

# Helping Teenagers Celebrate Safely

Going out and partying is a normal part of growing up, but there are some risks involved. You can help your teenager manage these risks through discussion and planning.

Whether your teenager is hosting a party at home or just 'going out' with friends, this fact sheet contains some important discussion points and planning tips to help keep them safe.

## Hosting a party? Plan together!

Planning beforehand ensures a safer night for everyone.

### Police

Contact your local Police licensing officer to discuss laws related to alcohol and young people. Register your party with the Police: this doesn't mean they will come into the house to check on the party, but it will help them respond quickly if you do need their help.

### Entertainment

Entertainment such as dancing, a theme or a 'chill out' or quiet area will take the emphasis away from drinking.

*"We share the driving and supervision of our kids' celebrations with other parents"*

*"I clear up empty and full bottles to let them know the party is officially over"*

### Supervision

Adult supervision at youth celebrations reduces the risk of injury or harm. Parents don't have to be 'hovering' over guests; but don't restrict yourself to certain rooms.

### Alcohol

By law in NSW alcohol cannot be served to minors (under 18s) without their parents' consent - even in your home. So provide plenty of appealing no-alcohol drinks and party food. For parties where alcohol is available, serve small amounts, set limits, have low-alcohol options with one responsible, sober adult serving.

### Gatecrashers

Gatecrashers can be discouraged by handing out invitations, including an RSVP. Have one entry and exit point with a reliable person at the door to check all invitations - no invite, no entry. Don't allow guests to come in and out of the party.

### Transport

Help your guests get home safely:

- book a taxi
- check bus/train timetables
- provide or organise a lift with a responsible adult
- allow them to stay overnight.

For further information about youth injury prevention contact Youthsafe on (02) 9809 4615 or check the website: [www.youthsafe.org](http://www.youthsafe.org)

**“I contact the party host before an event to check security, alcohol and transportation.”**

## **Going out? Discuss together!**

*Parents often worry about major celebrations like Schoolies or formals. However, research shows that young people are most at risk when they are just 'going out' with friends, as these occasions are often poorly planned and unsupervised. Discuss the following points with your teenager before they go out and consider setting some boundaries around transport and alcohol use.*

Check where your teenager is going and talk to them about ways to manage possible risks in that setting.

Transport to an event is often planned, but getting home is sometimes forgotten. Think about and discuss:

- Public transport and taxi options
- Only travelling with a sober and responsible driver
- Having enough money to get home
- Staying overnight

Going out, friends are safer arriving and leaving together - they can help each other if something goes wrong. Have contact numbers for your teenager's friends (and their parents) as a back up.

**“Our local taxi company has pre-paid cards you can top up - more secure than giving my daughter cash”**

If their plans fall through, or if they are feeling unsafe wherever they are, let your teenager know it's OK to contact you for help.

When young people are partying there may be alcohol or other drugs around, and it's often a new experience for them. Young people generally have little understanding of the effects of these substances and how to apply limits, so it's important for you and your teenager to discuss this as well as:

- The health and injury risks involved in drug and alcohol consumption
- An agreed limit on alcoholic drinks, if alcohol is permitted
- Zero alcohol limit for 'L' and 'P' platers

Consider confirming the decisions you have made together with a written agreement. Your teenager can sign this to show they trust you and promise to go to you for help. For a sample of a parent/young person agreement visit [www.youthsafe.org](http://www.youthsafe.org)

**Youthsafe has more tips on developing agreements and discussing these issues with your teenager on our website: [www.youthsafe.org](http://www.youthsafe.org)**

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