

IN GOOD Health



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Conversations With Your Teen May Be Intimidating, but Don't Ever Stop Talking

By Jennifer Faringer

With the new school year now underway concerns may be surfacing about having "the talk" about alcohol with your kids.

This is a conversation that may be intimidating for you as a parent as well as for your child, yet it is so important to keep the lines of communication. Look for opportunities to talk whether that is in the car, during family meals or even while watching television together.

Research has shown that teens whose parents who communicate clearly that underage drinking is not unacceptable are more than 80% less likely to drink than teens whose parents give them other messages providing unclear expectations and boundaries.

To help you consider having these important conversations at every available opportunity here are several conversation starters that come directly from NYS OASAS's Parent Tool Kit:

- Use examples that are relevant and meaningful to your kids like musicians, sports figures and other celebrities who are in the news for their substance use.

"I heard about.... What do you think about that?"

- Be honest with them about any history of alcoholism or other drug problems in your family. Talk to them about how the use of a family member impacted the entire family.

"I worry because you have a higher risk for developing an alcohol or drug problem."

- Let them know how dangerous it really is to drink and drive or ride

with someone who's drinking.

"Did you know it only takes a very small amount of alcohol before you are too impaired to drive?"

- Empower your child, ask them what they think.

"What do you think is the biggest issue that teens face today? How do you face it?"

- Be aware of and sensitive to their transitions: starting middle or high school, the loss of a friend or even their pending graduation.

"This is a difficult time for you are you scared or concerned? I went through this too, let me tell you how it affected me."

These suggestions and many more may be found at the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) www.Talk2Prevent.Ny.gov. For local resources, information or to request a presentation for your community group, contact 585-719-3480 or visit <https://ncadd-ra.org/resources/awareness-campaigns/underage-drinking>.

Jennifer Faringer is the director,



*DePaul's
NCADD-RA
(National
Council on
Alcoholism
& Drug
Dependence-
Rochester Area).*