

Decoder

Breaking down teen culture, substance abuse, and parenting



THE PARTNERSHIP
AT DRUGFREE.ORG

[6 Tips to Create a Safe Prom and High-School Graduation Season for Your Teen](#)

Apr 8, 2011 by [Jeff Wolfsberg](#) | Categories [Addiction](#), [Age Appropriate Advice](#), [Alcohol](#), [Prom](#), [Setting Limits](#), [Teenagers](#)

There's something about prom and graduation season that makes rational parents go bonkers. Here are 6 tips for parents to help keep their teen safe and make this season one to remember for all the right reasons.

1. **Set curfews** — Teen car crashes and deaths increase exponentially late at night. If you decide to extend curfews, do not allow large blocks of time that are unaccounted for. Know where your teen is, how long he will be there, when he will be leaving, who is there, and who is supervising the event. In 2008, half of teen deaths from motor vehicle crashes occurred between 3pm and midnight and 56% occurred on Friday, Saturday or Sunday.
2. **Do not rent a hotel room** — Is anyone really surprised when a tragedy happens after a parent rents a hotel room unsupervised? If a room is rented for teens, an appropriate adult(s) must be there to ensure safety and manage risk.
3. **Be up when they come home** — My mom told me that her anti-drug plan was coffee and lights. She was wide-awake, lights on, coffee in hand, when my siblings and I came through the door at night. A teen's curfew should never exceed the parent's ability to stay up. My dad's favorite expression was *nothing ever good happens after midnight*. The older I get, the more true that statement feels to me.
4. **Clearly communicate your expectations** — Although you may feel you've talked many times to your child about your expectations for healthy choices and the consequences of breaking the rules, the prom and graduation season is an important time to repeat this message. Talk to your child about the dangers of drinking and driving and getting in the car with a drunk driver. Consider [role-playing](#) a few scenarios. Research shows that parents who discuss possible scenarios and seek their teens' knowledge about what to do increases the chances of their teen's safe decision-making.
5. **Keep the party local** — Don't be tempted to allow your children to celebrate at a far away location, such as a beach or cabin. Allowing your teen to take off to a remote spot with no supervision creates unnecessary risk.
6. **Talk with your teen.**
 - Ask: How are you feeling about the prom? What are you most excited about? What are you most nervous about?
 - Find out who your teen is going to prom with. Do you know his/her date and/or group of friends? Does your teen know these kids well? Do you?
 - If you don't know the parents of your teen's date and prom group, be sure to get to know them before the big event.

Help your teen enjoy their prom and graduation without drinking or using drugs. Lay down rules that will help them create everlasting memories. The prom is a rite of passage that your teen should enjoy and remember for a lifetime. Help them make it a safe one.

Editor's Note: You may also consider creating a [contract](#) and developing a [safety plan](#) with your child.