

Hanging-Out or Hosting a Party

What is YOUR Position?

In a recent survey of local parents, 98% responded that they regularly communicate their expectations concerning behavior and choices with their children. All parents surveyed (100%) DO NOT think it's OK to host a party with alcohol for teens. Interestingly, only 61% thought other parent peers would agree with them.

When teens are guests in your home, will you allow (consciously or unwittingly) the consumption or use of beer, wine, liquor or other drugs? **It's important to determine your position and communicate those family rules and values to your children.**

Whether your child has one friend or 100 visiting... **you, the parents, are the responsible hosts.** It is illegal to serve drugs, including alcohol, to minors. Parents are legally responsible for anything that may happen to a minor who has been served alcohol or provided with drugs in their home. Discussing your expectations about what is, or is not, acceptable behavior with your children can help eliminate confusion and avoid troublesome (or even dangerous) situations.

Want to Plan a Party for your Teen and hardly know where to start? Tom Hagy, a parent of a teen in our area, shares his proven strategy for having a successful party for teenagers. In this humorous but quite serious Letter to the Editor, Tom explains how staying in control begins with careful planning and a clear strategy -- without killing all the fun. The article targets large parties, but many of the suggestions apply to even a casual, smaller gathering. http://www.archcares.org/teen_party_ltr.pdf

Communicate Your Expectations

Remembering that good kids can make bad choices depending upon the circumstances, ARCH recommends that you share your expectations with your kids. This open communication will help them navigate social situations. The topics below will help get the conversation rolling.

- Clarify when a **check-in call** is required. For example, is a call required if they are going to be later than the agreed time or if any part of their plans change? Should they always let you know where they are and whom they are with? Do you expect them to be reachable by phone?
- Share your expectations concerning **cigarettes, drinking alcoholic beverages** or the use of any other kind of **drugs** (illicit, prescription or other).
- Develop and discuss strategies for **peer pressure**. If your kids are being pressured to do something that they don't want to do – have you talked about an exit strategy? For example, decide on a code word they can text or call you with if they are in an unsafe situation and need an immediate ride home.
- Discuss appropriate reactions to new situations. How should your child react if placed in a new situation that may violate your **family's rules** or values? Discuss the options. For example: "I will call home or use our code word to get myself out of that social situation."
- Address your family's rules concerning being a passenger in someone else's **car**. For example, ask your kids to: (1) always wear their seat belt when in a moving car; (2) never under any circumstances get into a car if the driver has been drinking or doing other drugs; (3) never under any circumstances get into a car where passengers are drinking or doing other drugs.



When my daughter asked if she could have some friends over for her 15th birthday, I was tired from work and glad that my daughter had friends. Adults and teens often have different definitions of terms. In this case the disparity centered on the word "some." To me it meant "several," a "few," 12 or 15. To her it meant Woodstock. To her, some people went to The Million Man March.

Read more of Tom's letter, Attached or on www.archcares.org

