everywhere.  
But alcohol use among minors doesn't have to be a given.**

Parents and teachers have a major impact on a child's life. The rules and views of a home and school can play a big part in the development of a teen's self-identity. Parents and teachers can help change attitudes about teen drinking and help replace environments that enable it with environments that discourage it.

Work with your child's teachers to come up with plans that can protect him or her from underage drinking and its problems.

- Urge your child to take part in school activities. It plays a big part in cutting down on underage alcohol use.
- Create environments at home and at school that help your children pursue their talents and passions. These may be academic, musical, creative, sports or social causes.
- Talk to your child's teachers about being mentors for your child.
- Talk to teachers about the school's policies on underage drinking and its consequences. Make sure your child knows these rules and consequences.
- Know that with important social transitions such as graduating to middle or high school or getting a driver's license go more responsibility, freedom, social pressure and a heavier school workload. All of these raise the risk of alcohol use. Be alert and supportive during these times and urge your child's teachers to do the same.
- Know that children who mature earlier or later than most of their peers may be at a higher risk.
- Provide and promote other places that don't enable drinking where teens can get together with their friends.

Like you, school faculty members have your child's best interests in mind. Work together to find ways to keep your child safe, healthy, emotionally secure and alcohol-free.



# YOUR ACTION PLAN

The pre-teen and early teen years of a child's life are critical when it comes to alcohol and the future. It's important to discuss your concerns about drinking. Give clear and consistent rules for your child to follow.

## WHEN TO TALK

- Find good places and times to talk, and have talks frequently.
- Have many talks instead of one big one.
- Pick informal times. During dinner, in the car, after watching TV or while doing chores work well.
- Keep talking about the subject all through your child's teen years.
- Urge your son or daughter to talk and share feelings, ideas and opinions.

## HOW TO TALK

- Be real, open and honest. Let your child know your feelings and make rules that you can enforce.
- Give good reasons not to drink, for both teens and adults.
- Come up with family rules.
- Teach how to handle peer pressure.
- Adapt the rules as your child matures.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Let your child know you're always there, to talk, to help, to solve problems.

## TAKE ACTION

- Think about the things you, your friends and other family members can do besides talking. Then take action.
- Be a good role model.
- Know where you keep your alcohol and safeguard it.
- Get to know your son or daughter's friends.
- Monitor his or her activities.
- Promote a healthy lifestyle.
- Talk to others.
- Join in efforts to stop underage drinking in your community.

**MORE  
411!**

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration: Underage Drinking  
Prevention: Action Guide and Planner:  
[store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA-3259/  
SMA-3259.pdf](http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA-3259/SMA-3259.pdf)

# RESOURCES

## **Partnership for Drug-Free Kids**

[drugfree.org](http://drugfree.org)

HELPLINE: 1-855-DRUGFREE

## **Al-Anon Family Groups**

[al-anon.alateen.org](http://al-anon.alateen.org)

888-4AL-ANON

## **National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence**

[ncadd.org](http://ncadd.org)

1-800-622-2255

## **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism**

[niaaa.nih.gov](http://niaaa.nih.gov)

## **SoberNation: Addiction Treatment Centers & Recovery Resources**

[SoberNation.com](http://SoberNation.com)

## **SAMHSA: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**

[samhsa.gov](http://samhsa.gov)

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IT GOES BY MANY NAMES...

ANTIFREEZE BEAST BOOZE

BREW BREWSKI CHUG COLD ONE

FIREWATER GARGLE

GOOF GIGGLE JUICE HARD STUFF HOOCH

JACK JUICE POISON REFRESHMENT

SAUCE SHINE SWISH HAPPY DRINK GROG

DEVIL'S MOUTHWASH HAIR OF THE DOG

MOONSHINE RED-EYE ROAD SODA ROT GUT SUDS

Keeping children alcohol-free isn't an easy task. This Parents/Guardians Guide to *HIP CODE 411: ALCOHOL AND YOU* can help you learn how to talk to your teens and preteens about underage drinking. There are dozens of good reasons for waiting until they're 21 to drink. This book explains those reasons and helps you help your children understand this important issue.



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