



# CONVERSATION STARTERS

## Tips For Talking With Your Teen about Drugs & Alcohol

*Let's face it. Talking with teens about drugs and alcohol can be challenging. Just because it is hard doesn't mean these important conversations shouldn't happen. Let the following tips guide you!*

### Tip #1



### **Show you care about your child's health and happiness.**

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

### **Be a reliable source about drugs and alcohol.**

There is so much information out there that is unreliable when it comes to drugs and alcohol. Teens get their information from social media, the internet and peers- make sure they are getting the most credible information from YOU.

### Tip #2



### **Know your child's friends and their families.**

Just because you set your own boundaries for your children around drugs and alcohol doesn't mean that your child's friends' parents do too. Get to know who they hang out with and ensure that their rules are similar to yours.

### Tip #3



## Tip #4



## Take an interest in what your child enjoys.

Teens are more engaged if they feel that you relate to them. Even if you don't like the same things, find out why they enjoy the things that they do- take an active interest in their lives and they could be more willing to open up.

## Talk about drugs and alcohol early and often.

Don't expect the conversation to be "one and done." Have a conversation whenever the opportunity presents itself- in the car, over dinner, during a movie. Capitalize on the small moments and these conversations won't seem as daunting.

## Tip #5



## Set clear rules and expectations.

There should be no questions about what is and is not permissible when it comes to drugs and alcohol. Teens have to make decisions all day, everyday. Make it as easy for them as possible by setting clear and concise rules about drugs and alcohol.

## Tip #6



## RESOURCES

### Talk. They Hear You. 5 Conversation Goals: Talking with Teens About Alcohol and Other Drugs

<https://www.samhsa.gov/talk-they-hear-you>

### Underage Drinking: Talking to your Teen About Alcohol

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/tween-and-teen-health/in-depth/teen-drinking>

### 8 Tips for Talking to Your Teen About Alcohol and Other Drugs

<https://drugpolicy.org/sites/default/files/SafetyFirst-8-Tips-for-Talking-Tip-Sheet.pdf>



The Madison Chatham Coalition is funded by the Office of National Drug Control Policy and is a collaborative partnership between the Centers for Disease Control and the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America.