



Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free

Talk early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough.



Click here to print a PDF of this article so you can start a conversation with your child

Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

Learn more at: DrugFreeActionAlliance.org

Know! is a program of:



Drug Free Action Alliance



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Building a Drug-Free Future

Know! How To Even the Playing Field For Your Child

The NFL and its big-dollar advertisers are gearing up for Super Bowl LI, set to kickoff Sunday, February 5th on the FOX network. About 111.9 million viewers tuned in for Super Bowl 50, making it the third highest watched U.S. broadcast in history. The upcoming Super Bowl is expected to catch just as much attention, for the commercials as much as the game itself. Of that wide viewing audience, somewhere around 18% will be youth under 21 – which means millions of children will be exposed to all sorts of advertising to include alcohol.

In our quest to further research the impact of alcohol advertising on youth, Drug Free Action Alliance annually hosts the **Big Bowl Vote**, where middle and high school students nationwide are asked to vote on their favorite commercials and share the product brands they recall being advertised. Without fail, alcohol ads consistently rank in the top three each year, among both age groups, as either favorites or most memorable advertisements.

What's the big deal? Many young people look to media to help them define who they are and what they want to become. They count on the glamorous and cool characters depicted in ads to help them determine what behaviors are normal and what lifestyle choices will give them their desired outcomes of acceptance and inclusion or maybe excitement and fun. In any case, studies show that an increase in exposure to alcohol advertising contributes to an increase in drinking among underage youth.

Underage drinking negatively affects developing brains, increases risk for addiction later in life, impacts decision-making and puts youth in danger. Alcohol contributes to youth suicides, homicides and fatal injuries - the leading cause of death among youth following auto crashes. Alcohol abuse is linked to as many as two-thirds of all sexual assaults and date rapes of teens and college students. Youth who drink are more likely to become sexually active (putting them at greater risk of

HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases). Teen girls who binge drink are 63% more likely to get pregnant during their teen years. Students who use alcohol are five times more likely to drop out of school or believe that earning good grades is not important. So yes - exposure to alcohol advertising and underage drinking - it is a big deal.

Ideally, as parents, we would simply steer our children clear of all such advertising. However, the attempt would be not only impossible, but unhelpful. What children can benefit from instead, is us teaching them to decode the advertising messages they see and hear in song lyrics, TV shows, movies, advertisements, etc., therefore decreasing media's power and influence – this is called **media literacy**.

Instead of avoiding the upcoming Super Bowl, you are encouraged to watch it with your children, turning the much-anticipated ads into teachable moments.

When the commercials come on, ask your child to pay close attention, then pick one and pose these questions to fuel their critical thinking:

- Who do you think created this commercial?
- What techniques did they use to get your attention?
- What do they want you to do after seeing their message?
- Would this be a healthy choice for you?
- Do you think your health and safety are important to the ad sponsor?
- How do you feel about it now?

It doesn't have to be an alcohol ad to be a learning experience. The key is to teach your child that no matter the product being promoted, there is an advertiser with an intended message, and that it is up to your child to think critically to interpret that message and apply it to his or her life appropriately. These questions only scratch the surface when it comes to media literacy. But they're a great start.

To learn more about the **Big Bowl Vote** or delve deeper into media literacy, please visit Drug Free Action Alliance at www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org.

Source: Drug Free Action Alliance: Big Bowl Vote.

Visit starttalking.ohio.gov to get the conversation going !!!