



THE POWER  
OF CHOICE  
thepowerofchoice.info

- 1 Set Clear Expectations  
Talking About Not Using Alcohol
- 2 Developing Clear Family Rules  
About Underage Drinking
- 3 Setting Examples  
Modeling Behaviors
- 4 What We Can Do  
Positive Influences

## About This Issue

It is so important to be clear with our teens about not using alcohol. In this issue we explore how parents can set clear expectations.

# THE PARENT POST

March 2020

MIDDLE SCHOOL EDITION

Look for some of our latest parent PSAs on Facebook!

## Monitor & Set Clear Expectations

**01** Welcome to the Winter 2019 Issue of the Parent Post, Middle School edition. This issue we are exploring the importance of monitoring and communicating clear expectations with your teens when it comes to talking about not using alcohol.

### Monitor: Set Clear Expectations About Not Using Alcohol, Your Kids Depend on You --

While parent-child conversations about not drinking are essential, talking isn't enough -- you also need to take concrete action to help your child resist alcohol. Research strongly shows that active, supportive involvement by parents and guardians can help teens avoid underage drinking and prevent later alcohol misuse.

**Monitor alcohol use in your home.** If we choose to keep alcohol in our homes, we have to keep track of the supply. Make it clear to teens that unchaperoned parties or other teen gatherings in the home are not allowed. If possible,

however, encourage them to invite friends over when adults are at home. The more entertaining our child do in our homes, the more we will know about our child's friends and activities.

**Connect With Other Parents.** Getting to know other parents and guardians can help us keep closer tabs on our teens. Friendly relations can make it easier for us 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. We're likely to find out that we're not the only adults who wants to prevent teen alcohol-use -- many other parents share our concerns.

**Keep track of your child's activities.** It is important to be aware of our teen's plans and whereabouts. Generally, our teens will be more open to our supervision if they feel you are keeping tabs because we care, not because we distrust them.

**Start early.** Setting and enforcing clear expectations about not using alcohol as a teenager are key to delaying first use. That's important, since the younger adolescent years are when they are first likely to use alcohol and the more likely they are to deal with its negative consequences.



- KEEP MONITORING -

KEEP THEM SAFE, KIDS ARE CURIOUS  
BE INVOLVED AND HAVE HONEST CONVERSATIONS  
HELP THEM AVOID UNDERAGE DRINKING

FOR RESOURCES + TO LEARN MORE VISIT: THEPOWEROFCHOICE.INFO

THE POWER  
OF CHOICE

FUNDED IN WHOLE OR IN PART BY THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, DIVISION OF SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION AND RECOVERY THROUGH A GRANT FROM THE SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION.

**Keep communication open.** We need to be interested in our teen's lives, and be open to information they may share. Not only will this make it easier to talk about difficult issues regarding alcohol and other topics, but it also will give us information about where our teens may be facing pressure or temptation to use alcohol.

In partnership with



The Power of Choice is a project of 360 Youth Services, Naperville School District 203, Indian Prairie School District 204, Naperville Police Department, KidsMatter and District 203 & 204 parents.

## 02 ◀ Develop Family Rules that are Clear

Develop family rules about underage drinking. When we parents establish clear “no alcohol rules and expectations”, our children are less likely to begin drinking. Although each family should develop agreements about teen alcohol use that reflect their own beliefs and values, some possible family rules about drinking are:

- » Kids will not drink alcohol before the age of 21.
- » Older siblings will not encourage younger brothers or sisters to drink and will not give them alcohol.
- » Kids will not stay at teen parties where alcohol is served.
- » Kids will not ride in a car with a driver who has been drinking.



## 03 ◀ Modeling Healthy Behaviors

Set a good example. Parents and guardians are important role models for their children – even children who are fast becoming teenagers. Studies indicate that if a parent uses alcohol, their children are more likely to drink as well. If we choose to use alcohol, there may be ways to lessen the likelihood that our teens will participate in underage drinking. Some suggestions include:

- » Use alcohol moderately.
- » Don't communicate to our teens that alcohol is a good way to handle problems. For example, don't come home from work and say, "I had a rotten day, I need a drink."
- » Let our teens see that we have other, healthier ways to cope with stress, such as exercise, listening to music, or talking things over with our spouse, partner or friend.
- » Don't tell our kids stories about our own drinking in a way that conveys the message that alcohol use is funny or glamorous.
- » Never drink and drive or ride in a car with a driver who has been drinking.
- » When we entertain other adults, serve alcohol-free beverages and plenty of food. If anyone drinks too much at a party, make arrangements for them to get home safely.



## 04 ◀ What You Can Do



**Don't support underage drinking.** Our attitudes and behavior toward teen drinking also influence our child. Avoid making jokes about underage drinking or drunkenness, or otherwise showing acceptance of teen alcohol use. It is important to never serve alcohol to our child's underage friends. Research shows that kids whose parents or friends' parents provide alcohol for teen get-togethers are more likely to engage in heavier drinking, to drink more often, and to get into traffic crashes. Remember, too, that in almost every state it is illegal to provide alcohol to minors who are not family members.

**Help our teens build healthy friendships.** If our teen's friends use alcohol, our teens are more likely to drink too. So, it makes sense to try and encourage our young teens to develop friendships with kids who do not drink and who are otherwise healthy influences. A good first step is to simply get to know our teens' friends better. We can then invite the kids we feel good about to family get-togethers and outings and find other ways to encourage our kids to spend time with those teens.

Also, it's important to talk directly with our teens' about the qualities in a friend that really count, such as trustworthiness and kindness, rather than popularity or a “cool” style. When we disapprove of one of our child's friends, the situation can be tougher to handle. While it may be tempting to simply forbid our child to see that friend, such a move may make them even more determined to hang out with them. Instead, we might try pointing out our reservations about the friend's behavior in a caring, supportive way. We can also limit our teens' time with that friend through our family rules, such as how after-school time can be spent or how late they can stay out during the evening. **For more resources and for future newsletters, please visit: [www.thepowerofchoice.org](http://www.thepowerofchoice.org)**

### Additional Resources for you ▶

Learn more here - Talking with your kids about not using alcohol:

<https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-training/for-families/alcohol/make-a-difference/index.html>

Connect with The Power of Choice online and on social media:

Contact: Jennifer Lezan

6-8th Grade Campaign Coordinator

[Jlezan@360youthservices.org](mailto:Jlezan@360youthservices.org)

