



Talking Points

How WI Prevents Underage Drinking

- While Wisconsin has been successful in reducing underage drinking, preventing youth and young adults under the age of 21 from using alcohol remains a challenge that affects all Wisconsin communities and families.
- You may wonder why this is important. You may have consumed alcohol before the age of 21 and turned out okay. Times have changed. Children try alcohol much earlier, and in larger amounts. Plus, we know a lot more today about the risks of underage drinking.
- Because you care about children, you care about underage drinking.
- Childhood is a critical period of physical and emotional growth.
- Underage drinking exposes a child's developing brain, mental health, and life to serious damage.
- Research supports the effectiveness of conversations between children and trusted adults about challenging topics, such as underage drinking.
- Small Talks is a statewide campaign encouraging adults – especially parents and caregivers – to have short, casual conversations about the dangers of underage drinking with the children in their lives starting at age eight.
- Prevention experts recommend beginning alcohol education at age eight. This is the age at which children start to form their earliest opinions about alcohol and alcohol use.
- Small talks do not require much planning: Just choose the alcohol-free moment that feels right to you. Small talks can happen while watching a TV show, over homework, while playing video games, at the store, while listening music, and while scanning social media. Help a child sort out what they hear from friends or see on TV before someone hands them a drink.
- There is no right or wrong way to have a small talk. Having a lot of talks (even do-overs) is the point. Every attempt shows you care and are paying attention.
- Visit SmallTalksWI.org for underage drinking facts, talk tips, and more.
- This campaign is sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.