

Underage Drinking

What Every Parent Should Know

The Facts

- The average Kansas youth begins to drink alcohol at age 12 ½, that's sixth grade.
- One out of 3 fourth graders believe that drinking is a "big problem" in their age-group.
- About 1 out of 7 fourth graders already have consumed alcohol to the point of intoxication.
- Four out of 10 sixth graders say there is pressure from other students to drink alcohol.
- Three million children between the ages of 14-17 are problem drinkers.

Why Should Parents Be Concerned?

- Youth suffer greater effects of alcohol on learning and memory than adults.
- Alcohol affects all parts of the brain. Alcohol affects the heart rate, coordination, speech, and destruction of brain cells.
- Alcohol impacts both behavior and brain function differently in adolescents and adults.
- The brain is still developing until a person is around 20 years old. Underage drinking can affect the brain's ability to plan and make complex judgments.
- Drinking is linked to greater sexual activity and promiscuity, which can lead to unintended teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Once pregnant, alcohol exposes the unborn baby to possible major birth defects.
- Nearly half of all deaths among those 15-19 years old involve traffic accidents in which alcohol was a factor.

Where Do Youth Get Their Alcohol?

- One-third (1/3) of 6th and 9th graders get their alcohol from their homes.
- Children most often report drinking at other people's homes.
- Siblings and siblings of their friends or sometimes even other parents.

The Help

- Learn the facts and discuss the negative consequences of drinking with your children, their friends and their friends' parents.
- Set clear rules, expectations and consequences about underage drinking.
- Supervise parties and be sure there are responsible adults in homes where your children attend parties.
- Do not serve alcohol to anyone under 21. Besides being against the law, you could be legally liable for problems that occur.
- Don't accept underage drinking as a rite of passage.
- If your child needs help, get treatment – don't wait.

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

