

Parent Communication Kit:

*Building Your Toolbox to Keep
Your Teen Substance-Free*

Sponsored by the Evanston Substance Abuse Prevention Council.

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For more information on anything in this packet, and to learn about how you can get involved in substance abuse prevention strategies in Evanston, contact the ESAPC at 847-951-0109 or esapc.coordinator@gmail.com.

The Data Proves You Matter!

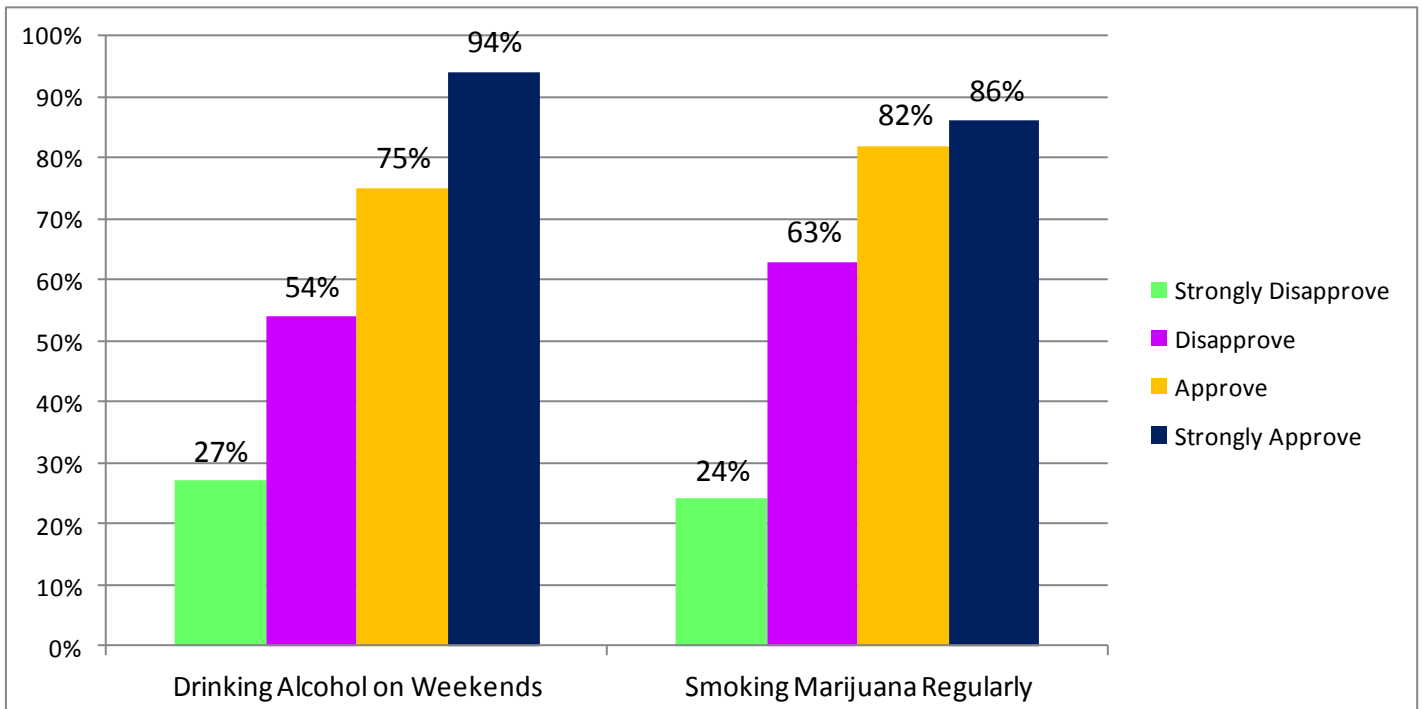
Student Reports of Believable Sources of Information About ATOD

NOTE: Students were able to select multiple answers for this question (Which sources of information about alcohol and other drugs do you think are most believable?)

Source of Information	% of ETHS Students
Parents	73%
Coaches	59%
Teachers	58%
School Counselor	55%
Internet	54%
Friends	44%

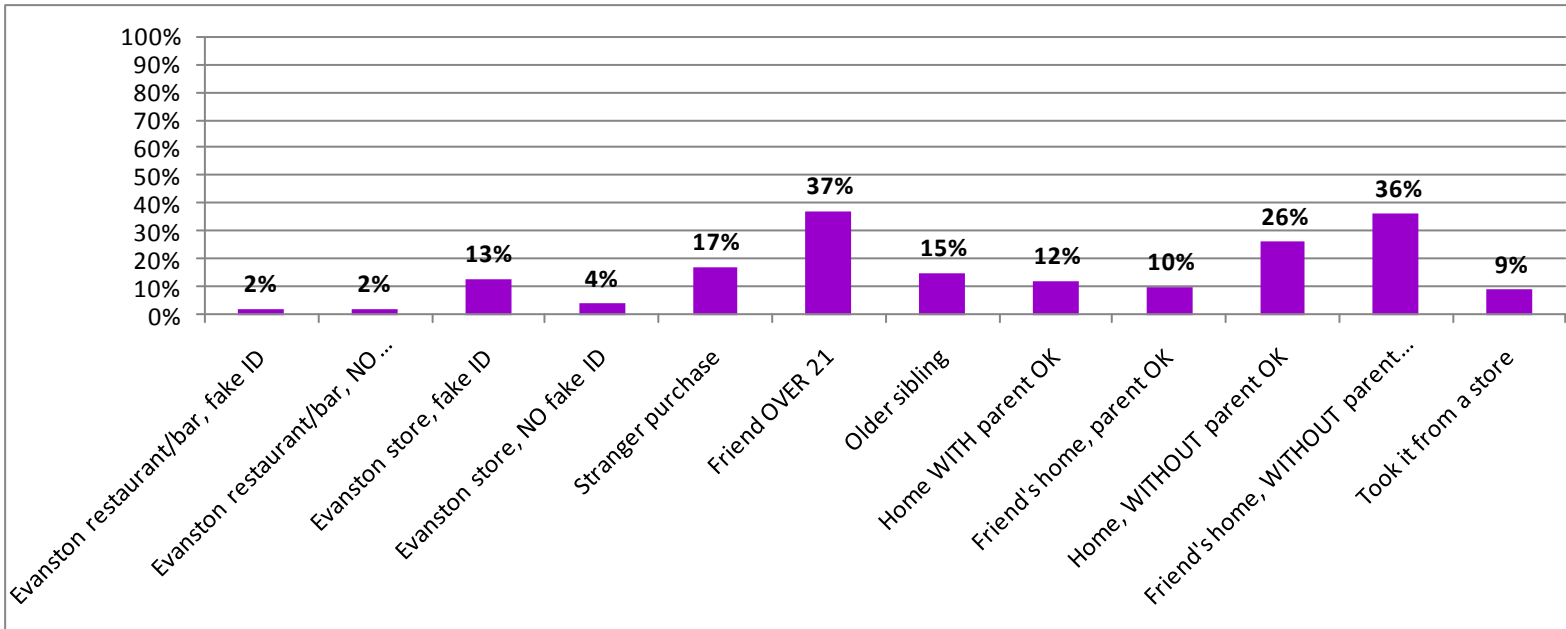
Impact of Parental Approval on Youth Behavior

Read this graph as follows: For example. . . "Of ETHS youth who drink alcohol on weekends, 27% drink when they perceive that their parents strongly disapprove of drinking on the weekend, compared to 94% who drink on the weekend when they perceive their parents strongly approve of drinking on the weekend."

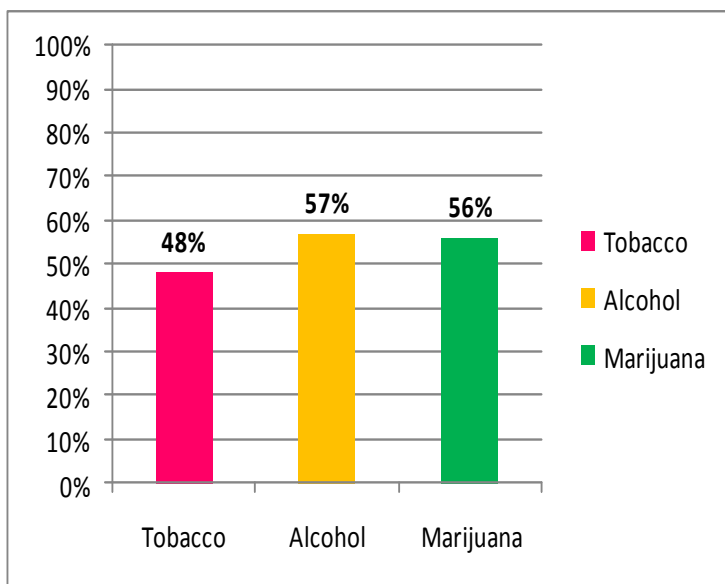


How ETHS Students Access Alcohol

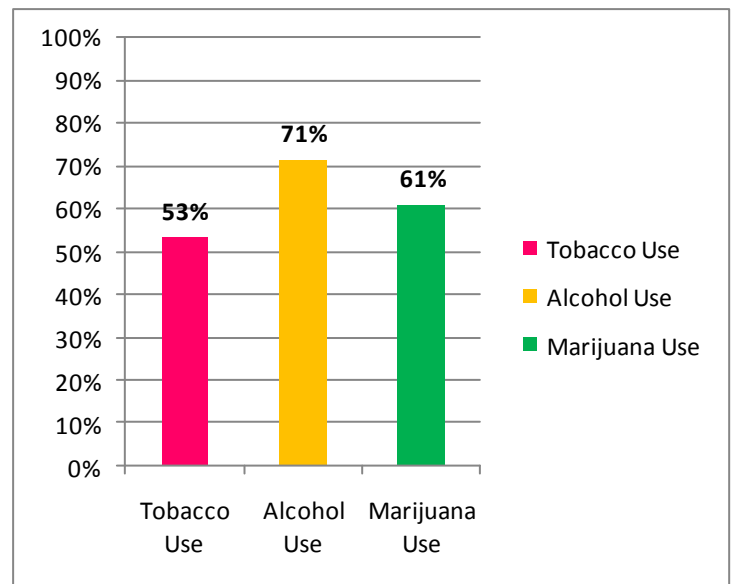
NOTE: Students were able to select multiple answers for this question (If you drank alcohol in the last 30 days, where did you get your alcohol?); this graph shows only the responses of those students who replied that they did drink alcohol in the 30 days prior to the survey



"My parents have set clear rules with me about not using the following"



"My parents have talked to me about the risks of using the following"



All data on this sheet (front and back) comes from the 2011 Drug Use and Perceptions Survey of Evanston Township High School Students. N=2,418 ETHS students.

*Annual surveys taken by ETHS students consistently show that PARENTS rank among the most believable sources of information**

Here are some ways to make use of this:

Start an Ongoing Conversation With Your Teen

No loving relationship can exist without communication. Teens believe they have valuable things to say and, when a parent listens genuinely, it helps self-esteem and confidence. The most important thing to remember when it comes to talking about difficult subjects like drinking and drugs is that **it's not a five-minute "talk"** — it's about building an ongoing dialogue. As your children grow up, they will need more and more information, so **start early and build on the conversation as your teen matures.**

When talking with your teen about drugs...

- Make sure they understand the reasons to avoid alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (focus on **immediate effects** such as poor decision-making, legal problems, and impacts on relationships).
- Set clear rules, and enforce them consistently.
- Tell your children that you will monitor where they are and what they are doing.
- Ensure that they have an easy plan for leaving any place they feel unsafe; discuss how they can contact you or another adult in order to get a ride home.

Some Conversation Starters

- "What do you think about people who use drugs?"
- "Do you have friends who drink alcohol, smoke, etc.?"
- Watch TV with your children and ask them what they think about a situation: "Do the shows and ads make drug use look acceptable and routine?" or "Do they show the downside of drug use?"

For more information, and to create an action plan for talking to your child, visit: <http://www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov/>

* 2011 Drug Perceptions and Use Survey. N=2,418 ETHS students.



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Signs & Symptoms of Teenage Drinking and Drug Use

How can you tell if your child is using drugs or alcohol? It's difficult because changes in mood or attitudes, unusual temper outbursts, changes in sleeping habits and changes in hobbies or other interests are common in teens. What should you look for? You can also look for signs of depression, withdrawal, carelessness with grooming or hostility. Also ask yourself, is your child doing well in school, getting along with friends, taking part in sports or other activities?

The following signs, especially when combined with one another, might indicate that your child is using alcohol or other drugs:

- Changes in friends
- Negative changes in schoolwork, missing school, or declining grades
- Increased secrecy about possessions or activities
- Use of incense, room deodorant, or perfume to hide smoke or chemical odors
- Changes in conversations with friends, e.g. more secretive, using coded language
- Change in clothing choices: new fascination with clothes that highlight drug use
- Increase in borrowing money
- Evidence of use of inhalant products (such as hairspray, nail polish, correction fluid, common household products); Rags and paper bags are sometimes used as accessories
- Bottles of eye drops, which may be used to mask bloodshot eyes or dilated pupils
- New use of mouthwash or breath mints
- Missing prescription drugs

The following signs are specific to some of the drugs most common among teens:

Marijuana: Glassy, red eyes; loud talking and inappropriate laughter followed by sleepiness; a sweet burnt scent; loss of interest, motivation; weight gain or loss.

Alcohol: Clumsiness; difficulty walking; slurred speech; sleepiness; poor judgment; dilated pupils; possession of a false ID card.

Tobacco/Nicotine: Smell of tobacco; stained fingers or teeth.

Inhalants: (Glues, aerosols, and vapors) Watery eyes; impaired vision, memory and thought; nose-drips or rashes around the nose and mouth; headaches and nausea; appearance of intoxication; drowsiness; poor muscle control; changes in appetite; anxiety; irritability; an unusual number of spray cans in the trash.

The above changes often signal that something harmful is going on with your child. Be on the watch for them so that you can spot trouble before it goes too far. If you do suspect drug use, contact your school's social worker for more information or PEER Services at 847-492-1778 for drug screens, evaluations, and adolescent treatment.

Talking to Parents of Your Teen's Friends

You might be so focused on your teenager that you forget about the other adults in his/her life, including his/her friends' parents. They can be key allies as you deal with the ups and downs of parenting during the teenage years. Here are some tips:

- Teens often believe that their own parents are the absolute strictest, and they might tell you this, creating some anxiety for you around calling other parents. The only way to know for sure where other parents stand is to ask them. It's very likely that you'll be surprised by the results!
- If you don't know the parents of your teen's friends, take the initiative and call them up or invite them over to develop the relationship.
- Don't be shy about calling other parents to get advice or help with a problem, to share ideas, or to use them as a sounding board.
- Be proactive about calling the friends' parents to give them details about a party or other activity your teen is hosting. Then they'll be sure to do the same.
- Routinely compare notes on rules around drug, tobacco and alcohol use, curfews, movies, computer use, sexual activity and other issues to make sure other parents know where you stand.
- If a friend's parents don't supervise as carefully as you would like, or if they have different rules, address the issue with your teen. Remind him/her of your family's rules and the consequences for breaking them. You can't expect the friend's parents to enforce your rules. If there are issues related to safety, you may have to restrict your teen's time with that friend.
- If you suspect one of your teen's friends is in trouble, talk to your teen first about the situation and get his/her opinion. Then ask yourself if you would want to know the information if it was your own son or daughter. Most likely, you would. Approach the parents carefully and know that they may be defensive at first.
- Meet with other parents, neighbors and adults in your teen's life, such as coaches or teachers. Share your expectations and develop common limits.

All information in this resource is courtesy of *Parents. The Anti-Drug.*
For more information, visit <http://www.theantidrug.com>



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Talking to Parents of Your Teen's Friends: A Sample Transcript

Talking to other parents about drugs and alcohol can feel awkward, especially at first. Let this transcript serve as a potential conversation guide.

Karen's teenage son Ben has asked to attend a party at his friend Luis's house and spend the evening. Karen has met Luis's mother, Maria, but doesn't know her very well. She has some concerns about the party, including the possibility of drinking, so decides to give Maria a call.

KAREN: Maria? Hi, this is Karen Johnson, Ben's mother. Is this a bad time?

MARIA: Oh no, not at all. How are you?

KAREN: I'm well, thanks. The reason I'm calling is about Luis's party this weekend. Ben would really like to come, but I had some concerns and told him I'd call you.

MARIA: Oh, sure. I completely understand. I'm planning to be home all evening, along with Luis's father. So the party will be supervised. There will be girls here for a while but we have very clear rules with Luis about what's appropriate. So they will be checked on.

KAREN: Great. That makes me feel much better. I also wanted to make sure that there wouldn't be any drinking there. Ben knows we feel strongly that he is not permitted to drink but I know some parents are more lenient.

MARIA: I know, I've heard about some parents hosting drinking parties. Don't worry. We forbid drinking as well, so there will be none of that. We'll be checking on the kids regularly to make sure nothing is going on.

KAREN: Oh good. Ben said the boys are planning to rent some movies as well. I hate to interfere too much, but we have rules about appropriate movies and I wanted to make sure Ben didn't see anything too "adult."

MARIA: Sure. I'll make sure that they don't rent anything "R" rated. We try to stay away from that in our house as well.

KAREN: Terrific. I'm so glad to hear we're on the same page. As long as we're talking, maybe we should compare notes about some other things. I've been meaning to call you for a while.

MARIA: Absolutely. Actually, we've been talking to Luis about renegotiating his curfew. He insists his is much earlier than all of his friends.

KAREN: Well, Ben has to be home at 9 p.m. on school nights and 11 p.m. on weekends, unless there's something special going on.

MARIA: Oh good, that helps. I've been talking to some other moms too, and that seems to be about the norm.

KAREN: Good, I'm glad to know that too. Ben always insists we're the strictest parents! I've always suspected he's been exaggerating.

MARIA: That's funny. I hear the same from Luis! You know, we should really exchange phone numbers and email so we can stay connected.

KAREN: Great idea. I'll send you mine and maybe we can circulate our information with some of the other parents so we can all keep in touch about the kids.

MARIA: Sounds great!

KAREN: Thanks again for your help on the party. Ben's really looking forward to coming.

MARIA: Happy to do it. Let's talk soon.

Guidelines for Parties: A Practical Guide for Parents

Most ETHS students are making healthy choices regarding alcohol and other drug use. Most parents are doing the right things to help their teens.

This guide is intended to serve as an aid for parents as we establish guidelines for our teenagers who host or attend parties. These suggestions may be too restrictive for some families and too permissive for others. Each family will need to consider them in light of their own values and attitudes.

Our teens sometimes experience pressure from both their peers and the media to use alcohol and other drugs. As teens grow into healthy, functioning adults, they need to resolve the three major issues of identity, intimacy, and autonomy during this period of their lives. Parties provide a means for adolescents to test their social skills and rate their behavior and acceptance against that of their peers.

As parents we are concerned about parties that get out of control. We may feel uncertain about what sorts of guidelines to establish for our children. We often feel isolated because we are unaware that other parents have the same concerns. We want to be responsible parents, yet we recognize that social pressures affect us, as well as our children. For a variety of reasons, we are often reluctant to contact other parents who are supposed to be hosting a party. Hopefully, this guide will provide you with some concrete ways to deal with these sorts of situations, and encourage further dialogue within families about these very important issues.

The Laws: A Summary

According to both state and Evanston law, the following acts are illegal:

- Providing alcohol to minors (on or off your property)
- Permitting minors to drink alcohol on your property, both knowingly and unknowingly; you are expected to know what is going on in your home when you are there, and to ensure adequate supervision when you are not.
- Knowingly permitting minors who are under the influence to drive.
- Permitting minors who are under the influence to leave your supervision such that they later commit acts of vandalism, theft, disorderly conduct, or other illegal activities.

If you are found to have committed any of the above violations, you will most often receive an Evanston ordinance ticket, fining you between \$500 and \$1,000. In the case of severe violations (typically, those resulting in bodily harm or death), you can be subject to civil suits, as well as more stringent state laws and their ensuing fines. Discretion lies in the hands of the officer.



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The information in this guide is adapted from www.thepowerofchoice.info, and www.cityofevanston.org.

Guidelines for Attending a Party

Know where your teen is going and with whom he/she will be.

- Obtain the address and phone number of the party host.
- Let your teenager know you expect a phone call if the location of the party is changed. (Tip: Given the mobility of cell phones, you may want your teen to check in with you from the party's land line.)
- When taking your teen to a party, wait to see that he/she goes inside the house.

Contact the parents of the teen giving the party.

- Be sure that a parent will be present.
- Offer assistance.

Communicate concerns.

- Discuss with your son/daughter the possible situations which might arise.
- Let them know where you can be reached.
- Assure your teen that you or a specified friend or neighbor can be called if needed.
- Agree on an acceptable curfew.
- Wait up until your teen arrives home.

Verify overnight arrangements, whether planned or spontaneous.

Guidelines for Giving a Party

Parents must be at the party. No parents - no party! A home minus adult supervision is asking for trouble. As parents, we have a parental as well as legal responsibility to our children to see that parties are conducted in an appropriate manner.

Set ground rules with your teen beforehand. Talk to your teens!

- Let your teenager know your expectations of him/her, and that you are sharing the responsibility of the party.
- Discuss the inappropriateness of any underage use of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs.
- Give your children options but at the same time establish parameters.
- Remind your kids that they are accountable for their own behavior.
- Specific rules might include: no leaving the party and then returning, some rooms of the house are off limits, no closed doors, lights will be left on, backpacks must be left at the door, etc.

Know your responsibilities.

As parents, it is important to understand our liability both to criminal charges and for monetary damages in case of a civil law suit where drugs and/or alcohol are used on our property. Therefore...

- Be alert to the signs of alcohol or drug use.
- Be aware of teens who leave the party and then return. Experience shows that in many instances these people have left the party with the intent of drinking or using drugs.
- If you find a teen under the influence of alcohol or drugs, call his/her family so that he/she can get home safely.
- Formulate a backup plan beforehand. Decide what you will do if, despite your best efforts, alcohol or other drugs do find their way into a party at your home.

Other ideas:

- Plan to have plenty of food and non-alcoholic drinks available.
- Try to meet your teen's friends and their parents.