

## **POSSIBLE TITLE: Parent involvement can help ensure safe summer parties**

Summer is right around the corner. Kids have more free time, and with it opportunities to host and attend parties.

There are many ways for parents and caregivers to help their kids stay safe at parties. If a party is being held at your house:

- *Establish clear rules.* Before the event, talk with your child about your expectations. Kids may not admit it to their parents, but they need limits and they do listen.

- *Help plan activities.* Kids who are bored will look for something to do that they think is “exciting.”

- *Know the guests and contact the parents of the children who will be attending.*

Share your family’s rules and encourage parents to ask questions.

- *Monitor the party.* Check on things regularly. Just because a party is at your house doesn’t mean everything will be OK. Children may not like it, but it’s important to put safety ahead of your popularity. Aim for a ratio of at least one parent for every eight children.

- *If you have alcohol in the home, be sure it is stored in a secure place.*

- *Monitor the transportation.* When parents drop off their child, verify with them who will pick up the child. Unless prior arrangements have been made, be sure children go home with their parents.

If your child wants to attend a party, call the parents who are hosting it and introduce yourself. This conversation is a great opportunity to ask questions such as:

- *What activities are planned?*

- *What are the host family's values and rules about things such as underage drinking, and is there a plan if a child brings alcohol to the party?*
- *Will the party be chaperoned by adults? Do they need extra help with supervision?*
- *Is there a phone number where the adult hosting the party can be contacted anytime?*

Consider forging a “safe parties” agreement with your child. Such agreements establish guidelines for parents and children about party plans, time limits, transportation, supervision, rules that restrict uninvited guests and other issues.

For more information about “safe parties” agreements, contact Oregon Partnership, a Portland-based nonprofit that provides substance abuse prevention education and treatment referral, at 503-244-5211.