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Parents Matter

Havana Area Prevention Team

Tip: Talk Early

As the school year gets underway and the routines begin to take shape, the Havana Area Prevention Team has started its third volume of *Parents Matter* prevention newsletter. Throughout the course of the school year, parents and guardians of Havana Junior High students will receive a monthly newsletter that shares: educational facts, talking tips, and news from the Prevention Team. Thanks to the staff at Havana Junior High School for helping to hand out this newsletter to HJHS parents.

One of the goals of the Prevention Team is to promote healthy, happy, and responsible lifestyles for area youth and families. One way of reaching this goal is by sharing helpful talking tips with parents and guardians.

Tip of the month. – **Talk Early**

Chances that children will use alcohol increases with age.

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.



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. Some even start to experiment. 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.

Let your teen know you disapprove of any youth use of alcohol.

"In Mason County 55% of 6th graders and 54% of 8th graders reported that in the past year their parent/guardian talked about not using alcohol."

2012 Mason County Illinois Youth Survey data

Special points of interest:

- September Prevention Tip of the month .
- Conversation Goals
- Prevention Team Contact Info

REFERENCE

Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA's) "Talk, They Hear You" Campaign, www.underagedrinking.com
SAMSHA "A Family Guide to Underage Drinking Prevention," brochure 2010

US. Department of Health and Human Services Administration, "The Surgeon General's Call To Action to Prevention and Reduce Underage Drinking: A Guide to Action for Families"

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Promotes comprehensive community-wide prevention efforts.

Empowers youth & families to develop and lead healthy lifestyles.

Havana Area Prevention Team is a non-profit organization that seeks to promote:

- Healthy, happy, and responsible lifestyles for area youth and families.
- Awareness of positive alternatives and support of positive actions and activities for youth and families in and around the Havana area.

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Talking To Kids About Alcohol

5 Conversation Goals

1. Show you disapprove of underage drinking.

Over 80% of young people ages 10-18 say their parents are the leading influence on their decision to drink or not drink. So they really are listening, and it's important that you send a clear and strong message.

2. Show you care about your child's happiness and well-being.

Young people are more likely to listen when they know you're on their side. Try to reinforce why you don't want your child to drink—not just because you say so, but because you want your child to be happy and safe. The conversation will go a lot better if you're working with, and not against, your child.

3. Show you're a good source of information about alcohol.

You want your child to be making informed decisions about drinking, with reliable information about its dangers. You don't want your child to be learning about alcohol from friends, the internet, or the media—you want to establish yourself as a trustworthy source of information.

4. Show you're paying attention and you'll notice if your child drinks.

You want to show you're keeping an eye on your child, because young people are more likely to drink if they think no one will notice. There are many subtle ways to do this without prying.

5. Build your child's skills and strategies for avoiding underage drinking.

Even if your child doesn't want to drink, peer pressure is a powerful thing. It could be tempting to drink just to avoid looking uncool. To prepare your child to resist peer pressure, you'll need to build skills and practice them.

Keep it low-key. Don't worry, you don't have to get everything across in one talk. Many small talks are better.



For more information please visit [samhsa.gov/underageddrinking](https://www.samhsa.gov/underageddrinking)