



Fact Sheet

FACT: 46 percent of adolescents say they have used alcohol at least once in their lifetime. (2003 Monitoring the Future Study)

FACT: 38 percent of 13-15 year olds drank alcohol on an average of nearly 5 occasions in the past year. (“Parents, Kids and Alcohol,” TCC Research)

FACT: First use of alcohol typically begins around age 12. (National Institute on Drug Abuse)

Background

The incidence of underage drinking remains unacceptably high among our nations youth. According to the 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, about 10.7 million Americans between ages 12-20 report current alcohol use. While the prevalence of current alcohol use increases with age, in fact, the first use of alcohol typically begins around age 12 and 46 percent of kids say they have used alcohol at least once in their lifetime by the time they reached the eighth grade.

Whether or not they realize it, parents are the leading influence on kids’ decision not to drink alcohol. According to a survey conducted by TRU Omnibuzz in 2003, 65 percent of adolescents identify parents as the leading influence in their decision to drink or not to drink. Unfortunately, 36 percent of adolescents say that they had not spoken to either parent about alcohol. This communication gap between kids and parents can be minimized by developing tools that increase awareness, educate parents and kids and help to facilitate conversations between parents and kids about the dangers of underage drinking.

While it is clear that early parental intervention can significantly delay the age of first consumption among youth, often parents struggle with how to best start an effective conversation about the consequences of underage drinking with their kids.

Also important is providing youth with accurate, youth oriented information to help them make the right decision when faced with making decisions about alcohol.

The Century Council in partnership with Nickelodeon have developed a new, creative multimedia program for middle school aged kids and their parents called *Ask, Listen, Learn: Kids and Alcohol Don't Mix* to fight the problem of underage drinking, particularly among tweens (ages 9-12). The program is unique in that it approaches the issue from two sides – providing both parents and kids with information and strategies to help facilitate the conversation about the dangers of underage drinking, in a format and language designed specifically for them.

Components

The Century Council is grateful to the American School Counselor Association, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Latino Children’s Institute, the National Middle School Association, and the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for providing scientific input for use in creating *Ask Listen Learn*.

The program includes:

- **A parent's booklet**, detailing how to begin the conversation, sustain the conversation and make an impact on kids. It presents effective questions, data, conversation starters and answers to typical objections kids raise. The booklet will be bound into Nick Jr. Family Magazine for distribution nationwide.
- **A kid's booklet**, with interactive games, trivia cards with questions and answers explaining the facts about alcohol (over 7 million trading cards are expected to circulate), addressing issues including how to avoid peer pressure, and creative ways to say no. It also includes an Action Against Alcohol Agreement that both kids and parents can sign. The booklet will be bound into Nickelodeon Magazine for distribution nationwide.
- **A kid's website**, produced by Nickelodeon, for kids with information on the dangers of underage drinking including monthly polls, information interactive games and videos, as well as more information on how to say no.
- **A parent's website**, produced by Nickelodeon, for parents with additional information on how to have the conversation and links to additional national and local resources related to underage drinking.
- **Television Advertising, produced by Nickelodeon**, for kids to raise awareness among youth about the dangers of underage drinking.
- **Television Advertising, produced by The Century Council**, for parents to raise awareness about the importance of communicating with their children and the dangers of underage drinking.

Coming in the future

Recognizing the important role that teachers, counselors and administrators play as role models and purveyors of information, The Council will also begin work on a teacher-focused component to the program for distribution nationwide.

Also, in an effort to provide Spanish speaking parents and kids with culturally sensitive resources to help them fight underage drinking, The Century Council will develop program components in Spanish.

The Century Council

The Century Council's mission is to promote responsible decision-making regarding drinking or non-drinking of beverage alcohol and to discourage all forms of irresponsible consumption through education, communications, research, law enforcement, and other programs. Recognizing over thirteen years of progress, America's leading distillers have promoted The Council's mission by investing more than \$130 million in its programs to fight drunk driving and underage drinking. For more information about Ask, Listen, Learn™ or The Century Council, or to order a copy of the program free-of-charge, please visit www.asklistenlearn.com/parents or www.centurycouncil.org.

Launched in 1991, the Council is a national not-for-profit organization funded by America's leading distillers: Allied Domecq Spirits & Wine North America, Bacardi U.S. A., Inc., Brown-Forman, Constellation Brands, Inc., Cruzan Ltd., DIAGEO, Future Brands LLC, and Pernod Ricard USA, Sidney Frank Importing Co Inc. For more information on The Council, log onto www.centurycouncil.org.

Nickelodeon

Nickelodeon, which is celebrating its landmark 25th anniversary this year, is the number-one entertainment brand for kids. It has built a diverse, global business by putting kids first in everything it does. The company includes television programming and production in the United States and around the world, plus consumer products, online, recreation, books, magazines and feature films. Nickelodeon's U.S. television network is seen in 88 million households and has been the number-one-rated basic cable network for more than eight consecutive years. Nickelodeon and all related titles, characters and logos are trademarks of Viacom International Inc.

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