

## 27 Reasons NOT to Serve (or turn a blind eye to) Alcohol at High School Graduation Parties

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1. Most young people still have a vibrant natural capacity for joy; they don't need alcohol to be exuberant and to abandon themselves to celebration.
2. Serving alcohol to kids reinforces the jaded view that human beings can't be playful and wonderfully outrageous unless they are intoxicated. (*When we are older in spirit, tired, stressed, bored, inhibited, depressed, over-worked or have otherwise dimmed our capacity to easily celebrate life, alcohol may speed a transition to party mode. But most kids just need permission to get loose and they find their joy naturally. Let's not confuse adult needs with those of kids.*)
3. Young people are beginning to explore their romantic and sexual selves; it is difficult for them to develop confidence if they rely on alcohol for courage.
4. Young people don't sip wine; they drink to get drunk increasing their risk of serious trauma and their risk of developing alcoholism.
5. Accidents are the most common cause of death in young persons under age 26; the risk of fatal and/or disabling accidents is markedly increased with alcohol.
6. You may take the car keys but can you really keep them safe? Every year thousands of young people die from alcohol poisoning, choking on vomit, drowning, fighting, falling off of roofs, fires, and other alcohol related causes.
7. Young people's brains are still developing and the risk of developing an alcohol disorder is greater the younger a child is when he or she begins to drink. Kids who start drinking under age 14 are four times more likely to develop alcohol problems than persons who begin drinking as adults.
8. Young people who are intoxicated on alcohol are more likely to use other drugs offered to them, including pills containing unknown, and sometimes lethal, substances.
9. Rituals around alcohol provide a structure for young people to interact with each other, but games, dancing, sports, bonfires, and other activities work just as well without the vomiting and hangovers.
10. Young people don't necessarily think parents who serve alcohol are cool. We hear "no wonder so and so is so messed up...do you believe his parent served us alcohol", more often than "so and so's parents are so cool, they let us drink".

11. In New Hampshire, young persons under age 21 can be charged with possession of alcohol by having alcohol in their bodies (a blood level of 0.02 or above, - legal intoxication is 0.08)
12. Young persons convicted of alcohol or drug related offenses are not eligible for Federal education loans.
13. Although many parents believe that introducing children to alcohol at home may prevent them “going wild” in college, there is no clear evidence for this, so each parent must decide. Don’t assume others are comfortable with you serving their kids alcohol; many expect that if an adult is present, alcohol will not be.
14. You may think you are serving 18 and 19 year olds, but are you checking IDs? Do you really think its okay for 15 and 16 year olds to be drinking at parties?
15. Parents who serve alcohol to underage children at parties create significant conflict for other parents who want their kids to celebrate and have fun with their friends, but who want to protect them from the health risks of underage drinking and believe their children should respect the law.
16. Parents who serve alcohol to underage children create significant distress for many children by creating a situation that separates friends from each other when they all want to be celebrating together.
17. If there were no alcohol at ANY graduation parties, there would still be graduation parties and kids would be just as likely to laugh, dance, make-out, stay up all night, party and have a good time.
18. Intoxicated young persons are at risk for having consensual (more or less) sex that they would not choose to have if they were not intoxicated.
19. Intoxicated kids are less likely to protect themselves from pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases than non-intoxicated young persons.
20. Date rape occurs most often when young people are intoxicated.
21. Host party laws in states such as New Hampshire and Massachusetts mean that adults who serve alcohol to minors risk serious fines and even jail terms.
22. There are now hotlines in Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire to report parties where there are concerns that alcohol may be served.
23. Suicide among young people with depression, anxiety and other psychiatric problems is more common when they are drinking.

24. Even young persons who are usually emotionally stable may become despondent and impulsively suicidal when they are drunk.
25. Young people may be taking medications that result in serious toxicity with use of alcohol.
26. Young people who get drunk at parties often feel humiliated the next day by their actions while drunk and adolescent friendships may be ruined by alcohol.
27. The knowledge that parents are serving, or turning a blind eye to, alcohol at some underage parties reinforces young persons' beliefs that party drinking is okay for them and increases their likelihood of drinking in less supervised settings.

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