

Strategies to Avoid

While research has shown that monitoring and encouraging teens' independence are associated with less teen drinking, research has shown that certain strategies may be associated with more drinking:

- Using punishment or threat of punishment to keep teens in line
- Considering teens' requests for explanations as a rejection of parental authority
- Discouraging independence by instilling fear in teens
- Trying to adopt a "friend" role in teens' lives
- Permitting teens to make all of their choices without any guidance from parents
- Expecting teens to do exactly what the parents say without asking any questions



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- Individual community members
- Centre County Community Foundation
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- Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board, Bureau of Alcohol Education
- Prevention Research Center, the Pennsylvania State University

Selected References

Arria, AM., et al. (2008). High school drinking mediates the relationship between parental monitoring and college drinking: a longitudinal analysis. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention and Policy*, 3:6.

Livingston, J. A., Testa, M., Hoffman, J. H., & Windle, M. (2010). Can parents prevent heavy episodic drinking by allowing teens to drink at home? *Addictive Behaviors*, 35(12): 1105-1112.

For more information:

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Parents are
the Solution

Part 4 in a Series of 6

EFFECTIVE PARENTING DURING HIGH SCHOOL

Tips to Help
Parents Reduce
Teen Drinking

A Collaboration of the
State College
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EFFECTIVE PARENTING STRATEGIES

Monitoring and encouraging independence are two parenting strategies that are consistently associated with less teen drinking.

Monitoring: Research shows that monitoring your teen can protect him or her from a range of different problems, such as drinking alcohol and experiencing negative alcohol-related consequences.

MONITORING YOUR TEEN

- Ask them about their friends
- Ask them how they spend their free time
- Ask them about their drinking experiences
- Get to know their friends
- Set curfews

Encouraging independence: It is important for teens to develop good decision making skills. This takes practice and parental guidance.

- Encourage teens to make their own choices, even if the choices are relatively minor ones.
- Choices can be framed by the parent so that the teen is choosing between two desirable options.
- Provide parental guidance for those choices that are important for the life course development of the teen (such as academic success and health).
- Allow teens more freedom and responsibility with each passing year, but maintain certain limits.

SOLVING PROBLEMS

You can reduce the chances that your teen will start drinking by being a positive influence in your teen's life, providing guidance, setting limits, and allowing him or her to develop a sense of individuality.

HOW DOES PARENT APPROVAL INFLUENCE TEENS' DRINKING?

Research has shown that teens are more likely to drink when:

- Parents show that they approve of alcohol use by allowing their teens to drink at home
- Parents drink frequently or consume heavy amounts of alcohol in front of their teens
- Teens believe that their parents approve of their drinking

In contrast, when parents show that they disapprove of alcohol use by not allowing their teens to drink, and modeling healthy drinking behaviors, their teens drink less.



ALCOHOL IN THE HOME

Some parents have asked whether it is OK to allow their teens to have small amounts of alcohol at home, so that drinking loses its appeal for teens, and so that teens are able to drink in a safe environment.

However, research suggests that allowing teens to drink at home while they are in high school is associated with more heavy drinking, and negative consequences of drinking, outside the home.

Consider evidence from the scientific community, along with your own family's values, when deciding what limits to set for your teen.

There is no scientific evidence indicating that parents can "teach" their teens to drink responsibly by allowing them to drink at home.

