



College Drinking: What Parents Can Do

College drinking is a frequent topic of concern for parents. As we have previously reported, a person's executive function (decision making part of the brain) does not fully develop until that person is at least 25. This can make it difficult for young adults to make good choices about alcohol and other drugs.

As high school seniors are filling out college applications, you may be planning your family's college search, or you may be thinking about your child heading off to college in the fall. College-aged young adults are at great risk for problem drinking behaviors.

Learn about College Drinking

College drinking looks different today than it did in previous generations. [Binge drinking](#) has become increasingly popular among teens and young adults. This type of alcohol use is very dangerous, and it can be [deadly](#). Many high school teens also binge drink. Talk to your children about binge drinking before they get to college. Explain that it can cause potentially fatal blood alcohol levels. If someone passes out while drinking, they should be taken to the emergency room.

Collegiate Recovery Communities

There is a growing movement to provide students in recovery with safe sober spaces, usually known as Collegiate Recovery Communities (CRCs) or Programs (CRPs). More information about schools with these programs can be found through the [Association for Recovery in Higher Education](#). Other schools are working on starting CRCs and CRPs. If your child's school is not already on the list, contact the school to find out if they have considered starting a program. When you are choosing a college for your child, consider if drinking is likely to be an issue, and look for a school with a CRC or CRP.

Make a Wise Choice in Colleges

If you are concerned that your child is going to be involved in college drinking behaviors, help guide them to schools where partying is less prevalent. Look for lists of colleges that are considered "party schools," as well as those that focus more on academics. These lists can help guide your child's choices.

Once your child chooses a college (or narrows the list), find out about the college's alcohol/drug policies. You can use this information to help your child understand the consequences of using alcohol. Make sure your child knows that you do not condone alcohol use until a person has turned 21, when it becomes legal. Even after a young adult can legally consume alcohol, they still need to drink responsibly.

Parental Influence on College Drinking

Keep in mind as your child grows older, that you still have [influence](#) and control over your child's behavior even when it feels out of your control. If you are concerned about your child's behavior, don't wait to act.

You have influence on your child even when they are living away from you. What help do you provide for your child? Some common expenses that parents cover during college include:

- school tuition
- room and board
- books
- rent
- groceries
- phone bill

- car insurance or car payments
- gas money
- car repairs
- spending money

If you are helping cover any of these (or other) expenses, you have influence you can choose to exercise. If your child is using alcohol irresponsibly or illegally, you can choose to discontinue paying for these things while they are using.

Making a difficult choice not to enable use and to get your child the help he or she needs can ultimately save their life.

Get Help Now!

If your child hasn't left for college yet, now is the time to [get them help](#). ASAP can work with adolescents until they turn 20, as long as their parents can attend sessions. We begin with an [assessment](#), which will determine whether there is an ongoing issue with substances. Many teens are [resistant](#) to getting help, and we can assist parents in getting their kids into recovery. It is easier to recover from an illness, including a substance use disorder, when treatment begins as soon as a problem is discovered. Call us at 513.792.1272 to get started today.