



## Parents' Campaign



Drinkaware Raising #Parents

### Objective

To provide parents with facts and knowledge to help them have a conversation about alcohol with their children/teenagers, about alcohol

To help children/teenagers develop a lifelong healthy attitude towards alcohol.

To delay the age at which the 'first drink' is taken and, where alcohol is consumed by a young person, to reduce the volume of alcohol consumed.

### Description

According to independent research commissioned by Drinkaware and carried out by Behaviour & Attitudes, over half (53%) of Irish parents surveyed stated that they believe it is acceptable for their children to drink alcohol at home. This contradicts emerging evidence that parental supply of alcohol is associated with increased risks. Drinkaware responded to the need for support, facts and advice to encourage parents to start a conversation about alcohol with their children.

Drinkaware recognises that parents are key "gatekeepers" of adolescent behaviour and should be an integral part of any campaign aimed at reducing underage drinking, and the parent-child relationship is important for a young person's development.

Through the Parents' Campaign, Drinkaware provides research and practical tools to support parents to have timely, informed conversations about alcohol with their children while encouraging them, as role models, to consider their own drinking habits. Having an ongoing conversation with teens about alcohol facilitates bonding, enabling the parent to influence their teen's decisions.

The programme is anchored on an information hub, workshops and regular communication.

### **Information Hub**

An evidence-informed, dedicated **information hub** provides parents with comprehensive facts, advice and strategies to support parents to have informed conversation about alcohol with their young people.

- A **Parent Pack** can be ordered on the hub. Each pack contains a copy of the “Talking Matters: A resource for Parents” and a copy of the “Young People, Alcohol and Mental Health” booklet. A “get the facts pack” can also be ordered from the same page which contains an “Alcohol and You” booklet, a standard drink measure cup and a drinks, calorie and sugar calculator.
- The hub also has materials available for download including three booklets “Your Children and Alcohol”, “Talking Matters - A resource for Parents/Guardians” and “Young People, Alcohol and Mental Health”, a poster: “Alcohol and The Body” and an activities calendar.

### **Interactive Workshops**

The one-hour interactive workshop is facilitated by the Drinkaware team and is currently free of charge. In addition, each parent in attendance receives a copy of the “Your Children and Alcohol” and “Young People, Alcohol and Mental Health” booklets. Each workshop features:

- The latest research about young people and alcohol in Ireland.
- Risks of early alcohol use on a teenager’s development.
- Strategies parents can use to start the conversation about alcohol.
- Age-appropriate advice for parents to continue the conversation.
- Advice for parents on being role models, boundaries, consequences, and active communication.

### **Regular communication of the messages**

Regular communication is issued at key times such as around the Junior Cert results and Leaving Cert celebrations for example on Drinkaware’s **X** (twitter) and **Facebook** accounts and on the parents hub. For example,

- In 2019, Drinkaware encouraged parents to advocate for sober curiosity and a more mindful attitude to alcohol in August. In October, they shared tips and resources to highlight the importance of pushing back on the normalisation of allowing young people to drink alcohol at home under parental supervision.
- In 2020 and 2021, blogs were posted for parents on drinkaware.ie to acknowledge and support the challenges faced by parents regarding COVID-19 and the restrictions on parent workshops. Topics included: Parenting during a pandemic; Fathers and role modelling around alcohol; Looking after young people's wellbeing, Positive role modelling tips for parents and adults family members at Christmas.; How Relationships Affect Adolescents Drinking, and, Parenting Teens-A Call to Action. A Blog was also written for Grandparents, recognising their role and impact on the lives of their Grandchildren, especially with regards to role modelling, attitudes to and behaviour around alcohol.

## Results

Since its launch in April 2016, the Drinkaware Parents' Campaign has reached over 2.5 million parents in Ireland through a dedicated parent website, social media, workshops and resources.

1 online parent workshop was delivered in 2021 attended by 30 parents. Also, there were 14,471 visits to the parents' pages on drinkaware.ie and an increase for education and parent resources of 297%.

4 of the 9+ anticipated parent workshops were delivered in 2020 due to COVID-19. These were attended by 83 parents in total. Also, there were 14,214 visits to the parents' pages on drinkaware.ie. 9 parent workshops were delivered in 2019. Also, there were 21,342 pageviews in the parents' pages on drinkaware.ie.

## Measurement & evaluation

Survey results from parents post workshop attendance found increased awareness and consciousness of parents regarding role modelling and alcohol. Parents also had increased intention, motivation, and capability to have a conversation with their children. Examples of comments from parents:

- Informative and research-based workshop. Everyone is having the same struggle as you at home and we are all doing our best.
- Very informative and so helpful. It should be compulsory for every parent to attend this workshop.
- “Fantastic workshop which every parent/guardian should attend. The delivery of the presentation was fantastic and was both engaging and informative.”
- “The parent is the role model so be very mindful of drinking habits.”
- “Influence of parent’s actions is relevant.”
- “It is never ok to allow kids drink alcohol. Set expectations.

In 2018, Drinkaware parent research was conducted by Behaviour & Attitudes with 503 parents in order to identify the main contributory and influencing factors on young people’s attitudes towards alcohol. It found that:

- 20% of parents consider alcohol’s impact on mental health as the most important topic to include when talking about alcohol with wither their young people, compared to 10% in 2015.
- 24% obtained information before having a conversation about alcohol, compared to 11% in 2015.
- 61% of parents are very confident in their ability to talk effectively to their children about alcohol, compared to 75% in 2015.
- 14% of parents believe it’s acceptable for their children to drink at home before the age of 15 years, compared to 9% in 2015.
- 50% of parents consider it is acceptable for children to drink alcohol at home before the legal age of 18 years.
- 25% of parents do not know the rules about alcohol set by the parents of their child’s friends. The same number have not communicated their rules to the parents of their child’s friends.
- One-fifth of parents would allow their child to drink at a friend’s house under the age of 18 (fathers are more likely to allow this).
- 78% of parents state young people are more likely to see them consuming alcohol at family celebrations such as weddings and communions than any other location.

## Website

<http://www.drinkaware.ie/parents>

## Downloads

## Photo gallery

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## Documents

**Talking Matters 2023 booklet** (pdf - 1.98 Mo)

**Young people and mental health 2017 booklet** (pdf - 0.15 Mo)

**Your children and alcohol 2016 booklet** (pdf - 0.21 Mo)

**Alcohol Expectations Smart Agreement** (pdf - 0.7 Mo)

**Alcohol and the body poster** (pdf - 0.74 Mo)