

Kids and alcohol don't mix.

Talking to your kids about alcohol and setting boundaries can help keep them safe.

Drinking alcohol too young.

Drinking alcohol too young, with its potential adverse effects on the developing brain, may mean your child fails to reach their full potential – academically, creatively or on the sporting field. Alcohol can also inhibit your child's ability to consider the consequences of their actions, leading them to take risks such as getting in fights, drink-driving, unprotected sexual activity or serious accidents.

Alcohol as a distraction.

Drinking alcohol can also become a negative distraction from study, sport, creative pursuits, family life and socialising – all important activities for building confidence and maturity during teenage years.

Alcohol and the brain.

The brain continues growing until people are in their early twenties, forming all the critical parts it needs for learning, memory, planning, emotional stability and thinking. Alcohol may disrupt this development.

Alcohol and parties.

Peer group pressure can be overwhelming. However, be comfortable in the knowledge that the majority of parents choose to delay their child's introduction to alcohol, believing it is unacceptable for children under 18 to drink. It's also interesting to note that most Australians believe that it is unacceptable for under 18s to be allowed to drink at parties.



Kids are interested in what's going on around them.

Seeing how their role models use alcohol is part of this – and the most influential and trusted role model is a parent.

With that in mind, it's important that parents shape their children's attitude to alcohol and future drinking behaviour.

Most Australian parents think that they should start a conversation with their kids about alcohol before they reach 12 years of age.

DELAY your kids drinking alcohol.

The longer teenagers delay drinking alcohol, the greater chance their brains have to develop fully, allowing them to reach their potential and succeed.



DrinkWise has developed the DELAY 5 Point Plan to provide practical advice on how to be a positive influence and delay your child's introduction to alcohol.

Discuss the issues

Discuss the fact that not everyone drinks.

Be aware that young people are likely to have a favourable perception of the social benefits of alcohol because they believe it will help them fit in, and need to know that they can fit in without it.

TIP

Highlight that not drinking is the norm for young people.

Educate by example

Be a positive role model by drinking alcohol responsibly or not drinking at all.

If alcohol does play a role in your family life, talk to your child about the rules and boundaries you follow.

TIP

Make a point of having alcohol-free events to demonstrate that you can enjoy yourself without drinking alcohol.

Listen and engage

Be aware of, and show interest in, your child's upcoming activities and discuss these (it's an opportunity to set clear expectations). Get to know their friends and their parents.

TIP

Knowing the parents of your child's friends enables you to discuss and develop a common position on things such as drinking alcohol. If other parents don't agree with your position, at least they know your views and will be better placed to manage the situation.

A good relationship

Work on developing and maintaining a good parent-child relationship based on clear and open communication.

Parent-child relationships characterised by emotional warmth and support, trust, involvement and attachment are associated with lower levels of adolescent alcohol misuse.

TIP

Kids who feel their parents are caring, concerned and supportive start to use alcohol later and drink less. Be there to support them as hormonal changes, school commitments and peer influences build.

Your expectations

Delaying your child's first drink requires making your expectations regarding alcohol very clear – not just to your child, but also to the other adult influencers in their lives.

Every family is different and boundaries and expectations need to be consistent with what you believe.

TIP

Involve your child in the development of rules to help them understand why they exist in the first place. They may not like the rules you set, but it is vital that they can see what your concerns are and how you hope to address them.

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) advises that in order to reduce the risk of injury and other harms to health, children and people under 18 years of age should not drink alcohol.

To get the facts and more information on how to have a conversation with your kids, visit:

[DrinkWise.org.au](https://www.drinkwise.org.au)