



Parents

The No. 1 Influence

As children get older, many parents tend to think they are no longer listening to them. Surveys of youth tell us something different. They still cite parents as the No. 1 influence in their lives. Knowing this, it is up to you to make your expectations about alcohol clear.

Simple ways to keep your child alcohol free:

- **Don't think "It's not MY child."**
Every child is exposed to alcohol use and is at risk.
- **Spend time together regularly.**
Connecting with them on a regular basis will help them resist peer pressure.
- **Listen and talk with your children, especially about alcohol and the law.**
Try to understand the pressures placed on them, and don't criticize their beliefs.
- **Know about the [effects](#) of alcohol on a teen's body.**
Explain why you want them to wait until they are 21 to drink.
- **Keep track of where your children are, what they are doing, and who their friends are.**
Get to know their friends' parents and talk to them about your rules concerning alcohol. Don't be afraid to ask questions. It's not being nosy – it's your job.
- **Get them involved in after-school activities.**
They won't be able to just "hang out" with friends in the afternoon. This is when children are most likely to experiment.
- **Praise and reward children often.**
If they feel good about themselves, they will be more confident and better able to resist peer pressure.
- **Establish specific rules and consequences.**
Make sure your children understand that underage drinking will not be tolerated. Set the rules and stick to them.
- **Give children the information needed to make good decisions.**
Teach them how to refuse alcohol or turn down a ride with an impaired driver while saving face.
- **Do not allow youth drinking in your home.**
Children who are allowed to drink in their home consume twice as much alcohol as those with a no tolerance policy. Social host laws prohibit you from furnishing alcohol to other youth in your home.

If you or someone you know is struggling with substance use, call the Recovery Helpline at 1-866-789-1511.



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