

Pointers for Parents

Shaping Your Child's Decisions About Underage Drinking

(NAPSA)—When it's time to discuss the subject of alcohol, it's important to start talking early, talk often and get others involved.

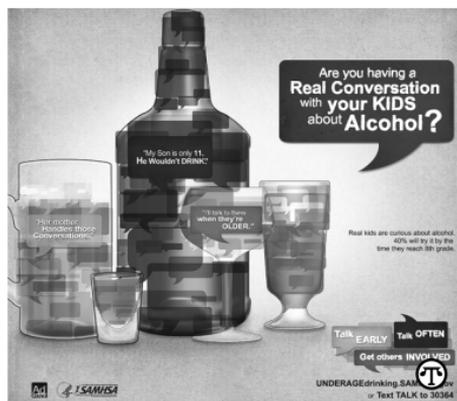
Alcohol is the most widely used substance of abuse among America's youth, contributing to the three leading causes of death among 12- to 20-year-olds (unintentional injury, homicide and suicide). According to a study, more than 26 percent of American Indian or Alaska Native teens drank alcohol in the past month.

Research shows that those who start drinking before age 15 are six times more likely to have alcohol problems as adults than those who start drinking at age 21 or older.

A survey by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) shows that the underage drinking rates were as high as 40 percent in states such as North Dakota and Vermont. The study also reveals that, nationwide, approximately 8.6 percent of past-month drinkers aged 12–20 purchased their own alcohol the last time they drank.

To combat the epidemic of underage drinking, SAMHSA and the Ad Council have produced a series of national public service advertisements to encourage parents to talk to their children about drinking alcohol at an early age.

“Underage drinking is a national crisis putting the lives of



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millions of Americans at risk as well as the futures of many of our youth,” said SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde, J.D. “The national educational campaign aims at bringing to bear the most effective weapon against underage drinking—conversations between parents and their children.”

Created by ad agency G&G through the Ad Council, the PSAs aim to reach parents of children ages 11–15, with an emphasis on parents of middle school children.

The related website features tips on how to start the conversation and resources to send to family members, peers and other adult influencers on their child's decision to drink.

For more information, visit www.stopalcoholabuse.gov.