

## Tips to Create a Safe Prom and High School Graduation Season

As we approach the spring and summer season of celebrations from prom to graduation to summer vacation, these occasions can present a reason to “party” with alcohol and other drugs. Many teens view drinking as a “rite of passage,” and they may be pressured by their peers to drink at these events. It takes a combined effort of parents, schools, the community, law enforcement, and students to make sure these events stay safe.

**Parents do make a difference!** Research shows that positive parenting has more influence over teens’ decision-making than their friends, TV, celebrities, music, and social media. Take an active role in teaching your teen about responsibility. Set clear expectations along with a family rule of no alcohol until age 21. Explain the reasons behind your expectations and encourage your teen to talk about any concerns. Discuss and agree upon consequences in advance with your teen. Be consistent and enforce the established consequences.

Other ways you can help:

- Remind your teen that under no circumstances should he/she ride in a car with someone who has been drinking or using drugs.
- Set curfews: Teen car crashes and deaths increase late at night. Know where your teen is, how long he/she will be there, when he/she will be leaving, who is there, and who is supervising the event.
- Do not allow alcohol or other drugs to be present at home, in cars or other places teens gather.
- Provide adequate adult supervision at home gatherings.
- Encourage family conversations around places where your teen will be.
- Call other parents to double-check the plans and be assured that adults will be present and awake at any parties. Confirm that no drugs or alcohol will be allowed.
- Discuss with your teen how a fun celebration can turn tragic very quickly when alcohol and drugs are introduced, as their use is frequently linked with other risky and potentially destructive behaviors such as bullying and dating violence, unintentional injuries from falls or drowning, car crashes, and overdose poisonings.

The teen brain responds to and is affected by alcohol differently than the adult brain. The teen brain is still in the developing stages until age 25 and introducing substances like drugs or alcohol negatively affects brain development during these formative years and increases the likelihood of addiction. That is why it is critically important to prevent underage drinking. Help your teen enjoy their prom and graduation without drinking or using drugs, please join us in promoting healthy behaviors and safe gatherings by discussing these issues with your teen.

For more information, visit our website at [cadyinc.org](http://cadyinc.org). If you, or someone you know, struggles with substance misuse or addiction, please call 2-1-1 or the Doorway at LRGH Healthcare (934-8905) for help. You can also connect with Plymouth Area Recovery Connection (PARC), our local recovery center, located at Whole Village Family Resource Center in Plymouth at [info@parcnh.org](mailto:info@parcnh.org) or 238-3555.