

Strategies for Parents to Help Prevent Alcohol Use

YOUNG CHILDREN

- Talk about taking care of ones body including exercising and eating healthfully
- Talk about the importance of brain development and nurturing healthy growth
- Encourage taking with an adult about anything they wonder about or observe related to alcohol or drug use
- Realize that young children are watching and monitor your own behavior when consuming alcohol. Make a point to talk about the choices you are making to be safe when you drink by saying such things as “I just had a glass of wine. Dad will have to drive you to soccer practice.”

MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Start to talk about family expectations with regard to alcohol and other drugs
- Introduce conversation about family history of alcoholism. Encourage questions.
- Point out the importance of fitting in but also making one’s own decisions about all kinds of things like what sport or musical instrument a child might choose. Explain the need to stay true to oneself as one gets older and spends more time peers.
- Encourage talking with an adult and bringing questions.
- Reiterate the importance of having a healthy body
- Share concerns about risks of longer term problems if starting too early.
- Begin to think about access to alcohol-lock it up, keep minimal amounts at home
- Talk about your child’s goals and ways that alcohol or other drugs could stand in the way.
- Encourage conversation with an older sibling or other highschool age youth

HIGH SCHOOL

- Continue to talk about family expectations when it comes to alcohol and drug use
- Support non-use

- **Encourage your teen to call for a ride no matter what**
- **Tell them to watch out for their friends**
- **Try not to leave teens home alone (dinner or a movie-not both)**
- **Choose one or two of the most important safety messages such as “no drinking and driving” and “don’t get in a car with someone who has been drinking”**
- **Tell teens not to accept an open or poured drink and not to put a drink down**
- **Help teens to think of activities that provide alternatives to parties especially on weekends**
- **Respect their privacy yet try to keep the lines of communication open**
- **Be willing to negotiate**
- **Be willing to step outside your comfort zone to keep your teen safe**
- **Especially in grades 8-10, call a home where your teen is going to be sure an adult will be home. Or bring food as a way to check.**
- **Ask your teen to kiss you when they come in so you can check their breath**