



Straight Up Ventura County
Reducing underage and binge drinking

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- **Keep track of your child's activities.** Be aware of your teen's plans and whereabouts, and be up to talk to them when they get home. Your child will be more open to your supervision if he feels you are keeping tabs because you care, not because you mistrust him or her.
- **Connect with other parents.** Getting to know other parents and guardians can help you keep closer touch on what's going on in your child's life. Friendly relations can make it easier for you to call the parent of a teen who is having a party to be sure that a responsible adult will be present and that alcohol will not be available.
- **Monitor alcohol use in your home.** If you keep alcohol in your home, keep track of the supply. Do not keep alcohol in a place accessible to youth. Never serve alcohol to underage youth.
- **Develop family rules about teen drinking.** When parents establish clear "no alcohol" rules and expectations, their children are less likely to begin drinking.
- **Set a good example.** Parents and guardians are important role models for their children. If you use alcohol, set a good example and drink responsibly.
- **Don't support underage drinking.** Your attitudes and behavior toward underage drinking also influence your child. Avoid making jokes about underage drinking or drunkenness, or otherwise showing acceptance of underage alcohol use. In addition, never serve alcohol to your child's underage friends. Underage drinking is illegal.
- **Help your child build healthy friendships.** If your child's friends use alcohol, your child is more likely to drink too. So it makes sense to encourage your child to develop friendships with kids who don't drink and who are otherwise healthy influences on your child.
- **Get to know your child's friends.** You can invite the kids you feel good about to family get-togethers and outings and find other ways to encourage your child to spend time with those kids.
- **Get to know the parents/guardians of your child's friends.** Talk with the friend's parents about alcohol. Ask them if they keep alcohol in their home, and if it's stored in an accessible place.
- **Encourage healthy alternatives to alcohol.** One reason kids drink is out of boredom. Therefore, it makes sense to encourage your child to participate in supervised after-school and weekend activities that are challenging and fun. Studies indicate that the availability of enjoyable, alcohol free activities is a big reason for deciding not to use alcohol.



Straight Up Ventura County
Reducing underage and binge drinking

TALKING TO YOUR CHILD

- **Be clear, direct and specific.** Let your child know exactly what is acceptable and unacceptable when it comes to alcohol. Be clear about expectations.
- **Take advantage of the media to discuss alcohol related issues.** Television, newspapers, movies and magazines present opportunities for discussion.
- **Try not to lecture with a message of “don’t drink.”** Having a conversation instead sometimes works best.
- **Leave an opening for future discussion.** Just because you have one conversation about alcohol doesn’t mean it should be the last conversation.
- **Make your child feel comfortable.** Your child will look for signs such as the tone of your voice, facial expressions and body language to react from.
- **Encourage your child to talk.** Use door-opening statements. (“Tell me what is going on.”) That invite a response.
- **Listen to the complete message.** Listen to everything before forming a response. Sometimes young people have difficulty discussing sensitive issues such as alcohol.
- **Talk about personal, family, social, or religious values.** These might provide additional reasons for your child not to drink.
- **Talk with your teen about ways to handle peer pressure.** Teach your teen how to say “no” and to suggest doing something different (safe). To feel comfortable talking openly with you, your teen needs to know you will not punish him or her for being honest.
- **Be a role model.** If you drink, do so responsibly. Never drink and drive and do not over consume alcoholic beverages.