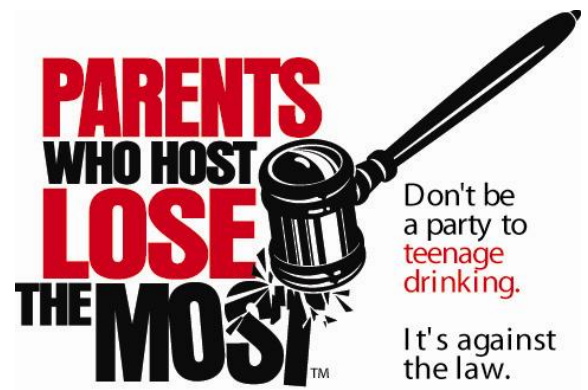


## Legal, Health & Safety Issues



### Legal Issues

#### Parents should know:

- You and anyone over the age of 18 are breaking the law if you give alcohol to your teen's friends who are under the age of 21, under any circumstance.
- You and anyone over the age of 18 are subject to prosecution by the Social Host Law if you knowingly allow a person under 21 to remain in your home or on your property while consuming or possessing alcoholic beverages.

#### If you violate the Nassau County Social Host Law, it is

- A **misdemeanor** – a **criminal conviction** and punishable by progressive fines and penalties:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Offense is subject to a fine of \$250;
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense is subject to a fine of \$500;
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense and future offenses are subject to a fine of \$1000 and/or up to a year in jail.

### Health and Safety Issues

While parents may rationalize: "I'd rather my kids drink at home than in a car." "At least they're not doing drugs." "If I let them drink a little now, they won't go crazy when they turn 21." "I did it when I was young and I'm ok.", **the fact is, underage drinking is hazardous to the health and safety of our children.**

#### ***#1 If your child drinks alcohol, it is likely that the alcohol will affect his/her brain development.***<sup>1</sup>

- The human brain continues to develop into the mid-twenties.
- If alcohol is heavily consumed in adolescence, the part of the brain responsible for learning and memory can shrink by about 10%.
- When it comes to behavior and brain function, while alcohol has a sedative effect on adults, it acts as a stimulant to adolescents. The more alcohol consumed, the more likely youth are to engage in risky behaviors. Furthermore, due to this stimulant effect, youth are more likely to drink past the point where adults would end up passing out.

#### ***#2 If your child drinks alcohol, you will more likely have to deal with those issues parents dread.***

- Kids who drink are more likely to become sexually active (putting them at greater risk of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases).<sup>2</sup>
- Teen girls who binge drink are 63% more likely to get pregnant in their teen years.<sup>3</sup>
- Children who start drinking before age 15 are 12 times more likely to be injured while under the influence of alcohol and 10 times more likely to be in a fight after drinking compared with those who wait until they are 21.<sup>4</sup>

#### ***#3 If your child drinks alcohol, he/she is at a greater risk of becoming addicted later in life.***<sup>5</sup>

- 40% of children who start drinking before the age of 15 will become alcoholics at some point in their lives.
- If the onset of drinking is delayed by 5 years, a child's risk of serious alcohol problems is cut in half.



Adapted from: *Working Partners Consortium DFWP News*, a publication of Working Partners Systems, Inc., June 2008.

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<sup>1</sup> American Medical Association (2003). *Harmful Consequences of Alcohol Use on the Brains of Children, Adolescents, and College Students*.

<sup>2</sup> Cooper and Orcutt. Drinking and sexual experience on first dates among adolescents. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 106:191-202, 1997. Cooper, Pierce, Huselid . Substance use and sexual risk taking among black adolescents and white adolescents. *Health Psychology* 13:251-262, 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Dee (2001). *The Effects of Minimum Legal Drinking Ages on Teen Childbearing*. *The Journal of Human Resources* 36, no. 4: 824-838.

<sup>4</sup> Real Kids are curious about alcohol: A Family Guide to Underage Drinking Prevention.

<sup>5</sup> Grant, B.F., 1998. NIAAA's Epidemiologic Bulletin No. 39 The Impact of a Family History of Alcoholism on the Relationship Between Age at Onset of Alcohol Use and DSM-IV Alcohol Dependence. *Results from the National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey*, *Alcohol Health and Research World* 22(2).