

03 Staying Involved & Monitoring your Teen

Parents need to be absolutely clear about their expectations for abstinence from alcohol and all other drugs and they need to share their love and worry about what could happen to their child, rather than threats of consequences. Rather than throw up your hands and say there's nothing you can do, take a minute to reflect on just how important and influential parents' roles are to their children.

In fact, you can make a difference. It all starts with having proactive strategies in place to ensure your teens learn to live by the family's rules and values, to appreciate that there are healthier ways to enjoy their time and that responsibility is something that needs to be practiced.

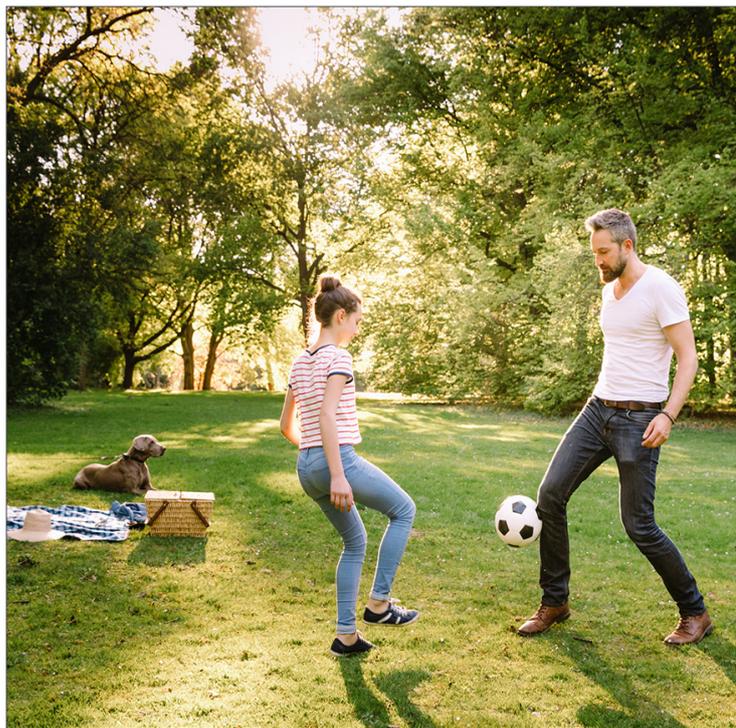
Be Involved

The best way to be in the know about what your children are doing is to be involved in their daily lives. This doesn't mean that you have to take time off from work to watch over them like a hawk, but it does mean that you engage in ongoing conversation about their likes, their friends, new activities and interests, what's bothering them, any peer pressure, struggles with skills or learning ability, and what they want to get out of summer.

The more you interact with your teens, the more natural and comfortable this way of communicating will feel. The overarching impression is that you care about your kids and want to do all that you can to ensure that their teen years are filled with beneficial opportunities to learn and grow, and to build their core sense of values and increase personal responsibility.

While this may be easy to recommend, how do you implement a strategy to be involved & monitor your teens' lives? You could try the following:

- » Ask about their plans for the day or week.
- » Discuss as a family things to do together on the weekend or plans for a family vacation.
- » Research activities together that your teen can participate in; hopefully, pertaining to their interests, but also encouraging them to discover new ones.
- » Learn the names and key information about their friends, and encourage simple ways to meet them.
- » Communicate with the parents of your teen's friends and make sure they know your expectations about not allowing alcohol and drug use.
- » Set clear rules, including rules about not using alcohol and other drugs. Enforce the rules you set.
- » Keep a family calendar with important dates and activities clearly listed.
- » Check in during the day with your teen using social media, instant message, texting or a quick phone call.



04 Work With the Community

Consistency of the message that alcohol and drugs are off-limits needs to be communicated. To ensure this happens, parents should work with their children's schools, with other members in the community and the local government. Here are the goals, as recommended by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

What You Can Do with the Community to Prevent Your Child from Drinking Alcohol:

- Schools and the community support as well as reward young people's decision not to drink [and use drugs].
- Schools and the community identify and intervene early with children involved in underage drinking [and drug use].
- Make sure that rules about underage drinking [and drug use] are in place at home, in school, and in your community.
- Ensure that agreements of acceptable behavior are established, well-known, and consistently applied.
- No alcohol [or drugs] permitted at parties and social events at home or elsewhere where children are present.

Additional Resources for you ►

Parenting to Prevent Childhood Alcohol Use – National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
<https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/adolescentflyer/adolflyer.htm>

Connect with The Power of Choice online and on social media:

www.thepowerofchoice.info
Contact: **Terra Rumer**
6-8th Grade Campaign Coordinator
Trumer@360youthservices.org

