

Underage Drinking: Why It Is a Problem and What Can Be Done About It

3/22/2013



THE
CENTURY COUNCIL
DISTILLERS FIGHTING DRUNK DRIVING & UNDERAGE DRINKING

About The Century Council

- The Century Council is a leader in the fight against drunk driving and underage drinking and promotes responsible decision making regarding beverage alcohol.
- Our members:



BACARDI U.S.A., INC.



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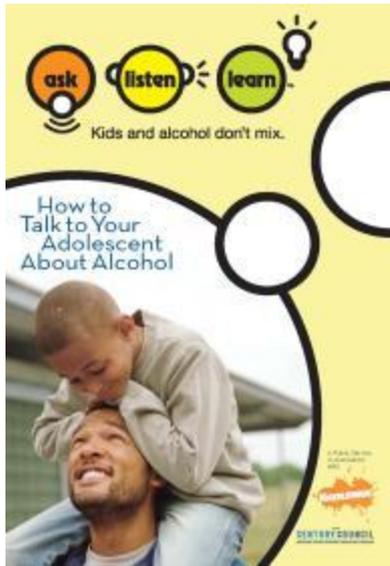
Together

Ask, Listen, Learn: Kids and Alcohol Don't Mix!

- For over 20 years, The Council has been a leading force in the fight against underage drinking. During this time underage consumption of alcohol decreased 33% to a historic low of 27%.
- Today, thanks to The Council's *Ask, Listen, Learn: Kids and Alcohol Don't Mix* program, we have been able to reach more than 20 million parents, kids, and educators all over the country!



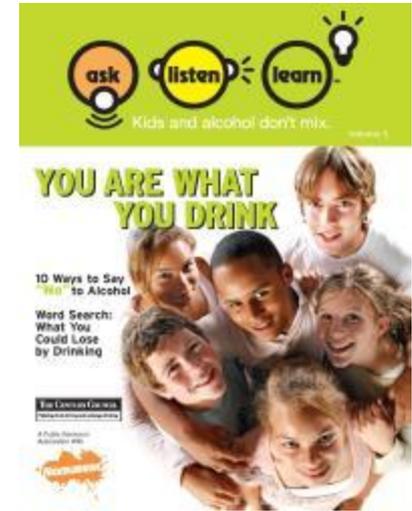
Ask, Listen, Learn: Kids and Alcohol Don't Mix! – A Snapshot



Parents' Brochure



Scholastic Poster



Kids' Brochure



Interactive Game



Asklistenlearn.com

Alcohol Awareness Month Activities

- Starting a million discussions with our partners, parents, educators and most importantly children and youth
- Ask, Listen, Learn School Challenge
- Take Our Sons and Daughters to Work Day with Aly Raisman



- Follow us on Twitter: [@asklistenlearn](https://twitter.com/asklistenlearn)
- Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/asklistenlearn
- Find us on Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/CenturyCouncil/ask-listen-learn/

Dr. Anthony Wolf

- Dr. Anthony Wolf is a practicing child psychologist and the author of numerous books including the bestselling and widely acclaimed *Get Out of My Life but First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl to the Mall: A Parents' Guide to the New Teenager*.
- Dr. Wolf is also one of The Century Council's **National Advisory Board** members, bringing his many years of experience to our organization. He has written many insightful advice articles directed at our **Girl Talk** audience helping girls to tackle some of their toughest problems and questions, as well as parenting advice articles.

Facts About Underage Drinking

Monitoring the Future survey:

Underage youth who have consumed alcohol in the past month

1992

8th Graders – 26%

10th Graders – 40%

12th Graders – 51%

2012

8th Graders – 11%

10th Graders – 28%

12th Graders – 42%



Facts About Underage Drinking

- In 2011, the number of 16-20 year old drivers with a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher in fatal car crashes was **846**
- From 2002 to 2011 the above represented a 41% decrease!
- Children who use alcohol before the age of fifteen are five times more likely to become alcohol dependent than those who began drinking at twenty-one

Why Teen Girls Say They Drink

- To fit in with friends and other kids
- Peer pressure
- For fun
- Lesser reason: Fear of becoming alcoholic



Societal Ambivalence About Underage Drinking

- Fond memories – the “good old high school days – going to keg parties at Willow Point”
- What many parents think:
 - “They’re probably going to drink anyway.”
 - “Besides, adolescence is supposed to be a time for fun.”
 - “How bad is it if they drink?”
 - “There are worse things than drinking. And what control do I have?”
 - “I can’t keep them locked up in their rooms all through high school. And maybe if they do drink, if somehow it’s supervised, there will be less potential for trouble, their behavior will be less risky.”
 - “I mean I don’t like it, I don’t want them to do it. Really, how bad is it? There are things that are a lot worse.”



What Parents Fear

- Drinking and driving
- Getting into trouble and hurting their record for college
- For girls: sexual activity



Reasons Against Underage Drinking

- Drinking and driving can lead to fatal accidents or serious injury: both as driver, but also as passenger



- Apart from car accidents, underage drinkers could get seriously hurt or hurt someone else: getting into fights and engaging in risky behavior

More Reasons Against Underage Drinking

- Alcohol consumption in large quantity can be **fatal** - combined with drug use it can be especially dangerous
- Can lead to trouble with the law – it is **illegal** and can produce involvement with the law
- Can lead to behavior that can seriously damage their future

Some Hidden Dangers of Underage Drinking

- Fun becomes defined as drinking
- Kids become **dependent** on drinking for fun
- Kids are less likely to know how to have non-drinking fun
- Kids are less likely to know that **there is such a thing** as non-drinking fun

Other Reasons Kids Drink When Underage

- They use alcohol as a **problem solver/mood changer**.
- Teens can use alcohol for **stress relief**, and can become dependent on it to deal with stress - also gets in the way of developing non-drinking stress coping skills.
- Teens can use alcohol to **fight depression**, and can become dependent on it to deal with the issue. It also gets in the way of developing non-drinking stress coping skills.
- A pattern of alcohol being the **first option** as a solution to bad feelings in their bodies emerges.

How Does Alcohol Affect Kids?

Alcohol can exacerbate:

Depression



Anger



What Kids Do Not Know

- Underage drinking can lead to **alcohol dependence**.
- Alcohol has a very real power of its own. Teens vastly underestimate that power.
- They **think** they can handle it.
- They do not have the same maturity as later on to deal with drinking.
- They are **more vulnerable** to bad decisions, taking risks, because they simply don't know any better.
- They do not have as good judgment and have a greater willingness – **even wish** to – take risks.

Perception of Risk

- Teenagers have a sense of invulnerability – risks don't seem real
- They seek out risk taking – push the envelope
- They defy all adult world rules, and in fact do the opposite



How Does Alcohol Affect Kids?

Physically and Mentally:

- Teen alcohol use conflicts with having a healthy lifestyle. Abusing, rather than benefiting your body or mind.
- Underage drinking may cause harm to their growing bodies and still developing brains.

Emotionally:

- It will lead to trouble at home, bad fights with parents.
- Parents will in turn dole out harsh punishments.
- Kids end up losing their freedom / the opposite of what they were seeking when engaging in underage drinking.

What Can Be Done?

Parent's role:

Parents have a great effect on their kids, despite the teenager's allergy towards his/her parent's role/views

Surveillance and communication:

- The more parent presence and involvement – the less room there is for their kids to drink.
- Supervision in the era of cell phones

Teenage Fact: The more there is opportunity for forbidden behavior, the more it will happen.
Supervision is key!

How Should Parents React ?

Consequences:

Punishment and grounding

However, there is a down side of too heavy a hand: **alienation.**

It is very important for the parents to have a **connection** with their kids.



Parents Need to Know

- **Trust** cannot always be counted on
- The unbridgeable gap between parent and teen: **safety versus fun.**
- Parents **underestimate** how much their kids drink.
- Parents of different kids need to talk to each other as well, and create a **community.**

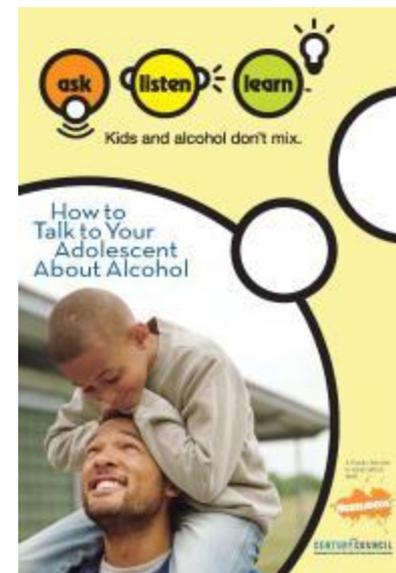
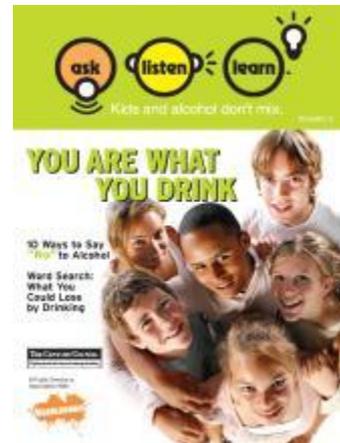
Parents Also Need to Know

- Talking to their teen works! They do **hear**.
- They are a **trusted** source to counteract what kids hear from their peers.
- The time is always right to talk to their kids about underage drinking!
Anywhere, anytime!
- They need to be **honest** and say what they think.
- Conversations are better than lectures.
- Even if it's not well received, parents should not give up on the conversation!
Persistence is key.



Counselor's Role Vis-à-vis Parents

- Reinforce that drinking is a problem. Urge the parents to **be aware and get involved**.
- Let parents know that they **have more effect** than they realize.
- Guide parents towards **local and national resources** where they exist.



Counselor's Role Vis-à-vis Students

The nature of the kid's relationship with a counselor is different from the kid's relationship with his/her parents:

- You don't control consequences because counselors don't have power over kids as do their parents.
- In talking with kids it is an advantage that you can speak openly - be very clear about confidentiality.



Counselor's Role (continued)

- You get a **more mature** version of them than their parents do.
- The parents will **almost always** be demonized by the kids.
- Be **genuine and honest** to your students. It is the biggest plus with teenagers.
- Do your own introspection: What do **you** think of underage drinking?
- Make sure that you have a balanced approach. Determine how much of **you** enters into the conversation.

Counselor's Role: What the Kids Might Say

Kids will give several excuses:

- 1) Saying “No” is **hard**.
- 2) They fear that they will be seen as **uncool** and cowardly.
- 3) They will **alienate** the kids who are offering, and thus be **rejected**.
- 4) They exhibit an “**I’m better than you**” attitude.

Bottom line:

Underage drinking is a **problem**.

Talking about it does make a difference.

Thank You!

