



## Junior Certificate Results Night

With Junior Certificate results due out shortly, parents can feel at their wits end. Not so much about the results themselves but the night out that follows. In the run up to the big day, parents can often feel brow beaten by the demands of their teenagers; wanting to spend the whole day with friends after getting results, go to parties or discos and spend the night in their friends as well as wanting to have the next day off school. You and the rest of the family don't seem to even figure in their plans.

Wanting to spend so much unsupervised time with their friends, and with the average age for teenagers in Ireland to start drinking being 14 to 15, parents are understandably concerned, as the hype and pressure 'to drink' is considerable on Junior Cert night.

So what can parents do in the lead up to the night? The following are some suggestions that parents have found useful:

- **Offer them an alternative to the Junior Cert night** – many teenagers will often say that they found it hard to say no to the peer pressure that builds up before the night. You can help them to say no by providing them with another enjoyable activity. For example you could suggest they have a barbecue in the back garden and invite some of their friends. Explain to them that there will be no alcohol and it will finish at a reasonable hour and bring in some family members to help, this way you can all celebrate together, even for an hour or two!
- **Offer a compromise** – After getting their results, allow them to hang out with their friends until lunchtime or early afternoon then come home. Book a meal in a restaurant for early in the evening for parents, brothers and sisters and grandparents. Then drop them to a supervised disco and collect them when it's over. This allows for a family celebration as well as getting around the whole issue of unsupervised time with friends.
- **Connect with other parents** – Talk to other parents about your teenagers plans, so as to avoid the 'everyone else is allowed to' conversation. Also if your teenager is going to a disco in town, suggest to one of their friend's parents that you also go in and have a meal or coffee and meet your teenagers after the disco.

Finally, remember to get them out of bed and into school the next morning. If they were older and went out the night before work they would have to get up and go in!

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