

Tips for Parents

As a parent...

Your child's well-being is your first priority, but you may not be aware of the best ways to keep your child healthy and safe. Your influence is stronger than you may think. Becoming well-informed about substance use problems can help you teach your child to make positive decisions, and becoming active in your community can contribute to protecting other children and adults from the harms of drug and alcohol use.

Silence Isn't Golden -- It's Permission

It's probably not just "going to come up," but a conversation about the risks of drug and alcohol use has to occur between you and your child. The good news is that with a little practice and a little preparation, you will find that it's a conversation that gets easier over time and may save a life.

Action Steps

- Know where your child is at all times. Make an agreement with your child that you will always call the home of the friend he or she is going to visit.
- Encourage your child to invite their friends to your home so you can get to know them.
- Engage your child in an open and mutual dialogue about the dangers of substance use and promote healthy decision making.
- Get involved in the parent-teacher organization. Encourage discussions with other parents and pledge to agree that no parent will purchase alcohol for or allow underage teens to drink in their home.
- Monitor your own behavior and don't involve your child in your use, such as asking him or her to get you a cigarette or beer.
- Contact your elected officials and ask them to support relevant underage drinking legislation such as higher alcohol taxes, social host laws, keg registration programs, graduated driver's license policies, etc.
- Ask your child's physician to screen for alcohol use during annual check-ups. The CRAFFT is a valid screening tool specifically designed for physicians to screen adolescents. Ask your own physician if he or she screens all patients.
- Get involved in a community coalition, such as CCSAPP.

- **TALK TO YOUR CHILD**
- **MONITOR YOUR CHILD**
- **RESPECT YOUR CHILD**
- **BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL**

Tip #1

Take advantage of everyday times like driving your to school or watching TV together to engage with your child. Or set aside a regular dinner "date" to check in. Ask about interests and activities and find out what's going on in your child's life.

Tip #2

Your child will be more likely to accept and understand your rules if you take time to teach him or her about the values that are important to your family. For example, to talk about accountability, use real-life examples about people you know or stories in the news to reinforce the importance of taking responsibility for your actions.

Tip #3

Children also need to learn to respect themselves. If your child seems worried about fitting in, use the opportunity to appeal to the value your child places on independence. Acknowledge the pressures he or she faces and emphasize the importance of individuality and independence.

To learn more about substance abuse prevention, visit:

www.antidrug.com

www.freevibe.com

www.drugfree.org

www.abovetheinfluence.com

www.focusas.com

www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

www.jointogether.org

www.drugabuse.gov

www.samhsa.gov

www.prevnet.org

www.unitedwayrivercities.org