



Identifying a Moment.

What makes a memorable moment? Taking the leap, opening the box, and trying the conversation – that’s a memorable moment! Once you do it, you can’t turn back. You may never feel as confident as you want to feel, but you can take steps to prepare for discussing underage drinking with your teen.

- Know a few facts. Teens who drink can have memory issues and may misuse other substances, too.
- School disruptions like dropping grades, social consequences like strained relationships, and legal situations are all on the list of what can happen when underage drinking occurs.
- Be ready to really listen, too. We need to listen to understand where they’re coming from, instead of listening to respond.
- As adults, we usually want to feel in control of our kids. Realize this is a topic they might already know something about, either from health class at school or witnessing it firsthand. Underage drinking can have poor outcomes, and the more often we send a consistent no-use message to our teens about it, the better.

5 Conversation Goals

Research suggests that one of the most important factors in healthy child development is a strong, open relationship with a parent. It is important to start talking to your children about alcohol and other drugs before they are exposed to them - as early as 9 years old.

1

Show you disapprove of underage drinking and other drug misuse.

4

Show you're paying attention to what your child is up to and you'll discourage risky behaviors.

2

Show you care about your child's health, wellness, and success.

5

Build your child's skills and strategies for avoiding substance use.

3

Show you're a good source of information about alcohol and other drugs.

And remember...

Keep it low-key. Don't worry, you don't have to get everything across in one talk. Plan to have many short talks.

Visit [SAMHSA.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov) for further parent resources on underage drinking, and see the featured conversation starter videos to help prepare you for those important conversations with your teens.

<https://www.samhsa.gov/talk-they-hear-you/partner-resources/discussion-starter-video>