

# **USD #377 Atchison County Community Schools News Release**

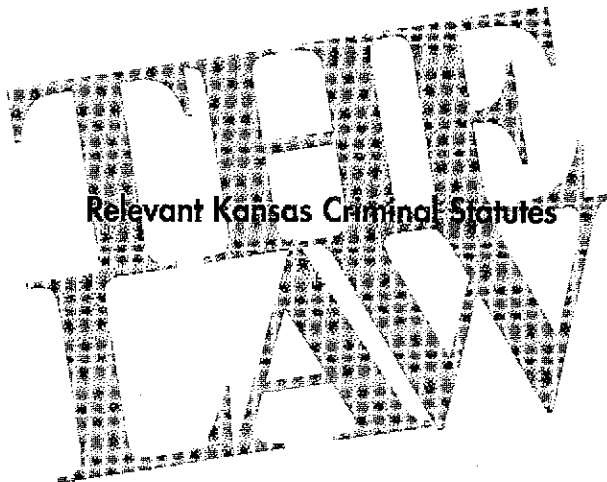


Effingham, KS 66023  
(913) 833-5050

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Teen Alcohol Use**

A Town Meeting was held in Atchison on Tuesday March 28 to address the problem of teen alcohol consumption. Based on data obtained from the Communities that Care survey, the average age of a person's first consumption of alcohol for Atchison county is 12 years old. 20% of Atchison county youth admit to binge drinking—consuming 5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row and 18% report that “it’s okay for kids my age to drink alcohol.” The dangers of underage drinking are real. 23% of Kansas kids say they have ridden in a car with someone who has been drinking and over 26% say they have attended a keg party in the past 6 months. Among those young people who drink, those who were first drunk before age 13 are twice as likely to have unplanned sex and twice as likely to have unprotected sex—remember, the average age for first consumption in Atchison County is 12. New research on the adolescent brain shows that the brain goes through a growth spurt much like the rest of the body and alcohol consumption has a negative affect on brain development. The facts are pretty clear. Included with this notice are two pamphlets to assist parents in combating underage drinking. It is a problem we all need to address, the successful future of our kids is at stake.



Relevant Kansas Criminal Statutes

**K.S.A. 21-3610** (Furnishing) Directly or indirectly, selling to, buying for, giving or furnishing any alcoholic liquor or cereal malt beverage to any minor is a class B person misdemeanor with a minimum fine of \$200.

**K.S.A. 41-727** (Minor in Possession) No person under 21 years of age shall possess, consume, obtain, purchase or attempt to obtain or purchase alcoholic liquor or cereal malt beverage except as authorized by law. Penalties for convictions include fines of \$200 to \$500 and suspension of driver's license (30 days for 1st offense; 90 days for 2nd offense; and 365 days for 3rd and subsequent offenses). In addition, the court may order 40 hours of public service and/or successful completion of an alcohol abuse course.

**K.S.A. 21-3610c** (Hosting/Paul's Law) Unlawfully hosting minors consuming alcoholic liquor or cereal malt beverage is permitting a person's premises to be used in such a manner that results in the possession or consumption therein of alcoholic liquor or cereal malt beverages by persons under the age of 18. The penalty for conviction is a class B person misdemeanor with fines ranging from \$200 to \$1,000, and the potential of up to six months in jail.

# THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR DRIVING DRUNK

An Alcohol Awareness Campaign from the Kansas Department of Transportation



**Safe<sup>®</sup>**  
not sorry

A program of the Kansas Department of Transportation

*For more information  
about the legal issues regarding alcohol  
and underage drinking, contact:*

*KDOT Bureau of Traffic Safety  
785-296-3756*

*Alcoholic Beverage Control  
785-296-7015*

*Office of the Attorney General  
785-296-2215*

*Kansas MADD  
1-800-443-6233*

For more information contact:

**KANSAS Drunk Driving  
Prevention OFFICE**

1208 SW Tyler • Topeka, KS 66612-1735

Telephone (toll free) 1-877-715-3377

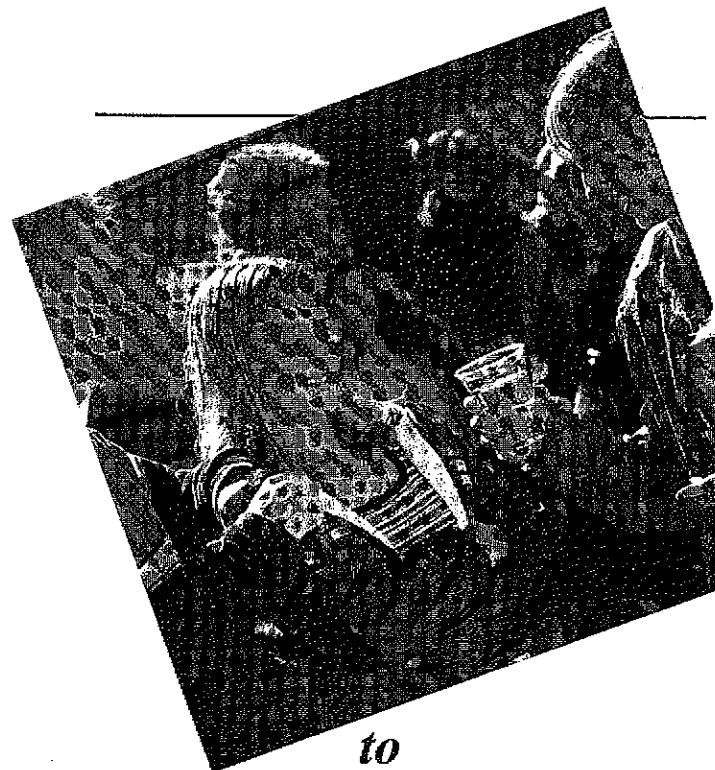
Fax 785-233-5222

kddpp@ksna.net

www.ksdot.org

*All information intended for educational purposes only.  
Administrative actions are the responsibility of the  
Department of Revenue  
which may be reached at 785-296-3671.*

*A Parent's Guide*



to  
**TEEN  
PARTIES**  
and  
**THE  
LAW**

## Attending A Party

Dear Parent:

*An alarming 53 percent of Kansas high school students have tried alcohol. Please talk with your teenager about the dangers of underage drinking. Believe it or not, they will listen to you.*

*In 2004, 1,625 people under the age of 21 were involved in alcohol-related crashes on Kansas roadways. Sadly, 22 young lives were lost and another 521 suffered injuries.*

*This brochure provides information to help you keep your teenager safe from death or injury. Below are some facts to assist you in talking with your loved one.*

*Thanks for helping to alleviate needless tragedy. Your involvement with your children and their friends is critical.*

- Alcohol is the most dangerous and misused drug in America.
- Alcohol kills 6.5 times more young people than all other illicit drugs combined.
- Kansas youth begin experimenting with alcohol at about age 12; reports indicate they get it from their parents (possibly without their knowledge) or from another adult.
- Early alcohol use can cause irreparable damage to a developing brain – a person's brain is not fully developed until their early twenties.
- The tragic consequences of underage drinking can last a lifetime and include traffic crashes, alcohol poisoning, alcohol abuse/dependency, brain damage and suicide.

### A. Know where your teen will be.

1. Obtain the name, address and phone number of the party host.
2. Let your teen know you expect a phone call to obtain permission if the location of the party is changed.

### B. Contact the parents of the party host to:

1. Be sure that a parent will be present.
2. Offer assistance.
3. Confirm that alcohol and other drugs will not be permitted.

### C. Communicate concerns.

1. Discuss with your teen the possible situations which might arise and how to deal with them. For example, what to do if another adult (older sibling, etc.) offers to make alcohol available for minors.
2. Let them know where you can be reached.
3. Agree on an acceptable curfew.
4. Assure your teen that you or a specified friend or neighbor can be called if he/she needs a ride home.
5. Be awake or have your teen awaken you when he/she arrives home. (This is often a good sharing time.)
6. If your teen is staying overnight with a friend following a party, check with the parents of the friend to verify that:
  - this is acceptable to them.
  - they will be home.
  - you both agree on curfew hours and other basic house rules.

### B. Set ground rules with your teen beforehand.

1. Let your teen know your expectations; they do want guidelines.
2. Let them know how you feel about drug and alcohol use.
3. Become involved with your teen in planning party activities. Agree on an appropriate guest list and stick to it.
4. Remind your teen that he/she is accountable for his/her behavior.
5. Notify your neighbors beforehand.

### C. Alcohol or other drugs should not be permitted, served or available.

1. Be alert to the signs of alcohol or drug use.
2. Guests who attempt to bring in alcohol or drugs or who otherwise are uncooperative or uninvited should be promptly told to leave.
3. Have a plan to implement if anyone arrives at the party under the influence of alcohol or another drug. Do not let a person drive when under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
4. Anyone who leaves the party should not be allowed to return. This will discourage people from leaving with the intent of drinking or using drugs elsewhere and then returning to the party.
5. Be visible — bring in snacks, etc. Your visibility will help keep the party running smoothly and will give you an opportunity to meet your teen's friends.
6. Ask other responsible adults to help chaperone the party.
7. Have plenty of food and non-alcoholic drinks, and a wide variety of activities available.
8. If you feel that despite your precautions things do get out of hand, please do not hesitate to call the local police for assistance.

## Hosting A Party

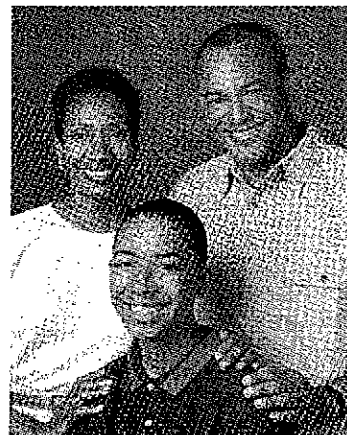
### A. Parents must be at the party.

1. No parents — no party.
2. A home minus adult supervision is asking for trouble.
3. Parents have a responsibility to see to it that parties are conducted in an appropriate manner.

## YOUR RIGHTS AS A PARENT

As a parent, you have the right to:

- Talk with your teen about the illegal use of alcohol
- Set limits with your teen.
- Expect that your rules will be respected
- Follow through with appropriate consequences if your rules are broken
- Expect that other parents who have promised a safe environment for your teen will, in fact, provide it.



As a parent host of a teen party, you have the obligation to:

- Communicate with other parents about party details.
- Put all your alcohol, valuables and weapons in a secure place.
- Supervise the party. Frequently monitor all party areas, indoor and outdoor.
- Make it clear that alcohol and other drugs are not allowed.
- Know the guest list and keep uninvited guests out.
- Restrict entry and exit areas to deter guests from bringing in alcohol or other drugs.
- Be prepared to call a guest's parents if the guest is impaired or if he/she attempts to bring alcohol or drugs to the party.
- Set an end-time to the party.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice. "Preventing and Dispersing Underage Drinking Parties"

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE How to talk to your teen

Research indicates that talking with teens about tough subjects is critical to limiting risky behaviors.

Kids whose parents talk to them about the dangers of alcohol are 50% less likely to use alcohol. Let your teen know you are available to listen to any and all problems, anytime. Start early—the average age when kids first try alcohol is 12 years old.

Here are ten tips to get you started:

1. Be positive and encouraging. Recognize your teen's successes rather than mistakes.
2. Be a good role model for your teen. Kids learn much of their behavior from their parents. Use alcohol responsibly if you drink.
3. Use "I" statements to express your concerns about alcohol. Telling a teen, "I feel worried about..." is less confrontational than saying, "You should be careful about..."
4. Know your teen's friends and where they go.
5. Don't accept underage drinking as a rite of passage. Beer is not okay.
6. Set rules about alcohol use and enforce them consistently. Make sure that your expectations are clear and reasonable.
7. Get involved in your teen's life. Eat dinner together. Make time for one-on-one discussions with your teen.
8. Tell your teen to call you if he or she needs a ride home from a party where alcohol is being served. Do not reprimand; be thankful that your teen turned to you for help.
9. Use the media as a springboard for conversation. If a TV show or popular song features alcohol use, discuss it. Allow your teen to ask questions, but don't press if he or she is not ready to talk.
10. If your son or daughter needs help with an alcohol problem, get treatment—fast!

Source: *Teen Tipplers: America's Underage Drinking Epidemic* by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University

## CONTRACT FOR LIFE

This contract was developed by SADD to help parents and their teens talk about potentially destructive decisions related to alcohol, peer pressure and behavior. This contract does NOT imply permission to drink—it is a promise to be safe.

### Teen:

I recognize that there are many potentially destructive decisions I face every day and commit to you that I will do everything in my power to avoid making decisions that will jeopardize my health, my safety and overall well being, or your trust in me. I understand the dangers associated with the use of alcohol and drugs and the destructive behaviors often associated with impairment.

I acknowledge that the legal drinking age is 21. By signing below, I pledge my best effort to remain alcohol and drug free, I agree that I will never drive under the influence of either, or accept a ride from someone who is impaired, and I will always wear a seat belt.

Finally, I agree to call you if I am ever in a situation that threatens my safety and to communicate with you regularly about issues of importance to us both.

Signature

### Parent or Caring Adult:

I am committed to you, and to your health and safety. By signing below, I pledge to do everything in my power to understand and communicate with you about the many difficult and potentially destructive decisions you face.

Further, I agree to provide for your safe, sober transportation home if you are ever in a situation that threatens your safety and to defer discussion about that situation until a time when we can both discuss the issues in a calm and caring manner.

I also pledge to you that I will not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs, I will always seek safe, sober transportation home, and I will always remember to wear a seatbelt.

Signature

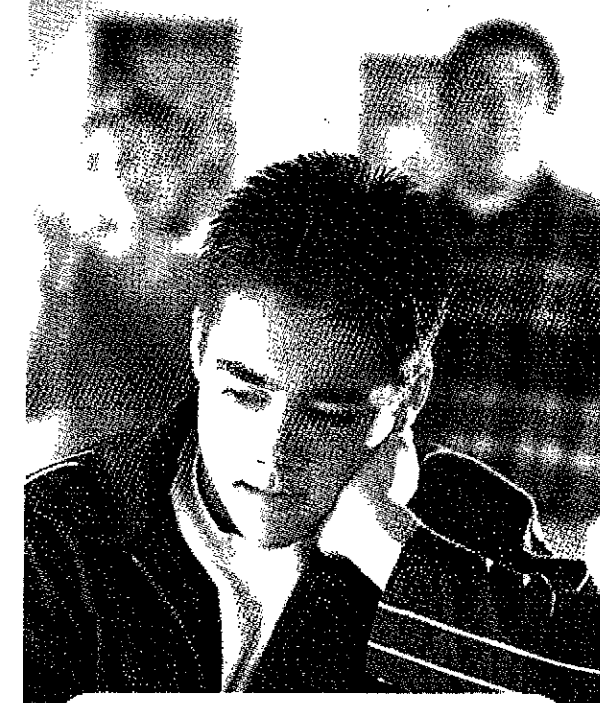
Source: SADD "Students Against Destructive Decisions"

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Parent Pamphlet

# UNDERAGE DRINKING

## What Parents Need to Know



**Kansas Family Partnership**  
5942 SW 29<sup>th</sup> Street  
Topeka, KS 66614  
800-206-7231 or 785-266-6161  
[www.kansasfamily.com](http://www.kansasfamily.com)

## UNDERAGE DRINKING

### Why should parents be concerned?

- Alcohol is still very easy for teens to obtain, even though selling or providing alcohol to anyone under 21 is illegal in all 50 states
- The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA) reports that underage drinkers consume 25% of all alcohol sold in the US
- New research from the American Medical Association (AMA) indicates that teenagers who drink alcohol are permanently damaging their still-developing brains
- The damage from underage drinking may affect teens' memory, cognitive abilities and their decision-making skills for the rest of their lives
- Underage drinking causes chemical changes that can "hardwire" the teen brain for addiction
- People who begin drinking before age 15 are four times as likely to become alcoholics as those who begin after age 21
- The hippocampus, the area of the brain that controls memory and learning, may be 10% smaller in teens who drink alcohol
- The prefrontal cortex, which controls decision-making, can also be damaged by alcohol
- Even just a few episodes of heavy drinking can permanently damage the teenage brain



## UNDERAGE DRINKING & THE LAW Did you know?

In all 50 states it is a crime to sell or provide alcohol to minors. Parents should contact their local police department or check their state's legislative website for specifics.

- All 50 states have Zero Tolerance laws. The legal BAC (blood alcohol concentration) limit for any driver under the age of 21 is 0.00%.
- Breaking the Zero Tolerance law can lead to loss of a teen's driver's license. A DUI conviction may remain on a teen's permanent criminal record
- Fake ID laws: Conviction of possession of a forged instrument is a felony that may remain on a teen's permanent record. Attempting to purchase alcohol with a fake ID is punishable with up to one year in jail and a \$2,500 fine. Fake IDs are readily available on the Internet.
- Hosting laws: A growing number of states have passed new laws that hold adults criminally and civilly liable if they host parties where minors are allowed to consume alcohol. Parents are held accountable even if they were unaware of underage drinking in their home.
- Delinquency laws: Providing a teen with alcohol and/or a place to drink can be classified as contributing to the delinquency of a minor and carries penalties ranging from a fine to jail time.
- "Open container" laws: The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has encouraged all 50 states to pass "open container" laws. Many states have complied, passing laws that forbid open alcohol containers—even empty bottles—anywhere in a motor vehicle. This law usually applies to drivers and passengers alike
- "Keg registration" laws: More than 20 states already have laws requiring keg purchasers to sign a statement saying they will not allow underage people to drink the beer in the keg. Purchasers face criminal charges if they provide false personal information to retailers or deface the keg's ID number. If minors are caught drinking beer from the keg, the purchaser can be held accountable and be sentenced to up to one year in prison

## CONFRONTING PEER PRESSURE

Communicate and role-play to protect your teen:

- Start an on-going dialog about peer pressure to drink
- Talk about the dangers of underage drinking. Share facts. Share information. Discuss alcohol-related issues in the news. Read your local newspaper for stories on car crashes, police blotters and arrests related to alcohol use
- Develop strategies with your teen for avoiding and confronting specific risky behaviors. Role-play ways to refuse alcohol. Role-play ways to stop an impaired friend from driving.
- Make sure your teen understands what binge drinking is and why it is particularly dangerous
- Make sure your teen knows how to identify impaired behaviors in others
- Have a family plan about what to do if your teen finds him/herself in a potentially dangerous situation.
- Teach your teen the golden rule: **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY.**
- Hammer home the message: **NEVER DRINK AND DRIVE. NEVER GET INTO A CAR WITH AN IMPAIRED DRIVER.**



## PROM ALERT

Be aware that proms and homecomings are prime time for underage drinking.

- Make sure your child has a precise plan for the evening and that you know all the details
- Work with the school to have party-control procedures in place—for example, specific times of arrival and departure and backpack checks. (Kids often carry a change of clothes and alcohol in their backpacks)
- Host parties before and after the prom with plenty of food and adult chaperones
- If teens are attending a post-prom party, know the location and check it out ahead of time. Ask about alcohol use and enforcement.
- Know who is going to be driving. For limo services, check their policy on allowing alcohol in the vehicle.
- Be aware that teens often tip limo drivers to purchase alcohol for them
- Discuss prom rules (both yours and the school's) with your child and the consequences for violating them
- Do not rent hotel rooms for prom-goers. A parent whose credit card is used to rent a hotel room is liable for damages
- Communicate frequently with other parents and school officials—kids often make last minute changes to the plan

Source: <http://www.promtips.org>

## SOBERING FACTS The wrong "rite of passage"

Some parents adopt the attitude that underage drinking is a normal "rite of passage" for teens. Wrong! The latest information from national researchers makes it clear that there are many real concerns about teen drinking:

- 10,000 16 to 24 year-olds die from alcohol-related car crashes each year. An average of six young people die in alcohol-related car crashes each day. This number doesn't even count the kids who are seriously and/or permanently injured
- Alcohol, when combined with depression and stress, is a major factor in teen suicide. Alcohol is involved in more than 60% of all teen suicides.
- Nearly 20% of 12 to 20 year-olds report "binge drinking" (having five or more drinks in a row). While most adults drink alcohol to socialize, most teens drink to get "hammered"
- Inexperienced teen drinkers are at an elevated risk of alcohol poisoning, which can lead to death. More than 4,000 young people die each year as a result of alcohol poisoning.
- Underage drinking increases the risk that a teen will engage in risky sexual activity. This can lead to pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Underage drinking increases the chance of sexual assault and rape. Alcohol is involved in 90% of all campus rapes
- Teens who drink are at a substantially higher risk for drownings, fires, violent incidents and accidents of all kinds. Alcohol is involved in 60% of fires, 68% of drowning deaths and 64% of all homicides