

talking points:

ALCOHOL

begin the conversation



Grades
K-5

Younger children learn mostly by experience and by observing the actions of people in their lives. You, as a parent or caregiver, can have a huge impact on your child's decision making!

- 1. Keep discussions about alcohol simple and in the present tense** (e.g. try to focus on short-term effects of alcohol use, instead of talking about long-term dependency and addiction)
- 2. Relate to things that your child already knows** and understands (e.g. ask your child what they know about alcohol, or where they see it being consumed)
- 3. Use everyday opportunities to talk** (e.g. when you watch TV with your child or see advertising messages in stores)
- 4. Talk about alcohol use and the body** (e.g. how to maintain good health and avoid substances that might harm the body)
- 5. Talk about what alcohol does** (e.g. alters the way people feel, makes it hard to judge things like whether the water is too deep or if there's a car coming too close)

Grades
6-8

continue the conversation

By the pre-teen years,

it is a good time to openly discuss facts about alcohol, its long and short-term effects and consequences, its physical effects, and why it's especially dangerous for growing bodies. Use this time to reinforce what you have already taught them and focus on keeping the lines of communication open.

Here are some ways to talk with your child about dealing with offers of alcohol:

- 1. Encourage your child to ask questions** about what they're consuming
- 2. Teach your child refusal skills** (ie: discuss what they are comfortable saying in a particular situation and role play together)
- 3. Educate your child to leave** any uncomfortable situation
- 4. Encourage your child to be honest and call when they need help**
- 5. Teach your child to never to accept a ride from someone who has been drinking**

Grades
9+**own the conversation**

You have laid the foundation for alcohol awareness throughout your child's elementary and middle school years; now it is time to prepare them for high school and beyond. Here are some tips to continue the conversation about alcohol use:

- 1. Clarify your expectations.** Set clear ground rules for not drinking and set specific consequences if your teen does drink
- 2. Talk early and often. Share** your concerns about alcohol **Listen** to their concerns, questions, and perspectives
- 3. Counter the "everybody's doing it" message. Remind teens that not everyone drinks,** particularly teenagers (for whom drinking is illegal)
- 4. Share the effects alcohol use can have on their future** as young adults
- 5. Find out what is happening with their friends,** at school, and places they spend time. Check in regularly, since the situation may change as your teen gets older



For more information about this campaign, please contact Skagit County Public Health at (360) 416-1500.

Funding provided by Skagit County Public Health and the Washington State Health Care Authority.

