

UNDERAGE DRINKING: THE FACTS

The average age youth begin using alcohol is 14 years old.

15%

of Ottawa County Youth have consumed alcohol in the past 30 days



14%

of Ottawa County youth have ridden in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking



8%

of Ottawa County youth binge drank in the past 30 days

Youth say their primary way of getting alcohol is to attend a party where it's available or to get it from someone 21 years old or older.

Youth who drink before age 19 are

40x

more likely to struggle with addiction.

Parents have an important responsibility in helping their youth make wise choices about alcohol.

- Have candid conversations with your youth about your **values** and **expectations** and the choices you want them to make. Have these conversations early and often. Youth often say their parents don't talk to them about alcohol, and parents say they do have these conversations. Increasing the frequency will make sure your teen knows where you stand.
- Have candid conversations with your youth about **their goals**, what they hope to achieve in life and if addiction runs in your family. In focus groups, youth report wanting to achieve their goals and not disappointing the important people in their life as the number one reason they choose not to drink.
- Use natural teachable moments to start conversations; celebrities, popular music, peers, and current events all give opportunities to start conversations with your youth.
- Know your school policy about youth participation in school activities and drinking.
- **Remember: providing alcohol to minors is illegal.** Social Host laws say that if you have knowledge of, or should have reasonable knowledge of, minors consuming alcohol in your presence you are responsible for the actions of those minors. This means you could be charged with providing alcohol to minors, pay \$1,000 fine, and face jail time. Understanding the consequences and what you may be liable for is important. For more information, please visit www.arborcircle.org/safeparties

