

## What You do is as Important as Talking

In addition to talking often with your child about alcohol, it's important to set a good example. If you choose to drink, you can positively influence your child by drinking in moderation and NEVER driving when you've been drinking. Be aware of where you keep your alcohol, and always remind your child that the alcohol in your house is off-limits.

## Monitor Alcohol Use in Your Home

Living in a home with teenagers means you need to keep track of the alcohol that is in your home. As parents we might not be worried about our own children but what about their friends or friends of friends coming in to your home. How about that group of teens coming over to study .... When your teen invites friends over, make a point of being home to monitor their activities.

## Connect With Other Parents

Getting to know other parents and guardians can help you keep closer tabs on your child. Friendly relations can make it easier for you 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. You're likely to find out that you're not the only adult who wants to prevent teen alcohol use—many other parents share your concern.

## Keep Track of Your Child's Activities

Be aware of your teen's whereabouts and plans. Generally, your child will be more open to your supervision if he or she feels you are keeping tabs because you care, not because you distrust him or her.

**Let's be the Influence**  
on underage drinking







83% of youth report parents are the leading influence in their decision not to drink alcohol.

-Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility, 2012

## Goals for talking to your kids about alcohol:

### Show you care about your child's happiness and well-being.

Young people are more likely to listen when they know you're on their side. Try to reinforce why you don't want your child to drink—not just because you say so, but because you want your child to be happy and safe. The conversation will go a lot better if you're working with, and not against, your child.

### Build your child's skills and strategies for avoiding underage drinking.

Even if your child doesn't want to drink, peer pressure is a powerful thing. It could be tempting to drink just to avoid looking uncool. To prepare your child to resist peer pressure, you'll need to build skills and practice them. Keep it low-key. Don't worry, you don't have to get everything across in one talk. Many small talks are better.

## Like most Virginia parents I choose to:

- Be involved with my child.
- Set appropriate limits and clear rules.
- Know where my child is, who he is with and what he is doing.

### Small Conversations are Important

Talking to your child at an early age about drinking is the first step toward keeping them alcohol-free. But as they enter junior high and high school, the pressure to try alcohol increases. It's important to continue the conversation throughout adolescence.

Sitting down for the "big talk" about alcohol can be intimidating for both you and your child. Try using everyday opportunities to talk— in the car, during dinner, or while you and your child are watching TV. Having lots of little talks takes the pressure off trying to get all of the information out in one lengthy discussion, and your child will be less likely to tune you out.

What you say to a 9-year-old about alcohol is different from what you say to a 15-year-old. Children also can't learn all they need to know from a single discussion. Make sure that the information you offer your child fits their age. As they get older, you can give them more information and reinforce your rules.

Although talking to your child about your thoughts about alcohol is essential, it's also important to hear their point of view. Give your child the opportunity to ask you questions, and listen to what they have to say. Children who have parents who listen to their feelings and concerns are more likely to say "no" to alcohol.