



# ANTI-DRUG COALITION

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## **Take advantage of holiday breaks and open the gift of conversation with your kids**

(New Philadelphia, Ohio) – The holiday season is a time of warm-hearted cheer and creating lasting memories with family and friends. With all this merriment, however, comes the need for greater care and responsibility.

The holiday season provides teens greater exposure to alcohol and events where drinking is underway, and an increased probability for drinking and driving. 37 percent of highway deaths during the Christmas holiday are alcohol-related according to Mother's Against Drunk Driving (MADD). That number increases drastically on New Year's Day to 57 percent. The average the rest of the year is thirty-one percent. Talking to kids about these risks does make a difference.

The Tuscarawas County Anti-Drug Coalition is encouraging parents and caregivers to consider five important goals when talking to kids about alcohol and other drugs.

### **1. Show you disapprove of underage drinking and other drug misuse.**

Over 80 percent of young people ages 10–18 say their parents are the leading influence on their decision whether to drink. Send a clear and strong message that you disapprove of underage drinking and misuse of other drugs.

### **2. Show you care about your child's health, wellness, and success.**

Young people are more likely to listen when they know you're on their side. Reinforce why you don't want your child to drink or use other drugs—because you want your child to be happy and safe. The conversation will go a lot better if you're open and you show concern.

### **3. Show you're a good source of information about alcohol and other drugs.**

You want your child to make informed decisions about alcohol and other drugs with reliable information about their dangers. You don't want your child to learn about alcohol and other drugs from unreliable sources. Establish yourself as a trustworthy source of information.

### **4. Show you're paying attention and you'll discourage risky behaviors.**

Show you're aware of what your child is up to, as young people are more likely to drink or use other drugs if they think no one will notice. Do this in a subtle way, without prying.

### **5. Build your child's skills and strategies for avoiding underage drinking and drug use.**

Even if you don't think your child wants to drink or try other drugs, peer pressure is a powerful thing. Having a plan to avoid alcohol and drug use can help children make better choices. Talk with your child about what they would do if faced with a decision about alcohol and drugs, such as texting a code word to a family member or practicing how they'll say "no thanks."

"The goals of the work of the Tuscarawas County ADC Alcohol Committee is to decrease alcohol access, availability, and use among youth in Tuscarawas county and to increase communication within the family units of Tuscarawas County around alcohol's negative impact," stated Veronica Spidell, Manager of Community Services with the ADAMHS Board and Chair of the ADC Alcohol Committee. "We appreciate the volunteers and community partners who help us get these messages out through our Parents Who Host the Most campaign and the Talk. They Hear You. Campaign."

For more information, contact the Tuscarawas County Anti-Drug Coalition or visit [adctusc.org](http://adctusc.org).