

# Three things you <sup>(r)</sup> didn't know about

## KIDS & DRUGS



### **Drinking, drug use, and smoking among 14-17 yo are lower than when their parents were teenagers**

And it seems to be a trend across the world! Studies have found:

- A halving of underage binge drinking in the last 13 years
- A doubling of young people abstaining from alcohol
- An increase in the age young people first drink alcohol
- A reduction in the number of young people using illicit drugs
- The lowest rates of smoking rates among young people since records began



### **Giving kids sips of alcohol early increases risk of alcohol problems**

There's a popular myth that introducing kids to small amounts of alcohol early has a protective effect. The argument is that they can learn to drink safely supervised by parents.

There's no evidence that early sips of alcohol are protective, but lots of evidence that delayed drinking reduces risk.

Kids who are 'early sippers' are much more likely to have a full drink by year 9 and to get drunk or binge drink early in high school.

Delay the introduction of alcohol as long as possible



### **Parents can have a stronger influence over young people's drinking and drug-taking than peers**

Although friends do play an important role in when and how much a young person drinks, parents and families have a strong influence through:

- The timing of early drinking - the later the better
- Supervision levels - the more supervision the less risk of problems
- Modelling drinking - if your kids see you drinking to get drunk they are more likely to do the same when they drink
- Communicating attitudes about alcohol and drugs - overly positive attitudes increase risk of young people's drinking and drug taking

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