

Talk to your child about living a drug-free lifestyle

Talking to your kids about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs will decrease the chance that they will participate in using and abusing them in the future.

Between the ages of 9 and 13, your child begins to form his or her personal values, including those that will affect his or her level of drug use in the future.

Parents are the **most influential** source of prevention. Simply having a conversation with your child about the effects of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs will have an impact on your child's future.

Research shows that kids are much more likely to delay drinking when they feel they have a close, supportive tie with a parent or guardian.

When you want to talk with your kids, keep in mind this principle:
Before you start to talk, you must listen.

Control your emotions if you hear something you don't like. Try not to respond with anger, especially about sensitive topics like alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Make every conversation a **win-win** experience. Don't lecture or try to prove your child wrong. If you show respect for your child's viewpoint, he or she will be more likely to listen to and respect yours.

Directions for Parents: Discussing alcohol with your kids will help them make healthy choices. We hope this information assists you in starting the conversation. Don't forget, consistency and frequency of repeating the message is the key. Hang this postcard where you'll be reminded to keep the conversation going regularly.

working together with parents for safe and healthy communities

If you would like more information, please visit www.guideinc.org/DFCCoalition.



Here are some important facts that will help you when you and your child have conversations about alcohol:

- **Alcohol is a powerful drug** that slows down the body and mind.
- **Beer and wine are not “safer” than liquor.** A 12-ounce beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine and a 1.5-ounce shot of liquor all contain the same amount of alcohol.
- **It takes 2-3 hours for a single drink to leave a body’s system.** Nothing can speed up this process.
- **Anyone can develop a serious alcohol problem,** including a teenager.

Try these conversation-starters about alcohol:

Ask your child what he or she knows about alcohol and what he or she thinks about underage drinking. Make sure to listen to your child’s views and opinions.

Ask your child what he or she feels are good reasons not to drink. Remember to listen to your child’s views and opinions. Listening shows you really care. Emphasize the following reasons:

- You want your child to avoid alcohol because you care about his or her health and safety.
- You want your child to maintain self-respect which is difficult to do when drinking.
- Drinking is illegal for anyone under 21.
- Drinking can lead to embarrassment, car crashes, unprotected sex, violence and, in some cases, death.
- Someone in your family might have a history of alcoholism putting your child at higher risk.

Parents are the most influential source of prevention.