



Your Children and Alcohol



Behaviour Change Raising #Parents&Teachers



Objective

To help parents talk to their children about alcohol.

To help child 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. 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. The programme consists of:

- Research: To inform Drinkaware's work in this area two pieces of national **research** have been carried out so far. The aim of this research was to gauge parental understanding of the risks associated with children drinking alcohol; establish if parents are having conversations about alcohol with their children and if they access information prior to this;

and develop a national picture on parental rules on children and alcohol.

- Website: An evidence-informed, dedicated **information hub** provides parents with facts, advice and strategies to start the conversation about alcohol with their young people.
- Workshops: The one-hour interactive workshop is facilitated by the Drinkaware team and is currently free of charge. Each parent in attendance receives a copy of the “Your Children and Alcohol” and “Young People, Alcohol and Mental Health” booklets. The workshop features the latest research about young people and alcohol in Ireland; strategies parents can use to start the conversation about alcohol; age-appropriate advice for parents to continue to the conversation; and advice for parents on being role models, boundaries, consequences and active communication.
- **Resources:** Two booklets to support parents. “*Your Children and Alcohol*” contains facts, advice and age-appropriate strategies to ensure that parents have the information they need to have this important conversation. Drinkaware research found that parents place great importance on including the link between early alcohol use and mental health however they were less confident on speaking about this than any other issue. To respond to this identified need, the second parent booklet “*Young People, Alcohol and Mental Health*” – is available.
- A **Parent Pack** can also be ordered on the website. Each pack contains a copy of the two parent booklets in addition to the Standard Drink measure cup, Drinks, Calorie and Sugar Calculator wheel and “*Alcohol and You*” booklet. A parent workshop can also be booked for schools or parents’ associations.
- Regular communication of the messages: for example on Drinkaware’s **twitter** account and on the website. Also, regular communication is issued around the Junior Cert results and Leaving Cert celebrations.

Results

9 parent workshops were delivered in 2019. 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.

Measurement & evaluation

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:

- 1 in 5 parents consider alcohol’s impact on mental health as the most important topic to include when talking about alcohol with their young people, compared to 1 in 10 in 2015.
- 3 in 4 parents do not obtain information before they initiate a conversation about alcohol with their children. However, twice as many parents (24%) obtaining information before having this conversation than in 2015 (11%).

- The number of parents who feel 'never getting into a car with someone who has consumed alcohol' has reduced by over half (10% in 2017 vs 22% in 2015).
- 61% of parents are very confident in their ability to talk effectively to their children about alcohol, compared to 75% in 2015.
- Increase in the number of parents who believe it's acceptable for their children to drink at home before the age of 15 years - 14% in 2017 vs 9% in 2015.
- 50% of parents consider it acceptable for children to drink alcohol at home before the legal age of 18 years.
- One-quarter of parents do not know the rules about alcohol set by the parents of their child's friends. The same number (25%) 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).
- Young people are more likely to see their parents consuming alcohol at family celebrations such as weddings and communions than any other location, with 78% of parents survey stating this.

Website

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

Downloads

Photo gallery

