

Sponsored by: Utah Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control; Attorney General's Office; Department of Health; State Office of Education, Safe and Drug-Free Schools; Juvenile Courts; Utah Prevention Network; Department of Public Safety; Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health; Utah Substance Abuse and Anti-Violence Coordinating Council; Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD); Intermountain Healthcare

References:

- ¹American Medical Association (AMA) 2003 Fact Sheet, "Alcohol's Adverse Effects on the Brains of Children, Adolescents and College Students."
- ²The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, "National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse X: Teens and Parents," August 2005.
- ³"Preventing Underage Drinking: Using Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's SPF, 1."
- ⁴Bach/Harrison, "Utah Student Health and Risk Prevention Survey," 2006.
- ⁵Fisher, S, "Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research," October 2006; Vol. 30; pp. 1-12.
- ⁶Hawkins JD., J.W. Graham, E. Maguin et al, Journal of Studies on Alcohol, 1997, 58(3):280-290.
- ⁷Institutes of Medicine, National Research Council, "Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility," p. 8,10,11,14,17.
- ⁸Chambers, R., J.R. Taylor, N.M. Potenza, American Psychiatry, 2003, Vol. 160, p. 1041-1052.
- ⁹U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Prevention Talk," Issue Number 14.
- ¹⁰National Institute on Drug Abuse (2000), <http://captus.samhsa.gov/western/resources/prevtalk/documents/newsletter-2005-03.pdf> and <http://captus.samhsa.gov/western/resources/prevtalk/documents/newsletter-2005-03.pdf>
- ¹¹"Alcoholism and the Brain: an Overview," http://teens.drugabuse.gov/parents/parents_brain1.asp and http://teens.drugabuse.gov/parents/parents_brain1.asp
- ¹²The NSDUH Report, November, 22, 2004.
- ¹³AMA 2003 Fact Sheet. (ibid.)
- ¹⁴Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, Columbia University, "Cigarettes, Alcohol, Marijuana: Gateways to Illicit Drug Use," 1994.
- ¹⁵Hawkins, 280-290.
- ¹⁶<http://www.casafamilyday.org/PDFs/FDIIIreport06.pdf> and <http://www.casafamilyday.org/PDFs/FDIIIreport06.pdf>
- ¹⁷40 Developmental Assets, www.search-institute.org
- ¹⁸www.family.samhsa.gov/talk/encouragement
- ¹⁹www.family.samhsa.gov/teach
- ²⁰Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, Columbia University, "Cigarettes, Alcohol, Marijuana: Gateways to Illicit Drug Use," 1994.
- ²¹www.thechildrenstrust.org : "Caring for Children Between 3-6 PM".
- ²²USDA: www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/dga/dga95/box16.html.

Every child comes with two anti-drinking devices.



Know where your kids are and what they're doing

New research on the dangers of underage drinking and the proven skills to prevent it.

PARENTS EMPOWERED.org

Eliminating Underage Drinking in Utah

PARENTS EMPOWERED.org

Eliminating Underage Drinking in Utah

For more information on this resource contact:
Utah State Office of Education
801-538-7713

For more information go to: ParentsEmpowered.org.

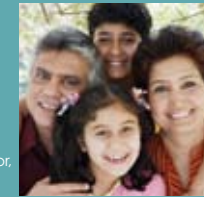
Parents Are the Most Powerful Influence On Their Children's Behavior

Parenting tops peer pressure

Believe it or not, teens still listen to their parents. In fact, kids usually listen to their parents more than anybody else, including their friends. In a recent survey on underage drinking, teens reported that parental disapproval is the #1 reason they choose not to drink.

"What parents may not realize is that children say parental disapproval of underage drinking is the key reason they have chosen not to drink."

(Charles Curie, former Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Administrator, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)²



Kids need help to stay alcohol-free

Education alone will not keep children from using alcohol when there are constant pressures and opportunities to drink. The areas of the brain that encourage impulsivity and risk-taking develop early in teens, while the areas that improve self-control don't develop until the very late teens or early twenties.³ Parents must stay actively involved to help their children remain alcohol free.

Parents often underestimate the problem

Binge drinking now begins as early as elementary school, and parents are often unaware of their child's use of alcohol. In fact, in a national survey, 31% of kids who said they had been drunk in the past year had parents who believed their children to be non-drinkers.

What can parents do?

First, they can learn and explain how alcohol can damage their child's brain and increase the risk of addiction. Then, they can apply the following three research-proven skills that prevent underage drinking:

- 1) Bonding
- 2) Boundaries
- 3) Monitoring.⁴

This brochure provides basic information on the effects of alcohol on the developing teen brain and the key parenting skills to help your child be alcohol-free.

Be kind and respectful



Sobering Facts About Underage Drinking

Brain Damage

"The brain goes through dynamic change during adolescence [ages 12-21] and alcohol can seriously damage long- and short-term growth processes."

(American Medical Association 2003 Fact Sheet)



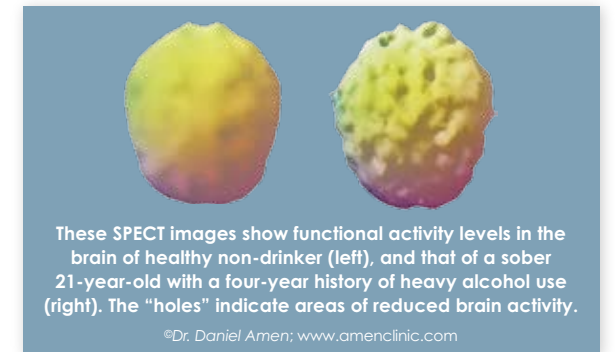
"The **prefrontal area** [responsible for good judgment and impulse control] undergoes the most change during adolescence. Researchers found that adolescent drinking could cause severe changes in this area...which plays an important role in forming adult personality and behavior...Damage from alcohol at this time can be long-term and irreversible."

(American Medical Association 2003 Fact Sheet)

"The **hippocampus** [involved in learning and memory]... suffers from the worst alcohol-related brain damage in teens...Those who had been drinking more and for longer had significantly smaller hippocampi (10 percent)...In addition, short-term or moderate drinking impairs learning and memory far more in youth than adults...Frequent drinkers may never be able to catch up in adulthood."



(American Medical Association 2003 Fact Sheet)



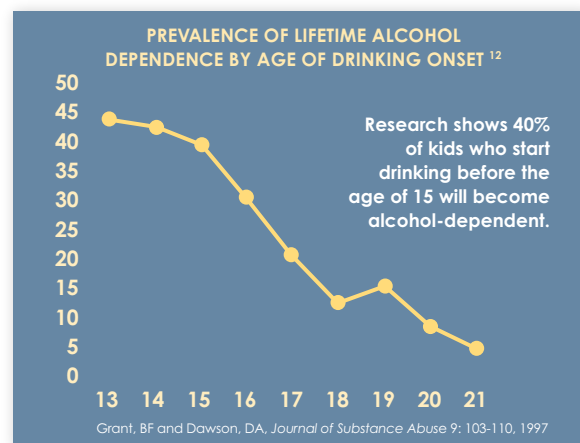
Increased Risk of Addiction

Teen drinking can program the brain for alcoholism.⁸

The brain rewards positive actions with feelings of pleasure so that we want to repeat them. Alcohol affects the brain's pleasure-reward system by stimulating the production of dopamine, a pleasure-producing neurotransmitter, generating feelings of pleasure from a chemical instead of a real experience.⁹

Because the teen brain produces an abundance of dopamine, it can rapidly go from liking, to wanting, to needing alcohol, programming it for alcoholism.¹⁰


Alcohol can also damage the brain's ability to sense pleasure from normal, healthy things and experiences—leaving a young person feeling “flat” about things he or she previously enjoyed.¹¹



Alcohol damage can cause young people to:


- have poor judgment
- get into trouble
- struggle in school
- experience failure in achieving life-long goals.¹³


Damage from underage alcohol use may also lead to other types of addiction. Research shows 67% of teens who drink before age 15 will try other illicit drugs.¹⁴



Eating dinner five times each week can reduce teen drinking

Kids are more at risk for drinking between 3:00 and 6:00 pm





Spend at least 15 minutes together every day

What Parents Can Do: Bonding

Bonding is a feeling of being loved, connected to, and valued by others. Research indicates that children are less likely to drink when their parents are involved in their lives and when children and parents feel close to each other. Family conflict and lack of bonding increase the risk of drinking. To increase family bonding:

1. CREATE A POSITIVE, LOVING HOME ENVIRONMENT

- Be kind and respectful of each other.
- Do fun activities together on a regular basis.
- Eat dinner together; have pleasant conversation. Research shows teens who regularly eat as a family (5-7 times per week) are 33% less likely to use alcohol.¹⁶

2. HAVE DAILY POSITIVE INTERACTION

- Take time daily to talk with your kids about their interests and activities. Get to know your kids by asking about their lives, hopes, fears, and concerns.
- Notice the good and compliment your child. Maintain at least a 4:1 ratio of positive comments to negative ones. (see www.family.samhsa.gov/talk/encouragement)
- In correcting behavior or giving consequences, make sure your child knows that he or she is loved.

3. NOTICE YOUR CHILD'S EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- Help your children become competent and involved in worthwhile activities.¹⁷ Encourage them to cultivate a positive, optimistic attitude.
- Watch for signs of excess stress or depression. These can lead to teen drinking. Help them cope in healthy ways: music; exercise; talking with a counselor, friend or doctor, etc.
- Take time to listen with empathy to your kids' concerns. Try to spend at least 15 minutes a day of one-on-one time.¹⁸ Repeat a phrase or two back to them as they talk so they know you are listening.

Watch for signs of excess stress or depression



POWER TIP:

Think of your child's feelings as an emotional bank account. Each positive thing you say is like a deposit in the account. Each negative thing is like a withdrawal. To keep from bankrupting your child's emotional bank account and damaging your relationship with that child, you need to put in way more positives than negatives.

What Parents Can Do: Boundaries

Boundaries are the rules and expectations that define what parents expect their children to do or not to do. Unclear rules and expectations leave kids vulnerable to underage drinking. To set clear boundaries:


1. TEACH RISKS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING

- Begin early talking with your child about not drinking alcohol—preferably before age eight.
- Explain the real risks of underage drinking, asking questions to be sure your child understands.
- Emphasize that alcohol is a dangerous drug for your child's still-developing brain. Review the dangers of alcohol often as they grow up.

2. SET CLEAR RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

- Set clear rules about not drinking alcohol while underage and establish firm consequences for drinking. Make your expectations clear about what to do if offered alcohol. For example: "If there is alcohol at a party, call me, and I'll pick you up."
- Discuss with your child situations where he or she might be encouraged to use alcohol. Brainstorm and practice ways to say "no." Remind them if offered alcohol they should call for a ride home.
- Ask kids for a personal commitment to live by the rules; then post and review the rules often.
- Consistently enforce the rules by giving appropriate consequences every time.

Get to know your kids friends and their parents



3. HELP KIDS TO CHOOSE FRIENDS WISELY

- The single most predictive risk for underage drinking is if your child's peers drink. Encourage your child to choose friends who support your no-alcohol rules.
- Get to know your kids' friends and their parents.
- Discuss your no-alcohol policy with your kids' friends and their parents, and enlist their support to keep your kids in an alcohol-free environment.

POWER TIP:

Some parents may question setting a no-alcohol rule because they drank as a teen and feel they "turned out fine." New research shows teens today begin earlier and drink more than adults at a sitting, putting them at far greater risk for addiction and brain damage.²⁰ All parents need to set firm no-alcohol boundaries.

What Parents Can Do: Monitoring

Monitoring is knowing where children are and what they are doing. Because the teen brain has not fully developed impulse control, inadequate monitoring can leave kids at risk for alcohol abuse. To improve parental monitoring:

1. KNOW YOUR CHILD'S ACTIVITIES

- Always know where your kids are, who they are with, and what they are doing.
- Insure that your kids have planned activities and appropriate adult supervision.
- Kids need fun. Help provide safe, enjoyable, "no-alcohol" fun for your kids and their friends.

2. ENSURE AN ALCOHOL-FREE ENVIRONMENT

- Ensure that alcohol is not available to your kids at home or from friends, siblings, etc. If they go to a friend's house, call to make sure parents will be home and there will be no alcohol.
- If alcohol appears at a party, instruct your kids that they need to call you, and you will pick them up. Then reward their good behavior.
- If you, as an adult, choose to drink, always keep your alcohol locked up and away from your kids and their friends.

3. MONITOR WHEN UNSUPERVISED

- Be aware that studies show kids are more at risk for alcohol use between the hours of 3:00 and 6:00 p.m., while many parents are still at work.
- Find ways to keep in touch with your kids when you are not around, either through phone calls, text messaging, or through a neighbor dropping by.
- Drop in occasionally, unannounced. Let them know it's because you love and care about them.



Set clear rules and expectations about not drinking

POWER TIP:

Setting clear boundaries without parental monitoring is ineffective in preventing teen alcohol use. At some level, most kids appreciate parental monitoring. It's very real proof their parents love them enough to care about their well-being.

There are ways to keep your child from using alcohol. They all start with you. Visit ParentsEmpowered.org for more information on the proven skills to prevent it.