

About This Issue

This year, our focus is on assisting you in continuing to build strong communication with your children.

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Research shows that students who talk with their parents about not using alcohol are less likely to use. The idea of keep talking, they're listening will be a continuing theme this year. We will share tools, tips and information to aid you in continuing to talk with your children about the risks of alcohol and substance use.

THE PARENT POST

November 2019

MIDDLE SCHOOL EDITION

Look for some of our latest PSAs on social media!

Hello Parents!

01

The Power of Choice is excited to share the latest parent post newsletter. As you may already know, the Power of Choice is a campaign supporting students, schools and parents, focused on building resiliency and providing education to increase the number of students making healthy choices regarding substance use.

As locals who are parents as well, our focus is on assisting you in continuing to build strong communication with your children and help them make the healthy decision to not use alcohol and other drugs. Research shows that students who talk with their parents about not using alcohol use are less likely to use. We will share tools, tips and information to aid you in continuing to talk with your children about the risks of alcohol and substance use. Did you know, that aside from our newsletters we also share information with parents digitally over social media?

Think our teens are too young for you to start a conversation about underage drinking? Think again.

Early adolescence is when some children begin experimenting with alcohol or feeling pressure to drink. To encourage our teens to avoid alcohol, talk to them about the risks and the importance of making healthy decisions

Keep in mind, Kids who drink are more likely to be victims of violent crime, to be involved in alcohol-related traffic crashes, and to have serious school-related problems. Kids pay attention to what we communicate. Our influence truly matters. **Parents can have a major impact on their children's drinking,** especially during the preteen and early teen years.

The best way to influence our children to avoid drinking is to have a strong, trusting relationship with them.

Research shows that teens are much more likely to delay drinking when they feel they have a close, supportive tie with a parent or guardian.



KEEP MONITORING - KEEP THEM SAFE, KIDS ARE CURIOUS

◀ BE INVOLVED AND HAVE HONEST CONVERSATIONS
MONITOR + RESPOND TO ANY SIGNS OF ALCOHOL USE
FOR RESOURCES + TO LEARN MORE VISIT: THEPOWEROFCHOICE.INFO

THE POWER OF CHOICE

FUNDED IN WHOLE OR IN PART BY THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION OF SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION AND RECOVERY THROUGH A GRANT FROM THE SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION.

Stay up to date on our parent campaign on facebook.com/powerofchoice360

The Power of Choice provides parents with a wealth of information we can use as we guide our children through the exciting teenage years.

In partnership with



The Power of Choice is a project of 360 Youth Services, Naperville School District 203, Indian Prairie School District 204, Naperville Police Department, KidsMatter and District 203 & 204 parents.

02 ◀ Building Strong Bonds

Keep in mind -- The opposite can also be true: When the relationship between a parent and teen is full of conflict or is very distant, teens are more likely to use alcohol and to develop drinking-related problems. This connection between the parent-child relationship and a child's drinking habits makes a lot of sense when we think about it.



First, when children have a strong bond with us as parents, they are apt to feel good about themselves and therefore be less likely to give in to peer pressure to use alcohol. Second, a good relationship with us is likely to encourage our children to try to live up to our expectations, because they want to maintain their close tie with us. When kids talk with us and communicate positively, they are willing to seek advice from us,



Here are some ways to build a strong, supportive bond with your child:

- » Establish open communication. Make it easy for teens to talk honestly.
- » Show you care. Even though young teens may not always show it, they still need to know that they are important to parents.
- » Make it a point to regularly spend one-on-one time with your children—time when you can give them your loving, undivided attention.
- » Some activities to share: a walk, a bike ride, a quiet dinner out, or a cookie-baking session. Brief but important talks happen in those moments.

03 ◀ 4 Tips for Talking with Your Kids about Not Using Alcohol

Developing open, trusting communication with our children is essential to helping them avoid alcohol use. If our teens feel comfortable talking openly with us, we'll have a greater chance of guiding them toward healthy decision making.

- » Encourage conversation. Encourage our teens to talk about whatever interests them. Listen without interruption and give them a chance to teach us something new. Our active listening paves the way for conversations about topics that concern us.
- » Ask open-ended questions. This encourage our teens to tell us how they think and feel about the issues being discussed. Avoid questions that have a simple "yes" or "no" answer.
- » Controlling emotions is vital. If we hear something we don't like, it is important to not to respond with anger. Instead, take a few deep breaths and acknowledge the feelings in a constructive way.
- » Make conversations a "win-win" experience as often as possible. Don't lecture or try to "score points" by showing teens they are wrong. If we show respect for our child's viewpoint, they will be more likely to listen to and respect ours.

