



## Tips for Talking to Children about Alcohol Use

As a parent, you are one of the most important factors in preventing your child from taking that first sip of alcohol. Although some adults find alcohol use and abuse a difficult topic to discuss with children, it provides an opportunity for you to state your expectations and ensure your child has all the facts.

Below are some tips to start the conversation, and what to say once your child opens up.

### Get talking

Use recent events – either personal or from the news – as well as the plots of television shows or books to launch a discussion about alcohol. Allow your kids to ask questions and be prepared to answer honestly and at a level they will understand.

### How does your child feel about alcohol? Does he or she have all the facts?

Let your child lead the discussion with thoughts, feelings and facts about underage drinking. That approach can help you determine the focus of the conversation and demonstrate to your child that you're listening.

### Teach your child the facts

Unfortunately, research shows alcohol is the drug of choice among Georgia's youth – and consumption is not just limited to college and high school students. Here are a few key statistics:

- 23 percent of Georgia youth have consumed alcohol before the age of 13, while nearly the same percentage of high school students admitted to binge drinking.
- Approximately 158 deaths of minors each year are attributed to alcohol use.
- 34 percent of Georgia's middle school students reported having at least one drink of alcohol in the past 30 days.
- 44.8 percent of children 12 to 14 reported receive alcohol for free from home.
- Minor use of alcohol is against the law, and could result in jail time. A DUI can cost upwards of \$10,000 per offense plus jail time, and could lead to loss of life for your child or another.
- Underage drinking is a factor in nearly half of all teen automobile crashes and contributes significantly to suicides, homicides and fatal injuries. In fact, more teens die as a result of alcohol use than all other illegal drugs combined.
- Alcohol abuse is linked to as many as two-thirds of all sexual assaults and date rapes of teens and college students.

### Set your expectations

Let your child know you expect him or her to achieve great things and don't want to see alcohol interfere with that path. Whether they admit it or not, your opinion matters to your child.

Above all, keep an open mind and continue to keep the dialogue open. The lessons you teach your kids today could contribute significantly to their safety and well-being later, so help give them a chance and guide them to make the best choices possible.



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