

Dear Parent:

Local and national studies have identified underage drinking as one of the major problems faced by youth. Parents can play a major role in lowering the chances that their son or daughter will drink, but often miss opportunities to do so because:

1. Parents think their efforts would be useless. BUT: Studies show that parental attitudes and actions about youth drinking are more important than expected. In a most recent study, “for every point increase in parental tolerance of alcohol use, the frequency of teen use of alcohol increased by 80%.”
2. Parents think their child already knows not to drink. BUT: Studies show that the percent of youth who drink is much higher than the percent of parents who think their son or daughter may drink.
3. Parents think underage drinking isn’t dangerous, sometimes based on their own experience as youth. BUT: Based on national rates of alcohol-related injuries, deaths, and other problems among youth, the risk for problems among underage drinkers is high, even if some are lucky enough to avoid those problems.
4. Parents think that one or two discussions with their children are sufficient. BUT: Teens see thousands of ads and media images that glamorize drinking.

Heartland Coalition for Youth and Families encourages you to take action against underage drinking:

- Clearly communicate your expectation that your son or daughter will not become an underage drinker.
- Ensure that your teen attends only social events that are adult-chaperoned and alcohol-free.
- Monitor alcohol stored in your home to prevent use of it by your teen or their friends.
- Download a free copy of the booklet “Make A Difference – Talk to your child about Alcohol” at [http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/MakeADiff\\_HTML/makediff.htm](http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/MakeADiff_HTML/makediff.htm)
- For more information, visit the Heartland Coalition website ([www.heartlandcoalition.org](http://www.heartlandcoalition.org)) or contact Heartland Coalition Parenting Specialist Mike Dobbins at 827-0377 (Project Oz).

Heartland Coalition wants you to know that together we CAN make a difference.