

Parents Who Host, Lose the Most

Parents play a major role in their children's choices about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. In a National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University survey to parents and teens, one-third of teen partygoers have been to parties where teens were drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana, or using cocaine, ecstasy, or prescription drugs while a parent was present. By age 17, nearly half of teens have been at parties where parents were present.

Parents Who Host, Lose The Most: Don't Be a Party to Teenage Drinking is a program that provides parents with accurate information about the health and safety risks associated with underage drinking and the legal consequences of providing alcohol to minors.

Underage drinking increases during celebratory times, such as homecoming, holidays, prom and graduation, and the program encourages parents and the community to send a unified message that teen alcohol consumption is not acceptable. It is illegal, unsafe, and unhealthy for anyone under age 21 to drink alcohol.

Get the Facts

It is illegal in NJ to serve alcohol to anyone who is under the legal drinking age of 21 (NJSA 2C:33-17a)

- Parents who give alcohol to their teen's friends under any circumstances, even in their own homes, are breaking the law
- Parents who knowingly allow a person under 21 to remain in their home or on their property while consuming or possessing alcoholic beverages can be prosecuted
- It is illegal in NJ to make your home or property available for the purpose of allowing anyone who is under the legal drinking age of 21 a place to consume alcohol (NJSA 2C:33-17b)
- Any person who serves or makes alcohol available to a person under the legal drinking age of 21 is subject to a \$1,000 fine and up to 180 days in jail per person served. Parents can be held civilly liable even if they are not present during the time of the party (NJSA 2C:33-17)
- If serving an underage person alcohol results in injury, the adult may be charged with Endangering the Welfare of Children, and may be subject to a fine of up to \$15,000 and up to 5 years in state prison (NJSA 2C:24-4)
- New Jersey Law imposes civil liability on social hosts who serve alcohol to anyone under the legal drinking age of 21 who is subsequently involved in an incident causing injury or

death

- A social host may be sued for up to two years after an incident that occurs resulting in injury or death. As the result of a lawsuit, your house, car, and bank accounts may be seized and future wages may be garnished.

Suggestions for Parents if a teen party is hosted at your residence

- Help your teenager plan the party. Make a guest list and invite only a specific number of people.
- Have your child pass out or send invitations and try to avoid the “open party” situation.
- Don’t send email invitations. They can be forwarded to a large number of people quickly and you lose control of who has this information.
- Put your phone number on the invitation and welcome calls from parents.
- **Set rules ahead of time** such as no alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. Set a start and end time for the party.
- Let attendees know that if they leave, they cannot come back.
- Have plenty of food and non-alcoholic beverages.
- Plan some activities such as music, games, movies, etc.
- Let your neighbors know in advance there will be a party and that you will be there to supervise.
- Familiarize yourself with your community’s noise ordinance.
- Limit the party access to a certain area of the house/property.
- Have a plan for dealing with vehicles. Include parking information on your party invitation.
- Secure all forms of alcohol, firearms and other potentially hazardous items in your home.
- Make regular and unobtrusive visits to the party area with sensitivity to teens’ needs for privacy and independence.
- Invite other parents to help chaperone if there will be a large number of teenagers.

When you’re away from home or out of town

- Set and communicate rules and standards to be followed in your absence.
- Do not allow underage youth to have unsupervised parties or gatherings.
- Remind them of their responsibilities and the consequences of their actions.
- Have a relative or responsible adult stay at your home during your absence, have your teenager stay with a responsible adult or ask a neighbor to watch the house and stop in while you are gone.

If a teen is attending a party in someone else's home

- Know where your teen will be. Call the parent in charge to verify the occasion and location of the party and ensure there will be adult supervision.
- Ask how many teens are expected at the party and offer to help supervise or provide refreshments.
- Make certain that the host will not be serving or allowing alcohol. Ask how the parents plan to handle the situation if a teen shows up with alcohol or has been drinking.
- Indicate your expectations to your child and the parent hosting the party that if the teens leave and go somewhere else, you will want to know.
- Set a curfew for your teen and when they arrive home, have them check in with you.
- Know how your teen is getting to and from the party. Reinforce the message to your teenager that they should never allow someone who has been drinking or using other drugs to drive them anywhere.
- Assure your teen that they can call you to be picked up whenever needed.
- If the activity seems inappropriate, express concern and keep your teen home.

Other Suggestions

- Get to know your teen's friends and their parents.
- Find out your teen's friends and their parents' policy on alcohol, drug, and tobacco use.
- It is illegal to serve minors or to allow a minor to have alcohol on your property.
- Encourage alcohol-free and drug-free parties and activities for underage youth.
- If your teen is on a social networking site, such as Facebook, be their 'friend' to monitor their posts.

About the Program

Drug Free Action Alliance developed *Parents Who Host, Lose the Most: Don't be a party to teenage drinking* in 2000 to educate parents about the risk associated with underage drinking and the legal consequences of allowing youth to consume alcohol. This program encourages parents and allows the entire community to send a unified message that teen alcohol consumption is unhealthy, unsafe and unacceptable.

The initiative takes place on state and local levels and concentrates on celebratory times for youth, such as homecoming, holidays, prom, graduation and other times when underage

drinking parties are prevalent.

Since the program began in 2000, it has been requested for replication in all 50 states, Canada, the Virgin Islands, Guam and Puerto Rico. In 2001, *Parents Who Host, Lose The Most: Don't be a party to teenage drinking* received the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention's Promising Prevention Program Award. While laws vary from state to state, the program's message is a universal one: It is illegal, unsafe and unhealthy for anyone under 21 to drink alcohol.

Program Contact Information

For more information about the program, to receive a copy of the campaign materials, or to register for the monthly Drug Free Action Alliance newsletter, visit [Drug Free Action Alliance](#) or contact them at (614) 540-9985 ext.16 or by contact [at] drugfreeactionalliance.org (email).

OR

Contact us for a free lawn sign and place it in your yard to show your support of the Parents Who Host Lose the Most campaign.

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