



FAKE ID!

What Parents Can Do

Let's face it, teens obtaining fake identification cards so they can buy booze and enter nightclubs underage is nothing new. Serious, but not new.

Although most states have made it more difficult to duplicate a driver's license since 9/11, young adults can still purchase IDs that make them appear old enough to do what they know they are not supposed to be doing.

Risk Increases with Possession of a Fake ID

What is new is that researchers have shown that young adults with fake IDs are more likely to get into trouble with drugs and alcohol than their peers without fake IDs.

Teens and young adults with fake IDs are drastically more likely to binge drink, smoke marijuana, and use more dangerous hallucinogens and narcotics. A fake ID also correlates with the likelihood of getting arrested.

An older study cites that 56 percent of fake ID holders used alcohol the previous week, compared with 14 percent of underage students who didn't have fake IDs.

"But Everyone Is Doing It!"

No, everybody is not getting fake IDs. Statistics show that 7 percent of high school students and 14 percent of college freshmen have them.

Some studies find that a third of college students will use a fake ID at least once. With these numbers, the "everybody else does it" argument does not wash. So, if you're a parent, don't buy it.

Not Necessarily Cheap

False identification will set your child back some money. Depending on where you live, it can cost \$150 or more. Sometimes club bouncers will ask for a kickback to not call the police when they spot a fake ID. And, of course, if your kid gets caught, there are court appearances and legal fees.

Some researchers suggest that the threat of punishment for obtaining a fake ID may not be the answer. Others disagree. Discipline generally is more effective when parents possess a quality relationship with their children, so don't toss this one out the window.

Focusing on decreasing the likelihood that kids will search out a source for fake IDs may be worthwhile. Parental guidance is the best defense. Studies have shown that teens and young adults more often *do* listen to what their parents say, even if it does not appear this way at the time.

What Else Can a Parent Do?

These five tips can help:

- **Follow the money.** Whether your child is in high school or college, if you help with expenses, you have the right to know where the money is going. Ask your young adult to produce receipts or bank statements every month. You can detect large expenses that may include the purchase of a fake ID.
- **Know your kids' friends.** Make sure you invite them to family dinner or a movie night so you can get an idea of who they are and their interests. Trust your instincts.

- **Keep tabs on your child.** They'll complain about it. But so what? Ask your teen or young adult who lives at home with you to call frequently when they are out, especially if you suspect some of their friends are troubled. Ditto if they are away at college on your dime. Hint: Over time, the troubled kids will find other friends who don't have so much parental involvement.
- **Don't turn a blind eye to underage drinking.** Although it's considered a rite of passage in many circles, drinking under the age of 21 is an illegal activity and can be the first step to problem drinking. Research has also shown that the earlier drinking starts, the more likely lifelong problems with alcohol will follow, especially if alcoholism runs in your family.
- **Talk to your children** about the effects of alcohol and make it known that you don't support underage drinking. Research the laws in your state for using a fake ID and the penalties for violations. Make sure your children understand the consequences.

Fake IDs aren't simply a part of going to college or the high school experience. Underage drinking could set your child up for addiction that lasts a lifetime and a criminal record. Hold your young ones accountable and do what you can to discourage the use of a fake ID.

