

Have You Discussed Alcohol With Your Child?



Dear Families,

It's no secret that kids are curious about alcohol. From the young child who asks, "What are you drinking?" to the older child who wonders, "What is it like to drink beer or wine?" kids have questions about alcohol. By having age-appropriate conversations about alcohol with your children, you can prepare them to make smart choices.

Don't know how to start? Use the discussion prompts we've provided on this page to begin the conversation. Remember, it's never too soon to start talking about underage drinking.

Sincerely,

Ralph S. Blackman
President and CEO
The Century Council

It can be difficult to know the right thing to say about alcohol. The conversations don't have to be perfect, but your children need to know how to say "YES" to a healthy lifestyle and "NO" to underage drinking.

Talk Early

For Ages 6–9

Conversation starter:

Do you know what alcohol can do to your growing body?

Set the foundation with young children by using the ideas at centurycouncil.org/talkearly to discuss how alcohol is harmful to a child's development.

Tip: Be prepared with the point you want to get across. For example, while you're growing, alcohol can hurt how your brain and other organs develop.

For Ages 9–14

Conversation starter:

Let's talk about your goals. Do you think drinking alcohol would help or hurt your future?

As children grow older, it's important to make sure they understand the long-term impacts of underage drinking.

Tip: Have brief conversations about the dangers of underage drinking on an ongoing basis. Get prepared with the research at asklistenlearn.com.

Ask, Listen, Learn

I Know Everything

For Ages 15–19

Conversation starter:

I know it can be tough to make healthy choices when friends are involved. What can you do to stay safe?

Teens still rely on you as their primary role model. When driving, make responsible decisions about consuming alcohol. Use the tips at iknoweverything.com to create a safety contract with your teen.

Tip: Make sure you cover household rules, as well as the law.

For College Students

Conversation starter:

Do you know the risks of alcohol use?

Stay connected with regular talks about the academic, physical, social, sexual, and legal consequences, both intended and unintended, of alcohol use in college—including the fact that drinking before the age of 21 is illegal.

Tip: Read the facts at centurycouncil.org before regular check-ins with your college-age child.

Parents, You're Not Done Yet

Give a Little, Gain a Lot



Making healthy choices is a lot easier when you keep your goals a priority. Ask your child what he or she knows about goals and decision making. Then share your own stories of the choices you've made to reach goals in your life. Discuss some of the healthy life goals you can strive for both individually and together as a family, and use this activity sheet to help you chart the course to reach them. Be as specific as you can—the clearer your goal, the clearer the path to success.

Goals	Choices	Rewards
<i>Example:</i> Take a 30-minute walk together five nights a week.	<i>Example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dealing with unpleasant weather• Watching less TV	<i>Example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More quality family time• Better physical fitness