

Dear Parent,

Are you concerned about your child drinking alcohol? You have every right to be. Australian research shows that 96 percent of kids under the age of 17 have tried alcohol, with 21 percent drinking alcohol every week.

Why should you be concerned?

New research shows young people's brains can be seriously damaged from drinking alcohol. There is now evidence to suggest that binge drinking destroys the growing brain's ability to relay information between cells.

One third of 12-17yr old drinkers are consuming at harmful levels. It indicates kids have easy access to alcohol and are drinking too much.

What can you do?

As a parent, you are the most important role model for your child. Your attitude to alcohol and personal behaviour will have a big influence on your child and the decisions they make:

- *Talk to your child and be involved in their life* – if you know what is going on and can talk openly, you are more likely to be able to influence your child's attitude towards drinking.
- *Know where your teenager is* – check where the parties are going to be, whether they are supervised and if alcohol is being served.
- *Talk to other parents* – presenting a united front makes it easier for everyone.
- *Use alcohol responsibly yourself and be a responsible host.* Show your children that you can also have fun without alcohol too.
- *Encourage your child not to drink until they are at least 16 years old.*
- *Point out the risks* – don't be afraid to disapprove of unsafe drinking behaviour.
- *Inform yourself* – log onto www.adf.org.au for more information.

What are we doing?

In most Australian states and territories, it is still *legal* for anybody to provide your child with any amount of alcohol on private property, without your permission. Without the right laws in place, there is nothing to protect young people against drinking a damaging amount and drinking without parental consent.

In Queensland New South Wales and Tasmania, it is illegal to supply alcohol to kids under the age of 18 without a parent's permission. We believe the protection of young people in those cases should be extended to all young Australians regardless of where they live.

The Australian Drug Foundation is campaigning to strengthen Australia's laws to protect young people. Register your support for a national law by visiting www.adf.org.au

Yours sincerely,



John Rogerson
CEO
Australian Drug Foundation