

THE TIME BETWEEN GIVING THEM AN INCH & THEM TAKING A MILE.



Underage Drinking Prevention: Setting Limits and Monitoring your Teen

Teens and young adults want freedom. You don't want to be a nag. When it comes to underage drinking, however, there is a lot at risk. Our friends at Partnership for Drug-Free Kids (www.drugfree.org) provides helpful points to setting limits and monitoring your teen.

Establish Rules & Consequences

Rules provide a concrete way to let your child understand what's expected of him or her and to learn self-control. Don't just assume they "know" you don't want them to drink or do drugs. Teens and young adults don't deal well with gray areas, so when they're offered alcohol or drugs, you don't want any confusion in their minds.



If you're a parent who feels bad about setting limits, remember that deep down, your child actually wants them. Rules mean that you care about your child and his or her safety. And consequences actually help – not hurt them. A firm consequence, such as getting grounded or having to give up a fun privilege, will remind your child what not to do in the future.



When you lay out rules and consequences, make sure you're clear – and that your child understands the limits you've set before there's opportunity to do something wrong. One great way to do this is to actually write out the things you expect from one another (being home before curfew, getting a ride home from a party if things get out of hand), and jointly sign off on them, in effect, creating a contract.

Monitor

How will you know that your son or daughter is following the rules? By keeping a close eye on him or her and communicating regularly about their whereabouts, friends, activities, and more. Here are a few ways to keep closer tabs on your child:

- Finding subtle ways to “drop in” while his or her friends are at your house.
- Ask questions before he or she leaves. Find out where they're going, who will be there and what they'll be doing.
- Check in while they're out. Call to say hello and include a reminder that you expect rules to be followed.
- Ask questions when he or she gets home. Make eye contact, smell his or her hair and ask about the night to gauge sobriety and truthfulness.
- Reach out to other parents in your community. This way you can all keep an eye on one another's kids.

Content provided by Partnership for Drug-Free Kids. To find more information about monitoring and consequences, visit Partnership for Drug-Free Kids at www.drugfree.org.