

# MCRUD Urges All of Us to Take Action

MCRUD believes there are many actions which concerned individuals can take— wherever they are at the moment, however simple it might be—which will contribute to changing the environment for underage drinking.

The belief is that adult behavior is a major part of the climate which either encourages and tolerates, or discourages and prevents, a youthful choice to use alcohol.

- Adult use—whether to, when, where, and how
- What adults speak up about or ignore
- Adult support or non-support for laws and policies
- What adults allow or disallow to happen in their communities

All of this determines whether the environment supports non-use by underage youth, or in fact glamorizes and normalizes use and makes drinking the badge of adulthood.

## Here's What You Could Do

1. When patronizing a family restaurant, let them know your objection to alcohol promotion through the decor, signs, posters, graphics on the menu, table tents, the names of dishes and beverages, and staff apparel.
2. Register your objection with bars or restaurants that promote alcohol sales with discount prices, happy hours, and the like. Be specific about how the wording or placement of their promotion (e.g. in a campus newspaper) would contribute to underage use.
3. Talk to retailers when you don't like their alcohol promotion through signage and posters on doors, windows, outside of buildings, etc. Be specific about why you think these would be appealing to youth.
4. When patronizing a bar, restaurant, or other alcohol sales outlet, ask if the management requires and provides server training. Tell them why this is important. Congratulate those who do.
5. Praise servers and sales people who ask for identification or refuse service when appropriate. Call to task those who don't. Say why this is important.
6. Talk to people who oversee local fairs, festivals, parades, and the like. Ask if there is a policy governing alcohol sales and promotion at these events. Check if the policy assures events are family friendly and do not promote underage use. If there are no policies, play a role in establishing some.
7. If you belong to a civic or other organization that plans fundraisers or other events, question whether these should include alcohol. Raise the issue especially if youth attend these events.
8. If holiday events and celebrations for your workplace or organizations you belong to include alcohol, question if this is necessary, especially when families attend.
9. When watching television, reading magazines, or driving with your children, discuss alcohol ads and promotions that you see. Talk about the implied messages and whether they are valid. Talk about whether they are targeted to youth.
10. When watching television, movies, music videos, plays or other programs, discuss portrayals of underage or adult drinking and any use that is problematic, glorified, gratuitous, or without consequences.
11. When traveling away from home, help children notice differences in advertising, promotion, or marketing practices, and discuss why this is.
12. If you won't allow children to visit another home because of concerns about alcohol use, explain to them why, and discuss your reasons with the other family.

*More on other side*

- 13.** If you choose to drink in the presence of your children, drink responsibly, and discuss what makes this responsible. Avoid portraying alcohol use as “adult,” or glamorous, or exciting, or in any way tempting for a child to emulate.
- 14.** When a child observes negative consequences from someone’s drinking, discuss this.
- 15.** Object to visible alcohol industry sponsorship of, or promotion through, any activity children are involved in—sports, band, theatre, etc.
- 16.** Register your objection to alcohol sales, promotion, or signage at sports events and venues which are intended for family involvement.
- 17.** Object to alcohol promotion, sales, and lax law enforcement at music and other events which by their nature attract youth.
- 18.** Congratulate coaches, leaders of youth organizations, favorite teachers, and others who have children in their charge for being good role models and for promoting non-use of alcohol by youth. Raise concerns about any adult who is not such a good role model in these positions.
- 19.** Congratulate physicians and nurses who discuss not using alcohol with children during appointments. Or ask why they do not.
- 20.** Make sure your schools have policies about alcohol use which they uphold. Do they have written policies? How do they partner with law enforcement and substance abuse services in carrying these out? Do policies apply to adult behavior? Do the policies prevent alcohol promotion at events, in educational materials, through sponsorships, on apparel?
- 21.** Avoid, prevent, or register your objections to all the little things we do which may have the unintended consequence of promoting youthful alcohol use. For example:
- serving beverages to children in alcohol beverage glassware or containers
  - ordering “Shirley Temple” drinks for children in restaurants
  - wearing or allowing children to wear alcohol promotion clothing
  - using toys anywhere with alcohol messages
  - portrayal of alcohol use in children’s cartoons, videos, etc.
  - handing out wineglasses or steins as prom favors.
- 22.** Go to city hall and ask why there is an alcohol billboard in your neighborhood.
- 23.** Go to the organizers and ask why an alcohol brand name is all over the banners and advertisement for your ethnic festival.
- 24.** Go to your boss and ask why alcohol is provided at the company picnic, when it is mid-day and everybody has to drive home.
- 25.** Ask yourself if you need alcohol at your daughter’s wedding.

### **You Can Act Alone, But You Are Not Alone**

MCRUD encourages you to take any little action you are ready for or feel compelled to take at the moment. Small actions by numbers of people create lasting change.

You can also join forces with other like-minded people. Call MCRUD for connection with this state initiative, referral to an underage drinking prevention coalition near you, or assistance starting a prevention organization.

You can gather others in your community around the issues. Take the MCRUD Agreement to your school, place of worship, neighborhood organization, civic group, workplace, sports team, daycare center, youth development organizations, city council, county commission—or any other group that will listen to you.

Ask them to discuss the MCRUD Agreement, endorse it, then take some action it recommends for changing the climate within which we ask our children not to use alcohol. Reach MCRUD at 800-968-4968.