



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.

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### Know! Parents Who Host Lose The Most: Don't Be a Party to Teenage Drinking

The summer is fast-approaching, which means end-of-school celebrations, graduation parties and endless summer gatherings for teens. Unfortunately, this also means teens gaining greater access and availability to alcohol, and more youth partaking in underage drinking.

When hosting a graduation or summer party, many well-intentioned parents will allow their teen and their friends to drink alcohol in their home, based on the belief that they can keep youth safe if they're drinking under their roof. The adults may take away the car keys of those old enough to drive and may even require that partygoers stay the night. The parents may also believe that by allowing the teens to drink, they will not consume as much alcohol and will choose to behave more responsibly.

While taking away the car keys may solve one major problem, it does not prevent many others. According to NIAAA, in addition to injuries and fatalities from drinking and driving, alcohol plays a factor in teens suffering injury and death from alcohol poisoning, falls, burns, and drowning. Drinking can lead to poor decision-making about engaging in sexual activity (including unprotected sex) and aggressive or violent behavior (including sexual assault). Even with parents present, these are all things that can and do occur at some teen parties.

Additionally, studies have found that when parents provide alcohol and/or allow underage drinking to occur in their home, teens are likely to drink more as opposed to less, and the associated alcohol-related problems are said to increase as well. Regardless of intentions, parents should know that there are also legal consequences (including fines and potential jail time) as to what is called "social hosting." While penalties vary by state, it is illegal across the nation for an adult to provide alcohol to someone else's child under the age of 21.

As summer parties begin, keep in mind that not every parent is on the same page as you regarding underage drinking. It is extremely important to get to know not only your children's friends, but their parents as well. While this becomes more



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challenging as they get older, it is key to keeping your children safe.

Of course, it is also essential to clearly communicate your stance against underage drinking to your teens, and let the consequences be known should your rules be broken.

If you choose to host a teen party, you can protect yourself and your children by following these *Parents Who Host, Lose the Most; Don't be a party to teenage drinking* guidelines:

- Be sure to be at home if you allow your teen to have a party and check in on them regularly
- Refuse to supply alcohol to youth or allow underage drinking in your home or on your property
- Make sure your teen's friends do not bring alcohol into your home; be aware of teens sneaking drinks in bags or purses

Before allowing your teen to attend another teen's party:

- Call or text the parent in charge to verify the occasion and location of the party and ensure there will be adult supervision – if they are on the same page as you, they will appreciate you reaching out
- Make certain the host will not be serving or allowing alcohol for those under 21 – or in the case of a graduation party for example, where adults and alcohol may be present, check to make sure the adults will be monitoring the alcohol to avoid underage drinking
- If the activity seems inappropriate, help your teen find an alternative activity

Let your child know that if they ever find themselves at a party or gathering that makes them feel uncomfortable in any way, no matter the situation, they should call or text and you will be there to help them make a quick and quiet exit.

Our youth deserve to live and grow in healthy, safe communities where the adults set positive examples and where the messages surrounding alcohol are unified and clear.

For more information on underage drinking and *Parents Who Host Lose The Most; Don't be a party to teenage drinking* visit <https://preventionactionalliance.org/>.

Sources: [Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs: Providing Alcohol for Underage Youth: What Messages Should We Be Sending Parents? 2019 Alcohol Research Documentation, Inc.: Center of Alcohol Studies Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.](#) [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\) Brochures and Fact Sheets: Underage Drinking.](#) [Prevention Action Alliance: Parents Who Host, Lost the Most; Don't be a party to teenage drinking.](#)

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