

# TALK WITH YOUR TEEN

Talking with your teen about not using alcohol is the first step in prevention. As a parent, you already understand that your relationship with your teen can make a difference.

**TALK frequently with your kids about alcohol.**

The guidance you give strengthens the bond you have with your child and helps counter media images that glorify alcohol. It also gives your teenager the tools he or she will need to resist peer pressure to drink. Still, finding the right words to say, and when to say them, can be

tough. Here are some recommended examples of how to talk with your teenager—and what to say.

## What You Can Say

### SET THE RULES:

*“If you’re at a party where kids are drinking, I want you to call me and I’ll come pick you up.”*

*“I love you, and I want the best for you, so I don’t want you to use alcohol.”*

*“I really want you to be healthy and safe. That’s why I don’t want you to use alcohol.”*

### AVOID RISKY SITUATIONS:

*“It’s not OK for you to ride in a car with someone who has been drinking.”*

*“I care enough to ask who you are going with and what you are going to do. I’m your [mom/dad] and it’s my job to keep you safe.”*

*“You know I love you, but I’m your parent not your friend. I won’t put up with your being in a place where kids are drinking.”*

Developing open, trusting communication between you and your child is **ESSENTIAL** to helping your child avoid alcohol use.



### ENFORCE THE RULES:

*“We’ve talked about how I feel about your using alcohol—and the consequences. You have no (Internet, telephone, car, visit to friends’ houses, etc.) privileges for (time period).”\**

*“I’m glad you told me, but I’m disappointed that you tried alcohol. I don’t want you to stop talking to me, but I don’t want you to use alcohol again. You do not get (Internet, telephone, car, etc.) privileges for (time period).”\**

\* Discipline is not negotiable and should depend on the severity of the act and whether or not the child lied. It should not exceed three weeks because your child may forget why s/he is being disciplined. As an alternative, you might also consider having your child read and discuss articles on the effects of alcohol, or perform community service.