

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE HARDIN-CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2021!

IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE! HELP TEENS CELEBRATE ALCOHOL-FREE!

DEAR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS,

Graduation is upon us and your child definitely deserves to be celebrated after this challenging year. Here are some things you can do to ensure that this celebration doesn't include alcohol:

- Communicate with your teen that alcohol is bad for their brain and they should not drink before age 21. Drinking by those below the age of 21 is strongly linked with increased risk for alcohol dependence later in life because the brain is still developing until the mid-twenties. Minors who drink are also more likely to use other drugs, have poorer academic performance, engage in risky sexual behaviors, and be injured or assaulted. Tell your child you don't want them to risk their future, reputation, or safety, and you expect them to remain alcohol-free.
- Create a game plan with your child so if they are offered alcohol, they know what to do. For example, help brainstorm excuses for saying no or develop a code word that your child can text you to let you know they are in a situation where they feel unsafe.
- Don't provide alcohol or allow your child to drink, even on special occasions! Research shows that when parents allow, provide, or supervise adolescent drinking, it sends a false message that alcohol is safe for their underdeveloped brain.

By working together with your teen, expressing your concern for their health and safety, and setting clear and consistent expectations, you can ensure that this celebration is a positive memory they'll have forever. Visit ParentUpKC.com for more tips and tools.

Congratulations to all the graduates of the class of 2021!

BEST REGARDS,

RAY COUNTY
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