

HOW TO TALK WITH YOUR KIDS ABOUT DRINKING

A Guide for Parents



Tackling underage drinking requires a team approach: one involving parents, teachers, community groups, businesses, law enforcement officials, members of the alcohol beverage industry and many others.

Ryan, son of David | Anheuser-Busch employee

Family Talk About Drinking

Thank you for requesting *Family Talk About Drinking*.

Anheuser-Busch introduced *Family Talk About Drinking* in 1990.

The program was developed by an advisory panel of authorities in the fields of education, family therapy and alcohol treatment, and through conversations with parents and teens. Recognizing that parents have the greatest influence on children's decisions about drinking, *Family Talk* is designed to help prevent underage drinking by encouraging open, honest communication between parents and children about this important subject. In a national survey of parents and educators who have received *Family Talk*,

- ▶ 97 percent of parents rated *Family Talk About Drinking* materials as excellent or good;*
- ▶ 93 percent of parents agree that every parent should have *Family Talk About Drinking* materials;* and
- ▶ 94 percent said they would recommend the materials to other parents.*

Tackling underage drinking requires a team approach: one involving parents, teachers, community groups, businesses, law enforcement officials, members of the alcohol beverage industry and many others. At Anheuser-Busch, we're working hard to do our part, not only because underage drinking reflects badly on our business, but more importantly, because many of our employees are parents, too. And just like all parents, we want to help our children make smart choices — from resisting negative peer pressure, to respecting the law, to avoiding underage drinking.

*Source: Data Development Corporation (2003) surveyed a national sample of parents with children ages 6-17 who requested *Family Talk About Drinking* materials in 2002. A total of 550 interviews were completed January 7-23, 2003.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
How To Use This Guide	7
Guideline 1 — Be A Good Role Model	9
Guideline 2 — Be Factual	15
Guideline 3 — Have Clearly Stated Rules	21
Guideline 4 — Practice Good Parenting	29
Guideline 5 — Know Your Children’s Friends And Their Parents	35
Guideline 6 — Get Help If You Need It	39
Review	45
Sample Parent/Child Conversations	46
Advisory Panel	54



Introduction

Being a parent brings great joy — and responsibility. It is rewarding, fulfilling, and occasionally, frustrating. Every day as a parent is important, and every day seems to bring new possibilities and new challenges.

Perhaps more than anything, the parenting years are a time to share and prepare... a time of getting a child ready to face the world alone. This takes place in steps and stages, of course. But successful parenting means, ultimately, letting go — after helping children become self-sufficient and good decision-makers.

Friends and relatives, both old and young, are extremely important. But parents are the most influential to children.

During these years, there is much for children to learn — everything from basic facts about the world in which they live to the difference between right and wrong. Schools play a large role. So do churches, synagogues and other places of worship. Friends and relatives, both old and young, are extremely important. But parents are the most influential to children.



Some Subjects Are Sensitive

Some subjects are difficult for parents to talk about with their children. The purpose of *Family Talk About Drinking* is to help parents teach children to make sensible choices about drinking – which means not drinking until they are of legal age, and then, if they choose to drink as adults, doing so responsibly.

The *Family Talk* program encourages straightforward communication between parents and children about drinking.



The *Family Talk* program encourages straightforward communication between parents and children about drinking. This communication includes everything from having a discussion with your children, to setting a good example, to showing interest in their lives. It also means praising a child to build self-confidence or sharing activities together as a family.

There are many other sources of advice – your parents, for example – along with close friends and trusted professionals, including a family physician, a member of the clergy or a school counselor. We urge you to talk with them, as well, about this and other subjects in child-raising.

Taking The Emotional “Charge” Out Of Alcohol

Alcohol and drinking need to be put in proper perspective.

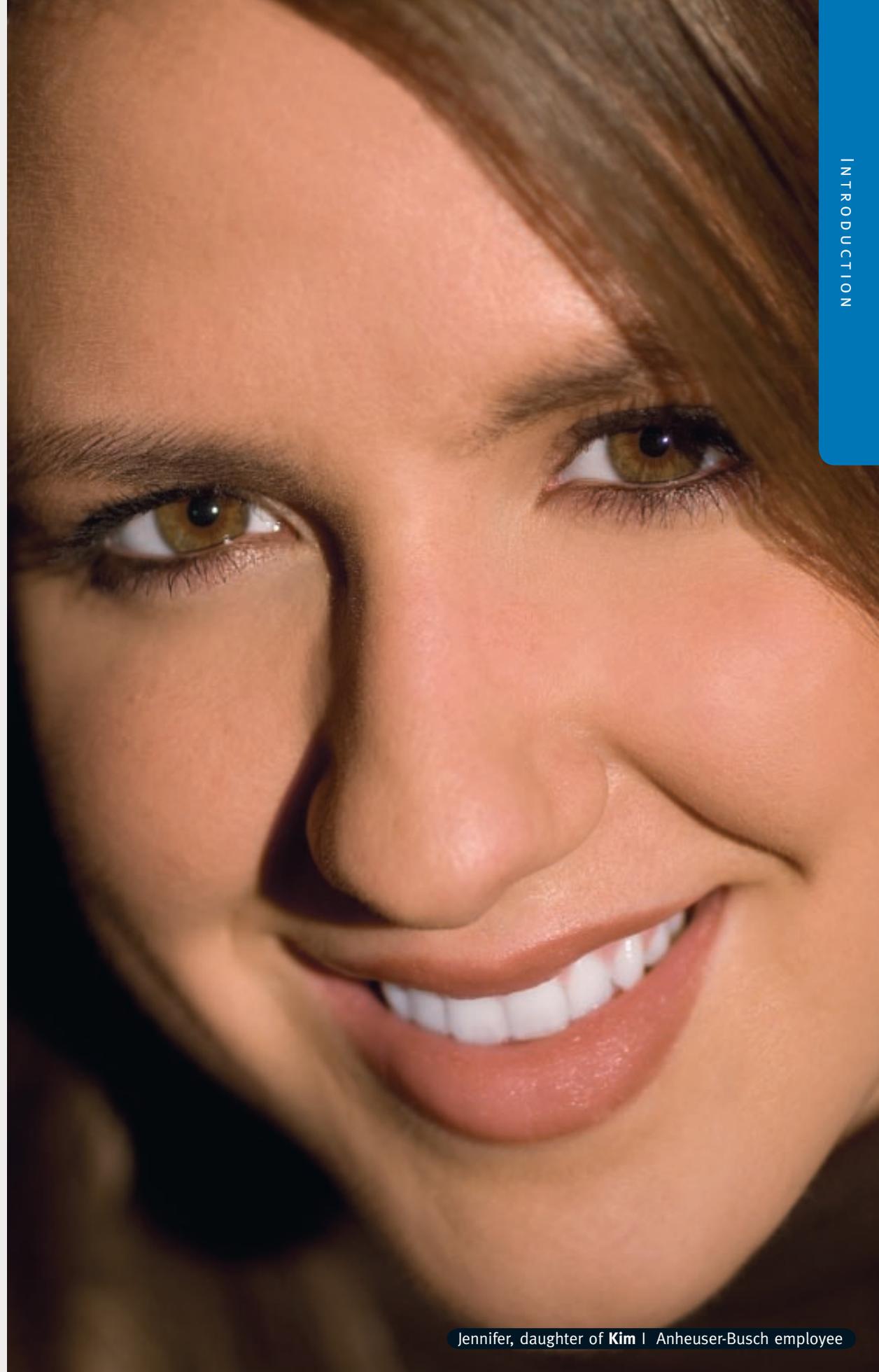
Two-thirds of American adults drink alcohol beverages, and the vast majority does so enjoyably and without difficulty. Yet drinking can be an emotional subject, and that emotional “charge” can be counter-productive.

Children who become responsible adult drinkers tend to come from families in which alcohol is treated matter-of-factly.

For those adults who drink responsibly, the practice is a normal part of life, a simple pleasure that complements a good meal or a good conversation. Drinking is not all-important and is not an end in and of itself.

Children who become responsible adult drinkers tend to come from families in which alcohol is treated matter-of-factly and unemotionally and where drinking has its proper place.

In the following pages, you’ll find suggestions for beginning this important dialogue with your children. Americans can take pride in the significant progress that has been made in the fight against underage drinking and teen drunk-driving fatalities. Education and awareness initiatives have contributed to this progress, as have the responsible actions of teens themselves.



How To Use This Guide

Family Talk is for parents with children of all ages. Ideally, you should begin talking with your children when they are young. “Prime Time” on this is between ages 9 and 11, but it’s never too late — or too early — to open the lines of communication on this subject.

Throughout this guide, the suggestions are related to various ages of children. Most sections include thoughts on “How And When To Talk.”

We encourage you to read *Family Talk* now and begin to use the suggestions as they apply to your children. Then you may wish to put the guide away and refer to it again as your children grow.

What’s Ahead...

Six Guidelines

The following pages list six guidelines for communicating with your kids about drinking. These are supported by a list of parent strategies.

- ▶ Be a Good Role Model
- ▶ Be Factual
- ▶ Have Clearly Stated Rules
- ▶ Practice Good Parenting
- ▶ Know Your Children’s Friends And Their Parents
- ▶ Get Help If You Need It

Sample Dialogues

Some sample dialogues for discussing the issue begin on page 46. These aren’t meant to be followed exactly because every situation and every parent and child are different, but they may help you think about your own conversations.

Be A Good Role Model

Perhaps the most important thing parents can do for their children, from the time they are very young, is to be good role models.

Children are keen observers. They know a lot more about you than you may think, so your drinking behavior and attitudes are being communicated to them. Actions speak louder than words, and the example you set will have great influence on your kids.

If you drink, make it a normal part of your life, as most adults do. Don't overdo it or place too much emphasis on drinking.

**Children are keen observers.
They know a lot more about you
than you may think...**

The majority of adults who drink do so responsibly... to enhance a meal, to share good times with friends, or to celebrate special occasions. They don't brag about their drinking or make light of drunkenness. And they don't drive drunk or tolerate drunk driving by others. Starting with yourself, make driving while intoxicated socially unacceptable behavior.

In families in which adults don't drink, children still need to know the facts about alcohol. Parents should talk with their children at an early age in a calm, unemotional manner and explain why the adults in their family don't drink. These children will then be better prepared to make responsible decisions about drinking when they are adults.





Research has shown that the example parents set for their children does make an impact, especially during the critical teen years. According to the Roper Youth Report, an overwhelming majority of children, ages 13 to 17, say that their parents have the greatest influence on the decisions they make about drinking. By setting a good example and encouraging dialogue on the subject of drinking from an early age, parents can play a key role in helping their children make good decisions.

Buying Alcohol For Minors Is Never A Good Idea

There is never a good reason to provide alcohol to minors. Some parents find it easier to just give in to their teens by hosting a drinking party or buying alcohol for their teens and their friends. They may see it as a way to be a “cool” parent.

Unfortunately, some parents are under the false assumption that it is permissible to throw a drinking party for their kids because they are there to supervise or hold teens’ keys. Other adults may condone teen drinking because they are celebrating a special occasion, such as graduation.

Regardless of the reason, providing alcohol to your teens and their friends is illegal and it’s wrong. In fact, parents can be prosecuted, sued and their salaries and personal property garnished for providing alcohol to minors.

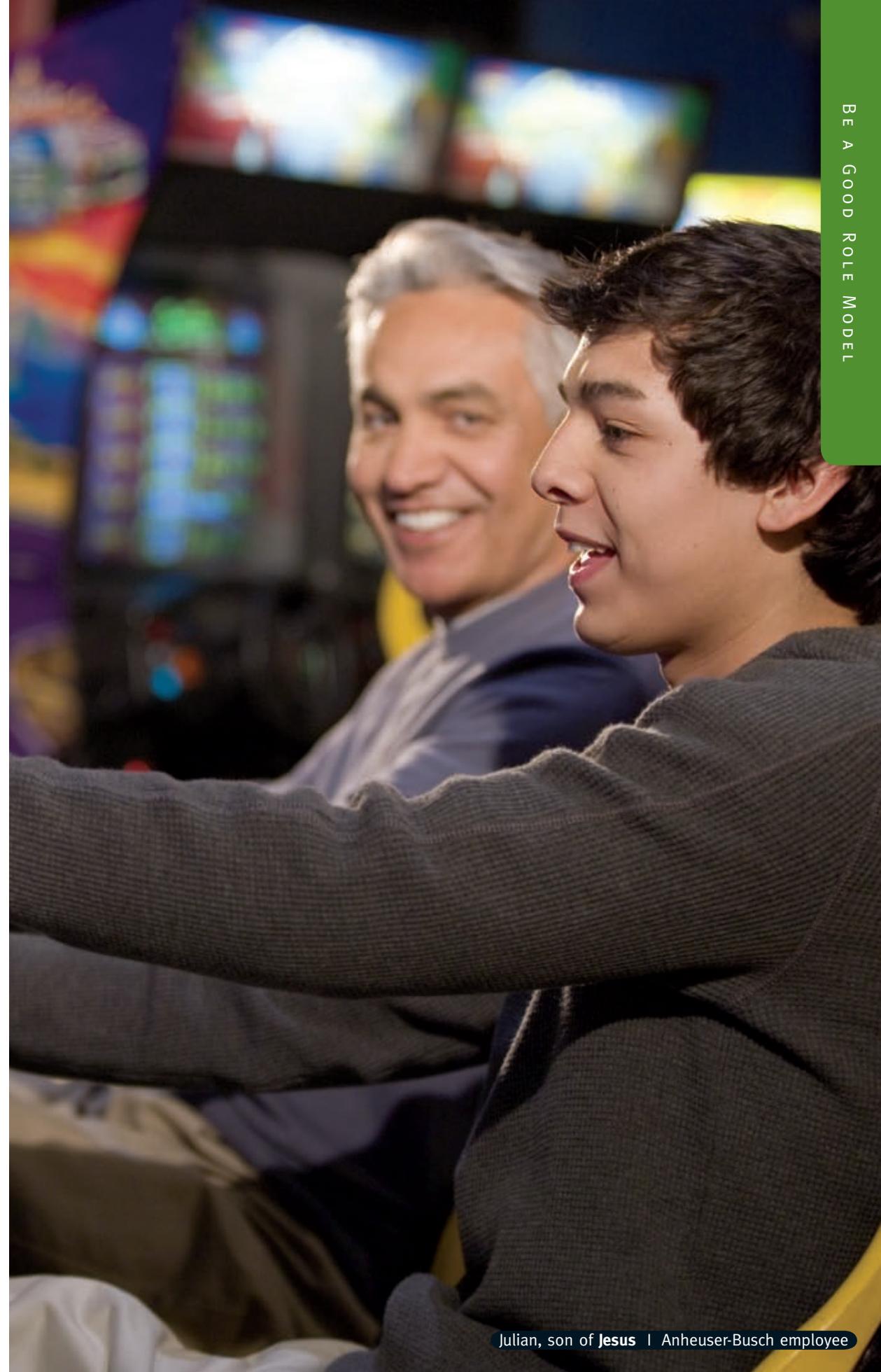
Abuse Is Never A Good Example

Negative reasons to drink include attempting to relieve depression, loneliness or boredom, or to escape reality or as a “medicine” to get through a bad day.

Parents who do not set a good example as responsible drinkers – those who abuse alcohol – have a special reason to curb their drinking or seek help. Children from families in which there is alcoholism have a greater chance of becoming alcoholics themselves, possibly because they learn from their parents.

If you drink responsibly, your children will learn responsible drinking attitudes and practices more easily from your example.

If you drink responsibly, your children will learn responsible drinking attitudes and practices more easily from your example. They’ll understand that alcohol beverages are meant to be enjoyed, not abused – but your example is not enough. Your children also need you to talk with them about it.





Be Factual

Young people are better equipped to make proper decisions about any issue, including drinking, if they have the facts.

Trying to scare them about drinking or presenting alcohol or drinking as evil may backfire. That's partly because children have many sources of information, and exaggeration or unfounded stories can damage parent's credibility.

In discussing drinking with children, it is always best to stress immediate consequences or effects because young people have the tendency to believe that they are indestructible and will live forever.

Young people are better equipped to make proper decisions if they have the facts.

Alcohol's Effects

Alcohol beverages have been enjoyed for thousands of years. But, they also can be abused.

From a medical standpoint, alcohol is a depressant that, when consumed in excess, leads to intoxication and loss of control, along with impaired coordination, reflexes and judgment.

Alcohol abuse has many well-known risks, one of the greatest of which is drunk driving and its consequences.

Many factors, such as a person's height, weight and whether or not he or she has eaten food, influence the way alcohol is metabolized by the body. It's a myth that black coffee or a cold shower or anything else will sober up a drunk person. Only time brings sobriety.



Reasons Why Young People Shouldn't Drink

While in some cultural settings young people drink at meals or on religious occasions, the public consumption of alcohol beverages by those under the legal drinking age is unlawful throughout the United States.

According to experts, young people lack the judgment, experience and coordination to drink alcohol beverages. Their smaller size means that smaller amounts of alcohol beverages can be intoxicating. And even for teens who may be “grown-up” in size, their bodies are still developing.

How And When To Talk

- ▶ When you share information with your son or daughter about why he or she shouldn't drink, it's important to do so matter-of-factly.
- ▶ Telling teens “you can't handle it” may come across to them as a dare or cause them to rebel.
- ▶ Start the discussion early. If your 6-year-old asks a question about drinking, be prepared to respond simply and factually to lay the groundwork for more dialogue later.
- ▶ Ages 9 to 11 are ideal for talking about drinking. A child is probably most receptive to discussion if he or she asks a question. But, if not, you should bring up the topic in brief “learning moments” that may naturally become longer discussions. A newspaper or television story, a family occasion that includes drinking by adults or a school discussion may be a good reason for opening the dialogue.
- ▶ While many schools today include lessons on alcohol, no one has greater authority or responsibility for children than parents. And most importantly, no one has more influence on children's drinking decisions than parents.





The Teen Years

If talking about drinking at ages 9 to 11 seems young, it may help to know that parents of teens say it is more difficult to start discussions during the teen years. However, it is never too late for parents to open a dialogue. And regardless of the child's age, listening by parents is always important.

Parents of teens say it is more difficult to start discussions about drinking during the teen years.

For teens who are approaching driving age, one of the most important discussions parents should have with their children is about drinking and driving. Here are two specific ideas for providing detailed facts about the issue.

- ▶ Every state has strict laws against and penalties for drunk driving. Find out from your police department what the penalties are in your area for driving while intoxicated, and share the information with your son or daughter. Some states have adopted "zero tolerance" laws that prohibit youths from driving after consuming any or a very small amount of alcohol. Typically, the penalty is suspension of the youth's driver's license.
- ▶ Visit your insurance agent with your son or daughter just before he or she gets a driver's license to talk about the responsibility of driving an automobile. Your insurance agent can explain the consequences if a young person is arrested for driving while intoxicated.



visit familytalkonline.com
for more information

Have Clearly Stated Rules

While children need facts, they also need their parents' opinions to help the facts make sense. Which facts are important? And why? Parents need to answer these questions.

Once children hear both the facts and your opinions and beliefs about them, it's easier for you to make rules and enforce them.

Unfortunately, many parents simply say, "Drinking is bad for you, and I don't ever want to catch you doing it or you'll be in big trouble."

That's because many parents may not have thought about how to express their opinions and beliefs about drinking.

Right now, take a moment to answer these questions for yourself.

- ▶ **If you are drinking, what are the positive reasons you have for drinking responsibly?**
- ▶ **What are your own family traditions about drinking?**
- ▶ **What are your opinions about drinking by others?**
- ▶ **What do you feel is appropriate concerning drinking, and what is inappropriate?**
- ▶ **What is appropriate behavior for your child?**

Some parents allow their children to drink a little at home on traditional occasions, such as religious activities or holiday celebrations. For other parents, whether they drink or not, drinking by their children is strictly forbidden. If you do not drink, and want your children to follow that example as adults, you should explain why – at the same time realizing that they will best accept that option if they come to that decision for themselves.

Thinking through these questions will help you have a meaningful conversation with your child about drinking. From the beginning, children are curious about grown-up practices, including drinking and why parents act a certain way or have a certain opinion.

...the “teachable years” of 9 to 11 are the best time to start talking with your kids.

It follows logically that the next step is to make clear to your children what your rules are about not drinking and why.

How And When To Talk

- ▶ Again, the “teachable years” of 9 to 11 are the best time to start talking with your kids. To begin the discussion, you might pose a question based on an imaginary or hypothetical situation: “What would you do if one of your friends offered you something to drink?”
- ▶ Then let your child know what your opinions and rules are about drinking. You might stress your concern for your child’s personal safety and explain how alcohol affects children differently than grown-ups. It’s important not to talk “down” to your children or to give them the idea they’re “second-class citizens” without the rights of adults.
- ▶ As your child grows, expand on your beliefs and rules and your expectations. Explain your reasons for rules and, if possible, make rules together about all sorts of things — chores, homework, and later, parties, dating and driving.



Kayla and mom Kelly, daughter and wife of David | Anheuser-Busch employee

And remember, it's important that you not only talk with your child but that you also listen and ask for his or her opinion and feelings. Talking by parents can all too soon become lecturing, particularly when it is directed to teens. Most of all, teens want to know that you care about them and trust them – but they will continue to test whether you are paying attention to what they are doing.

For teens, in addition to your discussions about drinking, it's especially important to discuss the rules when it comes to drinking and driving. The rules are simple: no drinking, no driving after drinking and no getting into a car with a drinking driver, whether the driver is a teen or an adult.

It's especially important to discuss the rules when it comes to drinking and driving.

Once a parent has asked a child to obey the law – and the family rules – regarding underage drinking, there should be a clear understanding of the consequences if the rules are violated. But if your daughter breaks a rule by drinking, she should understand that a second mistake, such as driving after drinking, could be fatal to her or her friends.



Laura and Kevin with mom Lisa, family of Dennis | Anheuser-Busch employee



Many parents, in fact, have an agreement in advance that a son or daughter will call them for a ride rather than drive while intoxicated or get in a car with someone else who has been drinking. There will be “no questions asked” at that time if the young person calls Mom or Dad for a ride. Of course, no parent wants his or her child to drink illegally. However, fear of reprisal could cause a teen to compound one bad mistake with another potentially dangerous one.

If you find that your son or daughter has been drinking, it's important to talk about it and set a firm punishment.

Parents should have a “game plan” in mind for these types of situations. If you find that your son or daughter has been drinking or has been involved in a drinking-and-driving situation, it's important to talk about it and set a firm punishment. Try not to lose your temper and react too harshly while your emotions are high and your teen is not in the best condition to hear what you have to say. However, you still need to communicate.

Send your son or daughter to bed and talk about the situation the next morning. State your position calmly and firmly and enforce your family rules with a punishment that fits the crime.

Many parents punish by taking away privileges, but another effective technique is to impose an undesirable task, such as cleaning out the garage or pulling weeds in the garden. It's often better to earn one's way back into favor by doing something constructive than to have privileges taken away.



Practice Good Parenting

Many of the things that parents can do to help their children avoid drinking may seem to have little to do with the subject, but they are very important. Several of these go hand-in-hand:

- Help your child feel good about himself/herself.
- Create an atmosphere of open communication.
- Be an active family.
- Teach problem-solving and responsible decision-making skills.

Building your child's self-confidence and self-esteem are two of the most important things you can do as a parent.

Building your child's self-confidence and self-esteem are two of the most important things you can do as a parent. This helps give children the courage to stand alone, if necessary, and to make decisions based on the values you've instilled in them.

Praise and encouragement build a child's self-image — but the recognition must be legitimate and credible. That means helping a young person discover what makes him or her special and unique.

For children, a strong sense of self is key to being the best they can be in a number of areas. That's a big payoff in and of itself for parents, and studies have repeatedly shown that kids with a high self-image are less likely to drink.



Create An Atmosphere Of Open Communication

Take time to listen. No subject should be out of bounds or off limits. Don't lecture or be a know-it-all, and don't render snap judgments that can end a conversation before it really begins.

Listening allows parents to "get inside" a child's head, to see things as a child sees them and help sort out matters so they make sense. It helps parents find out what a child already knows – what is understood correctly and what is not.

Listening becomes even more important during the teen years, so lay a firm foundation when your child is young.

Parents who are willing and ready to talk about all sorts of things and to accept the value of their children's viewpoints make it easier for children to talk and learn about sensitive subjects.

Be An Active Family

Families who spend time together learn more about each other, share more and have more opportunities to communicate. Kids feel more important when their parents spend time with them. And parents find out more about why their kids are special, especially if each parent spends some time alone with each child.

Sometimes it seems like a challenge to find something interesting for kids and adults to do together. But there are lots of activities – go to a baseball game, the zoo or a movie. Play games or sports. Make time to share your evening meal together.



Learn to appreciate what your child enjoys — friends, music, heroes and the like. A whole range of possibilities exists through youth organizations, such as scouting and sports groups — ones in which you can participate as a volunteer. That’s a special way to spend time with your kids and get to know their friends, as well. Sharing good times is one of the best ways to really get to know your children. Then, when concerns or problems arise, they’re much easier to deal with because you’ve built a firm foundation of love and trust.

Teach Problem-Solving And Responsible Decision-Making Skills

One way to help children make proper decisions about drinking is to let them practice making responsible decisions about lesser issues as they grow up.

Sharing good times is one of the best ways to really get to know your children.

From the time they are preschoolers, children can be taught to solve problems and make their own decisions. They can be given responsibilities and allowed to learn from their mistakes. And if a child makes a mistake, such as receiving a poor grade on a test because he didn’t study, you can discuss the error calmly and help him learn from it.

Helping kids think through situations and consider the pros and cons of certain actions will give them a good foundation to build on when they’re later faced with important choices.



Know Your Children's Friends And Their Parents

The need to belong and to fit in with a group is a tremendous force in the lives of young people. And this force grows through childhood, just as the need for independence grows. Peer pressure, in fact, is more important than any other influence, except parents, in affecting whether youths drink.

So, what can a parent do?

First, parents can teach their children the meaning of real friendship and how to make true friends. You also should know the parents of your children's friends. Learning about other families' values and rules will help you monitor your own children.

Second, parents can encourage kids to think for themselves — to be self-reliant and independent — and to recognize the times when they should do what their friends do and the times when they should stand alone and do what they think is right. These will be good lessons for life that will apply to many issues.

ask... "If your friends want you to do something you don't feel right about, are they really your friends?"

If your son is feeling pressured by friends, ask him, "If your friends want you to do something you don't feel right about, are they really your friends?" Teaching children how to evaluate the consequences of their decisions is an important skill. As their parent, you're the best teacher.



How And When To Talk

It's not practical – and not advisable – for parents to choose their children's friends. Trying to do so can even backfire, particularly during adolescence.

What parents can do, beginning in elementary school, is to encourage their children to talk about their friends, how their friends make them feel and how their friends influence their behavior.

Get to know your children's friends and what they like to do together. Include their closer friends in activities. If you like them, you can encourage the friendship by suggesting a future invitation. Accepting your child's friends makes them feel good about their social decisions, too.

During the preteen years, you can help your son or daughter prepare for situations in which they may be encouraged to drink by actually rehearsing specific ways for them to say "no." For example:

- ▶ **"No, thanks. It's not cool to drink or get drunk."**
- ▶ **"It's not worth being grounded if my parents find out – and they find out everything!"**
- ▶ **"I think people who get drunk are really immature."**

You also can help your teenager by continuing to share the facts – specifically, that most kids don't drink, despite what your son or daughter may have heard from friends. That way your child won't feel different for not drinking.

With your teen's help, make and enforce rules that have to do with drinking and friends, such as not allowing teens to attend parties in homes in which adults are absent and alcohol beverages may be available.

Especially during the teen years, get to know the parents of your child's friends, so you can determine if they share your attitudes about teen drinking and if they closely supervise teens around their homes.





Treatment for alcohol abuse:

- ▶ American Council on Alcoholism
- ▶ Betty Ford Center
- ▶ Alcoholics Anonymous
- ▶ Al-Anon

Get Help If You Need It

Sometimes even the most vigilant efforts of parents are not enough to prevent alcohol abuse by young people. If that's the case, the best thing to do is seek professional advice immediately.

Your family physician or pediatrician is an excellent source of help. Another might be your minister, priest or rabbi, school guidance counselor or social worker. Treatment for alcohol abuse is available in virtually every community, sometimes through corporate employee assistance programs. Other groups that may be helpful include the American Council on Alcoholism (800-527-5344), the Betty Ford Center (800-854-9211), or Alcoholics Anonymous, which welcomes teens into its meetings, and Al-Anon.

Finding out that your teen has illegally consumed alcohol or been drunk once doesn't mean your child is an alcoholic. However, you should focus strongly on this issue to eliminate future episodes.

If repeated episodes occur, or if you are concerned about the possibility of alcohol abuse by a preteen or teen, experts have identified a number of signs that may indicate trouble:

- ▶ A significant decrease in school performance, such as low grades, failed exams or increased absenteeism.
- ▶ Withdrawal from family activities, secretiveness, lying, unwillingness to communicate.
- ▶ Depression, loss of interest in usual hobbies or activities, excessive mood swings.
- ▶ A new set of friends who you feel may be inclined to drink alcohol beverages.
- ▶ Financial problems or unexplained accidents or injuries.

Remember that children are constantly changing, and there may be other explanations for a sudden change in behavior. But don't wait to take action. For the sake of your child, seek professional help immediately.

Parent Strategies

In addition to talking to your kids about drinking, here are some simple strategies that parents may follow, especially during the teen years:

- ▶ If your child is going out for the evening, know exactly where he or she will be, and clearly explain the consequences of being late.
- ▶ Stay up and greet your teen when he or she comes home. That action says you care and are paying attention to what's happening.
- ▶ Before you go out of town and leave a teen in charge for the weekend, consider very carefully whether he or she can handle the responsibility. Make it clear that throwing a party while you're gone is not an option.
- ▶ Teen parties should have adult chaperones, definite time limits, invitation lists and no gate-crashers. Do not let your teen attend a party that doesn't meet these standards. Many schools host alcohol-free parties after events, such as homecoming, prom and graduation to provide teens with fun activities.
- ▶ The majority of teen auto accidents are caused by inexperience and immaturity. When your teen receives a driver's license, consider letting him or her drive initially only during daylight hours for short distances or to specific places. Then, as he or she becomes more experienced, gradually increase the range and hours to include nighttime driving and, eventually, full driving privileges.



Katie and Chrissy, daughters of Bob | Anheuser-Busch employee

What Happens If A Teen Is Arrested For Driving Under The Influence?

Every state imposes severe consequences for being caught driving while intoxicated (DWI) or driving under the influence (DUI). While states have blood-alcohol-content (BAC) limits of 0.08 for adults, driving erratically after any drinking can result in a DWI in many states – and all 50 states have strict “zero tolerance” laws for teens. These laws prohibit youths from driving after consuming any or a very small amount of alcohol, and youths convicted of alcohol violations may have their licenses revoked.

Here’s an example of what can happen when a teen is stopped for drinking and driving:

- 1** The officer who stops the teen will administer field sobriety tests before the teen is taken to the police station for a Breathalyzer test to measure his BAC.
- 2** The teen’s car will be towed and stored, with fees assessed for towing and daily storage costs.
- 3** The teen will be fingerprinted, and his parents will be called to take him home. A bail-bond fee may be required for release.

4 If a guilty plea is entered, the fine for a first offense is usually a few hundred dollars, in addition to court costs and in some states, a payment to the state Crime Victim’s Compensation Fund. Many people hire an attorney whose fee will usually be several hundred dollars.

5 A teen’s driver’s license is taken away upon arrest and is suspended upon conviction for 90 days to a year or longer if it is a repeat offense. An additional cost comes from the license reinstatement fee if the driver’s license is revoked. Some states require a jail sentence on the first offense with community service as an alternative, permissible in several states.

6 Many states require offenders to attend special alcohol education courses, and those taking them must pay the tuition.

7 Many insurance companies automatically revoke auto insurance after a conviction, and families must then buy “high-risk” insurance that typically costs two to three times more.

In short, drinking and driving adds up to embarrassment, frequently a loss of driving privileges, a criminal record, financial penalties and inconvenience.



Carlin, son of Crystal | Anheuser-Busch employee

Review

Remember to start early, because children are impressionable about drinking particularly during ages 9 to 11. Use brief “learning moments” that may develop into longer discussions. And follow these guidelines:

1. Be a Good Role Model.

The example you set as a responsible adult is one of the most important ways you can communicate with your children about drinking. This means never providing alcohol to minors or hosting a drinking party for your teens and their friends.

2. Be Factual.

Give children the facts about drinking in an unemotional, straightforward manner.

3. Have Clearly Stated Rules.

Share your opinions and beliefs about drinking, and then make clearly understood rules and consequences if the rules are broken.

4. Practice Good Parenting.

Build self-esteem, communicate openly about all things, be an active family together and teach responsible decision-making skills.

5. Know Your Children’s Friends And Their Parents.

Be aware of the power of friends to influence your children. Also, learning about other families’ values and rules will help you monitor your own children.

6. Get Help If You Need It.

If you think a sudden change in your child’s behavior may be related to drinking, seek professional advice immediately.

Sample Parent/Child Conversations

The Restaurant

A family is eating out at a restaurant. The waiter is serving drinks: a soft drink for the 9-year-old daughter and a beer each for Mom and Dad.

- Daughter: Dad, my teacher says people shouldn't drink and drive. Who's going to drive home since you and Mom are having a beer?
- Father: I'll still be able to drive home. Your mom and I are having a beer with our pizza, but we would never drink more than we should and drive. We know our limits.
- Mother: Your dad's right. It's fine for adults to drink, as long as they use common sense.
- Daughter: But why do you drink at all? Our teacher says people can get drunk and hurt other people when they drink and drive.
- Father: Like lots of people, your mom and I enjoy having a beer, but some grown-ups choose not to drink, and that's OK, too. Unfortunately, a few people make bad decisions and drink too much. I'm sure that's what your teacher was talking about.
- Mother: That's why it's important to remember when you grow up, if you want to drink, be sensible about it and don't overdo it.

The Football Game

A father and his 10-year-old son are watching a Sunday afternoon football game on television. The father is drinking a beer, and the son has a soft drink. It's half-time.

- Son: Dad, why is it OK for grown-ups to drink but not kids?
- Father: Well, for one thing, it's against the law. Plus, adults' bodies are fully grown so they can handle drinking, but kids' bodies can't. Even a small amount of alcohol can be bad for kids.
- Son: Yeah, we studied how alcohol affects you in school. But why do some grown-ups drink?
- Father: I like beer, and it's something you may like when you're an adult. But I never drink a lot — some people make too big a deal about drinking. I usually have a couple of beers when I'm with friends or doing something fun, such as, watching the game with you. Does that make sense?
- Son: Sure. Hey, half-time's almost over.

Kitchen Talk

A mother and her 11-year-old son are talking before dinner.

- Son: You know my friends Mark and Alex were talking about drinking the other day at school.
- Mother: Oh? What did they say?
- Son: They told me they sneaked liquor from Mark's folks' bar and drank it. They asked me if I wanted to do it next time.
- Mother: So, what did you tell them?
- Son: Well, the bell rang, so we had to go to class. But I told Mark I'd walk home with him after basketball practice tomorrow, and I bet he'll ask me again. I don't want them to think I'm chicken.
- Mother: It sounds as though Mark and Alex are just trying to act grown-up. But doing something you're not supposed to isn't very grown-up, is it?
- Son: I guess not. But how can I say no?
- Mother: Well, what about saying, "No, thanks. I've got better things to do." Then maybe you could suggest something else — perhaps, "Let's go play basketball."
- Son: Yeah, or maybe we could play video games?
- Mother: That sounds good, too. You know, it's important not to compromise your values for the sake of being "one of the gang." Let me know what happens, OK?

First Date

A teenage girl is waiting for her first "real" date who is picking her up to go to a party.

- Father: Kim, now don't forget to be home by midnight. And you remember our conversation last night about drinking and driving?
- Daughter: I remember, Dad. I'll call you, and you'll come and get me if I need you to — I won't get in a car with someone who's been drinking. Besides, you know I don't drink, and neither does Rick — I already told you that.
- Father: I know, but I just worry sometimes that you might get hurt in an accident.
- Daughter: Dad, don't worry. I promise I'll call you if I need to. If I don't, I know I'll be in big trouble! Trust me, OK?
- Father: OK. Have fun and make sure you're home on time... you know I love you.
- Daughter: Dad...



Drew, son of Margie | Anheuser-Busch employee

Party Check

A parent calls to ask about the party his son, Jeff, will be attending at another teen's house. The phone rings...

Marcus: Hi, Jim! It's Marcus Smith. How's it going?

Jim: Great, Marcus. How's the family?

Marcus: Just fine. I was calling to ask about the party Amy's having this weekend. Jeff's planning on going, so I wanted to make sure you and Nancy were going to be around.

Jim: Marcus, I know where you're coming from. I trust our kids, but you can't be sure all the kids are as responsible as Amy and Jeff. We'll probably stay upstairs most of the evening, but we'll walk through occasionally to keep a close eye on the kids. We'll probably have to restock the food several times — you know how those kids eat!

Marcus: I hear that! I was just a little concerned because Jeff told us what he heard at school about the party last weekend where Kristen's parents bought a keg for the kids. I just don't understand that.

Jim: Yeah, it doesn't make a lot of sense — it's illegal, and besides, kids can't handle drinking. Don't worry, Marcus. Nothing like that's going to happen at Amy's party.

Marcus: Thanks, Jim! Tell Nancy we said hello... we'll talk to you later...



Why do we care so much? These are our kids.

At Anheuser-Busch, we take the issue of underage drinking seriously because many of our employees are parents, too. In fact, this booklet features Anheuser-Busch employees and their families. Like other parents, we're concerned about the welfare of our children — and we want to help them make smart choices. Experts agree that awareness and education programs, such as *Family Talk About Drinking*, are the keys to preventing underage drinking — and there is no more important place to start than in the family setting.



Family Talk About Drinking Advisory Panel

Dale Baker, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist
La Jolla, California

Thomas Baker, Ph.D.
Director
Family and Relationship Center
La Jolla, California

Lonnie Carton, Ph.D.
Family Therapist
Education Consultant
Boston, Massachusetts

Michael Chatman
Youth Advocate
Miami Shores, Florida

Emilio Diaz
Family Counselor
El Cajon, California

Ralph Jimenez
Youth Advocate
Miami, Florida

Robert F. Meinholtz
Retired Scout Executive
St. Louis Area Council
Boy Scouts of America
St. Louis, Missouri

David L. Ohlms, M.D.
Psychiatrist
Medical Director
CenterPointe Hospital
Chemical Dependency Unit
St. Louis, Missouri

Terri Rodriguez Ohlms
A.C.S.W. Diplomat
Family Therapist
Adjunct Instructor
Washington University
St. Louis, Missouri

Our Thanks to the Following Groups that have Helped Distribute *Family Talk About Drinking*:

- American School Counselor Association
- Association of Junior Leagues International Inc. (ALJI)
- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- Korean American Coalition
- Korean Health Education, Information & Research Center
- National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)
- National Council of Negro Women
- National Fatherhood Initiative
- National Korean American Grocers Association
- Optimist International
- Organization of Chinese Americans, Inc.
- U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees)

More Information Is Available

At Anheuser-Busch, we are committed to being part of the solution to alcohol abuse, including underage drinking and drunk driving. That's why we've made a significant investment in community-based education and awareness programs, such as *Family Talk About Drinking*.

If you would like more information on our efforts, please write or call:

Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc.

Consumer Awareness and Education

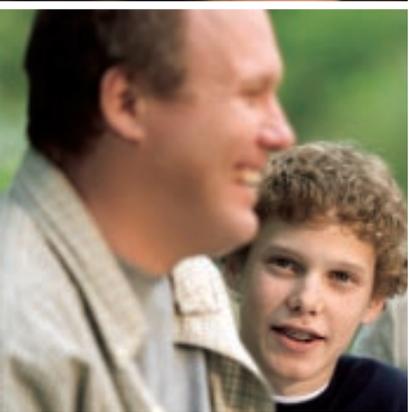
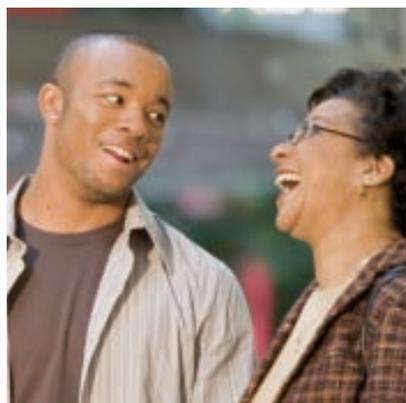
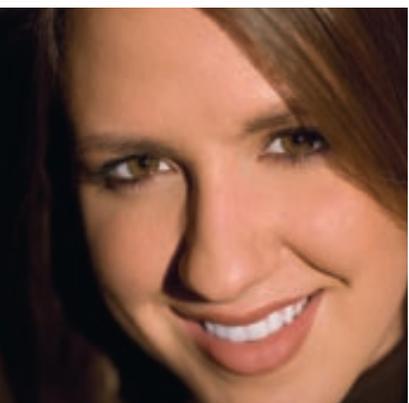
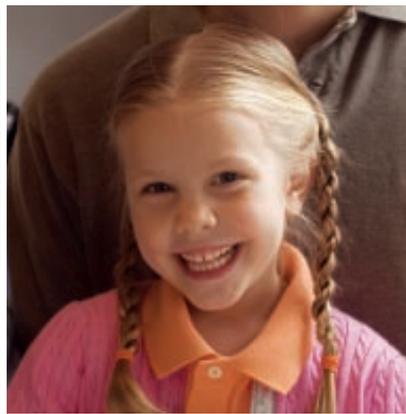
One Busch Place, 202-7

St. Louis, MO 63118

1-800-359-TALK (8255)

familytalkonline.com





ANHEUSER-BUSCH, INC.

PROVIDED AS A COMMUNITY SERVICE BY ANHEUSER-BUSCH.

©1990 - 2005 Anheuser-Busch, Inc., St. Louis, MO • SC • Item #1033435