

DEAR PARENTS,

We are beginning a series of lessons about how alcohol affects the developing brain. We will be using lessons and videos that are part of the *Ask, Listen, Learn: Kids and Alcohol Don't Mix* program (www.AskListenLearn.org). Since the program began in 2004, underage drinking rates are down because conversations among parents and teachers with kids are up. Conversations we have in the classroom and the talks you have at home matter. This long standing program is intended to get kids talking with their parents and educators, ultimately teaching them to say “yes” to a healthy lifestyle and “no” to underage drinking.

Because you are my partner in education and the leading influence on your child’s decision to drink or not to drink, I wanted to share the materials that we will be using in the classroom and provide [conversations starters](#) to help ensure you have all the resources to continue the conversation about the dangers of underage drinking at home.

Throughout this unit, we will be watching seven videos about various parts of the brain and how each are affected by alcohol. Each of the seven brain videos has corresponding lesson plans with classroom activities that feature traditional and interactive components and questions for discussion. All of the videos and classroom materials that we will be using can be found at AskListenLearn.org.

Knowing what is being learned in the classroom is a great way to start a discussion at home. Conversations about alcohol responsibility should begin early and last a lifetime but sometimes it can be tricky to get kids talking. Besides asking your child what they learned at school, look for real world examples that will get them talking.

Newspaper articles or current events about alcohol serve as ways to raise the issue and have them share what they’re learning. Share your reaction to these examples and ask your child for theirs. Provide factual information about how alcohol affects their growing brain and body to reinforce what is being learned at school.

Other ways you can get kids talking include asking them questions like:

- You know most kids your age don’t drink, right?
- You know you can call me if you’re ever in a situation that makes you uncomfortable, right?

Besides reviewing the Ask, Listen, Learn materials we are using in our classroom, I also recommend these free resources from Responsibility.org:

- How to Talk to your Adolescent About Alcohol
<http://img.responsibility.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/ALL-Parents-Brochure.pdf>
- Talking with Kids About Alcohol (español)
<http://img.responsibility.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/ALL-Spanish-Brochure.pdf>

Thank you for being my partner in education.

