

An Open Letter to Parents Who let Kids Party at Home

Dear Parents,

I am quite sure that you have all been in this situation at one time or another with at least one of your children. You know, when you pretty much know that your teens are going to drink alcohol at a party so you debate to yourself about whether or not to have the party at your own house rather than risk having the teens drink at a friend or acquaintance's home.

So, you most likely think to yourself that perhaps you should host the party at your house for many reasons including:

1. You will be able to keep an eye on the kids.
2. You will not allow the teens to drive if you notice that they are drunk.
3. You will get a chance to get to know the friends of your own teens and perhaps they might even think that you are cool and will like you and open up to you.
4. You will have the power to insist that the teens who are tired or not in good shape sleep at your home.

AND

5. You won't have to worry about your own teen's safety because s/he will be under your roof and your watchful gaze.

Well, let me tell you that I DO NOT think that it is a good idea to bring the party home. And, I am well aware that lots of parents disagree with me because I talk to parent groups several times per month. I also talk to parents individually who believe that it is fine to bring the party home. I kid you not.

I have several reasons for being adamantly opposed to bringing the party to your home. They include:

1. You are basically giving underage kids the ability to drink freely and are thereby giving them the message that you think that this behavior is fine.
2. You are allowing underage kids to do something that is not legal.
3. I also assume that you are engaging in some sort of deceit. I doubt that you are making the other parents aware that alcohol will be flowing at your home.
4. It is not your role to be seen as a friend or even as a "cool" parent.

AND

5. It is your role as a parent with good boundaries to model being a law-abiding citizen and responsible parent for your teen and for their friends.

The answer to whether or not to bring the party home is a resounding NO. If you think that your teens will be drinking elsewhere then you can make it difficult for them to go to that situation or location. And, while you are at it explain what the consequences will be if you find out that they have been drinking. Set the rules and make sure that your teens are clear about the consequences and expectations. I am not saying that your teens will always be compliant but at least they will know where you stand on this issue.

I have heard of too many teens dying because of alcohol overdoses and alcohol related traffic accidents and I wish these tragedies could be averted. I am asking for your help.

Good luck,
Barbara Greenberg PhD

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