

YOUR TEEN HAS A PLAN FOR PROM AND GRADUATION... DO YOU?

IT'S PROM AND GRADUATION SEASON.
A TIME FOR CELEBRATIONS!

PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO READ THESE HELPFUL
REMINDERS TO KEEP YOUR TEENS SAFE.



**Coalition for a
Drug-Free Lyons
Township**

Dear Parents,

You are a powerful influence in your child's life. Research has shown that parental disapproval is the number one reason teens choose to abstain from alcohol and substance use.

Many of our youth are making positive choices regarding their use of alcohol and other substances. However, the most troubling fact remains: underage substance abuse is a serious problem across our area. Teens are trying alcohol at ages as young as 11, and alcohol is a leading factor in the three most common causes of death for teens: automobile crashes, homicides, and suicides. Plus, research shows that exposure to alcohol and other substances, especially at younger ages, interferes with brain development, causing loss of memory and cognitive skills. The fact is that underage substance abuse puts youth at risk!

This booklet contains information and resources to help you learn more about alcohol and substance abuse and how to help your child make healthy choices. It also contains suggestions for ensuring safe post-prom and graduation related activities. Your child needs you to discuss the issues of underage drinking as well as the use of other substances to set family rules that help him/her make good choices.

Some effective parenting strategies include:

- Establish clear family expectations and rules about no underage drinking or substance use
- Get to know your child's friends and their families
- Know where your child is spending his/her time
- Make sure your teen's social environments are alcohol and substance free
- Get involved in your child's life - talk together about school, sports, friends, music...

Together we can make a positive difference in the lives of our youth.

Young people deserve to have the brightest possible future we can give them. **Please start talking before they start using and abusing alcohol and other substances.**

We wish you and your family the very best for the future!

Coalition for a Drug-Free Lyons Township

Hosting a Post-Prom Party? Know the Law.

FACT:

When kids drink, parents pay. In Illinois, the Social Host Law, which went into effect January 1, 2013, holds adults accountable for underage drinking that occurs in the home. There are several parts to this law.

- If you allow or host a party at your house and provide alcohol to people under age 21 (or if you know or should have known that they are drinking alcohol at your home), you are guilty of a Class A misdemeanor. This will result in a fine. Note that you are held responsible regardless if you are the one who provides the alcohol AND regardless if you are home or not.
- If a minor who was drinking at your house injures or kills someone, you are guilty of a Class 4 felony. This could result in both a fine and/or jail time.
- You will not be guilty of violating the law if you request help from the police to help remove the underage drinkers and stop the gathering. This only holds if you make the first call—not if the police show up after a complaint from a neighbor and then you ask for help.

What Can You Do?

FACT:

When kids drink alcohol, 65% of the time it is consumed at home or a friend's house.

As responsible parents, you need to not only prevent access to alcohol in your home but also be a positive role model. Your kids need to know where you stand on underage drinking through ongoing conversations about consequences. And, you need to give them the tools and the facts to make good decisions about drinking in the many different scenarios they may encounter—at a friend's house, at a party, after school.



Hosting a Party for Teens

Set ground-rules with your teen and his/her friends before the party. Set CLEAR EXPECTATIONS and specify consequences if expectations are not met.

Encourage small parties that are invitation only as they are easier to control and monitor. Do not allow for last minute changes.

Contact parents of every attendee before the party. Share your expectations of a sober event and ask parents to share these expectations with their teen. Invite other parents to stop by and help chaperone. If a teen is sleeping over, ask their parents to check their bag prior to leaving home.

Check your entire home prior to the party, including all entrances, and check for hidden substances in bushes outside of the house, removable ceiling tiles, window sills, storage areas, etc. Remove or restrict access to alcohol and prescription drugs.

Notify the neighbors and the police when planning a large party.

All keys should be collected when guests arrive. All keys to the home and family car should be safely locked away.

An adult chaperone should be present and visible throughout the party. Don't allow siblings to chaperone and don't remain in a different area throughout the party.

Monitor all entrances/exits and watch for inappropriate or prolonged activity outdoors, in restrooms, or elsewhere in your home. Don't have your own guests over unless they agree to help chaperone.



Your Teen is Attending a Party

Contact the parents of the party host to verify plans and verify that no drugs or alcohol will be permitted. Do not be afraid to communicate your family's "no use" rules. Offer to help chaperone the party.

Be awake when your teen comes home, or have your teen waken you when he/she arrives. Talk to your teen and inquire about the party. Night time is often when teens are most talkative!

Check the ending time to make sure it fits with curfew restrictions.

Know where the party is and how to get there. Let your teen know to call you with any change in plans. Ask your teen to call you from the host parent's home phone or consider obtaining a GPS "app" to monitor location of your teen's cell phone.

If your teen is staying overnight, plans should be made prior to the party and verified with the other parent. Consider a 'no-sleepover policy' for parties, as this is often how teens keep their alcohol and drug use hidden from their parents.

Allow your teen to always feel comfortable to call home for a ride or assistance. Establish code words with your teen that indicate their need for your assistance.

Myth: Drinking underage is a rite of passage for every teen.

A common misconception that many hold about drinking under 21 is that it's a rite of passage. No parent wants their teen to be left out. You may think letting them drink while they're a teenager will help them fit in. But the reality is that many teenage students don't drink. By choosing not to drink, your teen can still have a healthy and happy social life.

Myth: Letting my teen drink at home under my supervision is safe.

While on the surface this myth may seem like a creative way to keep your teen from driving drunk or showing them how to have a safe perspective on healthy drinking habits, it actually does the opposite. Research presented by Richard Mattick, a professor of Drug and Alcohol Studies at New South Wales, found that while the intentions may be good, this tactic rarely works. When you allow your teenager to drink at home with you, all they learn is that it's okay for them to drink underage.

Myth: Every teen has the same chance of getting addicted to a substance.

It is true that every person can get addicted to a substance over time. Unfortunately, some of us are more likely to become addicted than others, especially if someone in your family has been addicted to alcohol. According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, there isn't one single gene responsible for making someone an alcoholic. Instead, there are multiple environmental, social and genetic factors that can play into the risk. Since it's difficult to pinpoint these factors for a person, it's important to wait until someone is 21 to let them drink alcohol. At this age, the brain has had more time to develop and the risk for addiction decreases.

Consequences of underage drinking:

There are increased risks and a range of negative consequences that come with drinking. It is dangerous because it:

Causes many deaths.

On average, alcohol plays a role in the deaths of 4,358 people under age of 21 every year. These deaths include: 1,580 from car crashes, 1,269 from murders, 245 from alcohol poisoning, falls, burns and drowning, as well as 492 from suicides.

Causes Injuries.

Young people who drink alcohol are more likely to get injured. In 2011 alone, about 188,000 people under age 21 visited an emergency room for injuries related to drinking alcohol.

Increases the risk of physical or sexual assault.

Young people under age 21 who drink are more likely to carry out or be the victim of physical or sexual assault after drinking than others their age who do not drink.

Leads to other problems.

Drinking can cause teens to have trouble in school or with the law. Teens who drink are more likely to use other drugs than teens who don't.

Can lead to alcohol use disorder.

Alcohol use disorder is a medical condition that doctors diagnose when someone's drinking causes them distress or harm. In 2017, about 443,000 young people ages 12-17 had AUD. The younger the use of alcohol, the more likely one is to develop AUD later in life.

Increases the chance of anxiety.

Evidence shows a strong relationship between alcohol and anxiety problems. New research, "...provide(s) insight into the mechanisms through which alcohol-induced brain changes during adolescence increase vulnerability to alcohol and anxiety problems in adulthood," said George F. Koob, Ph.D., director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Which **Doesn't** Belong?



A week or so before the event, talk with your teen about his/her plans. Make sure you know who is involved, where they are going (know the address), and when the event is to occur.



Instruct your teen to keep in contact with you throughout the night when traveling from place to place or if plans change. Assure your teen he/she can call you (or text a code word) at any time if it becomes necessary to leave the event. Remind them to never travel with someone who has been drinking or using drugs.



Call the parent who is hosting the party and ask if there is anything you can do to help and to expect your child at their house.



Homeowners are legally responsible for what happens in their home. Discuss with your teen why hosting a party is a shared responsibility. Large outdoor parties and co-ed sleepovers can be more difficult to manage safely.



If hosting, establish the rule that once guests leave they cannot return, to discourage them from going elsewhere to drink and then come back to your house. Be visible near the party area and be aware of what is happening.



Should a teen arrive in possession of alcohol or under the influence, call his/her parents. Make sure the teen is transported home safely by a responsible adult.



You or your teen should not hesitate to call the police if the party gets out of control.



Talk with other parents of older students who have been through these social occasions. Often they have good advice as to how best to navigate tough situations.

They all
belong!

Remember, as a parent you influence your teens. By setting rules and consequences for breaking those rules, you are acting responsibly as a parent to ensure your teen stays safe.