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# News Alert

## Northeast Community Challenge Coalition

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### **What Parents Need to Know About College Drinking.**

*Parents continue to be a primary influence in their sons' and daughters' lives. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, there are three distinct stages in which parents contribute in critical ways to the decisions college-bound students make.*

#### **When choosing a college:**

- Inquire about campus alcohol policies.
- Ask college administrators how they enforce underage drinking prevention.
- Ask what procedures are in place to notify parents about alcohol and substance abuse problems.
- Ask what counseling services are available to students.
- Ask what follow-up procedures are used with students who exhibit alcohol abuse/problem behaviors.
- Inquire about housing arrangements and whether alcohol-free dorms are available.
- Ask whether the college/university employs student resident advisors (RAs) to monitor dormitories.

#### **When your child is a first-year student**

- Remind your son or daughter about the health, legal and social consequences of underage drinking.
- Make certain they understand how alcohol use can lead to death, date rape, unsafe sex, violence, vandalism, depression, suicide, alcohol use/abuse and dependence and academic failure (can damage the part of the brain responsible for learning and memory).
- Remind your child that the judgment area of the brain is not fully developed until age 25.
- Find out if there is a program during orientation that educates students about campus policies related to alcohol use. If there is one, attend with your son or daughter.
- Make certain you understand the college's "parental notification" policy.
- Make sure your son or daughter understands the penalties for underage drinking, public drunkenness, using a fake ID, driving under the influence, assault, date rape charges and other alcohol-related offenses.

#### **Getting assistance if facing an alcohol-related crisis**

- Be aware of the signs of possible alcohol abuse by your son or daughter (e.g., lower grades, never available or reluctant to talk with you, unwilling to talk about activities with friends, trouble with campus authorities, serious mood changes).
- Call and/or visit campus health services and ask to speak with a counselor.
- For alcohol policies on college campuses, see [www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/policies](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/policies)

Educating parents of college-bound students is a component of the Community-Wide Underage Drinking Prevention Campaign, a project of the Northeast Community Challenge Coalition.