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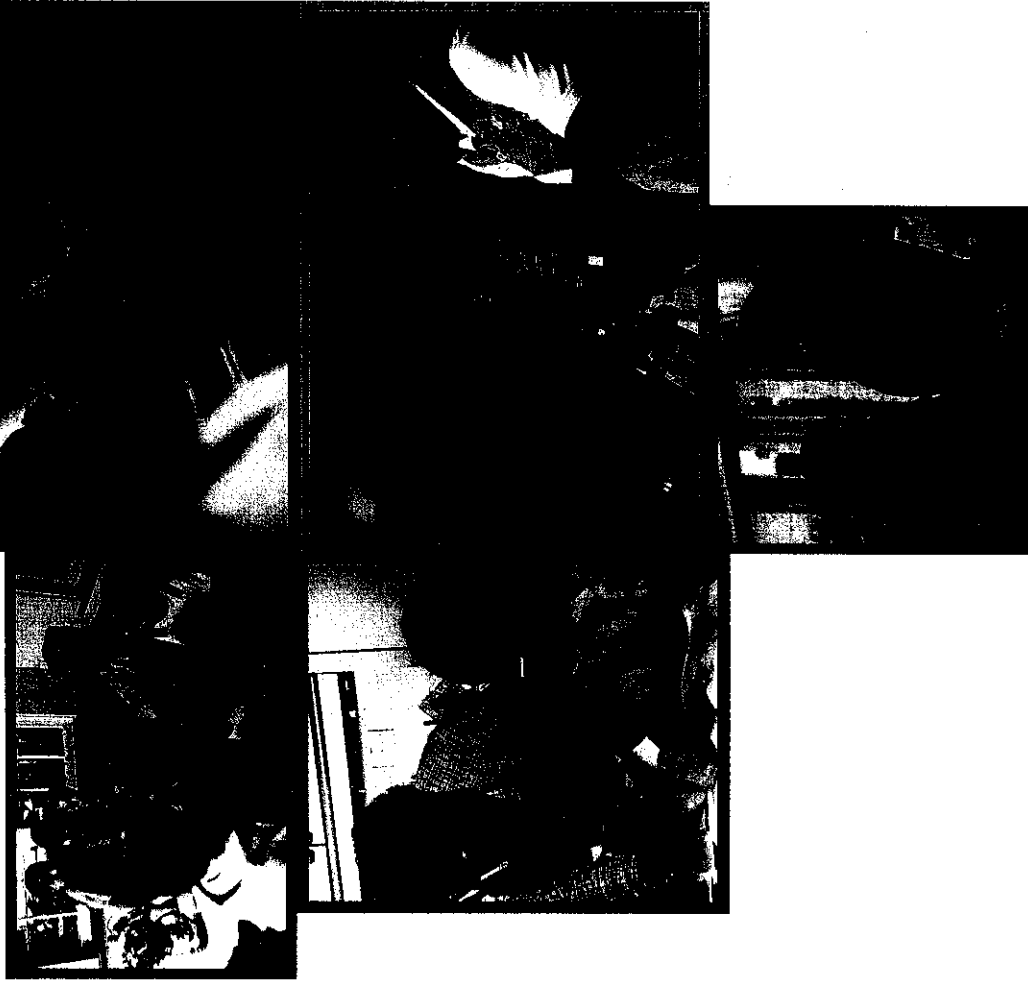
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MAKE A DIFFERENCE



THE
ROBERT WOOD
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FOUNDATION



NIAAA
National Institute on Alcohol
Abuse and Alcoholism

PMH
Office of Research on
Minority Health

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Printed 2000

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
National Institutes of Health • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

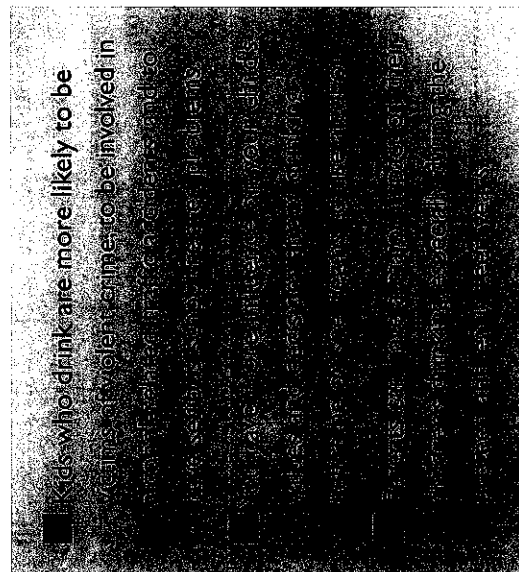
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ASSEMBLY JUDICIARY
DATE: 4/23/03 ROOM: 3138 EXHIBIT C
SUBMITTED BY: Laurel Stadler

Talk
to
your
child
about
Alcohol

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With so many drugs available to young people these days, you may wonder, "Why develop a booklet about helping kids avoid alcohol?" Alcohol is a drug, as surely as cocaine and marijuana are. It's also illegal to drink under the age of 21. And it's dangerous. Kids who drink are more likely to:

- Be victims of violent crime.
- Have serious problems in school.
- Be involved in drinking-related traffic accidents.

This guide is geared to parents and guardians of young people ages 10 to 14. Keep in mind that the suggestions on the following pages are just that—suggestions. Trust your instincts. Choose ideas you are comfortable with, and use your own style in carrying out the approaches you find useful. Your child looks to you for guidance and support in making life decisions—including the decision not to use alcohol.

"But my child isn't drinking yet," you may think. "Isn't it a little early to be concerned about drinking?" Not at all. This is the age at which some children begin experimenting with alcohol. Even if your child is not yet drinking, he or she may be receiving pressure to drink. **Act now.** Keeping quiet about how you feel about your child's alcohol use may give him or her the impression that alcohol use is OK for kids.

It's not easy. As children approach adolescence, friends exert a lot of influence. Fitting in is a chief priority for teens, and parents often feel shoved aside. **Kids will listen,** however. Study after study shows that even during the teen years, parents have enormous influence on their children's behavior.

The bottom line is that most young teens don't yet drink. And parents' disapproval of youthful alcohol use is the key reason children choose not to drink. **So make no mistake: You can make a difference.**

(Note: This booklet uses a variety of terms to refer to young people ages 10 to 14, including youngsters, children, kids, and young teens.)

For young people, alcohol is the number one drug of choice. In fact, teens use alcohol more frequently and heavily than all other illicit drugs combined. Although most children ages 10 to 14 have not yet begun to drink, early adolescence is a time of special risk for beginning to experiment with alcohol.

While some parents and guardians may feel relieved that their teen is "only" drinking, it is important to remember that alcohol is a powerful, mood-altering drug. Not only does alcohol affect the mind and body in often unpredictable ways, but teens lack the judgment and coping skills to handle alcohol wisely. As a result:

- Alcohol-related traffic accidents are a major cause of death and disability among teens. Alcohol use also is linked with youthful deaths by drowning, fire, suicide, and homicide.
- Teens who use alcohol are more likely to become sexually active at earlier ages, to have sexual intercourse more often, and to have unprotected sex than teens who do not drink.
- Young people who drink are more likely than others to be victims of violent crime, including rape, aggravated assault, and robbery.
- Teens who drink are more likely to have problems with school work and school conduct.
- An individual who begins drinking as a young teen is four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than someone who waits until adulthood to use alcohol.

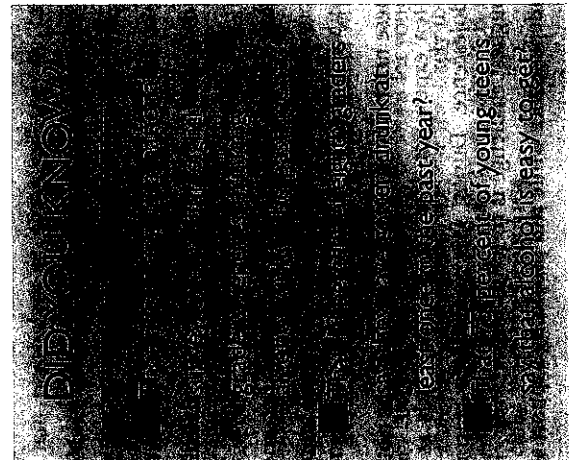
The message is clear: Alcohol use is very risky business for young people. And the longer children delay alcohol use, the less likely they are to develop any problems associated with it. That's why it is so important to help your child avoid any alcohol use.

Early adolescence is a time of enormous and often confusing changes for your child, which makes it a challenging time for both your youngster and you. Being tuned in to what it's like to be a teen can help you stay closer to your child and have more influence on the choices he or she makes—including decisions about using alcohol.

■ **Physical Changes.** Most 10- to 14-year-olds experience rapid increases in height and weight as well as the beginnings of sexual development. As a result, many kids feel more self-conscious about their bodies than they did when they were younger and begin to question whether they are "good enough"—tall enough, slender enough, strong enough, attractive enough—compared with others. A young teen who feels he or she doesn't measure up in some way is more likely to do things to try to please friends, including experimenting with alcohol. During this vulnerable time, it is particularly important to let your children know that in your eyes, they do measure up—and that you care about them deeply.

■ **Thinking Skills.** Most young teens are still very "now" oriented and are just beginning to understand that their actions—such as drinking—have consequences. They also tend to believe that bad things won't happen to them, which helps to explain why they often take risks. Therefore, it is very important for adults to invest time in helping kids understand how and why alcohol-related risks do apply to them.

■ **Social and Emotional Changes.** As children approach adolescence, friends and "fitting in" become extremely important. Young teens increasingly look to friends and the media for clues on how to behave and begin to question adults' values and rules. Given these normal developments, it is perhaps not surprising that parents often experience conflict with their kids as they go through early adolescence. During this sometimes stormy time, perhaps your toughest challenge is to try to respect your child's growing drive for independence while still providing support and appropriate limits.



You may wonder why a guide to preventing teen alcohol use is putting so much emphasis on parents' need to understand and support their children. But the fact is, the best way to influence your child to avoid drinking is to have a strong, trusting relationship with him or her. Research shows that teens are much more likely to delay drinking when they feel they have a close, supportive tie with a parent or guardian. Moreover, if your son or daughter eventually does begin to drink, a good relationship with you will help protect him or her from developing alcohol-related problems.

The opposite is also true: When the relationship between a parent and teen is full of conflict or is very distant, the teen is more likely to use alcohol and to develop drinking-related problems. This connection between the parent-child relationship and a child's drinking habits makes a lot of sense when you think about it. First, when children have a strong bond with a parent, they are apt to feel good about themselves and therefore be less likely to cave in to peer pressure to use alcohol. Second, a good relationship with you is likely to influence your children to try to live up to your expectations, because they want to maintain their close tie with you. Here are some ways to build a strong, supportive bond with your child:

- Establish open communication. Make it easy for your teen to talk honestly with you. (See box "Tips for Communicating With Your Teen.")
- Show you care. Even though young teens may not always show it, they still need to know they are important to their parents. Make it a point to regularly spend one-on-one time with your child—time when you can give him or her your loving, undivided attention. Some activities to share: a walk, a bike ride, a quiet dinner out, or a cookie-baking session.

- Draw the line. Set clear, realistic expectations for your child's behavior. Establish appropriate consequences for breaking rules and consistently enforce them.
- Offer acceptance. Make sure your teen knows that you appreciate his or her efforts as well as accomplishments. Avoid hurtful teasing or criticism.
- Understand that your child is growing up. This doesn't mean a hands-off attitude. But as you guide your child's behavior, also make an effort to respect his or her growing need for independence and privacy.



Good Reasons for Teens Not to Drink

- You want your child to avoid alcohol.
- You want your child to maintain self-respect.
- You want them to know drinking is illegal.
- Drinking at their age can be dangerous.
- You may have a family history of alcoholism.

How to Talk to Your Teen About Drinking

When you talk to your teen about drinking, it's important to be clear and direct. Don't be afraid to say what you mean. If you're not sure how to start, you can begin by asking your teen how they feel about drinking. This can be a good way to start a conversation that is open and honest.

It's also important to listen to your teen. If they tell you they don't drink, don't push them. If they tell you they do drink, don't judge them. Just listen to what they have to say. This will help you understand their perspective and make it easier to talk to them about the risks of drinking.

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For many parents, bringing up the subject of alcohol is no easy matter. Your young teen may try to dodge the discussion, and you yourself may feel unsure about how to proceed. To boost your chances for a productive conversation, take some time to think through the issues you want to discuss *before* you talk with your child. Also, think about how your child might react and ways you might respond to your youngster's questions and feelings. Then choose a time to talk when both you and your child have some "down time" and are feeling relaxed.

Keep in mind, too, that you don't need to cover everything at once. In fact, you're likely to have a greater impact on your child's drinking by having a number of talks about alcohol use throughout his or her adolescence. Think of this discussion with your child as the first part of an ongoing conversation.

And remember, do make it a conversation, not a lecture! Following are some topics for discussion:

■ **Your Child's Views About Alcohol.** Ask your young teen what he or she knows about alcohol and what he or she thinks about teen drinking. Ask your child why he or she thinks kids drink. Listen carefully without interrupting. Not only will this approach help your child to feel heard and respected, but it can serve as a natural "lead-in" to discussing alcohol topics.

■ **Important Facts About Alcohol.** Although many kids believe they already know everything about alcohol, myths and misinformation abound. Here are some important facts to share:

- Alcohol is a powerful drug that slows down the body and mind. It impairs coordination; slows reaction time; and impairs vision, clear thinking, and judgment.
- Beer and wine are not "safer" than hard liquor. A 12-ounce can of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, and 1 ounce of hard liquor all contain the same amount of alcohol and have the same effects on the body and mind.

- On average, it takes 2 to 3 hours for a single drink to leave the body's system. Nothing can speed up this process, including drinking coffee, taking a cold shower, or "walking it off."
- People tend to be very bad at judging how seriously alcohol has affected them. That means many individuals who drive after drinking *think* they can control a car—but actually cannot.
- Anyone can develop a serious alcohol problem, including a teenager.

■ **The "Magic Potion" Myth.** The media's glamorous portrayal of alcohol encourages many teens to believe that drinking will make them popular, attractive, happy, and "cool." Research shows that teens who expect such positive effects are more likely to drink at early ages. However, you can help to combat these dangerous myths by watching TV shows and movie videos with your child and discussing how alcohol is portrayed in them. For example, television advertisements for beer often show young people having an uproariously good time, as though drinking always puts people in a terrific mood. Watching such a commercial with your child can be an opportunity to discuss the many ways that alcohol can affect people—in some cases bringing on feelings of sadness or anger rather than carefree high spirits.

■ **Good Reasons Not to Drink.** In talking with your child about reasons to avoid alcohol, stay away from scare tactics. Most young teens are aware that many people drink without problems, so it is important to discuss the consequences of alcohol use without overstating the case. For example, you can talk about the dangers of riding in a car with a driver who has been drinking without insisting that "all kids who ride with drinkers get into accidents." Some good reasons that teens shouldn't drink:

- **You want your child to avoid alcohol.** Be sure to clearly state your own expectations regarding your child's drinking and to establish consequences for breaking rules. Your values and attitudes count with your child, even though he or she may not always show it.
- **To maintain self-respect.** In a series of focus groups, teens reported that the best way to persuade them to

avoid alcohol is to appeal to their self-respect—letting them know that they are too smart and have too much going for them to need the crutch of alcohol. Teens also pay attention to ways in which alcohol might cause them to do something embarrassing that might damage their self-respect and important relationships.

- **Drinking is illegal.** Because alcohol use under the age of 21 is illegal, getting caught may mean trouble with the authorities. Even if getting caught doesn't lead to police action, the parents of your child's friends may no longer permit them to associate with your child. If drinking occurs on school grounds, your child could be suspended.
- **Drinking can be dangerous.** One of the leading causes of teen injuries and death is drunk driving. Alcohol is also a major factor in other types of fatal accidents among teens, such as drownings, burns, falls, and alcohol poisoning from drinking too much, too fast. Drinking also makes a young person more vulnerable to sexual assault and unprotected sex. And while your teen may believe he or she wouldn't engage in hazardous activities after drinking, point out that because alcohol impairs judgment, a drinker is very likely to think such activities *won't* be dangerous.
- **You have a family history of alcoholism.** If one or more members of your immediate or extended family has suffered from alcoholism, your child may be somewhat more vulnerable to developing a drinking problem. Your child needs to know that for him or her, drinking may carry special risks.

■ How to Handle Peer Pressure. It's not enough to tell your young teen that he or she should avoid alcohol—you also need to help your child figure out how. What can your daughter say when she goes to a party and a friend offers her a beer? (See "Six Ways to Say No to a Drink.") Or what should your son do if he finds himself in a home where kids are passing around a bottle of wine and parents are nowhere in sight? What should their response be if they are offered a ride home with an older friend who has been drinking?

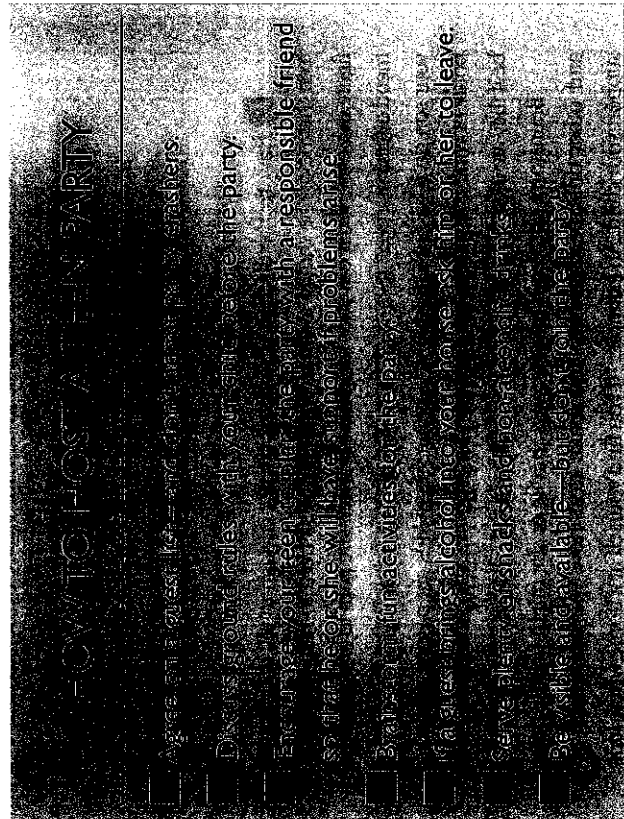
Brainstorm with your teen for ways that he or she might handle these and other difficult situations, and make clear how you are willing to support your child. An example: "If you find yourself at a home where kids

are drinking, call me and I'll pick you up—and there will be no scolding or punishment." The more prepared your child is, the better able he or she will be to handle high-pressure situations that involve drinking.

MOM, DAD, DID YOU DRINK WHEN YOU WERE A KID?

This is the question many parents dread—yet it is highly likely to come up in any family discussion of alcohol. The reality is that many parents *did* drink before they were old enough to legally do so. So how can one be honest with a child without sounding like a hypocrite who advises, "Do as I say, not as I did"?

This is a judgment call. If you believe that your drinking or drug use history should not be part of the discussion, you can simply tell your child that you choose not to share it. Another approach is to admit that you did do some drinking as a teenager, but that it was a mistake—and give your teen an example of an embarrassing or painful moment that occurred because of your drinking. This approach may help your child better understand that youthful alcohol use *does* have negative consequences.



While parent-child conversations about drinking are essential, talking isn't enough—you also need to take concrete action to help your child resist alcohol. Research strongly shows that active, supportive involvement by parents and guardians can help teens avoid underage drinking and prevent later alcohol misuse.

In a survey of sixth graders, over half said it would be easy for a kid their age to get alcohol at a party. And in a recent national survey, 75 percent of eighth graders said alcohol was "fairly easy" or "very easy" to get. The message is clear: Young teens still need plenty of adult supervision. Some ways to provide it:

■ **Monitor Alcohol Use in Your Home.** If you keep alcohol in your home, keep track of the supply. Make clear to your child that you don't allow unchaperoned parties or other teen gatherings in your home. If possible, however, encourage him or her to invite friends over when you *are* at home. The more entertaining your child does in your home, the more you will know about your child's friends and activities.

■ **Connect With Other Parents.** Getting to know other parents and guardians can help you keep closer tabs on your child. Friendly relations can make it easier for you to call the parent of a teen who is having a party to be sure that a responsible adult will be present and that alcohol will not be available. You're likely to find out that you're not the only adult who wants to prevent teen alcohol use—many other parents share your concern.

■ **Keep Track of Your Child's Activities.** Be aware of your teen's plans and whereabouts. Generally, your child will be more open to your supervision if he or she feels you are keeping tabs because you care, not because you distrust him or her.

■ **Develop Family Rules About Teen Drinking.** When parents establish clear "no alcohol" rules and expectations, their children are less

likely to begin drinking. While each family should develop agreements about teen alcohol use that reflect their own beliefs and values, some possible family rules about drinking are:

- Kids will not drink alcohol until they are 21.
- Older siblings will not encourage younger brothers or sisters to drink and will not give them alcohol.
- Kids will not stay at teen parties where alcohol is served.
- Kids will not ride in a car with a driver who has been drinking.

Once you have chosen rules for your family, you will need to establish appropriate consequences for breaking those rules. Be sure to choose a penalty that you are willing to carry out. Also, don't make the consequences so harsh that they become a barrier to open communication between you and your teen. The idea is to make the penalty "sting" just enough to make your child think twice about breaking the rule. A possible consequence might be temporary restrictions on your child's socializing.

Finally, you must be prepared to consistently enforce the consequences you have established. If your children know that they will lose certain privileges each and every time an alcohol use rule is broken, they will be more likely to keep their agreements.

■ Set a Good Example. Parents and guardians are important role models for their children—even children who are fast becoming teenagers. Studies indicate that if a parent uses alcohol, his or her children are more likely to drink themselves. But even if you use alcohol, there may be ways to lessen the likelihood that your child will drink. Some suggestions:

- Use alcohol moderately.
- Don't communicate to your child that alcohol is a good

way to handle problems. For example, don't come home from work and say, "I had a rotten day. I need a drink."

- Instead, let your child see that you have other, healthier ways to cope with stress, such as exercise; listening to music; or talking things over with your spouse, partner, or friend.
- Don't tell your kids stories about your own drinking in a way that conveys the message that alcohol use is funny or glamorous.
- Never drink and drive or ride in a car with a driver who has been drinking.
- When you entertain other adults, make available alcohol-free beverages and plenty of food. If anyone drinks too much at your party, make arrangements for them to get home safely.

■ Don't Support Teen Drinking. Your attitudes and behavior toward teen drinking also influence your child. Avoid making jokes about underage drinking or drunkenness, or otherwise showing acceptance of teen alcohol use. In addition, never serve alcohol to your child's underage friends. Research shows that kids whose parents or friends' parents provide alcohol for teen get-togethers are more likely to engage in heavier drinking, to drink more often, and to get into traffic accidents. Remember, too, that it is illegal in most states to provide alcohol to minors who are not family members.

You can also join school and community efforts to discourage alcohol use by teens. By working with school officials and other members of your community, you can help to develop policies to reduce alcohol availability to teens and to enforce consequences for underage drinking.

■ Help Your Child Build Healthy Friendships. If your child's friends use alcohol, your child is more likely to drink too. So it makes sense to try to encourage your young teen to develop friendships with kids who do not drink and who are otherwise healthy influences on your child. A good first step is to simply get to know your child's friends better. You can then invite the kids you feel good about to family get-togethers and outings and find other ways to encourage your child to spend time with those teens. Also, talk

directly with your youngster about the qualities in a friend that really count, such as trustworthiness and kindness, rather than popularity or a "cool" style.

When you disapprove of one of your child's friends, the situation can be tougher to handle. While it may be tempting to simply forbid your child to see that friend, such a move may make your child even more determined to hang out with him or her. Instead, you might try pointing out your reservations about the friend in a caring, supportive way. You can also limit your child's time with that friend through your family rules, such as how after-school time can be spent or how late your child can stay out in the evening.

■ Encourage Healthy Alternatives to Alcohol. One reason kids drink is to beat boredom. Therefore, it makes sense to encourage your child to participate in supervised after-school and weekend activities that are challenging and fun. According to a recent survey of preteens, the availability of enjoyable, alcohol-free activities is a big reason for deciding not to use alcohol.

If your community doesn't offer many supervised activities, consider getting together with other parents and young teens to help create some. Start by asking your child and other kids what *they* want to do, since they will be most likely to participate in activities that truly interest them. Find out whether your church, school, or community organization can help you sponsor a project.



While this booklet is mainly concerned with preventing teen alcohol use, we also need to pay attention to the possibility of youthful alcohol abuse. Certain children are more likely than others to drink heavily and encounter alcohol-related difficulties, including health, school, legal, family, and emotional problems. Kids at highest risk for alcohol-related problems are those who:

- Begin using alcohol or other drugs before the age of 15.
- Have a parent who is a problem drinker or an alcoholic.
- Have close friends who use alcohol and/or other drugs.
- Have been aggressive, antisocial, or hard to control from an early age.
- Have experienced childhood abuse and/or other major traumas.
- Have current behavioral problems and/or are failing at school.
- Have parents who do not support them, do not communicate openly with them, and do not keep track of their behavior or whereabouts.
- Experience ongoing hostility or rejection from parents and/or harsh, inconsistent discipline.

The more of these experiences a child has had, the greater the chances that he or she will develop problems with alcohol. Having one or more risk factors does not mean that your child definitely will develop a drinking problem. It does suggest, however, that you may need to act now to help protect your youngster from later problems. For example, if you have not been openly communicating with your child, it will be important to develop new ways of talking and listening to each other (see box "Tips for Communicating With Your Teen"). Or, if your child



has serious behavioral difficulties, you may want to seek help from your child's school counselor, physician, and/or a mental health professional.

Some parents may suspect that their child already has a drinking problem. While it can be hard to know for sure, certain behaviors can alert you to the possibility of an alcohol problem (see box "Warning Signs of a Drinking Problem"). If you think your child may be in trouble with drinking, consider getting advice from a health care professional specializing in alcohol problems before talking with your teen. To find a professional, contact your family doctor or a local hospital. Other sources of information and guidance may be found in your local Yellow Pages under "Alcoholism" or through one of the resources listed at the end of this booklet.

WARNING SIGNS OF A DRINKING PROBLEM

While the following behaviors may indicate an alcohol or other drug problem, some also reflect normal teenage growing pains. Experts believe that drinking problems are more likely to be noticed several of these signs at the same time and they occur suddenly and if some of them are extreme in nature.

- Mood changes, flare-ups of temper, irritability and defensiveness
- School problems: poor attendance, low grades and/or recent disciplinary action.
- Rebellious against family rules
- Switching friends along with reluctance to have you get to know the new friends
- A nothing matters attitude, sloppiness, apathy, lack of involvement in former interests and general lack of energy
- Finding alcohol in your child's room or backpack, or smelling alcohol on his or her breath
- Physical or mental problems: memory lapses, poor concentration, bloodshot eyes, lack of coordination or slurred speech.

Join Together

441 Stewart Street, 7th Floor
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 437-1500

Internet address: <http://www.jointogether.org>

A national resource center for communities who are working to prevent alcohol and other drug abuse across the nation.

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

12 West 21st Street
New York, NY 10010
(800) NCA-CALL

Internet address: <http://www.ncaad.org>

Provides educational materials on alcohol abuse and alcoholism as well as phone numbers of local NCADD affiliates who can provide information on local treatment resources.

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Scientific Communications Branch

6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 409
Bethesda, MD 20892-7003
(301) 443-3860

Internet address: <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>

Makes available free informational materials on many aspects of alcohol use, alcohol abuse, and alcoholism.



MADD
Lyon County Chapter
PO Box 1354
Dayton, NV 89403
(775) 246-7522

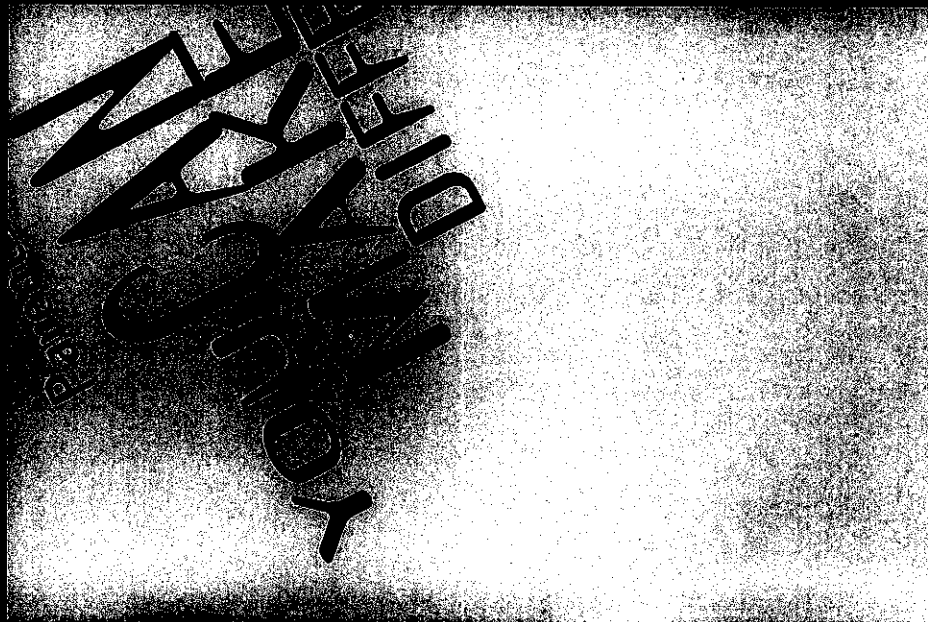
If you are interested in learning more about alcohol abuse and alcoholism, NIAAA has produced a number of booklets and other materials targeted to the public. Those publications include:

■ **Alcoholism: Getting the Facts**—describes what alcoholism and alcohol abuse are and offers useful information on when and where to seek help. English version: NIH Publication Number 96-4153; Spanish version: NIH Publication Number 99-4153-S.

■ **Alcohol: What You Don't Know Can Harm You**—provides information on drinking and driving, alcohol-medication interactions, interpersonal problems, alcohol-related birth defects, long-term health problems, and current research issues. English version: NIH Publication Number 99-4323; Spanish version: NIH Publication Number 99-4323-S.

■ **How to Cut Down on Your Drinking**—presents tips for those who are acting on medical advice to reduce their alcohol consumption. English version: NIH Publication Number 96-3770; Spanish version: NIH Publication Number 96-3770-S.

■ **Frequently Asked Questions** concerning alcohol abuse and alcoholism and the full text of the above materials are available at NIAAA's Web site (<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>).



LEADERSHIP TO KEEP CHILDREN ALCOHOL FREE

How Does *Alcohol* Affect the World of a *Child?*



C150522

Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free, a unique coalition of Governors, spouses, Federal agencies, and public and private organizations, is an initiative to prevent the use of alcohol by children ages 9 to 15. It is the only national effort that focuses on this age group. Alcohol use begins at a very young age, and the proportion of young people who drink often or heavily is alarming. Serious, often lifelong consequences for health and well-being can result. The leadership initiative is alerting the Nation to this critical public health problem and mobilizing action to prevent it.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERS

Initiative Founders

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Funding Partners

Office of Research on Women's Health
National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

For more information contact
leadership@alcoholfreechildren.org

NIH Publication No. 99-4670
Updated May 2001



ASK YOURSELF

As Parents

- Do you know how to discuss alcohol use with your child and where to get information to help you?
- Do you know your child's friends, and do you feel that they provide positive influences on your child's activities?
- Do you know the extent of drinking by children in your neighborhood and how to find local organizations that are working on the issue?
- Do you know the legal consequences if your child is caught drinking alcohol?
- Do you know your State's laws about providing alcohol to anyone under 21?

As Teachers, Administrators, and School Counselors

- Has your school or community assessed student drinking to determine the extent of the problem?
- Do you know what factors may be contributing to student drinking in your school or community (e.g., easy access to alcohol, peer pressure, adults' failure to address the issue)?
- Do you know what steps, if any, are being taken within your school system to help kids resist the pressure to drink?
- Is your school currently working to educate parents about alcohol use among children?
- Does your school have an active partnership with the families of its students?

As Concerned Citizens

- Do you know how easily children in your community can obtain alcohol and what communities can do to prevent access to alcohol by young people?
- Does your community have educational programs and policies to prevent children from drinking?
- Does your community have "alcohol-free" events? If not, do you know how to initiate them?
- Is there collaboration among public and private schools, community businesses, local government, and the police to develop and enforce policies related to youth alcohol use?

For information about preventing alcohol use by children, e-mail Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free@alcoholfreechildren.org

ALCOHOL IS NOT A KID'S DRINK

Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free, a unique coalition of Governors' spouses, Federal agencies, and public and private organizations, is a national initiative to prevent the use of alcohol by children ages 9 to 15.

- Alcohol is the #1 drug of choice among our Nation's youth.
- Research indicates that adolescents who abuse alcohol may remember 10% less of what they have learned than those who don't drink.
- More than 40% of individuals who begin drinking before age 13 will develop alcohol abuse or alcohol dependency at some point in their lives.
- Almost one-third of eighth graders and half of tenth graders have been drunk at least once. One-fifth of ninth graders report binge drinking (consuming five or more drinks in a row) in the past month.



MADD

Lyon County Chapter
PO Box 1354
Dayton, NV 89403
(775) 246-7522

IMPACT ON SOCIETY

- Approximately 14 million Americans—about 7.4% of the adult population—meet the diagnostic criteria for alcohol abuse or alcoholism.¹
- More than one-half of American adults have a close family member who has or has had alcoholism.²
- The total cost attributable to the consequences of underage drinking is more than \$58 billion per year in 1998 dollars.³
- In 1998, the estimated annual cost of alcohol abuse in the U.S. was \$385 billion. Alcohol use disorders cost \$56.7 billion more than the estimated annual economic cost of illegal drug use and \$36.5 billion more than the estimated annual economic cost of smoking.^{4, 5}
- In 1992, the estimated productivity loss for employees with past or current alcoholism was \$66.7 billion. Productivity losses were greatest for male employees who initiated drinking before age 15.⁴
- In a survey of 18- to 24-year-old current drinkers who failed to complete high school, nearly 60% had begun to drink before age 16.⁶
- In 1996, the average American drank 32 gallons of beer compared to 52 gallons of soft drinks, 24 gallons of milk, and 23 gallons of coffee.⁷
- Men who consume more than two alcoholic drinks per day are at increased risk for cancer, cerebrovascular disease, accidents, and violence.⁸
- Long-term heavy alcohol use is the leading cause of illness and death from liver disease in the U.S.⁹
- Alcohol is implicated in more than 100,000 deaths annually.⁹
- In 1996, about 2 million (38%) of the estimated 5.3 million convicted offenders under the jurisdiction of corrections agencies were drinking at the time of the offense.¹⁰

- ¹ Grant, B.F., et al. Prevalence of DSM-IV alcohol abuse and dependence, United States, 1992. *Alcoholism: A Public Health Problem* 18(3):243-248, 1994.
- ² Dawson, D.A., & Grant, B.F. Family history of alcoholism and gender: The combined effects of alcohol dependence and major depression. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 59(2):97-106, 1998.
- ³ Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation. *Costs of Underage Drinking: Private and State Costs, Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention National Leadership Conference*, July 11-14, 1999, Reston, VA. In support of the OJJDP Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program under contract 98-AH-FR-0114.
- ⁴ Updated estimate based on draft report prepared for NIAAA by the Levin Group, October 1999. Underlying estimates reported in Harwood, H.; et al. *The Economic Costs of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in the United States, 1992*. Rockville, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1998.
- ⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Economic Costs of Smoking in the United States and the Benefits of Comprehensive Tobacco Legislation*. Washington, DC: Author, 1998.
- ⁶ National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. *Drinking in the United States: Main Findings from the 1992 National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey (NIAES)*. U.S. Alcohol Epidemiologic Data System Technical Volume 3. Bethesda, MD: Author, 1999.
- ⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1998* (118th ed.). Washington, DC: Author, 1998.
- ⁸ National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. *10th Special Report to the U.S. Surgeon General on Alcohol and Health*. Rockville, MD: NIAAA, June 2000.
- ⁹ McCinnis, J.M., & Frome, W.H. Alcohol: Cause of death in the United States. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 270(16):2207-2212, 1993.
- ¹⁰ U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Alcohol and Crime: An Analysis of National Data on the Prevalence of Alcohol Involvement in Crime* (NCJ-168632). Washington, DC: Author, 1998.

COMMUNITY

"Alcohol is the number one drug of choice among our Nation's youth. Yet the seriousness of this issue does not register with the general public or policymakers." —Enoch Gordis, M.D., Director, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

- An overwhelming number of Americans (96%) are concerned about underage drinking, and a majority support measures that would help reduce teen drinking, such as stricter controls on alcohol sales, advertising, and promotion.¹
- Recent advertising expenditures in the United States for beer, wine, and liquor combined (\$1.2 billion) totaled more than 10 times the amount spent on milk ads (\$70.5 million). A total of \$764.2 million was spent on beer ads, \$131.5 million on wine ads, and \$291.2 million on liquor ads.^{2, 3}
- A study of fifth- and sixth-grade students found that those who demonstrated an awareness of beer ads also held more favorable beliefs about drinking and intended to drink more frequently when they grew up.⁴
- One study of Midwestern States found that 46% of ninth graders who reported drinking alcohol in the previous month said they obtained the alcohol from a person aged 21 or older.⁵
- In a study conducted in 38 States and the District of Columbia, areas with greater numbers of drinking establishments had higher rates of alcoholism.⁶
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that the 21-year-old minimum drinking age laws have saved 19,121 lives since the mid-1970s.⁷
- Among drivers aged 15-20, fatal crashes involving a single vehicle at night are three times more likely than other fatal crashes to be alcohol-related.⁸

- ¹ Wagenaar, A.C., et al. *The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Youth Access To Alcohol Survey: Summary*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Alcohol Epidemiology Program, 1998.
- ² Adams Business Media. *Liquor Handbook 1999*. New York: Author, 1999; Adams Business Media. *Wine Handbook 1999*. New York: Author, 1999; Adams Business Media. *Beer Handbook 1999*. New York: Author, 1999.
- ³ Blisard, M., et al. *Analyses of Generic Dairy Advertising, 1984-97*. Technical Bulletin No. 1873. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Economics Division, Economic Research Service, March 1999. (p.10)
- ⁴ Grube, J.W., & Wallack, L. Television beer advertising and drinking knowledge, beliefs, and intentions among schoolchildren. *American Journal of Public Health* 84(2):254-259, 1994.
- ⁵ Wagenaar, A.C., et al. Sources of alcohol for underage drinkers. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 57(3):325-333, 1996.
- ⁶ Harford, T.C., et al. Relationship between the number of on-premise outlets and alcoholism. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 40(11):1053-1057, 1979.
- ⁷ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *Traffic Safety Facts 1999—Alcohol*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation.
- ⁸ Hingson, R., et al. Lower legal blood alcohol limits for young drivers. *Public Health Reports* 109(6):738-744, 1994.

SCHOOL

"Alcohol almost destroyed my life. I started out drinking with my friends, trying to be cool. I drank to get drunk . . . and I did some stupid things while I was drunk. Now I'm trying to get my life back, and it's not easy with a baby." —Amy, Colorado

- Evidence suggests that alcohol use by peers is a strong predictor of adolescent use of alcohol.¹
- According to a 1995 national survey of fourth through sixth graders who read the Weekly Reader, 30% of students reported that they received "a lot" of pressure from their classmates to drink beer.²
- According to this same 1995 Weekly Reader survey, more than half (54%) of fourth through sixth graders reported learning about the dangers of illicit drugs at school, but fewer than a third (30%) learned about the dangers of drinking and smoking at school.²
- Among eighth graders, students with higher grade point averages reported less alcohol use in the past month.³
- Research indicates that adolescents who abuse alcohol may remember 10% less of what they have learned than those who don't drink.⁴
- Among eighth graders, higher truancy rates were associated with greater rates of alcohol use in the past month.⁵
- One national study found that students are less likely to use alcohol if they are close to people at school, are a part of their school, and feel that teachers treat students fairly.⁶
- In a survey of seventh-through twelfth-grade teachers, 76% felt that underage student drinking was a serious or somewhat serious problem.⁶

¹ Hawkins, J.D., et al. Exploring the effects of age of alcohol use initiation and psychosocial risk factors on subsequent alcohol misuse. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 56(3):280-290, 1995.

² *The Weekly Reader National Survey on Drugs and Alcohol*. Middletown, CT: Field Publications, Spring 1995.

³ O'Leary, P.M., et al. Alcohol use among adolescents. *Alcohol Health & Research World* 12(2):85-93, 1996.

⁴ Brown, G.K., et al. Neurocognitive functioning of adolescents: effects of restricted longitudinal study on adolescent health. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 278(15):823-832, 1997.

⁵ Metropolitan Life/Louis Harris Associates, Inc. *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1984-1995*. Cited in Department of Education. *Digest of Education Statistics, 1996*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 1996.

IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

"Underage alcohol use is a significant threat to the health and safety of our children. It's time for us to come to grips with this widespread, devastating public health problem." —Steven A. Schroeder, MD, President/CEO, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

- In a 1999 survey, 31% of ninth graders reported having ridden in a car driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol. Nearly 5% of ninth graders reported driving one or more times while drinking.¹
- Of all children under age 15 killed in vehicle crashes in 1998, 20% were killed in alcohol-related crashes.²
- Among 12- to 17-year-old current drinkers, 31% had extreme levels of psychological distress and 39% exhibited serious behavioral problems.³
- In 1997, suicide and homicide accounted for nearly 16% of the total deaths among adolescents aged 9-15.⁴
- Twenty-eight percent of the suicides and 46% of the homicides could be attributed directly to alcohol.⁴
- Current drinkers among a nationally representative sample of youth aged 12-18 had higher levels of diastolic blood pressure than did their nondrinking counterparts.⁵
- Adolescents who drink heavily assume the same long-term health risks as adults who drink heavily: peers to suffer depression.⁶
- Twelve- to sixteen-year-old girls who are current drinkers are four times more likely than their nondrinking peers to suffer depression.⁶
- Adolescent females who drink exhibit higher levels of estradiol (an estrogen) and testosterone than nondrinking girls. High levels of estrogen may contribute to increased risk for specific diseases, including breast cancer; high levels of testosterone are associated with an increased risk of substance use.⁷

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance — United States, 1999. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 107 Surveillance Summaries 49(No. SS-5):1-94, 2000.

² National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *Traffic Safety Facts 1998—Children*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, 1999.

³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *The Relationship Between Mental Health and Substance Abuse Among Adolescents*. Rockville, MD: Author, 1995.

⁴ Calculated from the Multiple Cause of Death Public Use Data File, National Center for Health Statistics, 1997.

⁵ Calculated by applying alcohol-attributed fractions for individuals older than 15, found in National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* 17(1):1-10, 1993.

⁶ Hanna, E.Z., et al. Drinking, smoking, and blood pressure: Do their relationships among youth foreshadow what we know among adults? *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 37(1):1-10, 1998.

⁷ Health Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, November 1999.

⁸ *Alcohol Health and Research World*, Volume 17, No. 2, Rockville, MD: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 1993.

⁹ Hanna, E.Z., et al. The relationship of drinking alone and other substance use alone and in combination to health and behavior among youth with alcohol use disorders. Paper presented at the 29th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Research Society on Alcoholism, November 10-13, 1999, San Francisco, CA. *Alcohol Use in Adolescent Populations: Correlates of estradiol and testosterone*. *American Journal of Addiction* 8(1):9-16, 1999.

FAMILY

"I've seen alcohol at work in my family and that's enough for a lifetime. I'm not drinking." —Matthew, Michigan

- Nearly 17% of children under 14 and 20% of children under 18 live with a parent (or responsible adult) who drinks heavily or has an alcohol problem.¹
- Current research suggests children are less likely to drink when their parents are involved with them and when they and their parents report feeling close to each other.^{2,3}
- Adolescents drink less and have fewer alcohol-related problems when their parents discipline them consistently and set clear expectations.²
- Children of alcoholics are significantly more likely to initiate drinking during adolescence and to develop alcohol use disorders.⁴
- Parents' drinking behaviors and favorable attitudes about drinking have been associated with adolescents' initiating and continuing drinking.^{2,5,6}
- Any drinking during pregnancy, even "social drinking," can put offspring at risk for learning and behavioral problems during adolescence.⁷

¹ Alcohol Epidemiologic Data System, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Number of children living with parent who has alcohol problem? Unpublished data, 1995.
² Hawkins, J.D., et al. Exploring the effects of age of alcohol use initiation and psychosocial risk factors on subsequent alcohol misuse. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 58(3):280-290, 1997.
³ Resnick, M.D., et al. Protecting adolescents from harm: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 278(10):823-832, 1997.
⁴ Andrews, J.A., et al. Parental influence on early adolescent substance use: Specific and nonspecific effects. *Journal of Early Adolescence* 13(3):285-310, 1993.
⁵ Any, D.V., et al. The influence of parental alcohol exposure on adolescent use of alcohol. *International Journal of the Addictions* 28(9):853-880, 1993.
⁶ Olson, H.C., et al. Association of parental alcohol exposure with behavioral and learning problems in early adolescence. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 36(9):1187-1194, 1997.

THE CHILD

"Parents must understand that they are the first line of defense in raising healthy children." —Peggy, President, National Family Partnership

- Seventy-five percent of eighth graders and 89% of tenth graders believe that alcohol is readily available to them for consumption.¹
- Forty percent of ninth grade students reported having consumed alcohol before they were 13. In contrast, only 27% of ninth graders reported having smoked cigarettes and 13% having used marijuana before they were 13.²
- Forty-one percent of ninth grade students reported drinking alcohol in the past month, while only 28% reported smoking in the past month.²
- Almost one-third of eighth graders and one-half of tenth graders have been drunk at least once.¹
- One-fifth of ninth graders reported binge drinking (having had five or more drinks on one occasion) in the past month.²
- Rates of drinking differ among racial and ethnic minority groups. Among ninth graders, binge drinking was reported by 27% of non-Hispanic white students, 30% of Hispanic students, 15% of Asian American students, and 5% of Asian-Pacific Islander students.²
- The gap between alcohol use by boys and girls has closed. Among ninth graders, girls report binge drinking and binge drinking rates equal to boys.²
- More than 10% of individuals who start drinking before the age of 13 will develop alcohol abuse or alcohol dependence at some point in their lives.⁴
- If the onset of drinking is delayed by 5 years, a child's risk of serious alcohol problems is decreased by 50%.⁵

¹ Johnston, L.D., et al. National survey results on drug use from the Monitoring the Future Study, 1995-1997. Volume 1: Secondary school students. Rockville, MD: National Center on Drug Abuse, 1998.
² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance — United States, 1995. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: CDC Surveillance Summaries* 49 (SS-1):1-14, 2000.
³ Alcohol Epidemiologic Data System. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. (Racial/ethnic breakdown of youth alcohol rates.) Unpublished data, 1995. Basic Center for Alcoholism and Prevention Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, 1997.
⁴ Grant, K.E. & Dawson, D.A. Age at onset of alcohol use and association with DSM-IV alcohol abuse and dependence: Results from the National epidemiological alcoholism (NEA) study. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 36(9):1187-1194, 1997.
⁵ Grant, K.E. & Dawson, D.A. Age at onset of alcohol use and association with DSM-IV alcohol abuse and dependence: Results from the National epidemiological alcoholism (NEA) study. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 36(9):1187-1194, 1997.



Dema Guinn — Nevada

"Teenage drinking problems account for tens of thousands of highway deaths and nearly half of all teenage suicides each year. Dependence on alcohol is becoming a greater problem each year, and it is the drug of choice among our high school students. Every school needs a comprehensive alcohol policy and program. Students need to be informed on what alcohol can do to their body, mind, and behavior, so they can make the proper choice when confronted with alcohol." —Dema Guinn

Public and Private Partners

Initiative Founders

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Funding Partners

Office of Research on Women's Health
National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Supporting Organizations

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Bar Association Standing Committee on Substance Abuse
American Medical Association Office of Alcohol and Other Drugs
Association of Village Council Presidents
Association of Women's Health Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Columbia University Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
Emergency Nurses CARE
The Kettering Foundation
Mothers Against Drunk Driving
National 4-H Council
National Alcohol Beverage Control Association
National Association for Children of Alcoholics
National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives
National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors
National Association of Student Assistance Professionals
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
National Crime Prevention Council
National District Attorneys Association
National Family Partnership
National Liquor Law Enforcement Association
National Medical Association
Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation Prevention Research Center
Students Against Destructive Decisions
United National Indian Tribal Youth
U.S. Conference of Mayors
Vanderbilt University School of Nursing

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NOV '98

Substance Abuse May Escalate Suicidal Ideas to Attempts in Teens

A study in the September issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* provides important insights into the relationships between psychiatric disorders and adolescent suicide, suggesting that teens who abuse drugs or alcohol are more likely to progress from suicidal thoughts to suicide attempts.

The research assessed the links among suicidal ideas, suicide attempts, and adolescent psychiatric disorders in a random sample of nearly 1,300 children aged 9 to 17 years. Of these, 67 had had suicidal thoughts and 42 had made suicide attempts. Child and adolescent psychiatrist and epidemiologist Madelyn S. Gould of Columbia University led the research.

After adjustment for other characteristics such as age and gender, the study indicated that suicide attempts were significantly more likely for youngsters with mood disorders (depression and bipolar disorder), anxiety disorders, and substance abuse or dependence issues.

Overall, the risk of attempted suicide within this age group was about three percent. The rate of suicide attempts rose to 22 percent in children with major depression and 25 percent in those with substance abuse or dependence.

For children with two or more disorders, the rate of suicidal ideation was eight times higher than normal, while the rate of suicide attempts was 18 times higher than normal.

Substance abuse or dependence was specifically related to suicide attempts. Substance abuse appeared to play a key role in the transition from suicidal thoughts to actual suicide attempts.

Certain other psychiatric symptoms also raised the risk of suicide. Panic attacks nearly tripled suicide risk for girls, while aggressive behavior doubled suicide risk among boys. Being a teenage runaway nearly tripled suicide risk. Perfectionism, a personality characteristic linked to teen suicide in previous studies, was not a significant factor in this study.

Child and adolescent psychiatrists have long noted that psychiatric disorders are a risk factor for suicidal ideas and behaviors in young people. However, few studies have examined the effects of specific psychiatric disorders on suicide risk.

These study findings will help child and adolescent psychiatrists and other professionals assess suicide risk among children and adolescents. Substance abuse appears to be a particularly important factor when kids who have suicidal thoughts go on to make suicide attempts. Substance abuse rates are higher among boys and in older children, and these groups are the most likely to make completed suicide attempts.

JUNE '99

Treat Alcohol Abuse--Reduce Suicide Attempts

Direct, confidential screening of high school students for risk factors such as previous suicide attempts, suicidal thoughts, and substance abuse have proven effective in identifying at-risk teens whose problems may be hidden from others, according to a study published in the March supplement to the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry.

Suicide remains one of the top causes of death for youth. It is the third-leading cause of death among adolescents aged 15 to 19, and the second-leading cause of death in those aged 19 to 24. Almost twice as many youth die by suicide than from all natural causes.

According to David Shaffer, M.D., director, division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, and author of the recently released supplement, "Research demonstrates that suicide should be regarded as a fatal complication of several underlying diseases, each of which is treatable." The article states that nearly 90 percent of teenagers who die by suicide have a diagnosable mental illness. Often those at highest risk are boys aged 17 to 19 who are depressed and drink heavily. The behavior they exhibit, such as drinking, results in being intoxicated at school or being arrested for driving while intoxicated.

In contrast, most girls who are suicidal suffer from uncomplicated major depression (not complicated by substance abuse issues).

The report in the The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry demonstrates that many mental illnesses that increase suicide risk in teen years and adulthood begin in adolescence. These disorders include depression, bipolar disorder (manic-depression), obsessive compulsive disorder, and other anxiety disorders. With better screening techniques, accurate and early diagnosis and treatment of depression, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse, we can significantly reduce the risk of suicide in youth, according to Dr. Shaffer.