



youth service bureau

When Other Parents Host

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What to do if other parents provide alcohol to your kids... and don't see it as a problem.

As a parent, it can be frustrating and uncomfortable to learn that other parents have been providing alcohol to your underage child. It can be difficult to know what to say to your child and to the other parents, especially if you are good friends with these parents and have trusted them to supervise and care for your child. Here are some things to keep in mind when faced with this issue.

1) Share your concerns with the other parents.

It may be an awkward conversation to have, but share your concerns and let the parents know that you aren't comfortable with them providing alcohol to your child. They may simply be unaware that you feel this way. Some parents may understand and respect your wishes, but others may not understand your concern. Either way, it's important to let them know.

It may be helpful to share information with the other parents about the risks of underage drinking, and that they may be held liable for providing alcohol to minors:

- <http://docs.sumn.org/SocialHostOrdinancesFAQ.pdf>
- <http://www.toosmarttostart.samhsa.gov/families/facts/brain.aspx>
- <http://www.madd.org/underage-drinking/why21/brains.html>

2) Remember that the real issue isn't what the other parents are (or are not) doing, but rather the decisions your child is making.

You can't control what happens in another home, and you can't control the behavior and decisions of the other parents, your child, or your child's friends. However, you CAN control your own decisions and behavior, and you CAN influence and guide *your* child to make the right decision when offered alcohol.

3) Focus on your own child and your own home.

Be clear in the rules and expectations for your family and children. Consider your family's values and how those shape the rules. Send clear, consistent messaging to your children about these expectations and what the consequences are for breaking the rules.

4) Communicate with your Child

Tell your child why you have concerns about them consuming alcohol, even when under the supervision of their friend's parents. Ask them how they feel about the situation and keep an open mind so you can really listen. Discuss with your child your expectations and explain that these rules are family rules, not just rules to follow when at home. Work with your child to come up with a plan on how to say no to alcohol, even when offered by another parent.

5) Offer to host parties and get-togethers at your own home.

When in doubt, open your home to your child's friends, and their parents too. Show the other parents how you handle a party or get-together without alcohol.