

# TRUTH SPOTLIGHT

on underage alcohol use

## DID YOU KNOW

Alcohol is the **most commonly used and abused** drug among youth in the US.

Is it **illegal for a person under the age of 21** to consume alcohol, have any alcohol in their system or even in their possession.

People who use alcohol **before the age of 15** are four times **more likely to become addicted to alcohol** at some point in their lives than those who wait until the age of 21 to have their first drink.

90% of American's with a substance abuse problem **started** smoking, drinking, or both **before the age of 18**.

**The brain is developing until the age of 25.** Early exposure to alcohol can interrupt critical brain development, including memory, ability to learn new things and hold onto knowledge, impulse control, and emotional maturity.

Teens say they **rely on adults in their lives more than anyone else** to help them make tough decisions and to provide good advice.

The 2021 YAS (Ottawa County Youth Assessment Survey) showed that **53.7% of Ottawa County teens** that were surveyed said that it would be **sort of easy for very easy to get alcohol**.

## TALKING TO YOUR KIDS

Conversations at any age can be a powerful tool to help protect your kids. Learn more at [talksooner.org](https://talksooner.org).

Take advantage of every opportunity to engage, listen and make sure your child knows your expectations while keeping the dialogue open and engaging.

When you talk to your child, listen to them and respect what they say. Teach them about the dangers of underage use while also modeling responsible alcohol use.

TALK EARLY.  
TALK OFTEN.

LISTEN &  
BE HONEST.