

What Can We Do About Parties?

1. Clearly establish ground rules and expectations with your child before a party takes place or before your child goes out for any social event.
 - Let your children know your expectations; they want and need guidelines, no matter what they may tell you.
 - Responsible limits are a powerful and convincing expression of your love and care for your children.
 - Give your children options and establish clear guidelines. Remind them that they are accountable for their decisions and that there are definite consequences for their behavior.
2. When hosting a party:
 - Always develop a guest list. Consider sending handwritten invitations to avoid duplications.
 - If the party is a large one, notify the authorities in advance.
 - Let your guests know where they should park when attending the party.
 - Let your neighbors know when you are hosting a party and to please call you if they become aware of any problems.
 - Do not admit uninvited guests.
 - Require a specific starting and ending time for any party. See curfew information below.
 - Do not allow guests to leave the party and then return. Experience has shown that often their intent is to use alcohol or other drugs while away.
 - Actively supervise the party. Walk through all rooms and outside areas during the party. Invite a few other parents to assist with supervision.
 - Plan the party with a variety of appropriate activities and plenty of food and non-alcoholic drinks.
 - Put backpacks / coats in a room that is unavailable during the party. Lock up medicine and alcohol as a precaution.
 - Decide in advance how you will handle certain behaviors that could occur. (smoking, too loud, making out...)
 - If any problems occur, do not hesitate to call the authorities.
3. Always attend teen parties in your home. Without parents, there should never be a party. Parents have a legal responsibility to their children to see that parties are conducted in an appropriate manner.
4. In Missouri, parents and other adults are subject to criminal charges and civil lawsuits. This can result in the assessment of damages against any adult on whose property alcohol or other drugs have been provided or used without authorization even if the property owners are not home or are unaware of the party.
 - Any person who sells or furnishes alcoholic beverages to someone under the age of 21 could be subject to a fine up to \$1,000 and/or imprisonment for up to one year. These penalties apply if a property owner allows minors to consume alcohol or other drugs on or in his/her property.
 - It is unlawful to have an open container of alcohol in an automobile.
 - Under "liability for failure to supervise minors," Clayton Municipal Ordinance provides for a fine of up to \$500 for each incident where any person knowingly or negligently permits the

possession and/or the consumption of alcohol or controlled substances by a minor on or in a premise under his/her control.

5. Make arrangements for reliable supervision of your house when you are out of town. Empty homes invite unauthorized and unsupervised parties. Make it clear that there will be consequences for unauthorized parties.
6. Be aware of and alert to signs that alcohol or other drugs have been used at a party. Do not allow anyone who may have been using alcohol or other drugs to leave the party. Call their parents for safe transportation home or 911 if necessary.

Communication

Talking with other parents:

1. When a party or other social gathering is planned, contact the parents of the host to:
 - Offer assistance, such as sending along food
 - Be sure the parents will be present and supervising the event. Dialogue with other parents about their expectations and curfew.
 - Verify the starting and ending times.
 - Do not allow your child to talk you out of this step.
2. Verify overnight arrangements, whether planned or spontaneous. The popular practice of sleepovers among older young people is often used for purposes of circumventing parental rules.
3. Work together with other parents whenever possible to support each other in setting and maintaining standards and expectations.

Talking with your child:

1. Communicate your supportive feelings, concerns, and clear-cut policies to your children and their friends. Discuss with them the possible situations that can arise: such as peer pressure to drink, dangerous drivers, and violence. Help your child to think of ways to resist peer pressure through role-playing.
2. Let them know where you can be reached when you are not home.
3. Agree on an acceptable curfew and upon the consequences if the curfew is broken.
4. Assure your child and their friends that it is always okay to call you for help.
5. Interact with your child when they arrive home.
6. Be aware of signs and symptoms of possible alcohol and other drug use.
7. Take a clear stand on the use of alcohol and other drugs and make sure your children and their friends understand your position fully.

Talking with your school:

1. Your child's school is available as a resource to you and your family for help and assistance.
2. Please be aware of and reinforce the school's policies and efforts related to alcohol and other drug use prevention.

Curfews

Curfews set a common community boundary for the supervision of children. There are penalties for curfew violation. According to the curfew ordinance of St. Louis County (Section 700, Paragraph 705.010), children under 17 may not be outside the company of their parents Sunday through Thursday from 11: p.m. - 6:00 a.m. and on Friday and Saturday from 12 midnight to 6:00 a.m.

We strongly encourage you as parents to abide by this law. We also encourage your family to set curfews with your children. Please consider your family expectations and the needs of your child in making this decision.

Source: The Clayton Community Alliance for Healthy Kids

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