

A Parent's Guide to Safe Teen Celebrations



Research shows that 67% of teens trust their parents for advice about substance use over any other source. Your voice is influential in their decision-making.

This fact sheet provides guidance on how to speak with your teen before any celebration — whether it's prom, a team event, graduation, or a weekend party — so they feel supported, prepared, and safe.



Before the big night, start with a conversation

Keep your tone open and pressure-free:

- Keep it casual and two-way (avoid lectures).
- Be curious, not judgmental (let them know you trust them to make good decisions).
- Focus on connection, not control.

Try asking:

- *What are you most looking forward to?*
- *What do you think the pressure will be like?*
- *What's your plan if something doesn't feel right?*



Help them think the night through

Before they go, ask them: “Do you know...”

- *Where you're going (including after-parties)?*
- *Who you'll be with?*
- *Whether there is supervision (if applicable)?*

Connect with other parents or hosts:

- If your teen is attending a house party, discuss expectations around supervision, substances, and timing with the responsible adult.
- Don't assume adult supervision means substance-free — ask direct questions.

Plan a safe ride home



Confirm transportation plans ahead of time.

- If using a limo or hired service, confirm there is a strict no-drinking policy.
- If a friend is driving, make sure there is a sober backup plan.
- Create a code word your teen can text to you if they feel unsafe and need a pickup without explanation.

Try asking:

- *Who are you going with?*
- *How are you getting home?*
- *What's your backup plan?*



Make the Safety-First Promise

“You can always call me for a ride—no matter what. Your safety comes first.”

Make sure your teen knows you will be there anytime if they feel unsafe.

Many teens don't think in terms of risks, so keep these conversations real, practical, and relatable.

Risks



Pre-drinking

Don't ruin the night before it starts (missing the event, getting sick, memory loss).



Binge drinking

4 or more drinks in a short time is one of the most common causes of medical emergencies on prom night.



Alcohol + cannabis

Mixing the two can increase the risk of alcohol poisoning and dramatically increases crash risk when driving.



Personal safety

Stay with a trusted group, watch out for one another, and leave together to reduce risks.



Real world consequences

Impairment at a school function can lead to denied entry, suspension or being barred from other events.



Things to tell your teen before they go:

On getting a ride:

"Call me anytime — no questions that night. I'll always come get you."

On helping a friend who is seriously impaired:

"If a friend is in trouble, call for help. A bad night is recoverable. Not calling isn't."

On peer pressure:

"You can always blame me. Say 'my parents will lose it.'"

On mixing substances:

Alcohol and cannabis together are 40 times more dangerous behind the wheel."

On calling 911 when someone has overdosed:

"You will not get in trouble for saving someone's life. The law protects you."



Final checklist for parents

- Have we had a calm, open conversation?
- Have I focused on safety — not punishment?
- Do I know their plans (and backup plans)?
- Have we talked about safe transportation?
- Do they know our code word and that I will come anytime, no questions asked?
- Have I asked them to stay with their group and never leave an impaired friend alone?
- Do they know calling 911 for an overdose is legally protected under the Good Samaritan Act?