

"Inspire me"



"Challenge me
to succeed"



"Remind me that
I'm worthwhile"



"Help me
find
my
talents"

Strategies for Parents to Prevent Underage Drinking



"Be a good
role model"



"Ask me
where I'm
going"



Hamilton
Public Health Services



HAMILTON-WENTWORTH
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



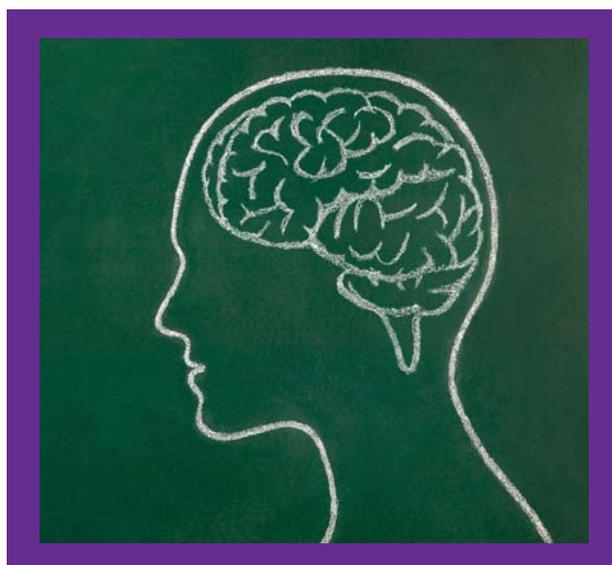
Hamilton-Wentworth
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Introduction

Alcohol is the drug most often used by students in Grades 7 to 12.¹ The chances are high that your child will be exposed to alcohol in some way during his or her school years. As parents or guardians, you can help to prevent or delay your child's use of alcohol.

Alcohol is a depressant (a sedative, or a "downer"). Children and youth are at greater risk to the harmful effects of alcohol. Harms related to alcohol use by children and youth include the following:

- ➔ **Brain impairment:** Alcohol can cause problems with normal brain development and can affect the growing brain of a child and youth. Alcohol can cause memory loss or cognitive (thinking/understanding) problems. Alcohol is also linked to depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders.
- ➔ **Risk-taking behaviours:** Binge drinking (drinking five or more drinks on one occasion) is common among youth. It can cause an increase in poor decision-making and risky behaviours. These behaviours include driving a vehicle after drinking alcohol, driving with someone who has been drinking alcohol and involvement in high-risk sexual behaviour.
- ➔ **Violent and aggressive behaviour:** Alcohol can increase conflict with others. This can cause social problems and/or sexual or physical violence.
- ➔ **Dependency on alcohol later in life:** Children and youth who drink alcohol at an early age are more likely to have trouble with alcohol later in life.²



Parents are a key influence in the lives of children and youth!

This resource was created to help parents prevent or delay their child's alcohol use. Research shows that there are six effective parenting strategies to prevent or delay alcohol use among children and youth.³ This resource provides an overview of each parenting strategy. It also includes tips to support you in helping your child make healthy choices regarding alcohol use.

Did you know?

- ➔ 54.9% of Ontario students in Grades 7 to 12 reported using alcohol in the past 12 months.
- ➔ The rate of alcohol use increases significantly with grade level. In Grade 7, 17% of students reported using alcohol during the past 12 months. By Grade 12, alcohol use escalated to 78%.
- ➔ Overall, 22% of students in Grades 7 to 12 reported binge drinking at least once during the past four weeks. Again, this rate increases significantly with grade level. Grade 7 students' binge drinking rate was 1%. The rate climbed to 40% among grade 12 students.⁴



Parenting Strategies

Parental Monitoring

Monitoring your child's activities means knowing who your child is with, what he or she is doing, and where he or she is. If children and youth are going to misuse alcohol, they tend to do it when adults are not around.

Parental monitoring includes the following:

- ➔ Educate your child on the appropriate and responsible use of Facebook, Twitter, and other forms of social media. Monitor your child's use until you're comfortable with his or her knowledge level.
- ➔ Agree on a curfew and set a time when your child is expected to be home.
- ➔ Make sure your child is able to contact you if plans change.
- ➔ Know how your child is getting home safely.

Remember!

Being overly strict can cause your child to misuse alcohol. Balance privacy with information sharing and adjust when necessary.

Provision of Alcohol

In Ontario, it is illegal to drink alcohol under the age of 19. When parents make alcohol available for underage children and youth, they put these children at risk for alcohol-related harm. They also put themselves and the children at legal risk.

Parents providing alcohol to underage children and youth may be held **criminally** and **civilly** responsible for their actions in regards to alcohol-related incidents.

This is what the law says:

- ➔ Selling or supplying alcohol to children and youth under 19 years of age will result in a fine and an appearance in court.
- ➔ Children and youth under 19 years of age who are found to possess, to have consumed, or to have purchased or attempted to purchase alcohol are committing an offence under the Liquor Licence Act. This can result in a substantial fine.⁵

As a parent, you are legally responsible for what goes on in your house. This applies even if you are not present, you do not know your guests are drinking, or if your guests brought their own alcohol.

General Discipline

General discipline means setting rules and establishing consequences when the rules are not followed. Effective disciplinary strategies support you in creating an environment where rules are respected.

General discipline includes the following:

- ➔ Involve your child in the development of rules and consequences.
- ➔ Ensure both you and your child have a clear understanding of what is expected.
- ➔ Be consistent in your approach to delivering consequences agreed upon by you and your child.
- ➔ Remain calm when enforcing consequences after rules are broken.
- ➔ Seek help if your child consistently breaks the rules/or does not meet expectations.

Parental Modelling

Children and youth learn behaviours by observing their adult role models. A parent's choice to use alcohol, as well as how much and when, may affect the child's decisions.

Modelling responsible drinking includes the following:

- ➔ Limit your use of alcohol according to Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines.⁶
- ➔ Limit your use of alcohol in front of your child.
- ➔ Provide food and non-alcoholic drinks to all guests when alcoholic drinks are available to guests 19 years of age and over.
- ➔ Avoid telling stories in which alcohol is portrayed as "fun" or "glamorous."
- ➔ Avoid using alcohol as a way to cope with stress.



Parent–Child Relationship Quality

A supportive parent–child relationship is characterized by closeness and caring. This in turn is associated with reduced risky behaviour among children and youth. Warmth, bonding, and affection are all qualities of a positive parent–child relationship.

The following strategies can support you in enhancing your relationship with your child:

- ➔ Support your child to find passions and interests.
- ➔ Be involved in your child’s day-to-day life.
- ➔ Remind your child that you love him or her on a regular basis.
- ➔ Be consistent in following through with agreements.
- ➔ Demonstrate that you care about your child.

General Communication

Ongoing communication allows children and youth to talk openly with their parents about areas of interest and concern in their lives.

Successful communication strategies include the following:

- ➔ Plan regular one-on-one time together.
- ➔ Have fun participating in activities that interest your child.
- ➔ Eat dinner together on a regular basis.
- ➔ Listen to what your child has to say.
- ➔ Respect your child’s privacy.
- ➔ Remember to knock before you go into his or her room.
- ➔ Avoid snooping through his or her room and belongings.



Tips for Hosting a Party in Your Home

- Ensure that parties are not advertised on Facebook, Twitter, or other forms of social media.
- Communicate that the party is an alcohol-free event.
- Ensure there is adult supervision.
- Set a guest list with your child.
- Do not allow children and youth to come and go from the party.
- Set rules and limits regarding the party's start and end times.
- State which parts of the house are off-limits.
- Ensure that any alcohol or medication in your home is not accessible to guests.
- Encourage your child to have other activities like videos, games or karaoke at the party.



Tips for When Your Child is Attending a Party Elsewhere

- Know where your child is going.
- Get the name, address, and phone number of the location.
- Discuss what to do if alcohol is present.
- Encourage your child to establish a buddy system with a friend.
- Ensure your child knows that it is okay to call home for a ride under any circumstance, even if he or she has used alcohol.
- Set a curfew.
- Be up to greet your child when he or she arrives home.
- Clearly state that the same rules apply if your child plans to sleep away from home.

Resources

Alternatives for Youth - ayhamilton.ca

Children's Mental Health Ontario - www.kidsmentalhealth.ca

Parent Action on Drugs - www.parentactionondrugs.org

Parent Further - www.parentfurther.com

Parenting Strategies: Preventing Adolescent Alcohol Misuse - parentingstrategies.net

Need more information or support?

Contact your family physician, or faith leader, or administration at your child's school.



References

¹Paglia-Boak, A., Adlaf, E. M., & Mann, R. E. (2011). Drug use among Ontario Students, 1977- 2011: OSDUHS highlights (CAMH Research Document Series No. 33). Toronto, ON: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

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³Ryan, S. M., Jorm, A. F., & Lubman, D. I. (2010). Parenting factors associated with reduced adolescent alcohol use: A systematic review of longitudinal studies. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 44(9), 774–783.

⁴Paglia-Boak, A., Adlaf, E. M., & Mann, R. E. (2011). Drug use among Ontario Students, 1977- 2011: OSDUHS highlights (CAMH Research Document Series No. 33). Toronto, ON: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

⁵Government of Ontario. (2011). Liquor License Act. Retrieved from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90l19_e.htm

⁶Butt, P., Beirness, D., Gliksman, L., Paradis, C., & Stockwell, T. (2011). Alcohol and health in Canada: A summary of evidence and guidelines for low-risk drinking. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.