

# Face to Face Addressing Alcohol During the Middle School Years

## Talk Tips

### Parents = Most Influential

Parents have more influence over their child than friends, music, TV, the internet and celebrities. Your words are powerful, so take the time to talk to your child about alcohol. These tips will help with the conversation.

**FACT:**

**1 in 5 Jefferson  
County youth begins  
drinking by age 12**

#### Listen:

- **Bring up the subject** of alcohol when you are both relaxed and can have a calm conversation. Don't be in a rush.
- **Allow** your child to speak without interruption.

#### Explain:

- **Explain the facts about alcohol.** Convey that alcohol is a drug that depresses the entire body and it can change the way you make decisions. Explain the difference between responsible drinking, binge drinking (five or more drinks in two hours), and alcohol dependence.
- **Don't threaten or give ultimatums.** Make sure your child understands your rules but avoid general threats, such as "I better not catch you drinking or else."
- **Set your family rules** concerning alcohol and substance use and communicate these to your child. Set a rule that there will be no alcohol use before age 21 and communicate the consequences if the rule was broken.
- **Encourage your children not to drink because:**
  - It is illegal and they may be arrested
  - It can make them sick
  - Drinking can lead to sexual assault and other dangerous situations and consequences
  - Drinking now might lead to becoming an alcoholic later. The younger the person starts drinking, the greater the chance he/she will develop alcohol problems later in life.

#### Encourage:

- **Empower your children** to make healthy decisions. Give them opportunities to make their own decisions, such as choosing the movie or dinner. Build their confidence and assure them they are strong enough to fight off peer pressure.
- **Express your respect and admiration** of your child. Tell your son or daughter you are proud of them for being able to handle tough situations.

#### Take Action:

- **Get to know your child's friends** and their parents. Make sure your child knows that parents talk to each other and you hear what's going on in school.
- **Do your research** and learn as much as you can about alcohol, drugs and other trends.
- **Check in with your child often.**

*Need more help?*

*Find out more at [www.pridenow.org](http://www.pridenow.org).*



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UP**