



Setting Up House Rules & Expectations

Setting specific rules and consequences for your child about alcohol, marijuana, nicotine, and other drugs is an important step in preventing underage use. **Let your child know you care** about them and their health and safety. These rules are how you show them you care.

Establish rules early on and make sure that you review and update them as your child grows up. Communicate your strong stance against any teen drug or alcohol use, and make your expectations clear.

Talk about the consequences if they were to break one of the rules. Make sure all consequences are realistic when they're set, so that enforcement is easy and consistent. **Remind your children that you care about them and their health and safety.**



Tell them you care




Set clear expectations

Consider including some of these sample "house rules:"

- I expect you to not drink alcohol until, at least, age 21.
- I expect you to stay clear of ALL drug use, including marijuana, vaping, and taking prescription medications that aren't your own.
- I want you to know that it is never okay to share your prescription medications with anyone else - including your friends.
- I expect that you will avoid places where other teens might be drinking or using drugs.
- Please know that it is never safe to ride in a car with an underage driver who has had any amount of alcohol or used any drugs.
- I expect that you will be home by the curfew we set.



Take a strong stance



Let them know you're here to talk

Useful Strategies to Help with House Rules:

- Help your kids find ways to have fun without alcohol or other drugs.
- Keep the lines of communication open with your child. Let them know if they're struggling with anxiety, stress, or peer pressure, they can talk to you or another trusted adult.
- Do not give alcohol to your teens - no exceptions, no special occasions. Tell them any alcohol in your home is off-limits to them and their friends. Secure and monitor the alcohol and prescription drugs in your home so kids and teens can't access them. Keep track of how much you have, so you'll know if some goes missing.
- Don't let your teens attend parties where it's known that alcohol is served or drugs are used. Make sure alcohol and prescription drugs aren't available to minors at parties and celebrations in your own home.
- Develop a system with your teen where they can contact you if they find themselves in a situation that breaks the rules. Have a code word, so your teen can contact you to come get them without having to say, potentially in front of peers, that they're in a situation that's dangerous or uncomfortable.
- Let your child know you expect them to come home at the curfew you've set 99% of the time, but for that 1% where they might be running late, they are to call or text you before curfew to let you know.

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