



Know! - Resolve To Strengthen Communication

Youth surveys reveal that the number one reason young people give for choosing not to use alcohol or other drugs is that they do not want to disappoint their parents. We want to encourage you to increase conversations with your children about the dangers of drinking, smoking and using other drugs.

In order to take full advantage of our parent power, we must: be informed on the issues; be clear on where we stand when it comes to underage drinking, smoking and using other drugs; and we must foster and strengthen communication with our children.

Follow these Ten Tips to Boost Parent/Child Communication:

1. Get in the habit of chatting about the everyday stuff with your child before jumping into potentially intense conversations.
2. Demonstrate your genuine interest in what your child has to say by listening with your full attention.
3. Be respectful of your child's feelings and viewpoint, even when you do not necessarily agree. He/she will then be much more likely to return the favor.
4. Choose your words carefully and be aware of your body language. If you show shock or disgust by what your child has shared, you will have ended the conversation.
5. Be mindful of your tone of voice. It's not just what we say, but how we say it.
6. Avoid interrupting and lecturing. These are also proven conversation busters.
7. You must know the facts about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and share them truthfully.
8. Skip the scare tactics. According to prevention experts, they are not effective.
9. Take advantage of teachable moments: For example, you are in the car with your child, with the radio on. You've got a captive audience, so try talking about that alcohol ad you both just heard.
10. Last but not least, control your emotions. If the talk gets heated and you display anger, your child is likely to go into fight or flight mode...neither of which will benefit anyone.

It is important to clearly communicate your love for your child and your desire for him/her to make healthy lifestyle choices. As you further establish and strengthen the lines of communication, your child will feel more comfortable to share his/her feelings with you, to ask questions, to seek your advice and guidance and in the end, you will be helping your child to make more positive life decisions; like choosing not to use alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.