

Summer Vacation is the Right Time for Parents to Step Up and Combat Underage Drinking with the Help of the “Talk.. They Hear You” Campaign

The National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence, Sacramento Region Affiliate (NCADD Sacramento) knows that the sooner a parent talks to their children about alcohol, the greater chance they have of influencing their decisions about drinking. The "Talk.. They Hear You" campaign is being released to help parents during summer vacation when they have more access to their kids. It is also common during the summer that young teens are unsupervised and open to peer pressure while parents are at work. The Campaign provides parents with information and resources to address the underage drinking issue by increasing their level of comfort with the topic and encouraging open communication between them and their children. The campaign materials were created by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and are being distributed by local partners like NCADD Sacramento.

During summer vacation, more opportunities exist for conversations between parents, caregivers, and their kids. At the same time, many young teens are unsupervised while parents are at work, leaving them susceptible to peer pressure and other influences. About 10 percent of 12-year-olds say they have tried alcohol, but by age 15, that number jumps to 50 percent. Parents have a significant influence on young people’s decisions about alcohol consumption, especially when parents create supportive and nurturing environments in which their children can make their own decisions. In fact, around 80 percent of children feel that parents should have a say in whether they drink alcohol.

Scientific understanding and knowledge of the dangers of underage drinking has increased substantially over the past two decades. Studies released by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) showed that in 2009, an estimated 1,844 homicides; 949,400 nonfatal violent crimes such as rape, robbery, and assault; and 1,811,300 property crimes, including burglary, larceny, and car theft were attributed to underage drinking.

NCADD Sacramento is engaging parents in a campaign to promote communication on the topic of underage drinking, making tools provided by SAMHSA available for a conversation about alcohol use. “Parents need to understand that their children actually do want guidance on the issue of underage drinking,” said NCADD Sacramento Executive Director Barbara Thompson. “The campaign materials produced by SAMHSA include everything a parent will need to answer their children’s tough questions about alcohol.”

The available resources include posters in English and Spanish that encourage parents to have the conversation, graphics and videos for posting on social media, talking points for parents, signs to look for if parents believe their child is consuming alcohol, a sample family agreement form, and other tips for helping children make the right decision when parents aren’t present. These materials can be found at [NCADD's website](#)

By educating parents on the seriousness of the issue, and the fact that they need to be concerned about their children as early as 9 years old, NCADD Sacramento is confident this prevention strategy will help children avoid dangerous situations involving underage drinking.



NCADD Sacramento's Director of Prevention, Angela Da Re said, "We have seen firsthand in our extensive work with families throughout the Sacramento region that informed parents, armed with communication skills, can be the most effective prevention tool."

Underage drinking is associated with various negative consequences for children and can affect and endanger the lives of those around them. According to SAMHSA, children who drink alcohol are more likely to:

Use drugs - Frequent binge drinkers (nearly 1 million high school students nationwide) are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, including using other drugs such as marijuana and cocaine.

Get bad grades - Children who use alcohol have higher rates of academic problems and poor school performance compared with nondrinkers.

Suffer injury or death - In 2009, an estimated 1,844 homicides; 949,400 nonfatal violent crimes such as rape, robbery, and assault; and 1,811,300 property crimes, including burglary, larceny, and car theft were attributed to underage drinking.

Engage in risky sexual activity - Young people who use alcohol are more likely to be sexually active at earlier ages, to have sexual intercourse more often, and to have unprotected sex.

Make bad decisions - Drinking lowers inhibitions and increases the chances that children will engage in risky behavior or do something that they will regret when they are sober.

Have health problems - Young people who drink are more likely to have health issues such as depression and anxiety disorders.

NCADD Sacramento's Prevention Department has made all SAMHSA "Talk.. They Hear You" materials available on their website at www.ncaddsac.org. Whether a parent or a community organization seeking to assist local families, posters, videos, banner ads and talking points may be downloaded free-of-charge. PSA's are also available for use by the media.

NCADD Sacramento has been strengthening individuals and families in their four-county region (Sacramento, Placer, El Dorado & Yolo) for over 40 years. NCADD Prevention and Treatment programs serve the diverse population of the Sacramento community, including a 24-hour Hopeline (free crisis phone line and one-hour assessment), Strengthening Families Programs, Kernels (tips for successful parenting and healthy eating), Options for Recovery (Perinatal Treatment), Families in Recovery and Drug Diversion classes.

NCADD also educates health professionals by offering guest lectures on the latest research pertaining to community health and well-being. Moreover, NCADD provides free drug and alcohol prevention training to communities of faith in the Sacramento Region. Using a holistic approach, NCADD stresses the importance of nutrition, child and baby well-being, safety, and community health.



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