



PARENTS USE YOUR POWER

May 2017

When choosing not to drink 86% say they don't want to jeopardize future plans (30 day data)

Conversation Starter of the month— "If you could have any job in the world, what would it be and why would you choose it?"

OPERATION: Clean Out The Cabinet

DROP OFF EVENT

Saturday, May 20th 10am-1pm
Naperville Police Department Lobby
1350 Aurora Ave.

Dispose of Unused Medication Properly
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Family Strategies for a Safe Summer

As school ends, many teenagers find themselves with an abundance of time on their hands. Some teens will take this opportunity to sleep all day or binge watch their favorite shows and others may celebrate this newfound freedom with risky choices.

While today's teens face different challenges than previous generations, "old school" parenting strategies still apply. During these academic respites, adolescents need to increase their physical activity and challenge their mental abilities. If, however, you don't set the stage now, your teens could waste away the summer and create significant family frustration as they lounge all day and engage electronically all night.

[Ongoing conversations](#) with your teens are the most productive process to negotiate a safe, sane summer experience. Encourage teenagers to bring their own plan to the table, as they may have insights and ideas that you do not. Begin the communication process by discussing some basic ground rules. Of most concern to many teens is when they have to get up in the morning and when they must return in the evening. Keep in mind that teens need to catch up on sleep, and a later-than-normal wake time makes sense. Rising too late, however, complicates sleep patterns and makes return to school year normalcy a difficult task. Set consistent and reasonable times.

Curfews can be another source of conflict. Having predetermined times with predetermined consequences can alleviate any arguments about nighttime boundaries. Jointly enacting consequences reduces arguing because the rules and results are already in place. Also be sure to address the allowable screen time (computers, TV, and video games). [Consider parental controls](#) if this is a continued source of conflict and require your teens to engage in some type of organized activity that challenges their physical ability.

Now that the rules are in place, it is time to have the conversation about how your teenagers will spend the majority of their summer days. Most teens want extra cash, and work experience is an invaluable tool that lasts long after the summer job is over. Unfortunately, finding summer employment is a job itself. Parents need to be supportive. Don't provide vague suggestions such as "Get out there and find a job", rather provide concrete and specific guidance as you collaborate and assist. Teens, however, also need to realize that they must get out of the house and pound the pavement; finding a job on the internet may not be the only way.

If families work together, job hunting can be a bonding experience. Begin the planning process by preparing for the search. Your teen may have started a resume in school, perhaps you can build on this. If your teen has never worked before—not a problem. Consider volunteer experience, academic achievements, leadership roles, informal neighborhood work and relevant hobbies that might lead to a job.

The next step is to begin approaching potential employers and applying in person. This can be stressful so offer to drive or meet afterward. Coach kids to be polite and to get a contact name for following up.

Phase two is networking, including teens working their connections and parents pursuing their contacts. Since most kids are on social media, teens should go online to let others know they are in the market to work. Parents should check with their friends to see if someone might be in need of some summer assistance. Try swapping by employing someone else's child and have them hire yours. Be creative, as these ideas could lead to unique opportunities.

Ok, so your anxious adolescent has done everything right—networked, put in applications, spent many hours in pursuit of any employment—but still no work. This teen might consider entrepreneurship. An enterprising teen could start a grass-cutting business that turns into a snow removal business and expands into a holiday lights installation business, resulting in a nice year-round income.

Finally, summer should be full of good times, not only for teens, but also for parents. Remember to slow down, plan some family fun, and create memories that will last long after summer tans have faded. Soon your teens will be out of the house and, believe it or not, you will miss them.

Parent Tips:

- ◇ **Encourage physical activity:** Being physically active is a great way to stay busy, healthy and out of trouble. Studies show that when kids are involved in sports, aside from being in good physical shape they are mentally sharp, possess better social skills, higher self-esteem, and have reduced anxiety levels.
- ◇ **Encourage a hobby:** Try to detect hints of a talent and encourage it until it comes alive. Being good at something is a confidence booster and a productive way to spend time. These pursuits will also enhance personalities and resumes. Remember that your teens' interests may be far from your own, so you may have to educate yourself on their hobbies in order to show honest enthusiasm.
- ◇ **Encourage them to earn their own spending money:** Giving free money to a teen capable of earning is not the best policy, while the desire to have money is a great motivator.
- ◇ **Encourage them to be a volunteer:** [Volunteering](#) for a charitable organization is a great way to network with people, stay busy, learn skills, be productive and positive, and feel great. (When kids at any age see their parents volunteering, chances are they will follow suit).
- ◇ **Encourage your kids to help you:** It is not a natural tendency for a teen to want to teach you how to use the computer, help out around the house, or help with the errands. You may have to struggle to get participation, but ultimately it is well worth the effort. The time together and their contributions will foster stronger connections with the family.
- ◇ **Remind your kids you need to [keep them safe](#):** They have to let you know who they are with, where they are going, and when they'll be home.

Source: April 2016 survey of 11,774 District 203 and 204 High School students. A project of 360 Youth Services, Naperville School District 203, Indian Prairie School District 204, Naperville Police Department, KidsMatter and District 203 & 204 parents. Funding in whole or in part by the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

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