



Study: Many Underage Drinkers Get Free Alcohol From Adults

Now, Many Adults Provide the Alcohol and the Venue

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A new government study from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration finds that of the nation's estimated 10.8 million underage drinkers, nearly 40 percent get their alcohol from an adult for free.

Unlike the old techniques, such as using fake I.D.s or stealing from the liquor cabinet, results show that more than 600,000 teens were given alcohol by their parents in the past month alone.

Acting Surgeon General Steven Galson takes a definitive stance against this approach.

"Parents should not be permissive," he says. "They should not facilitate."

However, others, including Stanton Peele, an addiction specialist, disagree. In his book, 'Addiction-Proof Your Child: A Realistic Approach to Preventing Drug, Alcohol, and Other Dependencies,' Peele describes how alcohol education can prepare children to lead addiction-free lives. He allows his underage daughter to drink with him, preferring that drinking take place under his supervision rather than elsewhere.

"The bottom line is that if your children are going to learn to drink, they really ought to learn from you," he says.

More than half of underage drinkers had their last drink at someone else's home, according to the new study, and 30 percent report drinking at their own home.

The debate surrounding this parental philosophy is playing out at dinner tables and now, courtrooms.

After two teens were killed in a car accident leaving an underage drinking party in a suburban Chicago home, lawmakers took action and adopted a new "social host" law. The law makes it criminal for adults to allow anyone underage to drink on their property  whether they provide the alcohol or not.

In the last five years, two dozen states have adopted similar laws.

Health officials say they aren't concerned about parents like Stanton Peele, but rather those who are offering up an open bar in their basement.

To find out more, you can read an excerpt from addiction specialist, Stanton Peele's new book, ['Addiction-Proof Your Child.'](#)

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