



A toolkit for parents, adults, and the general public to address underage drinking

# “Not My Kid”

Everything you need to know about underage drinking



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# Introduction

The goal of this toolkit is to educate and inform parents, guardians, and adults about the dangers and implications of underage drinking; provide a guide that includes recommendations and resources to strengthen and encourage open conversation with youth about alcohol use; and promote a best practices approach to prevent and reduce substance use among youth and young adults.

Fort Bend Community Prevention Coalition (FBCPC) is a program of Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse, a United Way Agency. FBCPC is a community coalition that serves a vital role in protecting the health and welfare of youth, families, and community members in Fort Bend County. The coalition is comprised of members from various backgrounds and levels of expertise who come together to address factors that are proven to increase adolescent substance use rates, such as ease of access to drugs and alcohol, low perception of the risks associated with using, and negative peer influence.

Coalitions promote coordination and collaboration to make efficient use of community resources. By mobilizing the entire community:



**Parents**



**Law enforcement**



**Business**



**Civic leaders**



**Youth**



**Healthcare**



**Young adults**



**Nonprofits**



**School**



**Faith community**



**Media**



**Local and state governments**

# Did You Know?

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Underage drinking is when anyone under the minimum legal drinking age of 21 drinks alcohol. Underage drinking is a risk behavior that attracts many developing adolescents and teens. When young people try alcohol, they often do not realize the damaging effects drinking can have on their lives, families, and their communities.



- Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused substance among youth and young adults, more than vaping, tobacco, and marijuana.<sup>7</sup>
- Young people consume 90% of their alcohol by binge drinking.<sup>7</sup> Binge drinking is the act of consuming four or five alcoholic beverages during one occasion (approximately 2 hours).<sup>6</sup> It is the most common, costly, and lethal pattern of excessive alcohol use.<sup>7</sup>
- On average, underage drinkers consume more drinks per occasion than most adult drinkers.<sup>7</sup> The majority of the adults with alcohol dependence disorders began drinking before the age of 18. Research shows that young people who drink before the age of 15 are 4 times more likely to suffer from addiction later in life.<sup>7</sup>
- The brain does not fully develop until the mid-20s. Early alcohol use can disrupt normal brain development that is critical to memory, the ability to learn new information and concepts, impulse control, and emotional maturity.<sup>15</sup>



# Did You Know?

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→ By age 18, only 58% of teens report having had at least one drink in their lifetime.<sup>15</sup> However, young people's perception of youth alcohol use is typically higher than the actual rate. This misperception can contribute to more permissive or favorable attitudes toward underage drinking and a decrease in their perception of risk.

→ Research indicates that adults are the predominant source of alcohol for underage drinkers. Many young people gain access to alcohol through family members or find it at their homes.

Alcohol use and excessive drinking can have short- and long-term effects on young people's mental and physical health and on their lives socially, legally, and financially.



# Health Risks and Consequences

## Mental and Psychological Effects

### Short Term <sup>8, 11, 17</sup>



- ✓ Impaired judgment
- ✓ Decreased inhibitions
- ✓ Dulled perception and vision
- ✓ Mood changes
- ✓ Memory difficulties
- ✓ Loss of consciousness

### Long Term <sup>13, 19</sup>



- ✓ Interference with brain development
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Anxiety disorders
- ✓ Schizophrenia
- ✓ Learning trouble
- ✓ Memory loss
- ✓ Addiction



# Health Risks and Consequences

## Physical Effects

### Short Term <sup>11, 13, 15</sup>



✓ Reduced core body temperature

✓ Raised blood pressure

✓ Vomiting

✓ Slowed reaction times

✓ Slurred speech

✓ Poor limb coordination

### Long Term <sup>13, 15, 17, 18</sup>



✓ Stroke

✓ Alcoholic hepatitis

✓ Liver fibrosis

✓ Liver cirrhosis

✓ Steatosis (i.e., fatty liver)

✓ Throat, mouth, larynx, breast, liver, colorectal, or esophageal cancer<sup>1</sup>

✓ High blood pressure

✓ Cardiomyopathy

✓ Irregular heartbeat



# Health Risks and Consequences

## Sexual Implications<sup>2, 3, 6, 7</sup>

- ✓ Increased risk of becoming a victim of sexual assault
  - Diminished usual ability to avoid risk
  - Diminished ability to resist
- ✓ Increased risk of becoming a perpetrator of sexual assault
  - Seemingly justified aggression
  - Increased likelihood of misreading body language and social sexual cues
  - Increased likelihood of misunderstanding sexual intentions
- ✓ Increased risk of unplanned and unprotected sexual activity
- ✓ Increased risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections
- ✓ Increased risk of unintended pregnancy
- ✓ Disruption in normal growth and sexual development



# Health Risks and Consequences

## Social Consequences <sup>4, 6, 7</sup>

- ✓ Incidents of violence and crime (property damage, homicide, suicide, fights)
- ✓ Self-injury (alcohol poisoning, falls, burns, drowning)
- ✓ Intimate partner violence
- ✓ Financial problems
- ✓ Work issues (absenteeism, productivity, performance issues)
- ✓ Risky behavior (drinking and driving)





# Health Risks and Consequences

## School Consequences <sup>9</sup>

- ✓ Drop in grades
- ✓ Truancy (poor attendance)
- ✓ Increased dropout rates

## Legal Consequences <sup>1</sup>

- ✓ DUI
- ✓ Vehicular manslaughter
- ✓ Public intoxication arrest or citation
- ✓ Social host citation
- ✓ Jail time
- ✓ Difficulty finding employment
- ✓ Court-ordered alcoholism treatment



# Risk Factors and Warning Signs

## Risk Factors

- ✓ Having a parent with an addiction or issue with alcohol use
- ✓ Having close friends and relatives who use alcohol or other drugs
- ✓ Impulse control issues, aggressive, and antisocial behavior during childhood
- ✓ Academic or behavior problems in school
- ✓ Communication issues with family
- ✓ Lack of adult supervision
- ✓ Lack of parental support
- ✓ Lack of or overly restrictive boundaries
- ✓ Issues with anxiety and depression and other mental health issues
- ✓ Having parents with favorable attitudes toward alcohol and other drugs
- ✓ History of childhood abuse and trauma
- ✓ Heavy exposure to alcohol advertising and marketing

## Warning Signs

- ✓ Mood changes (anger, defensiveness, and irritability)
- ✓ Academic or behavioral problems in school
- ✓ Rebellion against family rules
- ✓ Friend changes
- ✓ A “nothing matters” attitude (sloppy appearance and lack of involvement in former interests)
- ✓ Alcohol presence (finding alcohol among their things and smelling alcohol on their breath)
- ✓ Physical or mental health problems
- ✓ Low energy level
- ✓ Slurred speech
- ✓ Coordination problems

# Protective Factors

## Individual



- ✓ High IQ
- ✓ High self-esteem
- ✓ Good coping and problem-solving skills
- ✓ Achievement motivation
- ✓ Prosocial activities (i.e., helping, sharing, caring)
- ✓ Attending religious services

## Family



- ✓ Parental involvement
- ✓ Strong value placed on education
- ✓ Parental disapproval of drug and alcohol use
- ✓ Family and relation connections

## Community



- ✓ Resources
- ✓ Social support
- ✓ Positive peer influence
- ✓ Community involvement

## Society



- ✓ Laws and policies limiting access to alcohol and drugs
- ✓ Cultural influences
- ✓ Strictly enforced laws and ordinances

# Know the Law

## What is Underage Drinking?

It is illegal for a person under 21 to consume alcohol, possess alcohol, or have any bodily alcohol content.

## What is Social Hosting?

Social hosting occurs when an adult knowingly allows a minor, who is not their own child, to consume alcohol in their private residence, on their land, or on other legally secured property.

### Penalties for Providing Alcohol to a Minor in Texas

- ✓ Making alcoholic beverages available to a minor is a class A misdemeanor, punishable by a fine up to \$4,000, confinement in jail for up to a year, or both. Additionally, the violator will have their driver's license automatically suspended for 180 days upon conviction.
- ✓ Persons 21 or older (other than the parent) can be held liable for damages caused by intoxication of a minor under 18 if the adult knowingly provided alcoholic beverages to a minor or knowingly allowed the minor to be served or provided alcoholic beverages on the premises owned or leased by the adult (Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code: Sec. 106.03, 106.06)

## Using a Fake ID

It is illegal to create, possess, purchase, attempt to purchase or possess false identification, and use false identification to purchase or attempt to purchase alcohol. Fake IDs can result in criminal and civil charges, including suspension or revocation of a driver license, forgery, and fraud criminal charges.

## Zero Tolerance Laws for Alcohol Use

All 50 states have made it illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to have any measurable alcohol in the contents of their blood while driving. Driving under the influence under the age of 21 can result in loss of driving privileges and felony charges in some states.



# What You Can Do For Prevention

## Parents



- ✓ Advocate for environmental and policy change in your community and school systems ([see examples on page 22](#))
- ✓ Educate yourselves, adults, and community
- ✓ Talk to your children about alcohol and drugs
- ✓ Join or volunteer for community organizations or local coalitions

## Schools



- ✓ Educate students and parents
- ✓ Create truancy prevention programs
- ✓ Generate and promote social media campaigns, and mobilize and incentivize youth-led prevention initiatives and clubs
- ✓ Include evidence-based alcohol and drug prevention programs in the curriculum

## Youth



- ✓ Educate peers
- ✓ Create and promote social media campaigns
- ✓ Advocate for change in your community and school systems
- ✓ Join or volunteer for community organizations and coalitions
- ✓ Join or volunteer for school-based organizations



# What You Can Do For Prevention

## Business



- ✓ Assist with social marketing and community outreach
- ✓ Adopt drug-free workplaces
- ✓ Educate employees about alcohol and drugs
- ✓ Revise policies and programs to include language addressing drugs and alcohol
- ✓ Support community coalitions and organizations

## Law Enforcement



- ✓ Ensure underage drinking prevention is a priority
- ✓ Enforce underage drinking laws
- ✓ Ensure social hosting policies are a priority
- ✓ Educate community on consequences of underage drinking, impaired driving, and social hosting

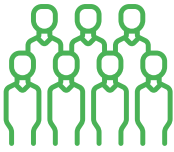
## Health Care Professionals



- ✓ Educate community members and patients
- ✓ Advocate for policies that reduce underage drinking
- ✓ Join and volunteer for community organizations and local coalitions
- ✓ Facilitate workshops and seminars for employees

# What You Can Do For Prevention

## Youth-Serving Organizations



- ✓ Host workshops and seminars to educate community
- ✓ Participate in community outreach
- ✓ Advocate for policies that reduce underage drinking
- ✓ Collaborate with coalitions and community organizations
- ✓ Offer SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) workshops and trainings

## Government



- ✓ Advocate and implement policies to reduce underage drinking
- ✓ Advocate for evidence-based prevention programs in public education
- ✓ Monitor and address barriers to enforcement of underage drinking policies

## Media



- ✓ Promote campaigns
- ✓ Assist community organizations with social marketing
- ✓ Generate and promote editorials
- ✓ Publicly recognize prevention partners and businesses
- ✓ Promote positive social norming messages
- ✓ Promote community coalition and organization success stories

# What You Can Do For Prevention

## Civic and Volunteer Groups



- ✓ Support, collaborate, and volunteer for organizations and community coalitions
- ✓ Participate in community outreach
- ✓ Host workshops and seminars to educate community
- ✓ Advocate for policies that reduce underage drinking

## Religious and Faith Groups



- ✓ Encourage youth engagement in community coalitions and organizations
- ✓ Host workshops and seminars to educate community
- ✓ Support, collaborate, and volunteer for organizations and community coalitions
- ✓ Participate in community outreach

## Community Organizations



- ✓ Participate in community outreach
- ✓ Collaborate with and support community coalitions
- ✓ Host workshops and trainings to educate community
- ✓ Advocate for policies that reduce underage drinking





# Best Practices

## Why You Should Talk With Your Child about Alcohol



➔ **The Chance That Children Will Use Alcohol Increases as They Get Older.** About 10% of 12-year-olds say they have tried alcohol, but by age 15, that number jumps to 50%. The sooner you talk to your children about alcohol, the greater chance you have of influencing their decisions about drinking.

➔ **Parents Play a Critical Role in Children's Decisions to Experiment with Alcohol.** Studies have shown that parents have a significant influence on young people's decisions about alcohol consumption, especially when parents create supportive and nurturing environments in which their children can make their own decisions.

➔ **The Conversation is Often More Effective before Children Start Drinking.** If you talk to your kids directly and honestly, they are more likely to respect your rules and advice about alcohol use. When parents know about underage alcohol use, they can protect their children from many of the high-risk behaviors associated with it.

➔ **Some Children May Try Alcohol as Early as 9 Years Old.** Most 6-year-olds know that alcohol is only for adults. Between the ages of 9 and 13, children start to view alcohol more positively. Many children begin to think underage drinking is OK. It is never too early to talk to your children about alcohol.

➔ **If You Do Not Talk About It, You Are Still Saying Something.** What you say to your children about alcohol is up to you. But remember, parents who do not discourage underage drinking may have an indirect influence on their children's alcohol use.

# Best Practices

## When to Start the Conversation



- ✓ Have conversations frequently and find good times and places to have them.
- ✓ Have lots of little talks instead of one big one.
- ✓ Choose informal times, such as in the car, during dinner, or while watching TV.
- ✓ Continue to talk about alcohol throughout adolescence.
- ✓ Encourage your child to talk to you.

## How to Start Conversations



- ✓ Give good reasons not to drink.
- ✓ Develop family rules.
- ✓ Renegotiate the rules as they get older.
- ✓ Let them know you're always there.
- ✓ Share important facts about alcohol.
- ✓ Teach them how to handle peer pressure.
- ✓ Ask open-ended questions.

## How to Set Clear Boundaries



- ✓ Set clear rules and let your child know that drinking is unacceptable.
- ✓ Tell your child, "I do not want you drinking until you are 21."
- ✓ Make your standards clear to immediate and extended family members and your child's friends' parents.
- ✓ Enforce your rules.
- ✓ Ensure alcohol is not available to teens at parties in your home.



# Best Practices

## Five Goals to Use When Talking to Kids about Alcohol and Other Drugs



### Show you disapprove of underage drinking and other drug use.

More than 80% of young people aged 10–18 say their parents are the leading influence on their decision whether to drink. Send a clear and strong message that you disapprove of underage drinking and use of other drugs.



### Show you care about your child's health, wellness, and success.

Young people are more likely to listen when they know you're on their side. Reinforce why you don't want your child to drink or use other drugs - because you want your child to be happy and safe. The conversation will go a lot better if you're open and you show concern.



### Show you're a good source of information about alcohol and other drugs.

You want your child to make informed decisions about alcohol and other drugs with reliable information about their dangers. You don't want your child to learn about alcohol and other drugs from unreliable sources. Establish yourself as a trustworthy source of information.

# Best Practices

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## Show you're paying attention and you'll discourage risky behaviors.

Show you're aware of what your child is up to, because young people are more likely to drink or use other drugs if they think no one will notice. Do this in a subtle way, without prying.

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## Build your child's skills and strategies for avoiding underage drinking and drug use.

Even if you don't think your child wants to drink or try other drugs, peer pressure is a powerful thing. Having a plan to avoid alcohol and drug use can help children make better choices. Talk with your child about what they would do if faced with a decision about alcohol and drugs, such as texting a code word to a family member or practicing how they'll say, "No thanks."

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*Keep it low key. Don't worry, you don't have to get everything across in one talk. Plan to have many short talks.*

*(Source: SAMHSA's Talk They Hear You Campaign)*

# Alcohol Policy Recommendations

## Social Hosting Ordinance

→ A social hosting ordinance enables local and cities to hold individuals responsible for providing a location for underage drinking, even if they are not present, regardless of if they provided the alcohol. One of the most common sources young people report obtaining their alcohol is from adults, with or without their permission. Typically, a social host citation will carry civil consequences instead of criminal, but that is not always the case. The ordinance sends a strong message to the community that youth alcohol consumption is unsafe and unacceptable.

## Alcohol Advertising Restrictions

→ Young people are exposed to the glorification of alcohol use and binge drinking regularly without being exposed to the risks that accompany youth alcohol consumption. Placing restrictions on alcohol advertising can reduce their vulnerability to adopting favorable attitudes toward underage drinking, as it did for tobacco products.

Examples of local ordinances that can be used to reduce harmful alcohol advertising include limiting alcohol industry sponsorships at community events that are family- or child-oriented, implementing limits on billboards in areas highly concentrated with children such as schools and daycares, prohibiting advertising placement that can be seen from outside the store, placing limitations on the percentage of window space that contains advertising, prohibiting the distribution or sale of any alcohol-industry promotional items to minors, and prohibiting alcohol sales promotions and reduced pricing at stores frequented by young people.



# Alcohol Policy Recommendations

## Alcohol Excise Tax

→ An excise tax is a tax placed on a specific good that becomes legally included in the price of the product. Studies have shown that higher taxes on alcoholic beverages have been associated with lower consumption among young people.<sup>14</sup> An increase in alcohol excise tax by just 30 cents not only leads to a reduction in underage drinking, but can also generate significant funding that can be used to finance more prevention programming and support services for treatment.<sup>14</sup>

## Alcohol Outlet Density Regulation

→ Alcohol density regulation is to limit the number of alcohol outlets in a given area. It is typically regulated through licensing or zoning processes. An alcohol outlet is a venue that can legally serve alcoholic beverages on the premises, such as bars and restaurants, or off premises, such as liquor and grocery stores. Places with a high density of alcohol outlets experience higher incidences of heavy drinking and alcohol-related problems (e.g., alcohol-related crashes, injuries, violence, and crime). Therefore, implementing restrictions on alcohol outlet density should result in fewer alcohol-related incidents.



# Resources

→ **Prevention Resource Center – Region 6**  
<https://www.councilonrecovery.org/community-programs/prevention-resource-center/>

→ **Talk. They Hear You” Campaign from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**  
<https://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking/mobile-application>

→ **National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens**  
<https://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking/mobile-application>

→ **Mental Health America of Greater Houston Resource Guide?**  
[https://mhahouston.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Resource\\_Guide.pdf](https://mhahouston.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Resource_Guide.pdf)

→ **Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse**  
<https://www.fortbendcouncil.org/>

## Fort Bend Community Prevention Coalition

[fortbendcpc.org](http://fortbendcpc.org) \* 281-207-2400



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