

Southeast Regional Support Center

Adults Get Low Grades on Drinking and Drugs, Adolescents Say Parents Do Poorly in Preventing Smoking and Alcohol Use

Six Key Actions to Helping Your Child Make A Wise Decision:

- Establish and maintain good communication with your child.
- Get involved and stay involved in your child's life.
- Make clear rules and enforce them with consistency and appropriate consequences.
- Be a positive role model.
- Teach your child to choose friends wisely.
- Monitor your child's activities.

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American teenagers do not approve of adult's efforts to stop them from drinking, smoking, and doing illicit drugs, according to a national survey of 1,000 kids. Teens from across the country say that their parents often fail to lead by example when it comes to drug use and smoking and that they often "fail to really listen to their kids," says Shay Bilchik, president of the Child Welfare League of America.

The group survey of 12 to 19 year olds asked teens about adult's performance on a large number of issues, ranging from waging the war on terror to preventing gang violence. According to Bilchik, parents earned above average grades in categories relating to providing quality education and creating job opportunities for the future.

But adults earned their lowest grades, mostly C's in their actions to prevent drug use and smoking. Parents earned a grade of C, from teens who were asked how they thought parents were doing in stopping underage drinking and understanding the realities of teenage sex.

Bilchik says that grades in those categories have been "consistently low" since his group started doing the survey, known as the Uhlich Report Card, in 1996.

Breakdown in Communication

Sheryl Brisett-Chapman, executive director of the National Center for Children and Families, suggests that poor communication from parents leads their kids to discount their advice when it comes to drug and alcohol use. She says that teens consistently tell her that adults do a poor job of leading by example with their own behavior. "The most devastating result of that breakdown in communication is alcohol, drugs and violence," she says.

Parents may also be failing to counteract the effects of negative television images. More than 55% of teens said that TV has more influence on their outlook on the world, the nation, and local events than any other medium. Forty-one percent of teens said that parents and family members were the people who influenced them about world, national, and local events, according to the survey. Friends and peers were the most influential for 28% of teens.

According to the survey, the highest grades from the 2003 report are in the following areas:

- Making neighborhoods safe
- Spending quality time with their families
- Creating job opportunities for the future
- Providing a quality education for young people
- Keeping schools safe from violence and crime

The lowest grades parents received were in:

- Stopping young people from smoking and drinking
- Really listening to and understanding young people
- Preventing the outbreak of war
- Protecting the environment

MADD and SAMHSA Help Kids Be “Too Smart To Start” Drinking Alcohol



“Too Smart To Start” Community Action Kit, will prevent children from choosing this behavior at a young age.

Underage drinking kills 6.5 times more young people than all other illicit drugs combined and according to SAMHSA’s 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 10.7 million children and adolescents, over one-fourth of youth ages 12 to 20 years old, reported current alcohol use. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) have teamed up to help children and adolescents reject underage drinking since underage drinking is a major public health problem associated with leading causes of death among young people—motor vehicle crashes, homicides, suicides, and drowning.

SAMHSA’s “Too Smart To Start” Community Action Kit is a free new resource and provides professionals, volunteers, and parents with tools and materials, focused on children ages 9 to 13 years old, that can help shape healthy behaviors regarding alcohol use for a lifetime. We know that the power of peer pressure and parental disapproval are key reasons why youth choose not to get involved in underage drinking and these areas are cultivated throughout the materials.

The hallmark of the program is its flexibility for use in communities of all sizes across the country. The kit includes information about alcohol use by this age group; identifies a clear, consistent message; and provides the basic materials and evidence-based strategies to deliver that message. Tips, guides, posters, and print and broadcast public service announcements are included in this comprehensive resource. The kit complements MADD’s established prevention programs for this age group such as Protecting You/Protecting Me and dynamic, multimedia school assembly shows that engage young people to consider their choices carefully.

To order your free kit: <http://store.health.org/catalog/productDetails.aspx?ProductID=16687>

Teens Are Most Comfortable Talking to Mom

When it comes to talking about serious subjects like alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs, an overwhelming 70% of teens are more at ease when talking with their mom. In contrast, 12% of the teens in the survey favored talking with their fathers, 7.4% preferred talking with their grandparents, another 7.4% favored talking with siblings, and 3% preferred talking with other extended family members. Through the responses of 67 African American and White teenagers ages 11 to 17 who took part in the study, researchers also learned that neither gender nor race played a role in these teens’ tendency to confide in their mothers.

In addition, the study noted that young people are more impressed by drug talks that are part of normal family routines than by one long, preplanned drug talk. You can make use of this important finding by talking about alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs during your normal family routine. For example, cooking together can lead to discussing the importance of good health. Use the media—TV, music, and ads—to start talks with your teen. When you notice that your teen is watching TV shows that you find inappropriate, don’t flip the channel right away. Instead, talk to your child. If someone on the TV show used or mentioned a drug, inquire about it. You might ask, “Do you know what ecstasy is?” or “Do you know how ecstasy affects people who use it?” Even if your teen already knows the facts, talking with you about drugs can make him less likely to use drugs.

Another chance to talk about drugs comes when you’re in a car with your teen. Let your child choose the radio station—even if you hate the music. Use it to open a conversation: “What do you like so much about this music?” or “What do you think those lyrics mean?” or “What’s the singer like in real life?” Finding out what your teen really likes about music will help open the door to discussions about many hot topics, including alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs. Ads also present a way to talk to your teen about making healthy choices. When you pass a billboard advertising cigarettes or see the latest beer commercial during sports programs, talk about it with your teen. What is the ad selling? Does your teen believe it? What are the consequences of doing what the ad tells you? Talk about what the ad may not be telling its audience.

Teens are flooded with tough issues, but the research at Penn State shows that they turn to mom more than anyone else. So, hang in there, mom, and remember how important you are to your teen—even if your child does not always show it.

Teens Want Alcohol Advice on Web

The internet is the best way of telling teenagers about the dangers of drinking too much, researchers have found. Experts from the University of Otago in New Zealand said young people did want to find out how to drink safely. Targeting individuals with information, by postal mail or email, was also highly effective, they said.

The team, led by Dr Kypros Kypri, reviewed existing studies which had looked at the best ways of getting information to young people aged 15 to 24. Dr Kypri said: "Our research suggests that young people who are not seeking treatment for an alcohol problem would be disinclined to discuss their drinking with a health practitioner through fear of being judged.

"Computerized approaches capitalize on this curiosity while reducing the potential that young people will be put off by the prospect of having to discuss their drinking and its consequences with a health practitioner."



Teenagers worry doctors may judge their drinking habits.

"Young people are curious about how risky their drinking is and how it compares with that of their peers."
Dr. Kypros Kypri, University of Otago

Face-to-face help

A trial where doctors wrote directly to 1,600 college students was found to be an effective way of getting information to them. Dr Kypri said it would be even more effective if email was used. And he said when health professionals have the opportunity to see and discuss a young person's drinking problem, even a short consultation could help.

"It is generally impracticable for a health practitioner to deliver a one-hour intervention to a young person whose drinking is risky. "Ten to 15 minutes of assessment and advice in the waiting room, however, may be quite deliverable to a large proportion of individuals with hazardous-drinking habits." Alcoholics Anonymous in the UK says young people prefer using its internet site over the telephone helpline. In the first three months after its launch in April last year, 33% of users were under the age 25, compared to 5% of AA's general membership.

Source: BBC News

Study: More Alcohol Ads Reaching Teenage Girls

A new study by researchers at Georgetown University concludes that young girls are drinking more than boys because an increasing number of alcohol ads are reaching teenage girls, the New York Times reported July 6.

The researchers analyzed alcohol advertisements placed in 103 national magazines in 2001 and 2002. They then compared the estimated number of readers provided by the magazines in different age categories with the population as a whole in the same age groups.

Georgetown Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth director Dr. David Jernigan, who led the study, said the research found that even though women aged 21 to 34 were the stated target of alcohol marketing, a larger percentage of girls ages 12 to 20 were exposed to the alcohol ads than women over 21.

In particular, the researchers found young girls were increasingly exposed to advertising for low-alcohol products, such as wine coolers and alcoholic iced teas. Teenage girls' exposure to such ads increased 216 percent, compared to 46 percent for boys.

Source: www.jointogether.org

College Presidents Receive Guidelines on Student Alcohol Use

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities Task Force on Student Life and Alcohol Abuse recently issued a report entitled, "Presidents in Action: Strategies for Effective Leadership." The report is a guide for presidents as they provide leadership to address alcohol and other drug abuse among students. The chancellors and presidents serving on the task force recommend four models proven effective in reducing student alcohol abuse: social norming, peer education, student assistance programs, and environmental management. For more information, visit: http://www.aascu.org/policy/special_report/act/default.htm.



Source: Weekly Updates, 12/03

Parents: Drug Lingo, Know What To Listen For

Have you ever heard your teenager reference the time "4:20?" Many parents do not realize that 420 (pronounced "four-twenty") is a "secret code" for a time to get high. The reference to 420 presumably dates back to the 70s stoner lingo but is still widely recognized by the youth of today. Some people have even designated April 20th as "National Pot Smokers Day."

If you hear your teenager reference 420, see that he or she is using the term while instant messaging with friends or has a 420 sticker on his or her car or backpack, talk to your child about it. Let him or her know you know what he or she is talking about and set up a time for a longer conversation about your family's no tolerance policy for drug and alcohol use.

For a database containing more than 2,300 street terms referring to specific drug types or drug activity and real stories from parents and kids, visit the Office of National Drug Control Policy website at <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/>

Source: Office of National Drug Control Policy

"Some people have even designated April 20th as National Pot Smokers Day."

Brick Awards for Young Leaders

Community leaders age 18 and under may apply for the "2004 Do Something Brick Awards." The awards honor and support youth community leaders who have developed and implemented innovative responses to such local issues as community building, health, and the environment.

Winners receive a \$5,000 scholarship and a \$5,000 grant to continue their work. Applicants must be 18 or under as of April 14, 2005, the application deadline is November 1, 2004. For more information, visit the Do Something website at dosomething.org.

Who Is Missouri's Youth/Adult Alliance (MYAA)?

"The mission of Missouri's Youth/Adult Alliance is to provide leadership and resources for the prevention of alcohol use by children and youth."

MYAA is a statewide coalition that assists local community efforts in addressing underage drinking. Its mission is to encourage advocates to reduce youth access to alcohol by implementing environmental and social policy changes in their communities. By changing policy we will improve the environment that our children are living in each day; the environment that encourages them to drink alcohol. MYAA is also a driving force behind statewide advocacy efforts at the legislative level in Jefferson City; the Coalition maintains a strong presence in and around the Capitol.

During a time when the media is filled with reports of illegal drug activity involving young people, MYAA remains single-minded in its pursuit of reducing access to the nation's number one drug used by children and youth: alcohol. In fact, many youth in the Missouri are actively involved in MYAA because they understand the implications of youth alcohol use. These young people are prepared to speak out about how they are targeted by the alcohol industry and about how normalizing the use of alcohol in society helps to create a climate of abuse. Our youth are a very instrumental part of our coalition.

MYAA's primary purpose, in its work to reduce underage drinking, is one of policy-setting. Since 1997, the coalition has been instrumental in the passage of such local ordinances as beer keg tracking and social host/open house parties. These local efforts have paved the way for success at the state level as well. In 2003, the Missouri legislature passed SB 298 which includes language that requires a retail alcohol licensee to attach a label to each beer keg sold for off-premises consumption. The purchaser of the keg is required to present identification and the retailer must keep records of the purchaser. If the label is removed from the keg, the purchaser forfeits the keg deposit. These provisions became effective July 1, 2004.

MYAA and its community advocates continue to push for increasing the fees on alcohol, refining the new keg tracking law, and other legislation that restricts youth access to alcohol. Other areas of work include enforcing a minimum age of patrons in bars, how alcohol is marketed to children and density of alcohol outlets.

Membership in MYAA is open to anyone interested in reducing underage drinking. As a MYAA coalition member, individuals and community groups become a part of a strong statewide advocacy network.

The average age when a child in Missouri first has his or her first drinks of alcohol beyond a few sips is 12.7 years, or about the sixth grade. As the coalition continues to mobilize advocates to change public policy around youth access to alcohol, the startling fact that sixth graders are consuming alcohol and setting themselves on a potentially destructive path drives MYAA's mission. The focus remains intent on the ultimate win: increasing the age of first use of alcohol and creating a better future for young people of Missouri.

For more information about MYAA or to receive MYAA's monthly e-mail newsletter, please contact Alicia Ozenberger at 573.635.6669 or toll free at 1.877.669.2280.

Colorado Markets Tag to Reduce Underage Alcohol Sales

Stop N Save stores throughout Colorado have introduced a program aimed at reducing underage alcohol sales. The program requires store clerks to check customer IDs and complete orange tags with every alcohol purchase. A long-standing store policy requires clerks to ask for identification from anyone making a beer purchase to ensure that the buyer is at least 21. The tags were recently added to beer packages to remind clerks to check for IDs.

The policy requires the clerk to write the buyer's birth date on the tag, initial the tag, tear it off, and attach it to a copy of the sales receipt, which is kept with the store records. "The customers have actually responded pretty well," said Bonnie Lightfoot, personnel supervisor for 16 Stop N Save stores in Colorado, who has seen a drop in the number of people who try to buy beer without first showing an ID. "Most of the people who approach the counter have their IDs in hand, so it is working for us."



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Our Mission

The mission of Southeast Regional Support Center is to promote and facilitate the development of community prevention initiatives concerning the use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs by serving as a catalyst for mobilization and change in the communities of Service Area 21.

Feel free to look around our website. It is full of useful information, links, and other resources. If you have any questions, please contact us.

Please call Leah, Jim, or Lori at 573-651-5153 if you would like to add information about your team and/or community events to our newsletter.

We're on the Web!

www5.semo.edu/community2000

Upcoming Dates: Mark Your Calendar

- **Cultivating the Past-Pioneering the Future**

August 22-25, 2004—The 17th Annual NPN Prevention Research Conference in Kansas City, MO.
For information visit: <http://swpc.ou.edu/npn/>

- **Recognizing Our Collective Responsibility: Kicking Things Up A Notch**

August 26-28, 2004—The Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center's 5th Annual National Leadership Conference in San Diego, CA
For information visit: www.dqimeetings.com/NLC

- **September is Recovery Month**

- **St. Louis White House Conference on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives**

September 14, 2004, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. at the Adam's Mark Hotel in St. Louis, Mo.
The conference is to help faith-based and community organizations learn more about President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Registration is online at www.fbc.gov and due by Friday, September 3, 2004
For more information: <http://www.dtiasociates.com/fbc/logisticsMO.cfm?location-MO>

- *****LOCAL OPPORTUNITY*** Making Research Work! Practical Strategies for Healing Our Communities.**

September 24, 8:30-5 (for professionals) & 25, 8:30-4 (for faith community), 2004 in Sikeston, Missouri
Call 573-472-4141 or e-mail missionmo1@sbcglobal.net

- **Family Day, September 27, 2004**

- **Developing Youth Courts (OJJDP Training Seminar)**

September 27-29, 2004 in Portland, Oregon
For more information: www.youthcourt.net/training_ta/2004/Implementation_Overview.htm

- **2004 National Youth Development Conference**

October 10-12, 2004 at the Holiday Inn in Allentown, PA- "Unleashing the Power of Youth and Community Potential Conference"
For more information: <http://www.justcommunity.com/>

- **Red Ribbon Week, October 23-31, 2004**

- **Recovery Ambassadors Workshop**

October 29, 2004 at the Tiger Columns in Columbia, MO from 10:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m.
For more information: <http://www.morecovery.org/events.htm>

- **Assets in Action-Making a Difference, Healthy Communities Youth Conference**

November 4-6, 2004 at the Radisson Riverfront Hotel in St. Paul, MN.
For more information: www.search-institute.org/hchy/