



THE CHAMPION

Parents, YOU make the difference!

As children age, it is important to build trust with them and keep the lines of communication open so that if at any point they begin to feel increased pressure to experiment with smoking, drinking and using drugs they can feel comfortable talking to you about it. On September 23, we recognize Family Day to acknowledge the importance of the time families spend connecting.

Every day activities like having family dinner together, helping your children with their homework or attending their after school activities have a lasting effect on your kids. Research shows that children of hands-on parents are far less likely to smoke, drink or use other drugs. Each of these moments offers an opportunity to connect, share and really listen to what's on their mind. Remember, parental engagement matters!

Why should I worry about my child experimenting?

Adolescence is the critical time when kids are at risk of experimenting with drugs, alcohol and tobacco. In fact:

- Nine out of ten Americans who meet the medical criteria for addiction started smoking, drinking, or using other drugs before age 18.
- Addiction is a disease that in most cases begins in adolescence.
- Preventing or delaying teens from using alcohol, tobacco or other drugs for as long as possible is crucial to their health and safety.

Try these parenting tips when talking to your kids about drugs:

- Understand that addiction is a disease of the brain that in almost all cases starts when your kids smoke, drink or use other drugs in adolescence when the brain is still developing.
- Acknowledge that marijuana, alcohol and tobacco are substances that are out there and that many people use them. Explain that tobacco and prescription drugs - like alcohol and illegal drugs - are also risky and can rewire your brain and increase the chance that you will get hooked.
- Start talking with your kids at an early age and take time to explain things to your child in basic terms that are easily understandable. Make your child comfortable talking to you about "difficult" topics such as tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.
- Listen carefully to your child. Educate yourself so you can answer his or her questions. As children get older, their questions get more difficult, so you need to be prepared.
- Peer pressure may play a pivotal role in a child's decision to use drugs. However, encourage your child to be their own person and make their own decisions.
- Tell your child the truth—that drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, may make them feel good for a while (by activating brain chemicals). Unfortunately, that feeling is brief and no one can know the true potency or lifetime effects of these substances.
- Try to impress upon your child the long-term consequences drinking, smoking or using other drugs may have on something they enjoy doing, such as sports, math or writing.
- Point out that adolescents are in a period of life during which they need their brains to operate at full efficiency. These substances can impair brain function.
- Make the point that repeated "chemical activation" will eventually cause people to crave that chemical and want to keep using it even if it hurts them.
- Explain that these substances may dull a painful part of their lives for a brief period, but it will never change or help the underlying situation.
- Write a family "contract" established to make your opinions on all types of drug use clear. Be consistent with family rules.
- Be a model of healthy behavior for your child.

(Adapted from "Just Say Know: Talking With Your Kids About Drugs And Alcohol" - Cynthia Kuhn)

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Our Vision:

We envision a county where adults support positive youth choices in order to develop into healthy, responsible adults.

Our Mission:

To improve and enhance the health, safety, and quality of life for our children and community by reducing substance use and abuse.



Twitter:

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**Fast
Fact**

**Other Adult
Relationships
(Developmental
Asset #3)**

Getting support from non-parent adults (“Other adult relationships”) is one of the developmental assets associated with positive effects on students’ school attendance, sense of bonding to school, effort, conduct and performance.

Starkman, Scales, and Robertss, 1999



What’s Coming Up....

Menahga High School Homecoming - October 12, 2013

Sebeka High School Fall Festival - October 14-17, 2013

Verndale High School Homecoming - September 28, 2013

Wadena High School Homecoming - September 27, 2013

Negotiating With Your Teen

Respectful negotiation is training for life! We know that children and teens alike need consistent limits and consequences, as well as accountability. Waffling over consequences doesn't help anyone. But that doesn't mean that we need to stick to rigid rules when there are other reasonable solutions. You can practice a balanced style of parenting and negotiate without compromising your authority. In fact, we *want* our kids to feel comfortable talking to us and disagreeing with us. This is especially true as kids get older. Negotiation can help us avoid a lot of unnecessary power struggles. In addition, learning how to negotiate at home helps young people build the communication skills they will use for the rest of their lives.

Researchers from the University of Virginia found that young people who can calmly and persuasively negotiate and disagree with their parents are more likely to resist negative peer pressure outside the home. This doesn't mean that every conversation turns into hours of endless negotiation. You are still the parent and unpopular decisions come with the job. But sometimes you and your teen may be able to work out solutions that work for everyone *and* build important communication skills and increased trust. Here are some tips to set you up for success when you negotiate with your teen:

1. **Start with respect.** Be willing to give and take with your kids as long as they don't start yelling or using crude or rude language. You and your teen may generate other ground rules as well that make the conversation go more smoothly.
2. **Set a good example.** If we treat our teens with respect, even in the middle of heated negotiation, our kids are more likely to approach a disagreement with the same attitude.
3. **Start by listening.** Listening to your child or teen shows that you respect their opinion and input even if you ultimately disagree.
4. **Be clear on what is NOT negotiable.** Decide which rules are non-negotiable and which rules are up for debate. For example, drunk driving or skipping class.
5. **Make it clear.** Make sure the negotiated agreement is clear to both you and your child. Vague agreements are an invitation to conflict.
6. **Check in.** How is negotiation going? Are you both holding up your ends of agreements? Demonstrate that your teen can earn more freedom and flexibility by making good choices. Remember your teen is a work in progress!

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Something To Talk About

In every issue!

Here are some ideas for conversations at your next family meal or ride in the car.

- Think of an activity that required you to practice a lot before you got good at it. Why did you stick to that task?

- If you have a homework assignment that needs to get done but a friend wants you to do something fun, how do you decide what to do?

- If you could study anywhere in the world, where would you go? Why?

The benefits of eating together will last long after your meal ends, especially if you make family mealtimes a regular activity.

For more ideas visit : <http://casafamilyday.org/familyday/tools-you-can-use/conv-starters/>

We're on the web!
www.champforwc.org