



Registered Charity 1138775

# Newsletter



for Parents

September 2013 Ed3

The Summer holidays already seem so long ago, where did those sunny days go?

Some of our kids have started new schools with the worry and excitement of making new friends, others realising Year 10 is the year they really need to start buckling down for their GCSE's, Year 11 knowing what a long slog they've got ahead of them this year and others beginning sixth form.

As the Autumn begins we've got some great discussion points to help you talk to your kids about alcohol, take a look online at [AET Parent Pages](#)

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## Mums lead the way in talking to their kids about alcohol

Over the Summer, Family Talk UK – an online platform developed with the Mumsnet community via [Facebook.com/FamilyTalkUK](https://www.facebook.com/FamilyTalkUK) - where parents can share experiences and advice about discussing alcohol with their children, commissioned a poll of 1,000 parents to find out if they had talked to their kids about alcohol.



Some interesting key findings were

- The average age at which parents talked to their child about alcohol was just after their tenth birthday.
- two thirds of mums (59%) polled said they had initiated a conversation with their child compared to fewer than half of dads (47%).
- While mums lead the way, of those polled one in five mums (22%) and one in three dads (32%) hadn't spoken with their children about alcohol.
- Mums also found it easier to have the conversation. One in five (18%) dads found talking about alcohol with their children difficult or very difficult, compared to just 9% of mums.
- Parents in the North East and North West are among the least likely to have spoken with their child about alcohol.

This third annual survey of parents marks the start of a new partnership between Family Talk UK and the Alcohol Education Trust (AET). The partnership aims to reach 100,000 parents over three years. Helena Conibear, Founder and Director of the Alcohol Education Trust, said: *"It's encouraging that nearly two thirds of mums are proactively talking to their children about alcohol, especially as research tells us just how important mums are as role models. But the research shows that there is still more work to do to reach those parents who haven't spoken with their children about responsible drinking and to ensure all parents have the right information and facts at their fingertips. It's crucial that both mums and dads feel comfortable and knowledgeable having these conversations. Our new partnership with Family Talk UK*

will mean that more parents can get the important advice and support they need via [www.alcoholeducationtrust.org/parentpages](http://www.alcoholeducationtrust.org/parentpages).”

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## Is Facebook bad for your child's health?



A US study suggests that ‘it may be beneficial to teach teens about the harmful effects of posting risky behaviours online and how those displays can hurt their friends.’

How many of us have to stop our kids spending hours on facebook? We know it's an important way of chatting with their friends and staying in touch, but a new study, albeit from the US, shows that teenagers who see friends smoking and drinking alcohol in photographs posted on Facebook are more likely to smoke and drink themselves.

‘Our study shows that adolescents can be influenced by their friends’ online pictures to smoke or drink alcohol,’ said Dr Thomas Valente, professor the University of Southern California.

Dr Valente and his team surveyed 1,563 15 and 16 year-old students about their online and offline friendship networks, the frequency of their social media use, their smoking, and their alcohol consumption. Interestingly they found that the size of a student’s online network of friends was not significantly associated with risky behaviour, but exposure to friends’ online pictures of partying or drinking was significantly associated with both smoking and alcohol use. Teenagers whose close friends did not drink alcohol were more likely to be affected by increasing exposure to risky online pictures.

‘The evidence suggests that friends’ online behaviours are a viable source of peer influence,’ said Dr Grace Huang, the study’s first and corresponding author. On average, 34% of students had at least one friend who talked about partying online and 20% reported that their friends posted drinking pictures online. Read more: [here](#)



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## Will your toddler be a teenage drinker?

It's good to have a study that helps explain how we can have one easy going teenager who is sensible and another that pushes the boundaries and just doesn't seem to listen.

Evidence from The Avon Longitudinal Study\* of Parents and Children (over 12,000 of them) has found that a child's' temperament prior to age 5 can predict their alcohol use and problems at age 15½ years, even after controlling for socio-demographic factors and parental alcohol problems. In both boys and



girls, 2 different temperament styles - children with consistent emotional and conduct difficulties through age 5, and children who were very sociable - both showed higher rates of alcohol problems at age 15. Those with emotional and conduct difficulties had reduced conscientiousness and lower emotional stability in dealing with alcohol whereas the association between sociability and alcohol problems was due to being more extravert and sensation-seeking for both boys and girls.

There's no one size fits all advice on keeping our children safe around alcohol - your advice depends on age, temperament and your relationship. But three other factors make a big difference, no matter what the temperament of your teen

- **Setting boundaries and sticking to them** - such as what time to be home, picking up from parties, checking plans are genuine (day time or evening) and that there is adult supervision at parties.
- **Keeping our kids busy** - boredom and having nothing to do is what teens say leads to them hanging around drinking - so encourage hobbies, a part time job or volunteering.
- **Being good role models ourselves** - Mum's drinking in front of children has more impact than Dad's - so drink responsibly - kids have a clear idea of the difference between sociable drinking and being drunk from as young as eight! Being a good role model also includes explaining to curious youngsters why they can't drink like you and should wait until they are older - to find the right message for the right age group visit [AET Parent Pages - when to start?](#)



(\*Source: Adolescent alcohol use is predicted by childhood temperament factors before age 5, with mediation through personality and peers Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research July 2013)

## Any questions?

Part of our job is to answer any worries you may have - either email in confidence to [jane@alcoholeducationtrust.org](mailto:jane@alcoholeducationtrust.org) or tweet Sandra via [@AETParentHelp](https://twitter.com/AETParentHelp) and share your experience, frustrations and also good news stories, via our on line forum [facebook/AET](https://facebook.com/AET) and [facebook/FamilyTalkUK](https://facebook.com/FamilyTalkUK). There are also some great chats on youtube via [YouTube.com/FamilyTalkUK](https://YouTube.com/FamilyTalkUK)

For further information on any of the above please contact

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