

PARENT RESOURCE CENTER BULLETIN

March—April 2010



Help Your Child Have a Safe and Drug-Free Spring Break

Spring Break is highly anticipated for most children, as they look forward to some time off school. But for many parents this means kids at home alone or kids hanging out with their friends. In either case, supervision is the "key" to keeping your child safe, as research shows that *unsupervised tweens are three times more likely to engage in risky behaviors like smoking, drinking and using other drugs.*

For lots of tweens, spring break will be their first experience being without an adult for an extended period of time each day.

Every day, **8,000** kids take their first **drink** of alcohol.

Every day, **8,000** kids use an **illicit drug** for the first time.

Every day, **6,000** kids smoke **marijuana** for the first time.

Every day, **2,000** kids try their first **prescription painkiller** (for non-medical purposes).

To avoid these "firsts" for your child this spring break:

- Safeguard all over-the-counter and prescription medications
- Lock the liquor cabinet and make any other alcohol inaccessible
- Make clear your expectations regarding smoking, drinking and using other drugs
- Set rules as to which friends (if any) are allowed over while you're gone
- Know where your child is and who he/she is with at all times
- Check in with your child throughout the day with a quick call or text

Do your best to reserve some time with your child this break, even if it's just an evening at the movies or family game night at home. The more involved you are, the closer your child will feel to you. And kids who are close with their parents are less likely to engage in risky behaviors.

Sources:

TheAntiDrug.Com: Monitoring Skills.

National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services: SAMHSA, 2008 TheAntiDrug.Com: Teens and Free Time.

WHAT'S YOUR PARENTING STYLE?

No one has all the answers when it comes to raising safe and healthy teens who are prepared to succeed in the world. But research does show that certain approaches to parenting can often make a difference. Grandparents and other non-traditional caregivers also can benefit from better understanding, communi-

cating and connecting with the teen in their lives.

Go to:

<http://www.theantidrug.com/advice/safeguarding-and-monitoring/parenting-style/default.aspx> to find your parenting style and learn more about what you're doing right and what you could do better.

Mark your CALENDAR



April is Alcohol Awareness Month!

April 13-14—6th Annual NC Parent Network Conference
Raleigh, NC
www.ncparentresourcecenter.org

Upcoming Webinar Trainings
sponsored by the NC Centers for Prevention Resources
Contact Tamara Mercer, tmercerc@coastalhorizons.org for more information.

March 11—Prescription Drug Misuse & Mortality

April 8—Prevention Theory

You're talking...but are you *Listening*?

Just talking to your child is only half the job. You can keep the lines of communication open by knowing how to listen and when to talk. Your teen will tell you about the sights and sounds that influence him or her every day. They are the experts about fashion, music, TV, and movies that people their age follow.

Ask your teen what music groups are popular and what their songs are about, what his friends like to do after school, what's cool and what's not and why. Encourage your teen with phrases such as: "That's interesting" or "I didn't know that" and by asking follow-up questions.

- **Encourage your children to feel comfortable** telling you about problems they may be having and asking you for help.
- You might try rephrasing your teen's comments to indicate that you have understood or **give nonverbal support and encouragement by nodding and smiling.**
- **Use a caring tone of voice** to answer your teen and use encouraging phrases to express interest and to keep the conversation going.

Source: The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign's Behavior Change Expert Panel



ROLE MODELING

It's easy to think that kids don't watch what we do, but statistics tell us that parents and their behavior have a huge impact on kids. Think about upcoming family get-togethers and social events. Are there situations where alcohol can be eliminated? Discuss it as a family. Make a decision on what's best for everyone, not necessarily on what's always been done.

TEENS AND ALCOHOL

15.7 years old is the median age at which children begin drinking.

48% of high school seniors say they consumed alcohol in the last 30 days.



Teens are at a reduced risk for alcohol problems when they have:

1. A parent or significant adult who is actively involved.
2. Adults who regularly support positive lifestyle choices and activities.
3. A sense of responsibility to others.

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