



Legal Issues

Parents should know:

- As a parent, you cannot give alcohol to your teen's friends under the age of 21 under any circumstance, even in your own home, even with their parent's permission.
- You cannot knowingly allow a person under 21, other than your child, to remain in your home or on your property while consuming or possessing alcohol.

If you break the law:

- You can face a maximum sentence of six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine.
- Others can sue you if you allow anyone under 21 to consume alcohol and they, in turn, hurt someone or damage property.
- Officers can confiscate any alcohol, money or property used in committing the offense.

Health and Safety Issues

While parents may rationalize: "I'd rather my kids drink at home than in a car." "At least they're not doing drugs." "If I let them drink a little now, they won't go crazy when they turn 21." "I did it when I was young and I'm ok." The fact is, underage drinking is hazardous to the health and safety of our children.

#1 If your child drinks alcohol, it is likely that the alcohol will affect his/her brain development.

- It takes about 21 years for the human brain to fully develop.
- If alcohol is heavily consumed in adolescence, the part of the brain responsible for learning and memory can shrink by about 10%.
- When it comes to behavior and brain function, while alcohol has a sedative effect on adults, it acts as a stimulant to adolescents. Due to this, youth are more likely to drink past the point where adults would end up passing out. The more alcohol consumed, the more likely youth are to engage in risky behaviors.

#2 If your child drinks alcohol, you will more likely to have to deal with those issues parents dread.

- Kids who drink are more likely to become sexually active (putting them at greater risk of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases).
- Students who use alcohol report higher levels of skipping school, cheating and getting lower grades.

#3 If your child drinks alcohol, he/she is at a greater risk of becoming addicted later in life.

- The rate of alcoholism is five times higher for kids who drank before age 21.
- Kids who begin to drink before age 15 have an even greater risk of alcohol dependence as an adult.

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