



Going to the prom? a graduation? a party at a friend's? just hanging out?

Stop And Think Before You Drink



Of all the dangers your teen faces, underage drinking is among the worst. Whether teens are experimenting with beer, wine, or other liquor, alcohol presents a serious—and potentially deadly—threat.

Casey's Story

Casey, my oldest son, was what you'd call a 'good kid' - he was on the honor roll every semester, in the marching band, in the choir; he wrestled and played football. I never really worried too much throughout high school. I had the false sense of security that he had the maturity of someone who could handle his liquor, but I was wrong. Casey's father had a drinking problem and Casey knew it contributed to our divorce. That gave me a false sense of security. I believed he had seen the problems alcohol could cause and was mature enough to handle drinking, but I was wrong.

Casey was 18 the night he and his friends stopped at a drive-up liquor establishment that didn't card underage buyers. They bought rum and decided it would be fun to see how much just one person could chug. That person was Casey. Around noon the next day, a police officer came to my door. It was the standard conversation. "I'm sorry to inform you that your son Casey has died...." "No, that can't be right," I said. It took 2 days for the coroner to get back to me and confirm that Casey's blood alcohol content was .41—more than five times the legal limit.

If I had it all to do over again? I would have made my message very clear. When I found that bottle of rum Casey had hidden in my garage, I would not have thrown it away and said nothing like I did. I would have taken it out and set it on my kitchen counter. Then we would have discussed why I did not want him drinking, sitting there and looking at each other. I would have spoken to him about alcohol more often. — a mother from Wyoming

Alisa's Story

During spring vacation when she was 15, Alisa went to stay the night at her best friend, Leana's house. Two senior boys stopped by and asked if the girls could come out and visit the go-cart tracks with them. Leana's parents said "Yes." The boys had a different plan. They picked up cases of beer hidden in the woods, drove to a pond and they all hung out while the boys drank. On the trip back to Leana's, on country roads, the intoxicated driver decided it would be fun to scare his passengers. He reached 120 mph and lost control of the car, which veered into the woods and hit a guard rail, tearing off the car's entire right side where Alisa was sitting. Alisa was thrown from the car into thick woods. A surgeon spent hours trying to put her organs back in place. The last time her mother kissed her and told her she loved her, Alisa was unconscious on the gurney. Alisa died at 4:30 a.m. that morning.

Parents Do Matter

Three-quarters of kids up to age 17 say parents influence their drinking decisions and they turn to them for guidance. So, speak often with your child about alcohol:

- Explain why alcohol, as a sedative drug, is dangerous.
- Talk about how alcohol can harm a teen's growing brain.
- Emphasize that underage drinking is illegal. Make it clear that you want your teen to respect the law and be safe, so you expect him/her not to drink.
- Find out where your child is going and with whom. Agree on a time they need to be home and explain the consequences if they drink.
- Help your teen brainstorm useful strategies for resisting pressure to drink.
- Show respect and caring. Listen respectfully to his/her ideas and concerns.



Teens who drink are more likely to:

- Die in a car crash
- Get pregnant
- Flunk school
- Be sexually assaulted
- Become an alcoholic later in life
- Take their own life through suicide



Talk With Other Parents

When your teen spends time with a friend, stay in touch with that friend's parents. Together, you can form a network that boosts your kids' safety. Other parents can help:

- Monitor teens' activities and location
- Make sure you're getting the real story
- Ensure a teen is following his/her own family rules



Working with Students with Serious Behavior Disorders

In a continuation of the article from February's newsletter on children with Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Conduct Disorder (CD), two psychiatric disorders that can be very disruptive in a classroom, this article will provide you with ideas for classroom routines and creating non-threatening environments that may be beneficial in working with students with ODD and CD. With this school year coming to a close, these may be some strategies that you want to establish and get ready to put in place for next year.

Effective classroom routines are a must. Your routines should be well known by the students and should have logical consequences when they're not followed. A consistent approach with no exceptions are your key to success in classroom management. Following are questions to consider when developing guidelines:

- What method do you employ to get your student's attention? (Count to three? Raise your hand? Flick the lights or a bell?)
- What are your students expected to do when they come in first thing in the morning? From recess? From lunch?
- What routines are in place when students finish work early?
- How do your students ask for assistance?
- What are the consequences for unfinished work? Late work? Sloppy work? The student who refuses to work?
- What are the consequences when a student disturbs another student? For the disobedient student?
- Where do students turn in their assignments/tasks?
- What are your routines for sharpening pencils?
- How does a student ask to leave the room to use the washroom? Can more than one go at a time?
- How do you establish what the acceptable noise level is?
- What are your expectations during group work to ensure students are on task?
- What are your tidy up routines?
- What are your dismissal routines?



It is also important to create a warm, non-threatening and welcome environment that is conducive to learning and maximizing student social and academic growth. Some suggestions include:

- Greet your students each day with enthusiasm and find something positive to say.
- Provide time for the students to share happenings, events or items. Take time on occasion to share something that is important to you. This shows you care about them, and the students will see you as a real and caring person.
- Talk about differences within the classroom. Children can benefit from learning about diversity. Talk about varying cultural backgrounds, body image and types, talents, strengths and weaknesses. Provide opportunities for your learners to share their strengths and weaknesses. The child who may not be able to run fast may be able to draw very well. These conversations should always be held in a positive light, and will build trust and acceptance in the classroom.
- Say no to all forms of bullying. Makes sure all students know that they should report bullying. Remind them that telling on a bully is not tattling; it is reporting.
- Build activities into your day that supports students working together and building rapport with one another.
- Focus on the strengths when calling upon a student. When asking a child to demonstrate or respond to something, be sure that the child is in the comfort zone. Showing sensitivity to each of your students is extremely important in protecting their confidence and self esteem.
- Promote two-way respect. Adhere to the golden rule, always show respect and you will get it back in return.
- Educate the class about specific disorders and disabilities. Role play helps to develop empathy and support among classmates and peers.
- Promote confidence and self-esteem among every student. Give praise and positive reinforcement often that is real and deserved. The more that student's feel good about themselves, the better they will be toward themselves and others.



(Source: <http://specialed.about.com>)