

Raising Healthy Teens

Promoting the Health & Wellness
of Kent & South County Teens

Get Smart
About Alcohol
Edition

Practical Tips for Parents Talking to Kids About Alcohol



Why you need to talk

As a parent, you have a lot of input over your children's choices. Talking to them can help them make the right decisions about alcohol and other substances.

You may be excited, or stressed about your children being in middle or high school. They will have a wider world and new challenges. They may be curious about new things. They want to fit in. Their friends may pressure them to do things they may not feel good about doing.

You will have more power over your children's decisions if you bring up alcohol and other substances first. Your "coaching" can help them to feel good about staying away from risky choices. Your children could start asking questions at any time so it may be a good idea to be prepared. Here are some useful tips to help guide the conversation.

Get ready to talk

Bonding with your children can happen in many ways. Take this quiz and check the answers with your kids. It's fun, and the information will be helpful in talks with your children. You may be surprised what you can find out!

1. What are their favorite colors?
2. What would they say is their biggest achievement?
3. Who are their best friends?
4. What would they say is their most embarrassing moment?
5. Who are their favorite teachers?
6. Who are some of your kids' role models?
7. What do they admire about these people?
8. What are their favorite movies, TV shows or songs?
9. What are their favorite activities or hobbies?
10. What are their dreams for the future?

Source: "Keeping Youth Drug Free," Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

Are You Smarter Than a 5th-Grader?

Test your knowledge by taking the interactive National Drug & Alcohol IQ Challenge quiz!

[CLICK HERE!](#)



Practical Tips for Parents *(continued)*

Know the facts about underage drinking

Your child may know more about alcohol, drugs and tobacco than you do! Don't worry. You don't need to know everything. Here are a few facts to get you started.

- Most teenagers don't use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.
- Teens who start drinking before age 15 are 5 times more likely to develop alcohol dependence or abuse later in life than those who begin drinking after age 21. [Read More](#)
- When kids use alcohol, it can cause changes in the brain. [Read More](#)
- The average age teen boys first try alcohol is age 11, for teen girls it's 13. [Read More](#)
- Adolescents tend to drink alcohol based on opportunity and heavy drinking often is the norm. [Read More](#)



Your children are listening to you even when it looks like they aren't! Talking with them can help your kids to make healthy choices.

Some ways to get your kids talking about what's going on in their lives

- Ask your kids about friends and what's new and fun.
- Get your kids to talk about feelings, like how they feel about school, their friends, or being a pre-teen or teen.
- Make sure they know you're listening. Show them that what they say and think matters.
- Respect their answers even if you don't agree with them. This can be a chance to talk about values.
- Use what comes up on the internet to start talking.
- Ask your kid who is their favorite social media influencer.

Examples to help get the conversation started.

"I know we really haven't talked about alcohol or drugs. I love you and want you to be healthy, so our family needs to set some rules."

"I know most kids your age don't drink. I want you to know how important it is not to ride in a car with anyone who's been drinking."

"In that show we watched, how do you think that kid could have avoided being around alcohol or drugs?"

Be prepared to talk about your use

What would you say if your children ask you about your own alcohol use? Your child looks up to you. You decide what you're comfortable sharing. Stay focused on them.

Some ways to answer

- "We're talking about you, and I want to help you to be safe."
- "I've seen a lot of people get into trouble with alcohol and drugs, and I don't want to see you get hurt."
- "I'm an adult. It's against the law to drink if you're under 21."
- "Adults are fully developed mentally and physically, and can handle alcohol better. Your mind and body is still developing, so alcohol has a greater effect on your judgment and health."

Make family rules and keep them

Kids are less likely to drink alcohol if their parents have established a pattern of setting clear rules and consequences for breaking those rules.

- Make clear rules such as when your child is expected home, what chores they have to do, etc.
- Write the rules down. Put them where they can be seen.
- Consider rewards for following rules, like a family activity.
- Go over the rules as your child gets older, and adapt them as they become more responsible.
- Talk with other parents about your rules. Find out if they will be home before you let your kids go to their home.
- Make a plan with your children in case they get into a situation where alcohol or other drugs are being used.

Adapted from "The Rules of the House", in Family Matters 2002

Coach your kids on peer pressure

Your coaching can help prepare your kids. You can help them build confidence by talking to them about how to say no to alcohol or other substances. You can suggest your kids say:

"No thanks. Let's go to my house and hang out instead."

"Not now, I gotta go."

"No! I'll get grounded."

Help them to come up with their own ways to say no to alcohol. They take the lead, and you coach and support them. Encourage them to spend time with friends who don't use alcohol or other substances.



Build your support system

There are many people in your community who can support you as you talk with your child about alcohol and other substances.

- Family doctors, nurses, and faith leaders may have experience in talking to teens about alcohol, tobacco, and other substances.
- School student assistance counselors and coaches can help support rules.
- Community health centers and prevention coalitions can provide helpful information and resources in your area.

Other ways to keep your kids safer

- Help your children set goals for their future. Talk about college or careers to help them begin to think about their long-term plans and goals.
- Join a community prevention coalition to help support a healthy community.

Watch for warning signs

If you've seen some changes in your kids, it might be time to talk with them about using alcohol or other substances.

1. Have you noticed a change in mood?
2. Is your child sleeping more than they usually do?
3. Does your child show less interest in school, friends, or activities?
4. Is the quality of schoolwork getting worse or is he or she skipping school?



5. Does your child have new friends you haven't met?
6. Has money or objects disappeared from the house?
7. Is your child talking about parties where drugs and alcohol are being used?
8. Is your child breaking rules or acting angry?

Some of these behaviors are normal for pre-teens. But if you think your child may be using alcohol or other drugs, have a calm and supportive talk with him or her and get help. Getting help early is key to protecting your child's health.

Other signs it may be worth a talk with your teen

Parents can also watch for some visible or not so visible signs of possible substance use by their kids. Try not to be a spy but be observant regarding things that may be lying around in your teens bedroom that could be signs of use.

Hidden in Plain Sight allows parents a unique interactive opportunity to look into a teen's mock bedroom. The room is full of common household items that could be used to hide or disguise alcohol or drug use or other "risky" behaviors.

[Click Here](#)
**to Check Out Our
New Interactive
Hidden in Plain
Sight Bedroom!**



RI RESOURCES

BH Link Hotline — 401-414-LINK (414-5465)
24/7, 365 days/yr

Kids' Link RI — (855) 543-5465
www.lifespan.org/centers-services/kids-link-ri

National Suicide Hotline — 1-800-273-TALK (273-8255)
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/

Trevor Project for LGBTQ Youth — 1-866-488-7386
24/7, Text Trevor to 1-202-304-1200
www.thetrevorproject.org

NAMI Helpline — 800-273-8255
Crisis Text Line 24/7: 741741

Parents Support Network of RI
(401) 467-6855 or (800) 483-8844 www.psnri.org

www.Preventoverdoseri.org

What Parents Should Know About Social Host Laws

This the time of year we usually look forward to celebrations like prom, graduation parties and outdoor gatherings and many of these involve the presence of alcohol. While much has been cancelled due to social distancing restrictions, parents should remember underage drinking remains unsafe, unhealthy and illegal.

Rhode Island law states that any host serving alcohol to minors at a party or social function will be held responsible for those minors – even if they leave your property. If a minor consumes alcohol, even without your knowledge or consent, you can still be held accountable.

RI Social Host Law

It is against the law in Rhode Island, for a host to “permit” an underage person to consume alcohol. “Permit” is defined as *to give permission for, or approval of, the possession or consumption of an alcoholic beverage by any form of conduct, that would cause a reasonable person to believe that permission or approval has been given.*



The Consequences:

- First offense is a misdemeanor punishable by a minimum fine of \$350 and a maximum fine of \$1,000, and/or a prison sentence not to exceed six months.
- Second offense is a misdemeanor punishable by a minimum fine of \$750 and maximum fine of \$1,000, and/or a prison sentence not to exceed one year.
- Third and subsequent offenses are a felony punishable by minimum fine of \$1,000 and maximum fine of \$2,500, and/or a prison sentence not to exceed 3 years.
- For 18- to 21-year-olds, there may be a civil penalty of not more than \$500 and required attendance at an educational program to recognize the dangers of underage drinking, and completion of up to 30 hours of community service.

More on Rhode Island’s policies on underage drinking and access to alcohol found [HERE](#).

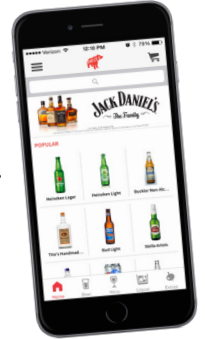
Hosting a party with underage drinking can be a dangerous situation. As a community, we need to respect our teens by providing safe and enjoyable experiences. Let’s join together to reduce underage drinking for the safety of our youth and our entire community.

DRUGS 101

What Parents Should Know

Alcohol Delivery: Is There Cause for Concern?

Alcohol delivery may be a welcome convenience in some respects, but in many ways, it could lead to problems for people who have trouble controlling their alcohol consumption. It could also be a convenient way for underage drinkers to obtain alcohol.



We wonder if some people would drink more than they should simply because it’s easier to obtain. Alcohol is one of the most widely abused substances across the globe, and while it is not always addictive, it can be accompanied by negative consequences. In most cases, alcohol is one of the first substances youth experiment with, due its accessibility and pressure from peers.

Another concern with alcohol delivery is that online ordering may allow people to avoid the stigma associated with drinking more. They don’t have to go to the local liquor store where they may be recognized. They don’t have to go to a bar. Apps and the Internet make it simple to anonymously buy alcohol or to sign up for subscription services that will regularly deliver. Men and women can bypass the social stigmas that might otherwise limit how much, how often, and when they drink.

Cause for Concern?

- On-demand alcohol delivery app **Drizly** saw a 300% spike in sales in March of last year when states and cities shut bars and restaurants down and social distancing keep people at home.
- The average online alcohol and spirits order is also up by 20%.
- According to scheduling platform **Doodle**, there was a 296% increase in group meetings booked specifically for virtual happy hours and drinking events in March 2020.

Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/27/drinking-coronavirus-social-distancing-and-alcohol-delivery-app-boom.html>

Empowering Families Virtually



The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) is an evidence-based family skills training program for high-risk and general population families.

What You Will Learn

Parents learn to increase desired behaviors in children by using attention and rewards, clear communication, effective discipline, substance use education, problem solving and limit setting.

Children learn effective communication, understanding feelings, social skills, problem solving, resisting peer pressure, consequences of substance use, and parental rule compliance.

Families engage in structured activities, practice therapeutic child play, conduct family meetings, learn communication skills, practice effective discipline, reinforce positive behaviors in each other, and plan family activities together.

SFP is an 11-week virtual course with 90-minute sessions designed for families with children 7-17. Upcoming classes on March 8th and 10th with more classes in the future.

REGISTER for SFP in Kent County
Scan QRC on right or email Astrid Meijer at ameijer.wwpc@gmail.com.

Strengthening



REGISTER for SFP in South County
Scan QRC on right or contact Kathy Gardner at Kgardner@risas.org or (401) 330-9592.



Virtual Coalition Meetings

For a Zoom invitation link, contact your local coalition below

Kent County Regional 3rd Monday at 3pm
Kathy Sullivan, ksullivan@risas.org [visit website](#)

Coventry 1st Monday at 9am
Dana DeVerna, DDeverna@comcap.org

Exeter West Greenwich 3rd Monday at 6pm
Dr. Paul Mangino, Jr., paulmanginojr@outlook.com

East Greenwich 2nd Thursday at 3pm
Bob Houghtaling, rhoughtaling2@verizon.net

West Warwick 3rd Tuesday at 3:30pm
Astrid Meijer, ameijer.wwpc@gmail.com

Warwick 2nd Friday at 10am
Michael Fratus, mfratus@comcap.org

South County Regional 2nd Wednesday at 9am
Heidi Driscoll, Hdriscoll@risas.org [visit website](#)

Block Island 2nd Tuesday at 8:30am
Jill Seppa, jseppa@gmail.com [visit website](#)

Charlho 2nd Monday at 5:30pm
Dan Fitzgerald, Dan@charihoyouth.org [visit website](#)

Narragansett Last Wednesday at 10:30am
Kelly Cartwright, Narraprevention@gmail.com [visit website](#)

North Kingstown 3rd Thursday at 2pm
Kathy Yeager, kathy_yeager@nksd.net [visit website](#)

South Kingstown 2nd Tuesday at 3pm
Sophia Balestrieri, southkingstownprevention@gmail.com

Westerly Last Monday at 11am
Ashley Iadevaia, preventionashley@gmail.com

Please Join Us!



For more information contact South County Prevention Coalition Director Heidi Driscoll at hdriscoll@risas.org or Kent County Prevention Coalition Director Kathy Sullivan at ksullivan@risas.org and please visit us at www.riprevention.org or on Facebook.