

Effectively Engaging Youth in Preventing Underage Drinking

The Problem

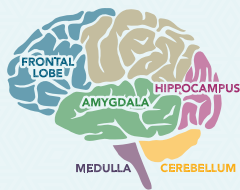
What Research Indicates

Underage alcohol use is a serious problem in Texas. It is the highest reported consumed substance by youth compared to other drugs, such as tobacco, marijuana, and prescription drugs without a prescription.¹

Youth who start to drink before age 15 are 4 times more likely to have a problem with alcohol dependence at some point in their lives.²

Alcohol Impacts the Brain

- **Frontal lobe:** reduces impulse control
- **Amygdala:** impairs fight or flight response
- **Hippocampus:** reduces memory formation
- **Cerebellum:** impairs voluntary movement such as balance, coordination, and speech
- **Medulla oblongata:** impairs involuntary functions, like breathing³



The Solution

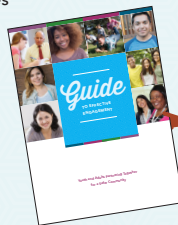
Youth and Adult Partnerships

Active engagement works! Everyone plays an important and vital role in contributing to the group's efforts. *The Guide to Effective Engagement* includes strategies and best practices for effectively engaging youth in underage drinking prevention efforts.

Adults can actively engage with youth to implement evidence-based strategies to create positive change in their communities.

5 Strategies for Active Engagement

1. Acknowledge that youth do care
2. Communicate clearly and set expectations
3. Share authority and responsibilities
4. Provide training and mentoring
5. Be nice and encouraging



Active Engagement in Practice

This ladder illustrates different approaches to youth involvement.⁴ Climb up the ladder for maximum impact!

Youth Empowered

- 8 **Youth/Adult Equity** = Youth and adults share decisions and work as equal partners
- 7 **Completely Youth Driven** = Youth initiate and direct activities with little adult input
- 6 **Youth/Adult Equality** = Adult-initiated, shared decisions with youth, but adults lead the activities
- 5 **Youth Consulted** = Youth are consulted and informed about how their input will be used in activities
- 4 **Youth Informed** = Youth are assigned roles, but informed about the purpose of the activity
- 3 **Tokenism** = Youth are token symbols; youth may be consulted, but only a little
- 2 **Decoration** = Youth are decoration for adult-led activities and have no say in planning
- 1 **Manipulation** = Youth are only directed in adult-led activities and not given an explanation for the activity

Adults in Control



Get Started

Get Ready for the Next Steps!

These activities are a great starting point for engaging youth.

COMPLIANCE CHECKS
to hold retailers accountable



DATA COLLECTION
to identify a problem or choose next steps



MEDIA ADVOCACY
to raise community awareness



1. DSHS Texas School Survey of Drug and Alcohol Use: Grades 7-12, 2016

2. NIAAA: Underage Drinking Fact Sheet. 2017. https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/UnderageDrinking/Underage_Fact.pdf. Accessed November, 2018.

3. NIAAA: Understanding the Impact of Alcohol on Health and Well-Being

4. This ladder concept was first introduced in a book written by Roger Hart in 1997 for UNICEF. More information is also available at The Freechild Project (Freechild.org).

To get more information, or to receive a copy of the Guide to Effective Engagement, visit [TxSDY.org](https://txsdy.org) or email info@txsdy.org

