



***Keep Kids  
Alcohol  
Free:***

***Strategies  
for  
Action***

# Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free

*Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free*, a unique coalition of Governors' spouses, Federal agencies, and public and private organizations, is an initiative to prevent the use of alcohol by children ages 9 to 15. It is the only national effort that focuses on this age group. Alcohol use begins at a very young age, and the proportion of young people who drink often or heavily is alarming. Serious, often lifelong consequences for health and well-being can result. The *Leadership* initiative is alerting the Nation to this critical public health problem and mobilizing action to prevent it.



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*The strategies included in this guide were selected by a panel of scientists convened by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, part of the National Institutes of Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The scientists were chosen for their distinguished careers in research on alcohol abuse and dependence and related prevention programs. We are indebted to the following panel participants for their invaluable contributions:*

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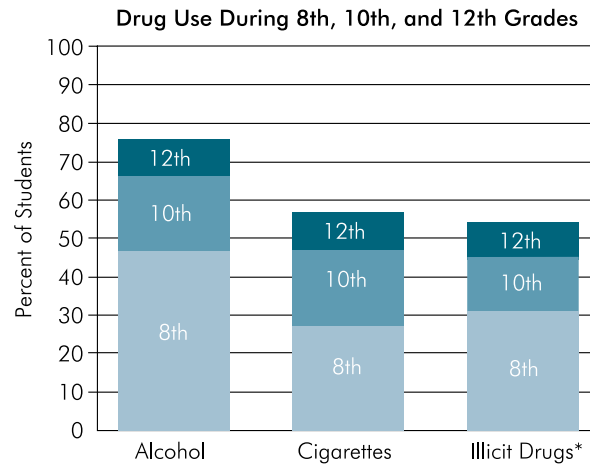
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## The Overlooked Age Group

Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among our Nation's young people, surpassing tobacco and illicit drugs.<sup>1</sup> Alcohol is a powerful, mood-altering drug, and

its use by children poses very serious health risks for bodies and minds that are still maturing. It can cloud judgment and interfere with developing social skills and academic achievement. For example, research demonstrates that adolescents who abuse alcohol may remember 10 percent less of what they have learned than those who don't drink.<sup>2</sup> Alcohol use may also lead to increased sexual activity, exposure to sexually transmitted disease, unplanned pregnancy, suicidal and violent behavior, criminal activity, injury, and death.

Moreover, children are beginning to drink at very young ages, sometimes before they finish elementary school. Many drink specifically to get drunk. Although drinking is often considered a normal part of growing up, like starting to date and learning to drive, it is not. The Nation must recognize this overlooked group of drinkers—the 9- to 15-year-olds—and understand the extent of the problem and its dangers. The statistics tell the story.



\*Includes inhalants

Source: Johnston, et al. (2003) Monitoring the Future.<sup>3</sup>


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**The age at which a person first uses alcohol is a powerful predictor of lifetime alcohol abuse and dependence. More than 40 percent of individuals who begin drinking before age 13 will develop alcohol abuse or alcohol dependence at some time in their lives.<sup>4</sup>**

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- ***Kids are pressured to drink.*** According to a 1995 national survey of fourth through sixth graders who read the *Weekly Reader*, 30 percent said that they got “a lot” of pressure from their classmates to drink beer.<sup>5</sup>
- ***Kids are experimenting.*** By eighth grade, 46 percent of American children have tried alcohol, and by tenth grade, this percentage rises to almost two-thirds.<sup>6</sup>
- ***Kids are drinking regularly.*** About 41 percent of ninth graders say they have drunk alcohol in the past month—more than those who say they have smoked cigarettes.<sup>7</sup>
- ***Kids drink to get drunk.*** One-fifth of eighth graders and 42 percent of tenth graders have been drunk at least once.<sup>8</sup> Almost one-fourth of ninth graders report binge drinking (consuming five or more drinks in a row) in the past month.<sup>9</sup>

## Using This Guide

The dangers of early alcohol use are clear. What may be less clear is how to begin to prevent it. This guide is a starting point for people like you—parents, teachers, health professionals, law enforcement personnel, alcohol retailers, policymakers, and others who are concerned with the well-being of children. It describes three basic prevention strategies and ways they can be applied in the home, the school, and the community. Addresses for online “e-sources” point to further information. 

To help you better understand how these strategies can be put into action, the guide also includes real-life examples of efforts by people around the country to prevent drinking by 9- to 15-year-olds. Although the strategies may be adapted in different ways by different communities, their science base ensures that no matter what the location, from rural farming areas, to suburban school districts, to inner-city neighborhoods, these strategies work.

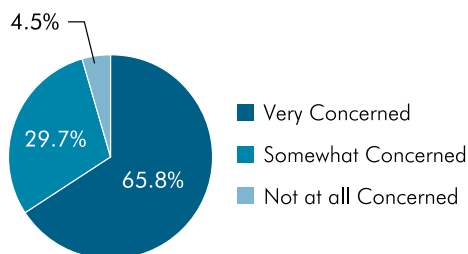
### HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

Start by reading the brief descriptions of the three basic prevention strategies covered in the guide. Then learn how they are applied in the home, the school, and the community. Discover examples of how other communities have used the strategies. Take advantage of the e-sources provided for each strategy to learn how they can be adapted to your community’s needs. Consider the concrete steps for getting started, which range from talking to your children about alcohol to mobilizing your entire community in a prevention campaign. Use the wealth of web sites that direct you to more detailed information to help you develop comprehensive programs. Finally, consider seeking help from the State contacts listed at the back of this guide.

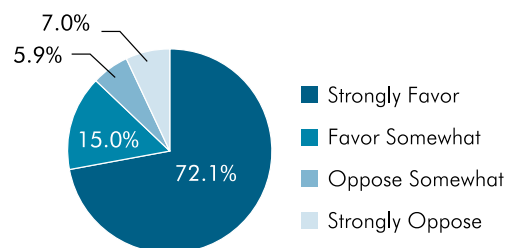
### A CALL TO ACTION

While the idea of starting a prevention campaign in your community may seem a little daunting, experience indicates that an appeal based on the need to protect children, combined with some friendly persuasion, will get people involved. Studies showing high levels of underage drinking, easy accessibility to alcohol, and lack of compliance with existing laws can serve as triggers to action. Small, informed groups who actively address these types of problems are able to achieve remarkable outcomes. The following survey results show that the desire for change is there:

When asked how they felt about the problem of teenage drinking, 96 percent of respondents expressed concern.



When asked how strongly they favored or opposed a law to punish adults who provide alcohol to minors, 87 percent of respondents supported punishing adults who provide alcohol to minors.



Source: Youth Access to Alcohol Survey, University of Minnesota, 2002.<sup>10</sup>

# Strategies That Work



Research and experience show that successful alcohol prevention programs should incorporate one or more of the following three science-based strategies:<sup>11</sup>

## **REDUCE THE AVAILABILITY OF ALCOHOL**

The most documented principle in alcohol use prevention is this: Make it harder for young people to get alcohol, and they will drink less. Communities can make alcohol less available by promoting responsible adult behavior and holding adults accountable when they provide alcohol to minors; by raising the price of beer, wine, and liquor; or by reducing the number of places where alcohol is sold or served.

## **IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Communities can better enforce policies designed to stop drinking among children and adolescents. Studies find that existing laws regulating underage drinking are often not enforced. When these laws are ignored, it not only enables young people to drink, but also communicates a general indifference.

## **CHANGE SOCIAL NORMS**

Children draw conclusions about alcohol-related *social norms* from what they see and hear about alcohol in their families and communities. These norms strongly influence their own attitudes and behaviors regarding alcohol. When communities consistently prevent underage access to alcohol, publicize and enforce alcohol-related laws, and limit the promotion of alcohol, they reinforce the message that alcohol use by young people is *unacceptable*.

## **Choosing an Initial Strategy**

As you plan your campaign, you should choose one or a combination of strategies from this guide that will work best for your community. The ideas listed below will help you decide. The strategy should be:

- Direct, so people will understand what is being proposed.
- Possible within the resources, constraints, and influence of your community or agency.
- Generally supported by citizens, businesses, and public officials.
- Able to show some results in the short term—in one year, for example.
- Able to help build coalitions or partnerships that will broaden the reach of the campaign.

Start now and your community will be a safer and healthier place for young people of all ages.

## The Home

The sanctity of one's home and family is a long-standing American value. Some may feel that regulating alcohol service in private homes and at parties violates this sanctity. However, when adults recognize the problems and dangers associated with underage drinking and their legal responsibilities to prevent it, they understand the need for these regulations.

Change begins at home. For example, a recent study shows that children whose parents are involved in their lives—holding regular conversations, attending after-school events, listening to their problems—are less likely to drink or smoke.<sup>12</sup> The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism has prepared a pamphlet called *Make A Difference: Talk to Your Child About Alcohol*. This 24-page guide is geared to parents and guardians of young people ages 10 to 14. It contains a short description of the risks and problems associated with alcohol use among young people as well as actions parents can take to talk with children about these issues. It offers specific suggestions for teaching children how to say no to a drink, hosting alcohol-free parties for teens, and noticing the warning signs of drinking problems in children and adolescents.



Available online in English and Spanish:

<http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org/pubs/PDF/makeadifference.pdf>

<http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org/pubs/PDF/hagaladiferencia.pdf>

### Taking Action

#### “Parents Who Host, Lose The Most”

Too often, especially at graduation and prom time, well-meaning parents host parties at which they serve alcohol to their children and their children's friends. In their effort to provide a controlled event, they unwittingly support the idea that teen drinking is acceptable. The Ohio Parents for Drug Free Youth, working with The Ohio Task Force on Combating Underage Drinking, large corporations, and community groups, developed a Statewide project called “Parents Who Host, Lose The Most.” The spokesperson for this partnership is First Lady Hope Taft. State corporations and local businesses convey the program's message, “Don't be a party to teenage drinking. It's against the law.” on paycheck envelopes and grocery bags, on signs in store windows, and at checkout stands.<sup>13</sup>

## Reduce Availability

*Prevent Availability to Minors in Homes* – In some States, *social host liability laws* spell out the responsibilities of parents and other adults for providing alcohol to anyone under the age of 21 and the penalties for disobeying the laws. Public information campaigns can teach parents about these laws as well as their responsibility to keep alcohol where children and adolescents cannot get it.



For examples of two new laws enacted in Minnesota that specifically target adults over 21 who serve alcohol to youth, see <http://www.miph.org/mjt/newlaws.html>

### Parents pledge to provide safe homes

In Safe Homes, a long-running program to prevent underage drinking, parents sign a pledge to follow some simple principles that provide a safer environment for their children. Safe Homes recognizes that parents and kids need support to resist peer pressure to drink. The pledge is a one-year commitment, renewed annually. Parents agree to:

- ▶ Provide adult supervision for all children visiting their homes.
- ▶ Provide a secure storage place for all forms of alcohol in their homes.
- ▶ Not allow parties or gatherings in their homes when they are not there.
- ▶ Not allow children to drink alcohol in their homes.
- ▶ Talk with any Safe Homes parent of a child they personally observe using alcohol or drugs.<sup>14</sup>

**Regulate Home Delivery** – More than half the States in the United States allow home delivery of alcohol. However, jurisdictions can forbid or restrict home delivery of alcohol to prevent unsupervised alcohol sales. If communities choose not to ban home deliveries of alcohol, they can require that delivery people record the purchaser's ID. In the future, home delivery to underage persons may become a bigger problem as Internet purchases become more widespread.



For examples of two proposed ordinances prohibiting home delivery, see

<http://www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/local/delivord.html>

## Improve Enforcement

**Break Up Parties** – Large parties of underage drinkers pose a problem for police. On the one hand, police have a responsibility to get involved and make arrests or issue warnings. On the other hand, they know that young people may scatter to their cars when the police arrive, increasing the risk of crashes. Some jurisdictions have developed special police procedures that have been successful in breaking up large parties safely.



For a discussion of safe ways to break up parties, see *A Practical Guide to Preventing and Dispersing Underage Drinking Parties* at

<http://www.udetc.org/documents/UnderageDrinking.pdf>

### Letters to parents explain social host laws

In Oregon, when school personnel learn about teen parties at which alcohol is served, they contact the Alcohol Beverage Control Commission. The Commission, in turn, sends a letter to parents explaining that they are breaking the law by hosting a party at which alcohol is served to minors.<sup>15</sup>

## The School

As school-based prevention programs have become more guided by research, they have broadened their focus from the individual to include environmental influences and social norms, in particular the effects of peers. For example, studies show that sixth graders who think that more of their peers are drinking than actually are drinking are more likely to drink when compared with those students who learn that their peers do not approve of drinking.<sup>16</sup>

Project Northland, developed by researchers at the University of Minnesota with a grant from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, is a comprehensive alcohol use prevention program for students in grades six through eight. This program has successfully reduced alcohol use in this age group. The participants learn that fewer of their peers drink alcohol than they thought, how to resist pressure to drink, and to talk with their parents about what happens if they do drink.<sup>17</sup>

 For more information about Project Northland and other school-based curricula, see <http://modelprograms.samhsa.gov>


### Taking Action

#### School district action results in a community coalition

The Troy, Michigan, school district put in place a three-pronged prevention effort when the town started seeing more youths using alcohol. It included a peer pressure resistance program in the schools, a parent group, and a community program. The federally funded Troy Community Coalition that resulted from this initial effort worked with groups from preschoolers to senior citizens. The coalition offered a class to help parents talk to their children about alcohol and encouraged police to make sure bars and stores were not selling alcohol to minors. Because youth were stealing alcohol from grocery store shelves, the coalition also successfully worked for legislation requiring retailers to safeguard the alcohol in their stores. In addition, the coalition trained pediatricians to help parents understand the problems associated with underage drinking.<sup>18</sup>

## Change Social Norms

***Reinforce Acceptable Social Norms*** – Schools can establish alcohol policies that clearly state expectations and penalties regarding alcohol use by students. Such policies reinforce the norm that underage drinking will not be tolerated. School staff, students, parents, and the community must support and enforce such policies consistently in order to shape appropriate attitudes about alcohol among students.

 For more information on what schools can do, see <http://www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/policy/schools.html>



A good school alcohol policy:

- States that alcohol and alcohol use are not allowed on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, and while students are representing the school.
- Describes the consequences for violating the policy.
- Explains how to assess and refer students who abuse alcohol and guarantees that self-referral will be treated confidentially and will not be punished.
- Pays attention to due process issues in dealing with violators.
- Is cautious about imposing suspension and expulsion for violators because students who are away from school and unsupervised may spend the time drinking alcohol.

#### Taking Action

##### **Nevada Department of Education survey galvanizes action**

A survey by the Nevada Department of Education in 1998 showed that 4 percent of sixth graders had consumed five drinks in a row in the past 2 weeks. These results sparked coalitions across the State to support laws and other enforcement efforts to reduce access to alcohol by minors. In Washoe County, Nevada, a group of parents set up a system in which retailers who failed compliance checks received followup visits from members of the group, while those who passed received special recognition.<sup>19</sup>

*Offer Students Feedback About Use Rates* – Schools can teach students actual alcohol use rates through education programs. Participants discuss how many students actually drink and whether drinking is a good idea. Students taught with this approach use alcohol less and have fewer related problems because they want to be in the majority.<sup>20</sup>



For more information about normative education, see

<http://www.tanglewood.net/products/allstars/article1995.htm>

#### Taking Action

##### **Community awareness results in a peer mentoring program**

In Haverhill, Massachusetts, a community partnership of citizens conducted surveys of schools, businesses, neighborhood groups, and various communities, including Hispanic neighborhoods. Learning that minors could easily get alcohol, they published the results of these surveys and received support for local prevention efforts. One effort was to recruit a core group of nondrinking students to act as peer mentors in the schools.<sup>21</sup>

## The Community

Alcohol is a regular feature of leisure activities in most communities. Alcohol ads and billboards commonly display attractive, youthful models. Neighborhoods allow alcohol companies to sponsor local fairs, races, sports activities, and other family-focused events. And communities often turn a blind eye to underage drinking and sales to minors. In all these ways, society tells children that alcohol use is accepted, expected, and even essential to having a good time. Many communities are using a variety of strategies to control the visibility and availability of alcohol in their children's environment.

For example, in an experimental program funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, seven participating communities made changes in local alcohol-related policies and practices when compared to eight nonparticipating communities. The changes involved local institutional policies as well as practices of law enforcement agencies, licensing departments, community and civic groups, houses of worship, schools, and the local media. The direct impact of this program, called Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (CMCA), required more checking of age IDs by alcohol retailers, resulting in fewer purchases of alcohol by 18- to 20-year-olds. CMCA shows that changing the alcohol-related social and policy environment in communities is essential to long-term prevention.<sup>22</sup>

 For free action guides developed by community groups for this project, see <http://www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol>


### Taking Action

#### Volunteers win vote to eliminate alcohol establishments

In Chicago, Illinois, a neighborhood study showed that 60 percent of the area's crimes revolved around liquor stores and bars. In response to these findings, volunteers, under the leadership of their church pastor, gathered statistics about the spread of liquor stores in their neighborhood. They even mapped their locations to help people see the full extent of the problem. Committed volunteers went door-to-door to win neighbors over to the cause. They circulated petitions and registered voters, resulting in a community vote to close a number of alcohol establishments. But progress sometimes happens in small steps. Opponents to the ban legally overturned votes to close certain bars. Nevertheless, the community has closed some bars and is united to keep on in its efforts.<sup>23</sup>

## Reduce Availability

***Raise the Price of Alcoholic Beverages*** – Higher prices can reduce alcohol purchases, particularly those by minors.<sup>24, 25</sup> Most studies have found that when the price of alcohol goes up, consumption by young people goes down.<sup>26, 27</sup> In addition, research shows that an increase in the price of alcohol is linked to reductions in alcohol-related problems among adolescents.<sup>28</sup> The most efficient means of increasing the price of alcohol is by increasing taxes.

 For a discussion about raising the prices on alcoholic beverages, see [http://www.cspinet.org/booze/taxguide/tax\\_toc.htm](http://www.cspinet.org/booze/taxguide/tax_toc.htm)

**Control the Number of Alcohol Outlets** – Studies show that the more alcohol outlets there are in a community, the more citizens drink and the greater the probability of alcohol-related problems.<sup>29</sup> Large numbers of alcohol outlets make it easier to buy alcohol and make it a more visible part of the community. Large numbers of outlets can also stretch the resources of enforcement agencies, making it harder to enforce minimum age laws. Communities can control the number of alcohol outlets through planning and zoning ordinances and conditional use permits.


 For a discussion of how to use local regulatory and land use powers to prevent underage drinking, see <http://www.udetc.org/documents/regulatory.pdf>

#### Taking Action

##### **Liquor license denied due to citizen action**

In Salinas, California, a small group of citizens was concerned about the concentration of alcohol outlets in their primarily Hispanic neighborhood. They urged others in the community to oppose plans granting a liquor license to a proposed supermarket in a new shopping mall. They persuaded the city council to deny the liquor license and to lease the property to a daycare center. At the groundbreaking ceremony, the image of a young child with a shovel breaking ground for the new center captured the spirit of a community that cares about a healthy environment for its children.<sup>30</sup>

**Train and License Servers and Sellers** – In many States and jurisdictions, alcohol licensees and their employees must be trained before they can do business. Training may cover the importance of checking IDs, how to identify false IDs, how to refuse politely to sell to underage persons, and who is liable (sellers or employees) when sales are made to minors. This training is more effective when alcohol managers and owners are also trained in how to establish alcohol policies and practices for their businesses.<sup>31</sup> Some States and jurisdictions are also setting a minimum age for servers and sellers of alcohol and requiring them to be licensed or certified.


 For examples of what some States are doing, see  
Alabama <http://www.abcboard.state.al.us/edu.html>  
California <http://www.abc.ca.gov>  
Virginia <http://www.abc.state.va.us/Education/tips/Tips%20Workshops.html>

#### Taking Action

##### **RASS: Retailers and law enforcers team up to find solutions**


In North Carolina, retail and beer and wine executives, the Alcohol Beverage Control agency, and alcohol law enforcement officials formed a coalition called the Responsible Alcohol Sales and Service (RASS) Coalition. Their goal is to reduce sales of alcohol to underage persons. Their comprehensive State plan includes strengthening penalties for adult providers and underage purchasers; using color-coded drivers licenses to check age; conducting secret shopper programs to monitor sales; and holding a media campaign to let people know about the problem. The RASS coalition members are wholesalers, retailers, law enforcement personnel, elected officials, trade association members, health care professionals, and government officials. Benefits include increased customer respect for and understanding of retailers' responsibilities, increased community support, and greater public and retailer awareness of the dangers of underage drinking.<sup>32</sup>

**Register Kegs** – Large, unsupervised parties where alcohol is served, both in private homes and in other settings, have become a common part of the youth scene in many communities. Too often these parties take the form of “keggers”—parties where beer is available to everyone who attends. With keg registration, each keg is engraved with a unique identifier that is linked to the purchaser’s ID. If the keg turns up at a party where underaged people are drinking, the authorities can use the keg ID to trace the person responsible and impose appropriate penalties.


 For a discussion of the issues surrounding keg registration policies, see <http://www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/policy/beerkeg.html>

## Improve Enforcement

**Enforce Establishment Policies** – One way to reduce sales to minors is to check the age identification of all individuals who appear to be younger than 30. Establishments that regularly check IDs and closely supervise sales by employees have lower rates of underage sales.<sup>33</sup> Communities can request owners and managers of alcohol establishments to require ID checks as a standard policy and to make sure their employees understand this policy. Communities that publicize and praise retailers who do not sell to anyone under 21 encourage retailers to become partners in the effort to prevent underage drinking.

 For a discussion of age identification policies, see <http://www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/policy/checkid.html>

**Conduct Compliance Checks** – Compliance checks can show whether sellers and servers of alcohol are obeying minimum age laws. A decoy (an individual who is underage or looks underage) attempts an alcohol purchase using no ID or a false ID. If a sale is made, the police can take appropriate action. Police incident reports can also point to the merchants who made the underage sales. These enforcement strategies work better if they are widely publicized to outlet owners and their staff.<sup>34</sup>

 For a practical guide to developing and implementing a compliance check system for establishments that sell or serve alcohol, see <http://www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/pdf/manual.pdf>

### Taking Action


#### Community action greatly increases enforcement

In Minnesota, law enforcement officers found that in many communities teens could easily buy alcohol in almost half of the stores tested with compliance checks. Citizens united to work for better enforcement of local laws to stop minors from having easy access to alcohol. Calling themselves the Action on Alcohol and Teens, the original group of seven broadened its network by speaking to civic groups, setting up an e-mail action alert, starting a newsletter, and reaching out to other already existing prevention groups. Efforts resulted in a St. Paul City Council mandate to conduct yearly compliance checks for all St. Paul liquor establishments and a decision to prosecute parents and others over age 21 who illegally give alcohol to kids.<sup>35</sup>

### Putting the mayor on the team gets results

In Pottsville, Pennsylvania, an anti-underage drinking group received funds from the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board to develop a community coalition. The coalition, the Pottsville Partnership for Youth Alcohol Prevention, in turn asked the mayor to chair its steering committee. With the mayor on the team, the partnership passed a city ordinance requiring all alcohol licensees in Pottsville to pass an alcohol server training course. (In Pennsylvania, the State Liquor Control Board offers businesses free training and technical assistance.) Eighty percent of the licensees completed the training in the first 3 months after the ordinance was passed. Responding positively to the training, participants also asked for more help with other responsibilities, such as checking IDs.<sup>36</sup>

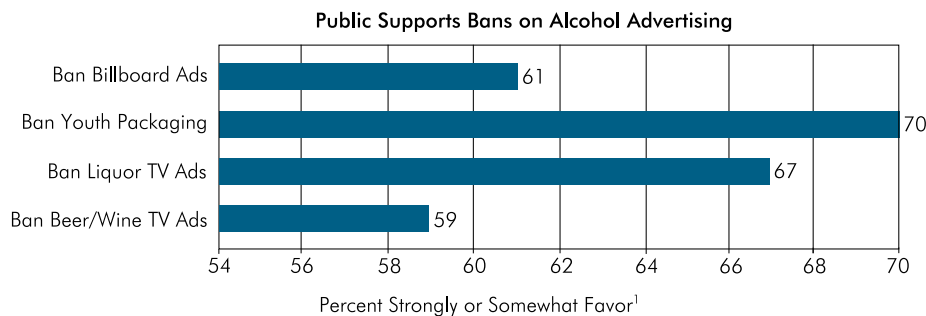
***Deter Third-Party Sales*** – Surveys suggest that many minors get alcohol from adults of legal age who buy it for them.<sup>37</sup> Such “third-party sales” are illegal in most States. In those States, adults who buy alcohol for underaged persons can be warned, cited, or arrested by the police. Merchants can also inform their customers about criminal and civil liabilities for providing alcohol to individuals under the age of 21.

 For a discussion of this and other methods to deter third party sales, see <http://www.udetc.org/documents/Reducing%203rd%20Party.pdf>

## Change Social Norms

***Remove Alcohol Promotions That Appeal to Children*** – Children see and hear positive messages about alcohol every day. Billboard ads and store promotions for alcoholic beverages often display attractive young people and cute cartoon characters. Many products, from T-shirts to cookie jars, feature alcohol beverage logos. Communities can ask billboard companies and local merchants to stop alcohol promotions and remove tie-in products that target children.

 For suggestions and considerations for implementing restrictions on alcohol advertising, see <http://www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/policy/adrstrct.html>



<sup>1</sup>Weighted frequencies; excludes nonresponse and “missing” cases.

Source: Youth Access to Alcohol Survey, University of Minnesota, 2002.<sup>38</sup>

## Getting Started



The suggestions below are good first steps to begin your campaign to prevent alcohol use by children in your community. They will help you find out what your community is already doing and where additional efforts might be needed. They will also help you to get in touch with other individuals and groups in your community who are already taking action or who might like to get involved. Just by talking to people about this issue, you will draw attention to it and put it on the public agenda.

- Talk to your children about the dangers of early alcohol use. Encourage friends and neighbors to talk to their children.
- Ask your doctor or pediatrician to discuss alcohol use during your children's annual physicals.
- Share this pamphlet with members of your community.
- Support recreational alternatives to drinking and provide alcohol-free parties for young people.
- Encourage parents to learn about their responsibilities regarding alcohol access and service to children and adolescents in their homes.
- Talk to teachers, counselors, school administrators, and school board members to make sure that school prevention programs put equal emphasis on alcohol and illicit drug use.
- Encourage your schools to adopt alcohol policies modeled after the one on page 7.
- Place the issue of alcohol use by children on agendas for meetings of PTAs, the city council, faith groups, the Rotary Club, and other community groups and organizations.
- Start public discussions about alcohol use by the children in your community with a focus on the messages your community is sending.
- Involve young people in your community's existing prevention efforts.
- Write letters to the editors of your local newspapers. Ask them to print articles about the dangers of early alcohol use.
- Personally contact elected and appointed officials at local and State levels to inform them about the problem and what can be done to solve it.
- Enlist increased support for immediate and consistent enforcement of existing underage alcohol-related drinking laws in your community.



# Mobilizing Communities



This guide offers effective, practical prevention strategies for communities that have decided to take action to prevent underage drinking, especially among children and young adolescents. Some of the strategies may lead to such changes as revised zoning laws, new policies or legislation, better enforcement of existing laws, and establishment of school policies on alcohol use. All will require some degree of community support.

According to recent studies,<sup>39</sup> communities that have used the strategies described in this guide have successfully reduced the rate of underage alcohol purchases. The key to success was to combine several strategies in one comprehensive prevention program. The challenge to success was to unite and organize community groups. The following resources are good places to find information that will help you organize for prevention in your community:


## Prevention Decision Support System (PDSS)

This online interactive tool developed by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) is a step-by-step guide for those interested in developing community and Statewide prevention programs. It covers procedures for doing needs assessments, building capacity, selecting best and promising interventions, and conducting evaluations.

 <http://www.preventiondss.org>


## Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)

This grass roots organization, with more than 600 chapters nationwide, seeks effective solutions to drunk driving and underage drinking problems.

 To find the MADD chapter nearest you, see <http://www.madd.org/chapters>


## Join Together Online

This online service provides practical resources to help communities develop new alliances, and find creative solutions to prevent alcohol use by young people.

 For access to a technical assistance package on underage drinking, see <http://www.jointogether.org/sa/files/pdf/underagedrinking.pdf>


## Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)

CADCA is an organization that provides resources and training to community coalitions.

 For information on advocacy and coalition building, see <http://www.cadca.org>

## National Issues Forums

These forums, sponsored by The Kettering Foundation, are public deliberations at the local level, through which citizens can share perspectives, confront issues, and shape public opinion.

 To obtain a forum starter kit that includes an issue book on alcohol, see <http://www.nifi.org/starter.html>

## Additional e-sources

The funding partners in this initiative offer a wealth of materials that will be useful to those who are developing prevention campaigns in their communities.

### **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, NIH, DHHS**


#### *How Does Alcohol Affect the World of a Child?*

This concise and easy-to-read brochure brings together a range of statistics on alcohol use by kids, its impact on their health and well-being, and the broader impact of alcohol use on society.

 <http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org/gs/pubs/pdf/statbooklet.pdf>  
[http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org/gs/pubs/pdf/stat\\_Spanish.pdf](http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org/gs/pubs/pdf/stat_Spanish.pdf)

#### *Make a Difference: Talk to Your Child About Alcohol*

This guide describes the health risks and other problems associated with alcohol use by older children and young adolescents and offers tips to help parents and guardians establish open, trusting communication with their children. It also suggests ways for children to say no to alcohol, lists warning signs of a drinking problem, and outlines specific prevention strategies for parents and guardians.

 <http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org/pubs/PDF/makeadifference.pdf>  
<http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org/pubs/PDF/hagaladiferencia.pdf>

### **The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

*2001 Youth Access to Alcohol Survey. Summary Report. December 2002.* This survey summarizes the attitudes and opinions of respondents on policies affecting youth access to alcohol. Many of the queries and responses relate to environmental and enforcement prevention strategies.

 [http://www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/pdf/2002\\_report.pdf](http://www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/pdf/2002_report.pdf)

#### *Reducing Underage Drinking Through Coalitions*

The American Medical Association and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are helping communities find ways to reduce underage drinking through coalitions. The coalitions focus on changing the social environment in order to discourage alcohol use among young people.

 [http://www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net/overview\\_rudc.htm](http://www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net/overview_rudc.htm)

### **National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, NIH, DHHS**

#### *Alcoholism Studies*

This site describes multiple studies that NCMHD is sponsoring or co-sponsoring with other agencies, including studies on minority alcohol prevention.

 <http://www.ncmhd.nih.gov/>

### **The National Women's Health Information Center, The Office on Women's Health, DHHS**

#### *Women Of Color Health Data Book*

This data book contains statistics about alcohol use by adolescent and adult females of color.

 <http://www.4woman.gov/owh/pub/woc>



### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT**

#### *2000 Youth Fatal Crash and Alcohol Facts*

This report documents actions that must be taken to reduce teenage alcohol-related fatalities. They include reaching the parents who ignore drinking by their underage children; increasing enforcement of laws shown to be effective in reducing fatalities; getting treatment for those hard-to-reach young people who are alcoholics or have drinking problems; and convincing young people that underage drinking, in addition to drinking and driving, is socially unacceptable.

 <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol/2002YFCAF/preface.html>

### **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, OJJ, DOJ**


#### *Strategies to Reduce Underage Alcohol Use: Typology and Brief Overview*

This document provides a conceptual framework for understanding the array of strategies available to prevent underage alcohol use. It also provides a simple assessment of the level of effect that might be expected from each strategy, based on existing research and evaluation.

 <http://www.udetc.org/documents/strategies.pdf>

#### *Regulatory Strategies for Preventing Youth Access to Alcohol: Best Practices*

This document provides guidance on the best practices for shaping and implementing laws and regulations to restrict the commercial and social availability of alcohol to youth and to deter young people from attempting to purchase or consume alcohol.

 <http://www.udetc.org/documents/accesslaws.pdf>

### **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, DHHS**

#### *Prevention Enhancement Protocols System (PEPS) – Preventing Problems Related to Alcohol Availability: Environmental Approaches*

This CSAP document, presented in three formats for three different audiences, provides an extensive discussion of the many approaches that communities can take to prevent alcohol use by underage youth. Suggested for broad use, the guidelines offer practical, detailed interventions along with discussions of the advantages and disadvantages of these interventions. Each format is available online.

 Practitioners Guide <http://www.health.org/govpubs/PHD822/aap.htm>

Reference Guide <http://www.health.org/govpubs/PHD822/aar.htm>

Parent and Community Guide <http://www.health.org/govpubs/PHD822/acc.htm>

#### *Underage Drinking Prevention – Action Guide and Planner*

This CSAP guide and planner suggests strategies for implementing coordinated prevention activities. For planning purposes, it includes a calendar that identifies themes and issues around which to organize. It also includes relevant statistics, sample letters, press releases, speeches, and other materials to adapt for local campaigns.

 <http://www.health.org/govpubs/PHD858/index.pdf>

## State Contacts

The following pathways will take you to directories of individual State agencies or regional offices that will be able to provide you with local resources:

### **State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Agencies**

These agencies direct the alcohol and drug abuse programs in their States, overseeing treatment and prevention activities.

National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD)

 <http://www.nasadad.org/Features/visit1.htm>

### **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center**

OJJDP has awarded grants to all 50 States and the District of Columbia under the Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws initiative. The following e-source takes you to the State contacts for the initiative:

Enforcement of Underage Drinking Program

 <http://www.udetc.org/StateContacts.asp>

### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**

NHTSA has 10 regional offices, each of which offers a special focus on youth drinking and driving.

Regional Offices:

 <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/whatis/regions>

### **State Alcohol Control Boards and Liquor Control Agencies**

These organizations are responsible for licensing the alcohol industries, for collecting and auditing taxes and fees paid by the licensees, and for enforcing the laws and regulations that pertain to the alcohol beverage industries.

National Alcohol Control Beverage Association (not all States are members)

 <http://www.nabca.org/control.html>

## Endnotes

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TO KEEP CHILDREN  
ALCOHOL FREE

[www.alcoholfreechildren.org](http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org)

For more information about the Leadership initiative or any of the materials presented in this guide, contact:

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Children Alcohol Free  
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Chevy Chase, MD 20815

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Because we are constantly updating our web pages to incorporate the most recent statistics, there may be some differences between the statistics in our published documents and those on the Web site. Please note that the Web site statistics are always our most current.

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