



KEEP SHOWING UP. They're still growing up.

Small Conversations Can Have A Big Impact.

When it comes to discussing the risks of underage drinking with your teen, there is no magic formula, but there is a major rule of thumb: have frequent small talks. This is one of the keys to keeping your child alcohol-free. It's not about sitting down for one "big talk." Not only can this feel intimidating for you and your child, but it is often less impactful. Short conversations over time prove to be more effective.

While it's essential to begin the conversation when your child is young, the pressures to try alcohol increase as they enter middle school and high school, making the talks even more necessary in the older years.

You may not be able to combat all the pressures your child's experiences outside of the home, but you can share the real risks that alcohol can have on their mind, body, and relationships. You can also empower them to stand firm to their convictions and live alcohol-free.

When Should the Conversations Take Place?

The chance is that you and your teen are away from each other more often than you are together. From school to recreational activities to maintaining a social life, it may be a struggle to find an overlap in schedules.

If this is the case for you and your teenager, take advantage of the moments you are together, whether during the car ride home or right before bedtime.

When having a conversation about the risks of alcohol, remember that it can feel like an awkward or sensitive topic for you and your child. That's ok. Ensuring that your child's friends or other people aren't around can make it more comfortable.

What Should the Conversations Look Like?

According to [SAMHSA](#), when it comes to talking with your teen about not drinking, there are five easy tips to guide the conversation:

1. Show you disapprove of underage drinking.
2. Show you care about your child's happiness and well-being.
3. Show you're a good source of information about alcohol.
4. Show you're paying attention and you'll notice if your child drinks.
5. Build your child's skills and strategies for avoiding underage drinking.

Remember that you don't have to get everything across in one sitting. Many small talks are better.

How to Keep the Conversation Positive?

Before beginning a conversation around alcohol, gauge your feelings and your teen's. Make sure everyone's comfortable and in good spirits before talking.

It is best to have a conversation rather than a lecture. This means you are talking with them, not just at them. Listening to your teen, without any interruption, is as important as talking to them. They want to feel heard as much as you do.

Give your teenager your full attention during the dialogue. Stay off your phone, make eye contact, and be present. Expect the same from your child.

As you prepare to have these frequent conversations about underage drinking with your child, download the ['Talk. They Hear You.'](#) mobile app, from SAMSHA. The free app provides tools and information to help you at the touch of your fingertips.

1. [samhsa.gov/underage-drinking/parent-resources/what-you-can-do-prevent-your-child-drinking](https://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking/parent-resources/what-you-can-do-prevent-your-child-drinking)