



Have you spoken to your child about drugs and alcohol?

THE FACTS

The transition period between grade school and Jr. High is the time when students are at the highest risk for substance abuse.

- National Institute on Drug Abuse

In Utah, 20% of teenagers have tried marijuana, 11% have inhaled a substance to get high, 3% have used cocaine, and 7% have used pain relievers for nonmedical purposes.

Over the last 3 years in Utah, over 20,000 adolescents (ages 12–17) per year reported using illicit drugs within the last month.

START TALKING BEFORE THEY START DRINKING

Research shows that more than half of Utah parents generally underestimate the extent of teen drinking and its negative consequences.

On average, parents talk to their children about drugs and alcohol TWO YEARS TOO LATE!

IF YOUR CHILD IS USING:

- Asking for help from professionals is the first important step.
- Physician screening – A practitioner can screen for signs of drug use and other related health issues.
- Involve the school administrators/councilors, they are trained specifically to help with this.
- For a step-by-step guide to help a teen who has a drug problem, visit:

<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/parents>

- If treatment is needed, visit this website to view adolescent residential treatment centers in Utah: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/treatment-rehab/teens-adolescent-residential/utah>

- The National Institute on Drug Abuse has a detailed reference guide titled, “What to Do if Your Teen or Young Adult Has a Problem with Drugs”: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/treatment/what-to-do-if-your-teen-or-young-adult-has-problem-drugs>

PARENTEMPowered.ORG

Governor Gary R. Herbert realized the disturbing fact that underage drug and alcohol use is a serious problem, even here in Utah. In an effort to combat this growing problem, the State of Utah launched ParentsEmpowered.org, a program designed to educate parents about the dangers of underage drinking and provide resources that teach parents important skills.

“ParentsEmpowered.org can help you discover that you have more power over the choices your children make than you may now realize.”

– Governor Gary R. Herbert



Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention

A GUIDE AIMED TO HELP EMPOWER PARENTS TO BE INVOLVED IN PREVENTION EFFORTS REGARDING ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ADDICTION.



You can combat your child's risk by understanding the prevalence, risk, and availability of drugs and alcohol as well as understanding the brain mechanism of addiction.

WHY PREVENT UNDERAGE DRINKING?

THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN IS RAPIDLY DEVELOPING

- Alcohol can do irreversible damage to a teen's learning and memory center, the "hippocampus". The earlier the brain is exposed to alcohol, the more permanent damage is done.
- Research shows kids who begin drinking before age 15 have a 40 percent chance of becoming alcohol dependent. In contrast, a person who waits until the legal age of 21 to start drinking has only a 7 percent chance of becoming an alcoholic.
- Adolescents are especially at risk for alcohol poisoning due to their brain not being fully developed.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Bond with your children through daily, positive communication and interaction. Stay close to your kids and have a positive relationship. **EAT DINNER TOGETHER.**
- Stay involved. Parents who are actively involved can have a powerful influence on their child's decision to remain alcohol-free.
- Have realistic expectations and do not enable your child.
- Set clear boundaries and limitations, including rules about no underage drinking. Be specific: "Absolutely no underage drinking in our family."
- Know passwords and randomly check your child's cell phone and social media accounts.
- Ensure that alcohol is not readily available at home. If you drink, inventory your alcohol.
- Monitor your children's activities by asking direct questions and ensuring that their environment is alcohol-free and drug-free. Kids are at the highest risk for drinking alcohol between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., while many parents are still at work.

The single most predictive risk for underage drinking is if your child's peers drink.

- Encourage your kids to choose friends who support your family's no-alcohol rules.
- Get to know your children's friends and their parents. Help them choose friends who support your family rules.
- Help your child decide on good ways to say "no" and practice them often in role-play situations. Students with high-refusal-abilities are less likely to drink underage.

YOU HAVE MORE INFLUENCE THAN YOU MAY THINK

- Believe it or not, teens still listen to their parents. Studies show that you are the number one reason your kids won't drink.
- Friends, school, the media—none of them have more of an influence on a teenager than parents. So as a parent, set clear rules about no underage drinking. Your kids will listen.

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

Changes in behavior – Poor academics, decreased interest, isolating, missing school, increased conflict, and avoiding eye contact.

Psychological Changes - Mood swings, extreme highs and lows, manipulation, lethargy, memory or concentration issues, slurred or rapid speech, deceitful behavior, and paranoia for no reason.

Health Problems – Decreased appetite, increased sleep, excessive thirst, headaches, nosebleeds, tremors, and sweating.

Personal Appearance - Poor hygiene, poor coordination, bloodshot eyes, pinpoint pupils, scratching, long sleeve shirts, teeth clenching, and burns on fingers or lips.

Other signs to look for-

- Drug paraphernalia (tin foil, balloons, rolling papers, unusual containers, capsules)
- Strong incense/perfumes in your teenager's personal space (as cover-up).
- Missing medications, drugs, or alcohol.
- Missing cash or other valuable items (often pawned for drug money).
- Finding drug remains or residue (seeds, stems, powders).