

The Fall/Winter Party Season Has Begun – Here’s How to Keep Your Kids Safe

With the school year in full swing and fall/winter parties on the horizon, your kids are bound to want to join in the fun. Here are some suggestions to make sure that they enjoy the season while staying safe and alcohol- and drug-free.

If Your Child is invited to a Party:

- Determine who else is on the guest list, their ages and how they know your child. Ask if your child has any concerns about specific invitees.
- Know the specific address of the party location and a phone number for the host's parents/guardians.
- Speak to the parents/guardians of the party host about their views on alcohol and drug use and make clear that you do not allow either. Receive their assurance that no alcohol or drugs will be available to partygoers. Also ask about who will be chaperoning the party.
- Clearly remind your child of your rules against alcohol and drug use and the consequences for breaking those rules.
- Know the start and end time of the party and remind your child of his/her own personal curfew.
- Establish a signal that your child can use if she or he wants to leave a party early and encourage him or her to call you immediately for a ride home.

If Your Child Wants to Host a Party:

- Review the guest list and ask about any names you don't recognize. Limit the number of invitees and determine a maximum amount of guests who may attend. Do not allow uninvited or "drop-in" guests to attend.
- Make it clear to your child that alcohol, tobacco and other drugs are not allowed and tell him/her to clearly communicate this to all guests.
- Provide plenty of snacks and non-alcoholic beverages for partygoers.
- Define a specific area for the party (family room, kitchen) and do not allow partygoers in the rest of the home (bedrooms, garage).
- Confine items such as weapons, alcohol, prescription drugs and breakable objects to a secure area.
- Provide a sufficient number of chaperones and monitor the party areas frequently, as well as areas off-limit to guests.
- Restrict party entry and exit areas to deter guests from bringing in contraband.
- Establish an area for coats and bags and monitor it closely.
- Set a beginning and ending time for the party. If a guest leaves, do not allow him/her to return. This discourages guests from leaving to drink or take drugs and later return under the influence.
- Be prepared to call a guest's parents/guardians if the youth appears to be under the influence of or brings alcohol or other drugs to the party.

Want more information on keeping your kids alcohol and drug free? Visit www.drugfreemc.org or call 317-254-2815.