

About This Issue

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

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.

Keep talking, they really ARE listening....

- 01 WELCOME About POC i-Team visits
- 02 Strong Bonds Ways to connect
- 03 Tips on Talking With your kids

THE PARENT POST

September 2018
MIDDLE SCHOOL EDITION

Look for some of our newest posters in schools today!

Hello Parents!

01 **The Power of Choice** welcomes you to the new school year. 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. We are a collaborative project led by 360 Youth Services in District 203 and 204 Middle and High Schools.

This year, our focus is on assisting you in continuing to build strong communication with your children. 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 in talking with your children about the risks of alcohol and substance use. The Power of Choice team will be connecting with parents digitally through newsletters like this, as well as over social media. Our website thepowerofchoice.info has topic-specific educational materials and links, as well as a

Community Resource Guide for your convenience. Watch for print materials including the Youth Connections Magazine, and our presentations in the community.

For your children, we will be connecting with them through posters and PowerSurges in the schools. The Power of Choice team visits Districts 203 & 204 middle schools throughout the school year during lunch periods, to get feedback from students for our in-school campaign materials. Youth materials focus on increasing students' resilience and building protective factors. The first poster of the school year focuses on being a true friend to yourself and using your power to choose a healthy and alcohol-free me.

Did you know? Kids who drink are more likely to be victims of violence, to be involved in alcohol-related traffic crashes, and to have serious school-related problems. You can have a more positive influence on your child's values and decisions about drinking before he or she begins to use alcohol.

Parents can have a major impact on their children's drinking, especially during the preteen and early teen years.



The best way to influence your child to avoid drinking is to have a strong, trusting relationship.

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.

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 distant, the teen is more likely to use alcohol and to develop drinking-related problems. This connection between the parent-child relationship and a child's choices about drinking makes a lot of sense when you think about it.



First, when children have a strong bond with a parent, 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 you is likely to encourage your children to try to live up to your expectations, because they want to maintain their close tie with you. When kids talk with their parent(s) and communicate positively, they are willing to seek advice from parents.

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

- » Establish open communication. Make it easy for your child to talk honestly with you.
- » Show you care. Even though young teens may not always show it, they still need to know that they are important to their parents.
- » Make it a point to regularly spend one-on-one time with your child—time when you can give him or her 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 can happen in those moments.

03 ◀ 5 Tips for Talking with your Teens about Not Using Alcohol

Developing open, trusting communication between you and your child is essential to helping him or her avoid alcohol use. If your child feels comfortable talking openly with you, you'll have a greater chance of guiding him or her toward healthy decision making. **Some ways to begin:**

- » Encourage conversation. Encourage your child to talk about whatever interests him or her. Listen without interruption and give your child a chance to teach you something new. Your active listening to your child's enthusiasms paves the way for conversations about topics that concern you.
- » Ask open-ended questions. Encourage your teen to tell you how he or she thinks and feels about the issue you're discussing. Avoid questions that have a simple "yes" or "no" answer.
- » Control your emotions. If you hear something you don't like, try not to respond intensely. Instead, take a few deep breaths and acknowledge your feelings calmly.
- » Make every conversation a "win-win" experience. Don't lecture or try to "score points" on your teen by showing how he or she is wrong. If you show respect for your child's viewpoint, he or she will be more likely to listen to and respect yours.



10

i-Teams at Fischer

The Power of Choice team will be visiting Fischer Middle School in October. We will be in the lunch room during all lunch hours connecting with students and introducing them to our program. We will be asking for their feedback on upcoming campaign materials.

16

i-Teams at Madison

The Power of Choice team will be visiting Madison Junior High in October. We will be in the lunch room during all lunch hours connecting with students and introducing them to our program. We will be asking for their feedback on upcoming campaign materials.

Additional Resources for you ▶

Learn more here - Talking with your kids about not using alcohol:
www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/why-talk-about-alcohol_0.pdf

Connect with The Power of Choice online and social media:

www.thepowerofchoice.info

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