

If you don't believe it is important to talk with your kids about the dangers of underage drinking, consider these powerful facts about the benefits of communicating with your children:

- Children whose parents talk to them regularly about the dangers of underage drinking are 42% less likely to drink alcohol.
- Teens whose parents talk to them about underage drinking NOT being OKAY are 80% less likely to drink than teens whose parents say it's ok to drink before your turn 21.

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## ARE YOU COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT THE DANGERS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING?

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Talking and sharing your thoughts about alcohol with your kids is important! The following tips can help you develop meaningful conversations with your child that may lead to better decisions going forward:

- ✓ **Listen.** When you have the conversation, be sure your child has an opportunity to ask you questions...and listen to what they say. Children who have parents who listen to their feelings and concerns are more likely to say "NO" to alcohol.
- ✓ **Don't lecture.** Parents often want to have all the answers and sometimes are so anxious to share their wisdom and opinions that they don't take the time to listen. Listen to hear NOT to respond.
- ✓ **Don't interrupt.** Your active listening will possibly open up the opportunity to have more conversations.
- ✓ **Ask open-ended questions.** Don't ask questions that have a simple "yes" or "no" answer. Ask questions that require your kids to provide details about what they're thinking or experiencing. *What do you think it feels like to be drunk? How would you feel if you saw your friend drunk? Why do advertisers make it look like so much fun?*
- ✓ **Ask for their feedback.** Encourage your kids to tell you what they think and feel about the "talk" you are having.
- ✓ **Control your emotions.** If you hear something you don't like, don't respond with anger. Take a minute and a few deep breaths before you respond.
- ✓ **Be mindful of the tone of voice and your body language.** Model what you want your child to do.
- ✓ **Show respect for your child's point of view.** It will make them more likely to listen and respect your point of view.
- ✓ **Tell the truth.** If you have a family history of problems with alcohol or drugs, be honest about it.
- ✓ **Focus on teaching.** Children are more likely to take your advice when you tell them what to do instead of what not to do.
- ✓ **Offer reminders.** It's ok to tell them over and over again that most teens do not drink alcohol.

The more you talk to your kids, and the more you really get to know them, the easier it will be to know what they need to hear.