

A Parent's Guide



to

**TEEN
PARTIES**

and

**THE
LAW**

Attending A Party

Dear Parent:

*An alarming 53 percent of Kansas high school students have tried alcohol. Please talk with your teenager about the dangers of underage drinking. Believe it or not, **they will listen to you.***

In 2004, 1,625 people under the age of 21 were involved in alcohol-related crashes on Kansas roadways. Sadly, 22 young lives were lost and another 521 suffered injuries.

This brochure provides information to help you keep your teenager safe from death or injury. Below are some facts to assist you in talking with your loved one.

*Thanks for helping to alleviate needless tragedy. **Your involvement with your children and their friends is critical.***

- Alcohol is the most dangerous and misused drug in America.
- Alcohol kills 6.5 times more young people than all other illicit drugs combined.
- Kansas youth begin experimenting with alcohol at about age 12; reports indicate they get it from their parents (possibly without their knowledge) or from another adult.
- Early alcohol use can cause irreparable damage to a developing brain – a person's brain is not fully developed until their early twenties.
- The tragic consequences of underage drinking can last a lifetime and include traffic crashes, alcohol poisoning, alcohol abuse/dependency, brain damage and suicide.

A. Know where your teen will be.

1. Obtain the name, address and phone number of the party host.
2. Let your teen know you expect a phone call to obtain permission if the location of the party is changed.

B. Contact the parents of the party host to:

1. Be sure that a parent will be present.
2. Offer assistance.
3. Confirm that alcohol and other drugs will not be permitted.

C. Communicate concerns.

1. Discuss with your teen the possible situations which might arise and how to deal with them. For example, what to do if another adult (older sibling, etc.) offers to make alcohol available for minors.
2. Let them know where you can be reached.
3. Agree on an acceptable curfew.
4. Assure your teen that you or a specified friend or neighbor can be called if he/she needs a ride home.
5. Be awake or have your teen awaken you when he/she arrives home. (This is often a good sharing time.)
6. If your teen is staying overnight with a friend following a party, check with the parents of the friend to verify that:
 - this is acceptable to them.
 - they will be home.
 - you both agree on curfew hours and other basic house rules.

Hosting A Party

A. Parents must be at the party.

1. No parents — no party.
2. A home minus adult supervision is asking for trouble.
3. Parents have a responsibility to see to it that parties are conducted in an appropriate manner.

B. Set ground rules with your teen beforehand.

1. Let your teen know your expectations; they do want guidelines.
2. Let them know how you feel about drug and alcohol use.
3. Become involved with your teen in planning party activities. Agree on an appropriate guest list and stick to it.
4. Remind your teen that he/she is accountable for his/her behavior.
5. Notify your neighbors beforehand.

C. Alcohol or other drugs should not be permitted, served or available.

1. Be alert to the signs of alcohol or drug use.
2. Guests who attempt to bring in alcohol or drugs or who otherwise are uncooperative or uninvited should be promptly told to leave.
3. Have a plan to implement if anyone arrives at the party under the influence of alcohol or another drug. Do not let a person drive when under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
4. Anyone who leaves the party should not be allowed to return. This will discourage people from leaving with the intent of drinking or using drugs elsewhere and then returning to the party.
5. Be visible — bring in snacks, etc. Your visibility will help keep the party running smoothly and will give you an opportunity to meet your teen's friends.
6. Ask other responsible adults to help chaperone the party.
7. Have plenty of food and non-alcoholic drinks, and a wide variety of activities available.
8. If you feel that despite your precautions things do get out of hand, please do not hesitate to call the local police for assistance.