

Underage Drinking

What Every Parent Should Know

...About Communication

The Risks

Unfortunately in Kansas the average age a child begins to drink alcohol is 12½, or somewhere in the sixth grade. Drinking at such an early age can often have lifelong consequences.

Kids who drink are more likely to be victims and/or perpetrators of violent crimes, have problems with school work and school conduct, are more likely to become sexually active at earlier ages and have a higher chance of being injured or die from vehicle crashes, drowning, fire, suicide and homicide.

The Solution

As a parent, you have the single greatest influence on your child's life. Research shows that parents who set clear, realistic expectations for their children and establish appropriate consequences for breaking rules and consistently enforce them, will significantly reduce their children's chances of being involved with alcohol and drugs.

The Tips

Developing open, trusting communication between you and your child is essential to helping your child avoid alcohol use.

Encourage Conversation

Encourage your child to talk about whatever interests him or her: Listen without interruption and give your child a chance to teach you something new.

Ask Open Ended Questions

Encourage your child to tell you how he or she thinks and feels about the issue you're discussing. Avoid questions that have a simple "yes" or "no" answer.

Control Your Emotions

If you hear something you don't like, try not to respond with anger. Instead, take a few deep breaths and acknowledge your feelings in a constructive way.

Make Every Conversation a "Win-Win" Experience

Don't lecture or try to "score points" on your teen by showing how he or she is wrong. If you show respect for your child's viewpoint, he or she will be more likely to respect yours.

The Help

The Kansas Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free is a program of Kansas Family Partnership in cooperation with state agencies and community groups working to reduce underage drinking in Kansas. The Leadership has FREE information on how to open the conversation with your child on the issues of alcohol. Call us today to receive a copy of "Make A Difference: Talk to Your Child About Alcohol."

**MAKE A
DIFFERENCE**
Talk With Kids About Alcohol

1-800-206-7231
www.kansasfamily.com

