



Put In Your 2¢ Worth...

About 2¢ a drink yields \$44 million annually to reduce the impact of alcohol problems in Missouri.

Question:

We keep hearing that parents are the source of the problem of harmful use of alcohol by children and youth, and that we should concentrate our efforts on educating parents. What do studies of the issue say about the role of parents?

Answer:

The most thorough examination of the issues, by the National Research Council / Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science (NAS, 2004) includes parents, but cautions against over-emphasizing their role. The study recommends far more comprehensive measures and exercising “a collective responsibility” to achieve the goal.*

MISSOURI ALCOHOL IMPACT FACT #41

- Blaming parents deflects responsibility. We need to “create and sustain a broad societal commitment to reduce underage drinking,” which will “require participation by multiple individuals and organizations at the national, state, local and community levels who are in a position to affect youth decisions—including parents and other adults, alcohol producers, wholesalers and retail outlets, restaurants and bars, entertainment media, schools, colleges and universities, the military, landlords, community organizations, and youth themselves.” (2)
- Parents do not operate in isolation but in a toxic environment. “The widespread legal use of alcohol in the society affects not only cultural and individual attitudes toward drinking, but also the extent to which any youth-oriented control regime can be effective adolescents are coming of age in a culture that promotes and enables underage drinking.” (24)
- “Adults tend to underestimate the prevalence of underage drinking, fail to recognize the full range of negative consequences that can result, and assume that drinking is something that other children, not theirs, do.” Also, “young people have large periods of time outside parental supervision and outside the reach of formal social controls.” (29, 35)
- Parents’ own alcohol abuse and alcoholism have also been linked to underage drinking. (85)

**Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility. Committee on Developing a Strategy to Reduce and Prevent Underage Drinking, R. J. Bonnie and M.E. McConnell, Eds. Washington DC: The National Academies Press, 2004.*

For more information call one of the Missouri’s Alcohol Impact Coalition members below:

Alicia Ozenberger
Missouri’s Youth Adult Alliance
573/635-6669
aozenberger@actmissouri.org

Gerrit DenHartog
Community Activist/Alcohol Policy Consultant
573/893-5448
gdenhartog@sprintmail.com

Angela Hirsch
MADD-Jefferson City
573/636-2460
madd-ed@earthlink.net