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Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

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DrugFreeActionAlliance.org

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Know! Parents, Educators and Community Members Make the Difference

'Tis the season for gift-giving. Whether you're a parent, educator or community member, you have an opportunity to give a gift that keeps on giving - your positive influence and consistent messaging when it comes to preventing teen substance abuse.

Adolescence is the crucial period for the onset of substance use and its many negative consequences. The teen brain is at its peak for risk-taking and is more vulnerable to damage at this stage in development. The earlier a child begins to use, the more likely he/she is to become addicted later in life. In looking at the adult population, 90% of those currently battling substance addiction say they began smoking, drinking and using other drugs before 18 – so as we see, time is of the essence!

Parents, educators, and community members, YOU are the first line of defense in the fight against drug abuse. What YOU say and do can have a life-saving impact on your children, your students and other young people in your community.

The following are five key objectives to assist in your prevention efforts.

1. Talk to the children in your lives about the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of impulse control.
2. Parents must set clear rules for their children about not using drugs; you must monitor your children's behavior and enforce appropriate consequences at home - so that the rules are respected and followed.
3. Parents, educators and community members should work to create a positive home, school and community environment; you must serve as good role models and always strive to help build children's self-esteem.
4. Parents, educators and community members should also encourage and support school/community attachment among youth. Youth are much more likely to avoid risky behavior and thrive in all aspects of development when they believe the adults in their school and community truly care about them as individuals.
5. Everyone should share this information with family and friends so that they may follow the same guidelines to discourage substance abuse and create a community of caring.



Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free

Talk early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough.



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All children have the right to grow up healthy, safe and drug free. Youth have the best chances for this to happen when parents, educators and community members work together to help youth understand the dangers of drugs, and when the importance of being healthy and making good choices at home, at school and within the community, are consistently reinforced.

Stay with Know! throughout the upcoming New Year, as we will continue to arm you with information, updates and insight on alcohol and other drugs, assisting you in your prevention efforts among youth.

Source: [CASA Columbia: "National Study Reveals: Teen Substance Use America's #1 Public Health Problem." June 2011.](#)

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