

# Parents Empowered: Underaged Drinking

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Parents often believe that school policies or church teachings will keep their kids away from alcohol use, but too often that is not the case. New, disturbing research indicates that the developing adolescent brain may be susceptible to long-term, negative consequences of alcohol use. Adolescent alcohol use is a serious threat to adolescent development and health. Parents are the most powerful influence on their children. It

is important to stay connected, monitor and create lasting bonds with your child.

Did you know?

- In Utah, underage drinking now begins as early as elementary school.
- The brain isn't fully developed until the mid-20s.
- Negative effects of alcohol last far longer in a teen's brain than in an adult's.
- Underage drinking can keep the good judgment and impulse-control part of the brain from properly developing.
- More teens die from the results of alcohol use than all other illegal drugs combined.

But, did you also know?

- Parents are the most powerful influence on their children's behavior.
- Children usually listen to their parents more than anybody else, including their friends.
- Children who feel close to their parents are less likely to drink.
- Knowing where your children are, who they're with and what they're doing helps prevent underage drinking.

Parents are often unaware of their child's alcohol use. In a recent national survey, 31 percent of kids who had been drunk in the past year said they had parents who believed their children were nondrinkers. Take action! Start talking to your child about underage drinking before age eight.

Parentsempowered.org gives 3 research-proven skills to help prevent underage drinking.

#### 1. Bond with your children.

- Create a positive, loving home environment.
- Have daily positive interaction.

2. Set boundaries for your children.

- Set clear rules and expectations.
- Help your children choose friends wisely.

3. Monitor your children.

- Know your child's environment.

For additional tips and more information, visit [Parentsempowered.org](http://Parentsempowered.org).

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Nikki Capener is a student at Utah State University studying family and consumer science education. She is the family and consumer sciences intern in Box Elder County and has loved working with the Extension faculty and 4-H youth. Her experience working with Extension has been incredibly beneficial and she has learned much while working with Ann Henderson. Her hobbies include running, cooking, sewing and making crafts.