

SKILLS FOR PREVENTING UNDERAGE DRINKING

1 BONDING



STAY CLOSE TO YOUR KIDS. Bonding is essential to preventing underage drinking. Children are less likely to drink when their parents are involved in their lives, and when children and parents feel close to each other.

DO A CLOSENESS CHECK-UP

Occasionally reviewing your relationship with your child can be helpful. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Does your child feel close to you?
- Does your child share their thoughts and feelings with you?
- Does your child enjoy spending time with you?
- If my child had a problem, would they feel comfortable asking me for help?

SPEND TIME TOGETHER

Try to spend at least 15 minutes a day of one-on-one time, doing things your child likes to do.

EAT MEALS TOGETHER

Eating meals together as a family provides a great opportunity to strike up a conversation with your children about their day and for them to share their thoughts and concerns.

3 MONITORING



WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE & WILL.

Know where your kids are, who they're with, and what they are doing. It shows that you care about them.

2 BOUNDARIES



PARENTAL DISAPPROVAL IS THE #1 REASON KIDS CHOOSE NOT TO DRINK. Believe it or not, kids still listen to their parents. In fact, they usually listen to their parents more than anybody else, including their friends. Utah data shows that when parents are clear about their complete disapproval of underage drinking, 97% of kids choose not to drink.¹²

TEACH THE RISKS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING

By age 9, begin talking with your children about not drinking alcohol underage.

HAVE A PLAN IF ALCOHOL IS PRESENT

Let your children know they can text or call you if they're somewhere that alcohol is present, and you'll pick them up. You can even set up a code word so you'll know to come get them. Keep their social environment alcohol-free.

CONSISTENTLY ENCOURAGE ACCOUNTABILITY

Recognize your kids when they do good things and praise them, but also offer gentle direction and correction when needed.

HELP KIDS CHOOSE FRIENDS WISELY

Studies show if your kids' friends drink, the risk for your kids to drink underage is significantly increased.¹³



PROTECTING A CHILD'S HEALTHY, DEVELOPING BRAIN

Parents Empowered



Your child's brain continues to develop through adolescence.¹ As a result, the harms from alcohol during these years can alter how the brain develops, affecting areas of the brain related to learning, memory and judgment.² A healthy brain has far-reaching benefits—helping contribute to a child's ability to reach their full potential.

ENSURE AN ALCOHOL-FREE ENVIRONMENT

Make sure alcohol isn't available to your kids at home or from friends, etc.

KNOW YOUR CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Help provide safe, enjoyable, no-alcohol fun for your kids and their friends.

ASK THE 5 Ws

1. Where are you going?
2. What will you be doing?
3. Who will you be with?
4. When will you be home?
5. Will there be alcohol?



TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT ALCOHOL EARLY

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends speaking with your children as early as age 9.³ That's because children develop their perceptions about alcohol between the ages of 9 and 13. Those are the magic numbers. Between the ages of 9 to 13 their perceptions can begin to shift, becoming more positive if they view drinking alcohol as pleasurable.⁴ While it might seem early, it helps your kids understand the potential harms. It also gives you the chance to make your expectations completely clear about not drinking underage, increasing the likelihood their brains will remain alcohol-free. Keep in mind, it's never too late to talk to your kids about the importance of not drinking alcohol underage.

WHITE MATTER

Transmits signals between cells. Harms from alcohol can affect attention span and ability to comprehend information.¹¹

THE PREFRONTAL AREA

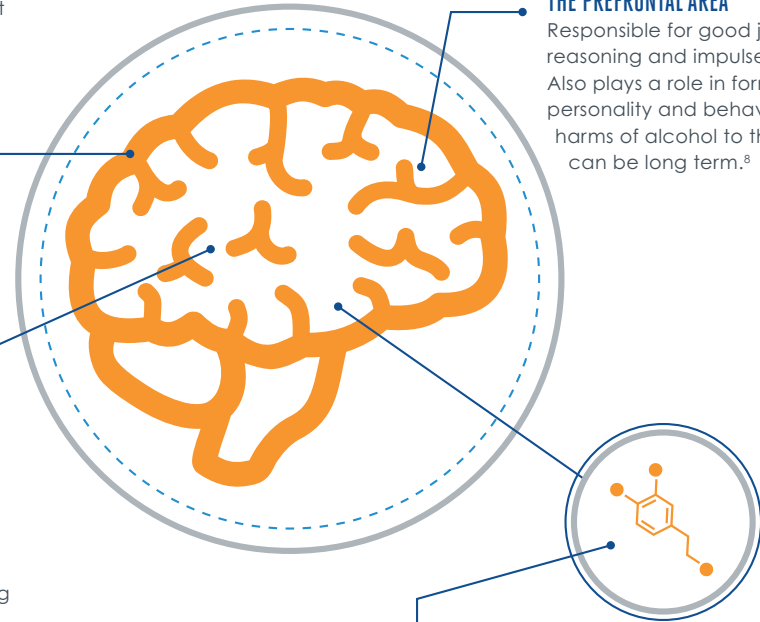
Responsible for good judgment, reasoning and impulse control. Also plays a role in forming adult personality and behavior. The harms of alcohol to this area can be long term.⁸

THE HIPPOCAMPUS

Responsible for memory and learning. Can be 10% smaller among kids who begin drinking early and then drink heavily.¹⁰

DOPAMINE

Alcohol hijacks the brain's pleasure-reward system into generating dopamine (the feel-good chemical) that can program an adolescent's brain for addiction.⁹



BE A PART OF REDUCING THESE SUBSTANCE USE STATISTICS:

40% OF KIDS WHO DRINK BEFORE AGE 15 WILL BECOME ALCOHOL-DEPENDENT.⁵

67% OF KIDS WHO DRINK BEFORE THE AGE OF 15 WILL ALSO GO ON TO USE ILLEGAL DRUGS.⁶

44% OF UTAH KIDS WHO DRINK DID SO AT HOME WITH THEIR PARENTS' PERMISSION.⁷

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Parents Empowered

Parents Empowered is Utah's statewide underage drinking prevention media and community education campaign. It focuses on parents and caregivers, because parental disapproval is the number one reason kids choose not to drink. The initiative provides parents with proven skills to protect kids' healthy brains from the harms of alcohol and promote their bright futures. For more information, visit parentsempowered.org.