



Prom Safety Tips

The Talk -- Tell your children that you want them to have a wonderful, memorable prom. Keep that wish as a central focus. They need to give you their complete itinerary for the evening, including whom they will be with, where they will be going after the prom and the phone numbers where you can contact them. "We'll just be driving around" is not an acceptable response. Come to a fair decision on a curfew, based upon your children's past level of responsibility in this area. Express your concerns about their health and safety and explain to them why prom night makes it more difficult to make safe and smart decisions. Do not be vague -- discuss drinking, drugging, driving under the influence, and sex. Ask them how they plan to keep safe and avoid actions they will regret. Reinforce your belief in their character and in their ability to act responsibly.

The Ride -- If they are not driving themselves, you must know who will be driving them. Regardless of how many times you have talked about the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, emphasize that these dangers are particularly high on prom night. Your children cannot drink or take drugs and drive. Someone who has not drunk alcohol or taken drugs also must drive them. You need their promise on these rules. These rules are non-negotiable.

The Connection -- If your children are not returning home right after the prom, you need to be able to contact them at all times until they return home. You also need to be reachable at all times as well. There can be no doubt where your kids will be and with whom throughout the evening and morning. If they are going to other kids' houses after the prom, check ahead of time with these children's parents. You also have a right and a responsibility to ask if these parents are going to allow drinking in their homes. Many parents believe that as long as they "take keys" in a situation like this, that underage drinking is permissible in their houses. You must answer the question, "Do I want my kids at after-prom parties where parents aren't present?" Post-prom, parent-child check-in calls make sense. Establish a couple of mandatory call-in times with your kids. You might consider giving cell phones to your kids for the evening, thereby establishing a guaranteed connection.

The Offer -- Give your children the unconditional option of calling you at any time for help or advice. That includes picking them up at any time of day or night, with a promise not to shame or humiliate them in front of others. Assure them that you always welcome being part of their making smart and safe decisions. This unconditional offer of help and advice should be an outstanding offer throughout their lives.

Source: www.familyeducation.com/life/prom/prom-safety