

Protecting Our Children

Set A Good Example When Celebrating

(NAPSA)—At holiday time, even people who drink little alcohol the rest of the year often indulge in the season of good cheer. But experts caution that adults—especially parents—should consider what impressions their celebratory drinking might make on young children.

The example adults set when they use alcohol during the holiday season can be critical, according to the Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free, an organization led by more than 30 Governors' spouses working to prevent drinking among children. Surveys show 20 percent of American 12-year-olds have tried alcohol; by the time kids reach eighth grade, this rises to more than 50 percent. Among those same eighth graders, one in four has been drunk at least once. Sending a message to kids that alcohol use is fine if you have a good "reason"—such as the holidays—can only make the problem greater.

What can parents do to protect their children and send the right message about alcohol at holiday time and all year around? Here are several suggestions that may help to keep your children alcohol free during the holidays:

- Drinking is illegal for kids. Let your children know you don't approve of underage alcohol



By setting some rules and a good example, parents can keep children away from alcohol, especially during parties.


use—and the holidays are no exception.

- If you have alcohol on hand, keep track of the supply. Big get-togethers offer kids plenty of opportunities to sneak drinks. Be especially alert during holiday partying. Let children know that holiday drinks, such as eggnog and punch, may contain alcohol.

- Make sure you set the right tone for holiday entertaining. Let your kids see you put out alcohol-free beverages and plenty of food for the party, to show that adults don't have to drink to have a good time.

- If your kids want to host

Rules Parents Should Set

- Let children know you don't approve of underage alcohol use.
- Warn children drinks such as eggnog and punch may contain alcohol.
- Show that adults don't have to drink to have a good time. 

their own holiday party, discuss the ground rules with them before the party. State on the invitation that adult chaperones will be on hand during the entire time. When the guests arrive, stay visible and available—just don't join the party.

The holiday season is a time for celebration, but it also presents an opportunity to give kids balanced messages about alcohol use. Let them know you can enjoy the season of "good cheer" without alcohol.

The Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free is a nationwide initiative committed to reducing the harm of childhood drinking. The Leadership offers a free booklet, *Make a Difference: Talk to Your Child About Alcohol*, which describes ways parents can talk to children about the problems associated with alcohol and the risks of childhood drinking. To order or download the booklet, visit www.alcoholfreechildren.org.