

Social media.
Healthy relationship with food.

Talk About It.

Digital citizenship.
Mental health.



Talk To Your Kids About Youth Alcohol Use

Alcohol is the most widely used substance among America's youth. Youth alcohol use is defined as the consumption of alcoholic beverages by individuals under 21 years old (the legal drinking age in the United States). In 2023, 5.6 million youth ages 12-20 reported drinking alcohol beyond "just a few sips" in the past month (NIH, 2025). Alcohol consumption, particularly youth alcohol consumption, is associated with many negative health outcomes, so much so that the Surgeon General released a 2025 report highlighting the causal link between alcohol consumption and cancer. While alcohol use is linked to many negative physical health outcomes, the negative mental and social outcomes impact both youth and adults alike.

The below table shows the percentage of students (7th, 9th and 11th graders) who reported using alcohol (one or more drinks of alcohol) in the past 30 days:

	Beach Cities	Los Angeles County	California
7th grade	1 %	2%	3%
9th grade	4%	5%	7%
11th grade	16%	10%	14%

*With the exception of 7th graders, the Beach Cities yields a higher percentage of students reporting 30-day alcohol use compared to Los Angeles County and California.

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For parenting resources, blogs and videos, visit southbayfamiliesconnected.org

For mental health resources, visit bchd.org/resources

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Alcohol, Social Media and Peers

1. Social media, an ever-evolving tool, comes with both risks and rewards. Remember to set expectations and rules with your child before they download social media. Take this as an opportunity to create a Family Media Plan to help navigate the world of social media as your child grows.
 - a. Increased use of and engagement with social media at ages 12-13 are associated with a younger age of drinking onset (e.g., ages 17-18) than those who did not use social media (Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 2024).
2. Peer groups often have significant influence on behavior, including risk taking and social support (American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 2018). California Healthy Kids Survey data reveal a relationship between decreased peer disapproval and increased alcohol use.
 - a. 7th grade perception of peer disapproval of alcohol use (one to two drinks of alcohol every day) is 97% versus 83% in 11th grade (Beach Cities, 2024).

Walk the Talk

1. Set family expectations about youth alcohol use. Researchers observed that students whose parents allowed them to drink at home and/or provided them with alcohol experience the steepest escalation in drinking (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2024).
2. Reflect on your own alcohol use. Modeling behaviors such as alcohol consumption at youth sporting events, family gatherings or school-sponsored activities can normalize that behavior. Ask yourself, "Is this necessary?"
3. Communicate your house rules to your children's friends and parents. Knowing that your house is an alcohol-free zone can help others feel confident in setting up similar rules in their homes.
4. Share your own experiences with alcohol use and normalize non-use. Your child may feel like "everyone is drinking" and they will be in the minority if they choose not to consume alcohol. Consider sharing statistics surrounding the percentage of teens (and adults) that aren't drinking.
5. Know help is available. SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration) has a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service: 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

Whatever "it" is, have the talk.

Find tips at bchd.org/talk.

Information sourced from:

[American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 2018](#)

[California Healthy Kids Survey, 2024](#)

[CDC, 2025](#)

[Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 2024](#)

[BMC Public Health, 2023](#)

healthychildren.org, 2023

[National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcohol, 2024](#)

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