

Information Brief

Focus On Families

Fostering Responsibility, Providing Supervision, and Recognizing Potential Problems

In the family, provide guidance, support, responsibility and self discipline.

- Consistently explain to your child that drug and alcohol use is wrong, harmful, and illegal.
- Encourage self-discipline by giving your child routine duties and holding him/her accountable for his/her actions.
- Establish standards of behavior concerning drugs, drinking, dating, curfews, and unsupervised activities. Enforce them consistently and fairly.
- Encourage your child to stand by his/her convictions when pressured to use alcohol, drugs or other self defeating behaviors.
- Always know your child's whereabouts, activities, and friends. Network regularly with the parents of your child's friends. Often the line "everyone is doing it" is merely a survey of "one." There is strength in numbers."
- Be selective about your child's television viewing habits and movie attendance, particularly those that portray drug use or other high risk behavior as glamorous, romantic or exciting.
- Be able to recognize signs of drug or alcohol Use.

What Parents Can Do

Every parent wants to know how he or she can help a child stay drug-free. Here are some suggestions:

- Be informed about drugs, their effects, and signs of use.
- Discuss the health dangers of drug use with young children and adolescents.
- Listen carefully to reassure children that you value their ideas.
- Offer praise for positive actions and realistic consequences for negative behavior.
- Put aside a specific time each week, perhaps at a meal, to meet as a family.
- Get to know the families of your child's friends.
- Join parent groups for support and to establish expectations for the children.