

# SAFE HOMES

Parents and Community Working Together to Create a Safe, Healthy, Drug-free Environment for All Youth

## LEADERSHIP ACTION GUIDE



The Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board's  
Bureau of Alcohol Education offers a  
variety of alcohol education  
materials free of charge.

For more information,  
please contact us:

**Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board**

Bureau of Alcohol Education

Northwest Office Building

Harrisburg, PA 17124-0001

**[www.lcb.state.pa.us](http://www.lcb.state.pa.us)**

Or call our toll-free line:

**1 (800) 453-PLCB (7522)**

If using a TTY line, please call  
**(717) 772-3725**



**PLCB DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY**

This information is not intended to be legal advice, but merely conveys information pertinent to alcohol-related offenses. For more information or further clarification, please contact your local District Attorney's Office or a private attorney.



# PENNSYLVANIA LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17124-0001

## Thank you for your interest in the SAFE HOMES Tool Kit.

This tool kit has been produced by the PLCB to assist parents, schools, and communities in helping to prevent children from using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Substance abuse, which often begins in adolescence, is a problem that touches each one of us at some point in our lives. Students, to be accepted by their peers, often feel they must match what they perceive to be others' use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Parents may also feel pressured to allow children to drink in their homes, thinking that it is a safe location. Or they may allow their children to attend parties without knowing all the details because "all the other parents let their kids." This troubling social pattern affects families, claims lives, and costs the nation billions of dollars each year. But there is a solution.

Proven prevention methods, including education and community programs, exist which help foster environmental change by changing the social norms. The goal of these efforts is to change what some parents and kids see as normal patterns of behavior involving underage use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Prevention efforts work best when all segments of the community become involved.

Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention is possible only when all segments of society support and enforce clear, consistent "No Use" messages and policies regarding children and drugs. Parents working together can make a tremendous difference in the lives of children.

We appreciate your help in disseminating this information to as many people as possible. The documents in this tool kit have been printed on white paper and can easily be copied. Permission is given to reproduce the materials as long as proper credit is given.

Please contact the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board, Bureau of Alcohol Education, with any technical assistance questions or concerns, 1 (800) 453-PLCB or (717) 772-1432. Our web site is: [www.lcb.state.pa.us](http://www.lcb.state.pa.us).

We hope the SAFE HOMES Tool Kit will be helpful in your prevention efforts.



# SAFE HOMES Contacts

Over the past few years, the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board has taken a leadership role in the prevention of underage drinking and other forms of alcohol abuse. The Bureau of Alcohol Education works on many levels with schools, community groups, licensees, and others to help prevent the problems that misuse of alcohol can cause. We are continuously developing and refining alcohol education materials to add to the extensive selection of items available free of charge to all residents of Pennsylvania.

## **Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board**

Alcohol Education  
Northwest Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17124-0001  
Phone: 1 (800) 453-PLCB (7522)  
Fax: (717) 783-2612  
Web: [www.lcb.state.pa.us](http://www.lcb.state.pa.us)

We would also like to thank the Erie County (NY) Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, the Informed Families Partnership of Florida, and PRIDE-Omaha Inc. for providing us with their valuable resources and assistance in developing this tool kit for Pennsylvania.

## **Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse**

4255 Harlem Road  
Amherst, NY 14226  
Phone: (716) 839-1157  
Fax: (716) 839-1159  
Web: [www.eccpasa.info](http://www.eccpasa.info)

## **Informed Families/ The Florida Family Partnership**

2490 Coral Way  
Miami, FL 33145  
Phone: (305) 856-4886  
Fax: (305) 856-4815  
Web: [www.informedfamilies.org](http://www.informedfamilies.org)

## **PRIDE - Omaha, Inc.**

3534 S. 108<sup>th</sup> Street  
Omaha, NE 68144  
Phone: (402) 397-3309  
Fax: (402) 397-9924  
Web: [www.prideprevention.org](http://www.prideprevention.org)

## **Northern Berkshire Community Coalition**

61 Main Street, Suite 218  
North Adams, MA 01247  
Phone: (413) 663-7588  
Web: [www.nbccoalition.org](http://www.nbccoalition.org)

## **Sharpsville Targets Adolescent Alcohol Resistance (S.T.A.A.R.)**

c/o Sharpsville PD  
1 S. Walnut St.  
Sharpsville, PA 16150

## **Westford Against Substance Abuse**

55 Main St.  
Westford, MA 01886  
Phone: (978) 399-2528  
Fax: (978) 399-2558  
Web: [www.westford.com/wasa/](http://www.westford.com/wasa/)



# SAFE HOMES Tool Kit Contents

The ideas and information contained in each of the following sections will guide you through the development of a SAFE HOMES network in your community. We hope that by providing the materials and resources for this campaign, we can help to send a clear, consistent message across the Commonwealth.

## ■ **WHAT IS SAFE HOMES?**

- Introduction
- A Note About This Tool Kit
- What is SAFE HOMES?
- Frequently Asked Questions
- The SAFE HOMES Pledge
- Sample Brochure

## ■ **GETTING STARTED**

- Planning Timeline
- Planning Checklist
- Tips for Schools
- Sample Letter to Parents
- SAFE HOMES Resource Needs
- Publicity Techniques
- Meeting Agenda
- Creating a Directory (Sample)

## ■ **GETTING PARENTS INVOLVED**

- Using the SAFE HOMES Directory
- Parent Interest Survey
- Keeping Your Home A SAFE HOME
- Starting a Parent Circle
- Sample Parent Circle Agreement
- SAFE HOMES Tips for Parents

## ■ **PROBLEM SOLVING**

- SAFE HOMES Problem Solving Tips for Parents
- Suspected Pledge Violation Letter
- Nonmember Violation Letter

## ■ **EVALUATION SAMPLE**

- SAFE HOMES Survey & Evaluation

## ■ **APPENDIX:**

### **TIPS FOR PARENTS**

- 10 Prevention Steps for Parents
- The Facts About Our Youth
- Planning A Party The Safe Way
- Elementary Parent Issues
- Talking To Your Kids About Alcohol
- Quiz for Parents
- Understanding Adolescent Drug Use
- Reporting Underage Drinking
- Local Resources
- Additional Resources
- Websites for Parents

■ **RESOURCE MATERIALS**

SAFE HOMES Parents' Network  
Guidelines for Evaluating Visual Resources  
Guidelines for Evaluating Textbooks and Curriculum  
Parent Guidelines for Drug-Free Children  
How Parents Enable Youth  
Parenting & Prevention  
Assertive Parenting  
All Children Are At Risk To Use Drugs!  
A Memo From Your Child

# **WHAT IS SAFE HOMES?**



# Introduction

**T**he development of this SAFE HOMES tool kit is the result of a need identified by the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (PLCB) and expressed to us by many concerned parents and community leaders.

The PLCB has been studying the extent and frequency of alcohol abuse by school-age youth and has discovered the following:

- Alcohol is the drug children consider most acceptable and, in fact, most desirable.
- Large numbers of middle and secondary school youth are drinking alcohol on a regular basis.
- Cocaine and drugs other than alcohol are used much less frequently; but their use is on the increase.
- The use of alcohol by school-aged youth is held to be unacceptable by the majority of the adult community.

Teenagers are making tough choices these days. Undoubtedly, one choice every teenager must make is whether or not to use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. The choice they make will have a profound impact on their lives and on the lives of others.

Kids are choosing to experiment with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs because they are readily available and they consider the use of these substances to be socially acceptable. Half of high school seniors will have already experimented with alcohol before graduation.

Schools provide alcohol and other drug education to every student as part of their health education program and through other activities. But schools alone cannot prevent alcohol and other drug abuse. Prevention must start in the home.

Parents are the primary educators of their children. They can help their children make good decisions about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. We believe when parents join together and take a united stand against drug use, they become much more effective than if they act separately.

SAFE HOMES is a parent networking campaign. A SAFE HOMES network can provide support for parents and guardians in their efforts to have safe, healthy, drug-free homes and communities. This tool kit is intended to give you greater insight into the problems of drug abuse and to assist you in preventing this abuse in your communities. Starting early is what makes prevention efforts work.

The important point is to start!

# A Note About This Tool Kit

**T**he SAFE HOMES Tool Kit has been developed to serve as a guide when forming a SAFE HOMES network in your school or community. It offers specific instructions, guidelines, and suggestions on how to begin your SAFE HOMES network yet offers flexibility to adapt the program to meet your specific needs. Its user-friendly design is intended to assist the volunteer who possibly has never attempted to organize anything before and is uncertain how to begin and what to do first.

The tool kit includes some basic guidelines: how to get started, whom to include, timelines, funding resources, as well as policy and procedure recommendations. Also included are ideas for publicity, informational brochures, surveys, letters to parents, and many other ideas and resources.

Throughout the materials enclosed, you will find a clear, consistent message on the importance of “No Use” of any alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs by youth. This “No Use” message is a constant thread throughout all effective prevention programs and it is strongly encouraged to be a common practice and message in every home.

The SAFE HOMES network can be started in one home, in a school, or throughout a community. There is no wrong or right size group. The format allows each group to decide what is appropriate for their circumstances. We have found it’s best to build a strong foundation of interested parents willing to be actively involved, and then to recruit and expand with new parents.

The contents of this tool kit represent the ideas and research of many parent organizations and individuals working in the area of primary prevention for years. They are committed to assisting and encouraging parents to provide safe, healthy, and drug-free environments for all youth. We thank all of them for their strong insights and commitment. We would also like to offer special thanks to PRIDE-Omaha, Inc. and the Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse for providing us with their valuable resources and assistance in developing this tool kit for Pennsylvania.

# What is SAFE HOMES?

The SAFE HOMES network is a project for all parents and guardians of children who are in pre-kindergarten to twelfth grades. It provides a way for parents to talk to each other and unite in a clear “No Use” message to children by maintaining that there will be “No Use” of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs in their homes or on their property. By working together around this simple principle, parents provide the consistency necessary to reduce the pressures children feel to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs to fit in with their peers.

## MISSION STATEMENT

“Parents and community working together to create a safe, healthy, drug-free environment for all youth.”

## GOALS OF SAFE HOMES

- To aid parents in educating themselves about the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs by adolescents and establish a clear “No Use” message.
- To encourage parents to openly communicate with one another about parenting concerns.
- To assist parents in establishing reasonable guidelines for their children’s behavior.
- To make parents aware of alternative activities available for youth.
- To provide a continuing support network for both parents and children.

## SAFE HOMES Parents agree to:

- Develop and communicate a clear position about alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use.
- Not allow parties and gatherings in their homes when they are not present.
- Work toward strengthening school policy regarding the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- Support law enforcement policy regarding the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and encourage the use of appropriate discipline and treatment in dealing with offenders.
- Not allow the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs in their homes or on their property.
- Communicate with other parents in their child’s social circles.

## SAFE HOMES NETWORK PLEDGE

1. I will actively supervise all gatherings or parties of youth in my/our home or on my/our property, or ask another responsible adult, person or parent for help to do so.
2. I will not allow the possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs by youth in my/our home or on my/our property.
3. I will set expectations for my/our children by knowing where they are going, who they are with, what their plans are, and when they are to return home.
4. I will provide a secure storage place for all forms of alcohol in my/our home.
5. I will communicate with any SAFE HOMES parent of a child I personally observe using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## ■ WHAT IS SAFE HOMES PARENTS NETWORK PROJECT?

- ▶ It is a way for parents to join together to help provide a safer environment for their children.
- ▶ It provides a way for parents to talk to each other and to unite in a clear “No Use” message to youth that there will be “No Use” of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs in their homes or on their property.
- ▶ It is simply a public agreement between parents and guardians to follow some simple principles, which allow their child/children to grow up in a genuinely safer world.

## ■ IS THERE A COST TO JOIN SAFE HOMES OR BE A MEMBER?

No. It is a free program open to any adult who agrees, signs the SAFE HOMES pledge, and lives by this agreement in their home.

## ■ WHY SHOULD I JOIN?

Joining the SAFE HOMES network lets children know you care where they are going, who they are with, what they will be doing, and when they are to return home. It helps parents and guardians establish a clear consistent “No Use” message about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Your children should know you are talking with other parents and the parents have agreed on some similar rules and guidelines for their children.

## ■ IF MY CHILDREN ARE ONLY IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WHY SHOULD I JOIN?

Ideally, prevention starts before a child goes to school. Children need to know exactly what their parents expect of them. Parents can do this by making clear, consistent, and fair rules and consequences while the children are still young and willing to listen and follow directions. Discuss early and often with your children your expectations there will be “No Use” of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs by your children or their friends.

## ■ WHAT AM I EXPECTED TO DO AS A MEMBER OF SAFE HOMES?

Parents are expected to talk with their children about the pledge and maintain the pledge principles in their homes.

## ■ IF I JOIN SAFE HOMES, WON'T MY CHILD THINK I DON'T TRUST HIM/HER?

Trust does not have to be blind trust. Parents have every right to know where their children are, who they are with, and what they are doing. Our children are growing up in a world much different than the one in which we grew up. A child can always be told, “I love and trust you but not the world in which you are growing up and I need to know about that world in order to be a good parent to you.”

## ■ WHO WILL KNOW I AM A MEMBER OR HAVE MY PHONE NUMBER?

The SAFE HOMES project coordinator and other parents who have also signed the pledge will have your name and/or phone number. Your phone number is never given out unless you have first signed the approval to do so on the SAFE HOMES pledge form.

## ■ IF I SIGN THE PLEDGE, DOES IT MEAN I CAN'T HAVE ALCOHOL IN MY HOME?

The pledge says you will not allow anyone under 21 to have alcohol in your home or on your property and you will secure all forms of alcohol in your home. If you are over 21, a good role model, and practice low-risk use, it is your decision.

The SAFE HOMES pledge is not a legally binding contract but an agreement between the networks of parents.

# GET INVOLVED!

There are many ways parents, guardians, and community members can get involved with the SAFE HOMES network.

- Sign the Pledge so your family can be part of the SAFE HOMES network.
- Volunteer to be on the SAFE HOMES planning committee.
- Volunteer to be part of a subcommittee.
- Start a SAFE HOMES Parent Circle with the parents of your child's friends.
- Donate your time or resources to help the SAFE HOMES mission.

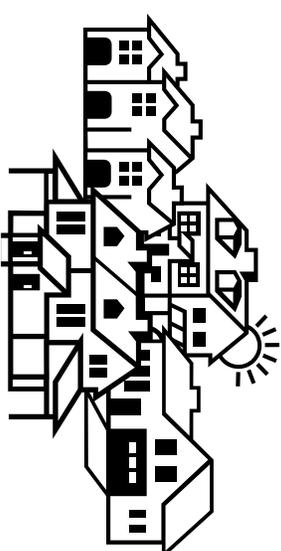
# There is a solution!

For More Information About the SAFE HOMES Network in Your Community

Contact:

<p>SAFE HOMES Network          Any School Name          Any School Address          Anytown, USA</p> <p>Contact Name          Contact Phone Number</p>
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# SAFE HOMES



# A Pledge for Parents

Parents and Community  
Working Together to Create a  
Safe, Healthy, Drug-free  
Environment for All Youth

### What is SAFE HOMES?

The SAFE HOMES network is a project for all parents and guardians of children from pre-school through twelfth grade. It provides a way for parents to talk to each other and unite in a clear "No Use" message to children, maintaining that there will be "No Use" of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs in their homes or on their property. It is simply a public agreement between parents to follow some simple principles which will allow their child/children to grow up in a genuinely safer world.

### Why Should I Join?

Joining the SAFE HOMES network lets children know you care where they are going, who they are with, what they will be doing, and when they are to return home. It helps parents and guardians establish a clear consistent "No Use" message about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Your children should know you are talking with other parents and the parents have agreed on some similar rules and guidelines for their children.

### What Am I Expected To Do As A Member Of SAFE HOMES?

Parents are expected to talk with their children about the pledge and maintain the pledge principles in their homes.

### Won't My Child Think I Don't Trust Him/Her?

Trust does not have to be blind trust. Parents have every right to know where their children are, who they are with, and what they are doing. Our children are growing up in a world much different from the one in which we grew up. A child can always be told, "I love and trust you, but not the world you are growing up in, and I need to know about that world in order to be a good parent to you."

### THE SAFE HOMES PLEDGE

1. I will actively supervise all gatherings or parties of youth in my/our home or on my/our property, or ask another responsible adult for help to do so.
2. I will not allow the possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs by youth in my/our home or on my/our property.
3. I will set expectations for my/our children by knowing where they are going, who they are with, what their plans are, and when they are to return home.
4. I will provide a secure storage place for all forms of alcohol in my/our home.
5. I will talk with any parent of a child I personally observe using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

NAME (print) \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS\* (home) \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE\* (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name	Grade	School
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____

\* We would like permission to list your name as a member of the SAFE HOMES network in the school SAFE HOMES directory and other related publications. Please indicate below if we may do so.

- Yes, you may publish my phone number.  Yes, you may publish my address.  No, please refrain from including my information in these publications.

Sign pledge and return to your school \_\_\_\_\_

## Every child is at risk to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

### SAFE HOMES Parents Agree To:

Develop and communicate a clear position about alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use.

- Not allow parties and gatherings in their homes when they are not present.
- Work toward strengthening school policy regarding the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- Support law enforcement policy regarding the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; encourage the use of appropriate discipline and treatment in dealing with offenders.
- Not allow the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs in their homes or on their property.
- Communicate with other parents in their child's social circles.

# The SAFE HOMES Pledge

## SAFE HOMES parents agree to:

- Actively supervise all gatherings or parties of youth in my/our home or on my/our property, or ask another responsible adult for help to do so.
- Not allow the possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs by youth in my/our home or on my/our property.
- Set expectations for my/our children by knowing where they are going, who they are with, what their plans are, and when they are to return home.
- Provide a secure storage place for all forms of alcohol in my/our home.
- Talk with any parent of a child they personally observe using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

This is not a legally binding contract, but rather an agreement between members of the SAFE HOMES network.

## THE SAFE HOMES PLEDGE

1. I will actively supervise all gatherings or parties of youth in my/our home or on my/our property, or ask another responsible adult for help to do so.
2. I will not allow the possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs by youth in my/our home or on my/our property.
3. I will set expectations for my/our children by knowing where they are going, who they are with, what their plans are, and when they are to return home.
4. I will provide a secure storage place for all forms of alcohol in my/our home.
5. I will talk with any parent of a child I personally observe using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

NAME (print) \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS (home) \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE\* (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name	Grade	School
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____

(list additional children on the reverse side of this form)

\*We would like permission to list your name as a member of the SAFE HOMES network in the school SAFE HOMES directory, newspapers, and other related publications. Please indicate below if we may do so.

- Yes, you may publish my phone number.     Yes, you may publish my address.     No, please refrain from including my information.

Sign pledge and return to your school \_\_\_\_\_



# **GETTING STARTED**



# SAFE HOMES Planning Timeline

Each SAFE HOMES network will have its own formula for success. This timeline is provided as a guideline for new volunteers to assist them in the difficult decision of where to begin.

## **3 to 4 MONTHS IN ADVANCE**

- Secure support and permission from school administrator to undertake project.
- Enlist parent volunteer groups' support and other possible co-sponsors.
- Secure permission to use site or room for meetings (building use permit).
- Set date and place for first planning committee meeting.
- Select chairperson and any necessary subcommittees.
- Decide what printed materials may be necessary.
- Start planning publicity campaign.

## **2 to 3 MONTHS IN ADVANCE**

- Put publicity campaign into effect.
- Call for donations of time, money, services, volunteers, and materials.
- Decide on method for distribution and collection of pledge brochures.
- Confirm reservation of meeting site and determine room set-up and any special needs.

## **1 to 2 MONTHS IN ADVANCE**

- Decide on refreshments and make arrangements.
- Check if there are any special needs of guest speaker or committees.
- Check on the progress of each committee. Make sure they have back-up plans.
- Start publicity campaign targeted at parents and guardians.

## **1 MONTH IN ADVANCE**

- Hold committee meetings to finalize any needs or arrangements not yet secured.
- Check on printing needs and timeline for printing to be completed.

## **2 WEEKS IN ADVANCE**

- Check to be certain each subcommittee has necessary equipment, materials, volunteers, etc.
- Verify that all responsibilities are being carried out, and each committee person is clearly informed and has his/her arrangements completed and/or confirmed.

## **DURING THE EVENT**

### **Duty Assignments:**

- Greeter
- Someone to assist with nametags and registration
- Someone to take notes for committee records

## **AFTER THE EVENT**

- Send thank you notes to individuals, organizations, and businesses that made donations.
- Send thank you notes to speakers and volunteers.
- Publish Open Letter of Thanks in School Newsletter to parents for their participation.
- Start to compile the SAFE HOMES network directory and prepare to distribute.
- Evaluate the success of your campaign.
- Begin planning for next effort.

# SAFE HOMES Planning Checklist

1. Form a planning committee of interested parents. (This does not have to be a large group.)
2. Select a chairperson.
3. Clarify your goals and write them down.
4. Get approval from the school principal with a promise of support, if possible.
5. Determine who will be your target group of parents for the membership drive. We recommend opening the network to parents of all children at your school rather than limiting it to certain grades.
6. Develop any necessary procedures or policies for the overall project.
7. Consider whether or not your network needs subcommittees. If so, define roles of each and determine method of assigning planning committee members into subcommittees.
8. Decide on timelines for the following and designate who will be responsible for what.
  - First parents' informational meeting
  - Registration for members (distribution and signing of SAFE HOMES pledge form)
  - Follow-up to membership drive (opportunity for late registration)
  - Compiling membership list/directory and distribution
  - Parent networking opportunities (parent socials or meetings)
9. Decide on type of publicity or promotion and target date for informational meeting.
10. Estimate financial needs and method for funding. Solicit donations, if necessary.
11. Establish plan for distribution of pledge forms, collecting signed pledge forms, organizing the membership list/directory, distribution process for directory, and a follow-up registration opportunity.
12. Determine what printed materials are needed. Are there any other resources necessary?
13. Plan first parents' informational meeting: publicity, refreshments, location, arrangements, guest speaker or facilitator, and audio/visual equipment.
14. Plan for the future of your project. What needs to happen after the membership directories are distributed? Provide additional opportunities for parents to meet and discuss what is happening.
15. Maintain communication with members (letters, newsletter columns, phone calls, posters).

## MISCELLANEOUS RESPONSIBILITIES TO REMEMBER

- Apply for school building use permit (use of library or other informal location is suggested).
- Gather printed materials and handouts needed.
- Arrange for A/V equipment; check that they actually are in working condition BEFORE program starts (slide projector, overhead, VCR, microphone, podium connection).
- Provide nametags for attendees and special guests.
- Confirm publicity.
- Organize room set-up. Arranging chairs in a circle will help encourage group participation.
- Make an agenda or program outline for the parents' informational meeting.
- Make a list of assignments and assign people to specific tasks to help event run smoothly.
- Arrange for refreshments, paper products, and other hospitality needs early in the planning process. Often donations are available.

# Getting Started: Tips for Schools

## BASIC STEPS

- Recruit a planning committee and hold planning meeting.
- Provide a parents' informational meeting to explain the SAFE HOMES project and establish membership.
- Distribute, collect, and process pledge forms.
- Compile and distribute a membership directory.
- Plan parent networking opportunities.

## MEETING WITH THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

- Two or three parents need to meet with the school principal to discuss the SAFE HOMES network project and to gain support and sponsorship. Explain what your parents' organization would like to accomplish by starting this project in your school. Unless the project is visibly supported and endorsed by the school, it may be more difficult to achieve initial credibility and involvement with all parents in your school.
- Set a date, time, and location for the first planning committee meeting. Include the principal and parents who are willing to assist with planning. Attempt to have the planning committee represent all segments of your school community. The more diverse and inclusive this group is the more success your project will receive.

## THE FIRST PLANNING MEETING

- Confirm the project chairperson or select co-chairs.
- Determine which organization will be the sponsor of this project (i.e. FFA, Parents Club, Athletic or Booster groups, PTO, or other organization).
- Focus on a target group for your membership drive. Will all parents be included, or only those in a particular grade level? If feasible, it is recommended all parents in school be invited.
- Determine the timeline for the project. When will the first parents' informational meeting be held?

### *Additional considerations for the planning committee:*

- ◆ Is there a need for additional volunteers?
- ◆ What is the timeline?
- ◆ Are any subcommittees needed?
- ◆ What is the goal for the parents' informational meeting (what do you wish to accomplish)?
- ◆ What printed materials are required (pledge forms, parent packets, or other informational hand-outs)?
- ◆ What publicity or promotional strategy is desired?
- ◆ What is the plan for distributing, collecting, and processing parents' pledge forms?
- ◆ What is the process for compiling and distributing the SAFE HOMES directory?
- ◆ What follow-up is desired to keep the program growing?
- ◆ How will the project's success be evaluated?
- ◆ How and when will new members be recruited?

# Getting Started: Tips for Schools (continued)

## PARENTS' INFORMATIONAL MEETING

- Publicize day, time, and location of event and invite parents to attend.
- Prepare a printed agenda for parents.
- Request planning committee members serve as hosts to make all parents feel welcome.
- Use nametags to help everyone become acquainted.
- To open the meeting, have the chairperson introduce the planning committee members, the sponsoring organizations and school, any special guests, and the principal. Thank the necessary key persons and everyone for taking the time to attend.
- If the school is co-sponsoring the network, ask the principal to say a few words of support.
- The following topics should then be addressed by the chairperson:
  - ▷ What is the SAFE HOMES network?
  - ▷ Why it is important for all parents to be involved?
  - ▷ What is expected of the parents when they sign the SAFE HOMES pledge?
  - ▷ How the network operates and the importance of communication between parents.
- Distribute pledge forms and collect. Some parents may choose to discuss their decision with the child's other parent before joining the network. Provide clear instructions of how parents can join after this meeting and where pledge forms can be sent.

### ***Additional suggestions:***

- ▷ Consider inviting a guest speaker.
  - Local community prevention agencies could provide a speaker to help explain the culture of today's youth and address the influence parents have on their children's decision to stay drug and alcohol free. Contact information for such groups can be found in the blue pages of your phone book or through the resource section of this tool kit.
- ▷ Follow up with the principal after the meeting.
- ▷ Send thank you notes to principal and any other guests.

## PLEDGE FORM DISTRIBUTION

1. Determine how pledge forms will be distributed. Some possibilities include: distribute at parents' meeting; send home in school newsletter or with student; hand out at parent-teacher conferences or school open house night; or send out as an individual mailing.
2. Decide a timeline for your campaign (with a deadline) so forms can be returned in a timely manner.
3. If forms are mailed or sent home, include a cover letter and/or brochure explaining the SAFE HOMES network. Provide clear instructions on where pledge forms can be returned and what sort of follow-up parents can expect. Be sure to inform parents of pledge form due date.
4. Assign someone to process the pledge forms and compile the SAFE HOMES directory. Keep the original signed forms in a safe place, ideally at the school, where they can be kept confidential.
5. Compile the SAFE HOMES members' information into a directory and distribute to all members.

# Sample Letter to Parents

Dear Parents,

Do you feel strongly about creating a safe environment for your children free from the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs? Have you ever wished there were other parents you could turn to for advice and support, knowing that they have the same fundamental beliefs about raising children that you have? SAFE HOMES is the tool to start this type of parent network.

SAFE HOMES is a positive prevention program, developed by parents to support parents. Parents sign a pledge agreeing to supervise all gatherings of youth in their homes, to not allow any alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use by youth in their home, and to know where their children are, who they are with, and when they will be home.

The SAFE HOMES network is for parents and guardians of all children through twelfth grade. Parents are encouraged to talk to each other and to unite in a clear “No Use” message to their children—there will be “No Use” of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs by youth in their homes or on their property.

While signing the pledge is not a legally binding contract, it is an agreement among parents in the SAFE HOMES network. The pledge provides a clear understanding among the SAFE HOMES members and sets clear expectations for youth. Parents are encouraged to discuss this important decision with their children, to explain why it is an important commitment, and to implement clear family rules, with appropriate and consistent consequences.

We hope you will join us in this important commitment.

Sincerely,

(Insert organization or school's name here)

# SAFE HOMES Resources and Needs

Organizing a SAFE HOMES network can be accomplished with a minimal amount of funds or donations of in-kind services. However, it is important to keep accurate records for future reference. Resources come in many forms. The obvious ones are money, time, equipment, and people. Listed below are categories of resources that most projects may need to have. There is overlap in some of the categories.

A budget should be developed even if there appears to be no need for funds. It allows for more accurate record keeping. It also gives you the information you may need for future planning, grant writing, and fundraising. Documentation helps to validate the broad base of support for your project. This is taken into consideration by grantors when determining their award of grants.

**PERSONNEL:** In order for any campaign to be successful, an active committee is essential. This can include volunteers, paid staff, consultants, or part-time help. The number and type will be determined by the skill-level of the project or activity. Volunteers' time should be recorded in your records for "in-kind donations" and compiled according to the number of hours they donate times the dollar amount they would usually receive in their regular occupation, if working; otherwise what it would cost to pay someone to do this particular task.

**MONEY:** Money isn't the only resource a project needs but it is a necessary ingredient to consider. Consider who would be most interested in supporting this type of project and/or why would it be beneficial to them (advertisement, good-will, personal commitment). Contact service and civic groups, business, community, or other organizations with similar concerns (sports, booster clubs, churches, youth sponsors). Ask them to co-sponsor the effort.

**IN-KIND DONATIONS:** This includes donated office or meeting space, equipment, printing, refreshments, volunteer time and staff, trained facilitators, technical assistance, speakers, and whatever is given that would otherwise have cost something to secure.

**EQUIPMENT:** This relates to any special equipment the project or activity needs (podium, microphone, sound system, paper products, printing, miscellaneous supplies, and postage). Do not include the equipment your organization already has available, but other required items.

**FACILITIES:** Do not list the facilities your organization already uses or has available. List those additional or special facilities this activity/effort requires. If the activity is going to require additional personnel, will there be space for them to do their assignment?

**TIME:** Determine how much time the effort will require of volunteers or personnel. Also include special time elements that are critical to the activity or the planning and implementation of it.

**KNOWLEDGE:** Determine what specific knowledge will be required and what informational needs are critical to the success of this effort.

**SKILLS:** Determine what special skills will be required to implement the project/effort.

**POWER and INFLUENCE:** Oftentimes just knowing the right people can help your organization get the things or support you need. What contacts are at your organization's disposal? Who personally knows someone?

**CONSULTANTS and CONTRACTS:** Include any training expenses or speakers fees, workshop materials, and mileage costs.

# Publicity Techniques

- **Timing** - This is probably the most critical factor in a successful turnout to any program being offered. Research what other events might be taking place that would conflict with your program. Give careful consideration to the date, time, and location chosen.
- **Announcement** - The program announcement needs to be attention getting. Consider using brightly colored paper and a title to the program that is interesting and nonthreatening. Be positive! Try using humor and artwork whenever possible. Make sure the information about date, time, and location is immediately noticeable.
- **Principal's letter** - Ask the school principal to send a letter to all parents endorsing the project and encouraging attendance. This is an excellent publicity strategy.
- **Letters of endorsement or support** - Securing letters from other organizations or community leaders supporting the effort helps to give credibility to the project.
- **Focus on parents' interest** - Any letter to the parents and guardians needs to focus on the parent. People tend to read letters and flyers concerning something of interest to them and their family.
- **Mailings & Email** - Whenever possible, mail or email information directly. Notices sent home with students at the high school level seldom reach the parent. Research the possibilities of donations for postage, printing, and copying costs.
- **Telephone all parents in the school** - A calling committee is of primary importance. A brief reminder over the phone will bring out those parents who were not sure about attending as well as those who simply forgot about the program.
- **Web site announcement** - Many schools have web sites set up for parents that include regular announcements and updated calendars. It is recommended to use this in addition to sending a mailing. Include a contact phone number and email address for parents who may have questions.
- **Diversity and inclusion of many people** - Involve as many people in the planning and program as possible. Ask them to serve as greeters, facilitators, etc. Suggest that people car pool since most people do not like going somewhere alone or where they think they may not know someone.
- **Childcare** - Offer childcare services whenever possible and provide age-appropriate activities for the young children. It is better for children to not attend the parents' program—thereby avoiding distractions and disruptions.
- **Finally...** Display posters in area businesses and key school sites. Provide announcements in newsletters of neighborhoods, churches, schools, community organizations, and businesses. Place flyers in public places such as libraries, grocery stores, doctor's offices, gas stations, etc.



# Meeting Agenda

1. **Welcome** — Statement by principal or organization chairperson, with a very brief explanation of what has led to this effort. Introduce the SAFE HOMES planning committee.
2. **A Look at the Agenda** — Explain what will be discussed at the meeting. Read the agenda and indicate the expected length of the meeting. Try your best to stick to that time.
3. **What is SAFE HOMES?** — Chairperson explains the need for and benefits of SAFE HOMES. If applicable, the chairperson will then introduce the guest speaker.
4. **Speaker** — Be certain that this person is dynamic and will not talk down to the audience. This first program will indicate the quality of programs and activities to come. It is critical that the presentation is well received. Select a speaker from outside your school, if at all possible. When introducing something uncomfortable or that calls for change, more acceptance is given to an expert who can overcome denial and the natural resistance to change. The speaker should acknowledge the pressures on parents from children and from society at large. This is an effective way to introduce the solution portion of the evening, namely signing and implementing the SAFE HOMES pledge.
5. **Q & A** — Allow plenty of time for the audience to question the speaker and the SAFE HOMES Planning Committee. Have a member of the committee open the question/answer session in case there is reluctance by the audience to break the ice by asking the first question.
6. **Pledge Signing** — Participants should be given the opportunity of joining the SAFE HOMES network while they still feel the momentum of the program. Others may decide to wait until they talk it over with their child's other parent—if both parents were not able to attend—or they may just need more time to think about it. Acknowledge that both options are available.
7. **Wrap Up** — Give a brief concluding statement thanking the audience for coming and expressing enthusiasm for the future of SAFE HOMES. Remind parents that volunteer opportunities are available if they are interested in becoming more involved. Inform them concerning the next step of the program.

## REMEMBER!

Be sensitive to the audience's needs. Include the length of the program/presentation on all advertising and as a reminder at the start of the evening. Begin and end on time. The entire program should not last more than two hours. If someone wishes to continue with questions, offer to remain after the conclusion of the program.

# Creating Your SAFE HOMES Directory

The design of your SAFE HOMES directory will largely depend on the population of your SAFE HOMES network. Some groups may include a whole community with many schools listed, while other networks may include only one school.

## ***Important things to include:***

- Names - listed alphabetically by the last name of the child (it may be different from that of the parent)
- Names and grade levels of children
- School or organization affiliation
- Home phone number and address — must receive permission
- The SAFE HOMES pledge
- Tips on using the SAFE HOMES directory

**Below is a sample of a typical SAFE HOMES directory page:**

Adams:	Claire, Grade 10 – Sunnyvale H.S. Michael, Grade 12 – Sunnyvale HS. Parent/Guardian: John and Felicia Adams (717) 555-1234 987 West Main Street, Harrisburg, PA 17124
Boyle:	Anthony, Grade 9 – Roosevelt HS. Parent/Guardian: Anthony and Anita Johnson (717) 555-2345 2217 Dauphin Drive, Harrisburg PA 17124
Conroy:	Bryan, Grade 8 – Springside Middle School Gina, Grade 5 – Spruce Elementary School Parent/Guardian: Ms. Pat Conroy (717) 555-4567 2001 Mill Road, Harrisburg PA 17124
Davison:	Jeremy, Grade 11 – Sunnyvale H.S. Paul, Grade 12 – Sunnyvale HS. Parent/Guardian: Christine Miller and Robert Davison (717) 555-9876 1972 Hometown Avenue, Harrisburg PA 17124
Forrest:	Daniel, Grade 8 – Springside Middle School Laura, Grade 5 – Spruce Elementary School Trevor, Grade 2 – Spruce Elementary School Parent/Guardian: Adam Meadows (717) 555-0860 227 North Second Street, Harrisburg, PA 17124

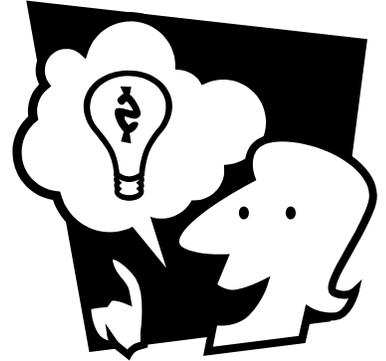


# **GETTING PARENTS INVOLVED**



# Using Your SAFE HOMES Directory

- Actively involve as many parents in the planning of the project as possible. Make them feel some ownership of the project and provide understanding of the value of its success. They will encourage their friends to attend.
- Tell parents what they can achieve if they get involved and explain how they will benefit.
- Plan a calling tree system. All parents should receive an invitation or a reminder call.
- Set up childcare services for parents' meetings with age-appropriate activities for the children. This is an excellent opportunity for older students to provide community service.
- Give lots of compliments and positive comments to every person involved in the project.
- Provide an environment where parents can talk freely without concern that someone will judge them, their ideas, or their children.
- Arrange meetings around social events such as pizza dinners or other meals.
- Hold the meeting in an informal setting (perhaps in the school library.) If the meeting must be held in the gym or cafeteria, arrange chairs in a semi-circle.
- Ask parents to share their experience, knowledge, and the successes shared by their family.
- Design flyers to place on bulletin boards—at schools, churches, work, grocery stores, service clubs, and other locations frequented by parents.



# Parent Interest Survey

Please respond to the following questions so that we may determine your interest in participating in a SAFE HOMES network.

1. Are you interested in participating in the SAFE HOMES network? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

2. When would be the best time for you to attend a meeting?  
\_\_\_\_ Afternoons                      \_\_\_\_ Evenings  
1:30 p.m. or 3:00 p.m.              7:00 p.m. or 7:30 p.m.

3. Which day/night of the week do you prefer to meet?  
Monday \_\_\_\_ Tuesday \_\_\_\_ Wednesday \_\_\_\_ Thursday \_\_\_\_

4. Would you be interested in assisting with any of the areas listed below?

■ Co-Leader \_\_\_\_

■ Subcommittees

Hospitality-greeting attendees at meetings, serving light refreshments \_\_\_\_

Publicity-preparing and distributing posters, letters, brochures \_\_\_\_

Outreach-calling parents to remind them of meetings \_\_\_\_

Membership Directory—compiling, preparing, and updating \_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

CHILDREN'S NAMES AND GRADE LEVEL

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

(List additional children on the reverse side of this form)

**Check any of the topics listed below that you would be interested in learning more about:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Handling conflict/Dealing with anger

\_\_\_\_\_ What parents can do to prevent youth using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs

\_\_\_\_\_ How the media targets our youth, and ways to counter their messages

\_\_\_\_\_ Teaching youth how to make healthy choices/refusal skills

\_\_\_\_\_ Current social norms for youth and the party scene—what parents need to know, but don't

\_\_\_\_\_ Ways to manage stress and cope with problems

\_\_\_\_\_ Helping your child to succeed in school

# Keeping Your Home A SAFE HOME

**1.** Sign the **SAFE HOMES pledge** and discuss your decision with your family. You may decide to post a copy of it on your family's refrigerator to serve as a reminder.

**3.** **Call ahead** to confirm your child's social plans **BEFORE** you give permission for him or her to participate.

**2.** Always arrange supervision for your children when you expect to be away for an extended period of time.

**4.** Make certain that activities are supervised by responsible adults and that they will be alcohol and drug-free. Never be embarrassed to call and talk to the adult in charge.

**6.** If you plan to be out of town and have left your child at a friend's house, we suggest that you ask the host parent, your next-door neighbor, as well as the police, to keep an eye on your house. This is to discourage impromptu gatherings. Inform your children that you have made these arrangements.

**5.** Secure any alcohol you may have in your home away from your children. We suggest that you remove this temptation from curious young people by locking alcohol up or removing it from the home while raising children.

**7.** Be a visible host when parties or gatherings are taking place at your home. Observe what is happening in subtle ways: replenish the refreshments, remove trash, suggest some fun activity or new music, etc.

**8.** Be aware that most of youth alcohol and other drug use takes place in homes when parents are absent. Children can be quite creative in finding hiding spots for these things.

**9.** Becoming a **SAFE HOMES** member does not imply distrust of your children. Rather, it simply means you are aware of the social pressures on today's young people and you care enough to create a safe, healthy social environment for them.

**10.** Parents may hesitate to join **SAFE HOMES** because they feel their children will never be a problem. You cannot guarantee, however, that other young people coming into your home will not create a problem. **Get to know other parents and remember to use your **SAFE HOMES** directory.**

# Starting a Parent Circle



You can maximize the benefits of the SAFE HOMES network in your home by starting your own Parent Circle with the parents of your children's friends. This is the most effective way to build lasting relationships with parents who are all dedicated to providing a safe and healthy environment for children—those who share your same belief that there should be “No Use” of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs by youth.

1. Identify your child's closest friends and obtain parent contact information.
2. Invite the parents to an informal gathering at your home.
3. Host the gathering in your home. Keep it friendly and informal.
4. Discuss the three top concerns the parents have about their children.
5. All parents work together and develop a list of clear expectations for youth.
6. Sign the SAFE HOMES Parents Pledge form.
7. Commit to contacting each other in the future regarding additional information or questions about permission to attend an event, setting a uniform curfew, etc. This is the SAFE HOMES network at work!

## PARENT CIRCLE SUGGESTIONS

- Tell the parents you call that you are contacting all of the parents in your child's friendship peer group so no one feels singled out.
- Let them know your get-together will give them a chance to become better acquainted and share your parenting concerns with each other.
- You may decide to send the parents a SAFE HOMES brochure in advance of your meeting or distribute them at the meeting.
- Allow time for introductions and some get acquainted time. Light refreshments often help to break the ice.
- Be organized and plan an agenda in advance, but be flexible with the needs of the group.
- Don't take differing viewpoints personally; some people will need to learn to open up to a new way of thinking about their children and their role as parents - this can take time.
- Follow up afterwards with a letter to the parents recapping what was accomplished at the meeting.

# Sample Parent Circle Agreement

You may decide to develop an agreement among the members of your SAFE HOMES Parent Circle that goes beyond the basic SAFE HOMES pledge. The specifics of each agreement will vary, as the needs of each group are different. This sample is provided to give you some ideas.

- Absolutely no adolescent use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. (Note: parent chaperones should follow the same rules when supervising a party.) Any violations by adolescents will result in appropriate, predetermined consequences— for example: restriction of phone use, grounding, loss of driving privileges, or a special written report on a related topic.
- No attendance at events where alcohol or drug use is present or known to occur. Establish expectations of what children should do if they unexpectedly find themselves in that situation.
- Every party/social gathering should be pre-planned, discussed with parents in advance, and adequately chaperoned by responsible adults. Parents should know where their children are, who they are with, when they are expected to return home, and how they can be reached in an emergency.
- Parents should agree on the procedure for chaperones to follow in case a violation of the “No Use” policy occurs in their presence. The parents of the child who has violated the policy should be called immediately to pick up their child.
- If the youth have no specific approved place to go, they should remain at home.
- Absolutely no parties or gatherings should occur at homes or places where or when parents are not present, unless there is adequate assurance that other responsible adults will be providing supervision.
- Specific age-appropriate curfews are set for school nights, weekends, school breaks, and holidays. Set expectations of what children should do if something unavoidable happens and they will be late.

## Additional Topics for Discussion

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chores                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Dating etiquette: age-appropriate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family responsibilities       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sleepovers                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School responsibilities       | <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle use                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curfews                       | <input type="checkbox"/> New drivers: safety, passengers   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency plans               | <input type="checkbox"/> Movies, DVD's, video games        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job hours during school year  | <input type="checkbox"/> Make-up                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Phone use: rules, courtesy    | <input type="checkbox"/> Tattoos                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer use: rules, courtesy | <input type="checkbox"/> Body piercing                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internet/Chat rooms           | <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing etiquette                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CD's (tunes): courtesy        | <input type="checkbox"/> Prom/Other school functions       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allowances                    |  |

# SAFE HOMES Tips for Parents

The SAFE HOMES committee encourages you to:

- Get to know your child's friends, as well as their parents.
- Know where your children are and let them know where you are.
- Make sure your kids know how to get help when you are not home.
- Assure your children you can be contacted to give them a ride home whenever needed.
- Leave a message for your child if no one will be home when they get there after school.
- Be awake or ask to be awakened when your children and their friends return home at night.
- Verify your child's activities. Find out if they are parent-supervised and make sure there will be no alcohol or drugs served.
- Secure any alcohol you may have in your home in a safe place and keep track of what you consume.
- Abide by set curfews for weekdays and weekends.

How does your family decide on teenage privileges and responsibilities? Have you ever wished for a standard to help you make those decisions? The following guidelines are designed for just that purpose. They may be too restrictive for some families and too permissive for others; but by using them as a guide you can establish a sense of agreement in your community.

## WHEN YOUR CHILD IS INVITED TO A PARTY

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1. Tell him/her that you intend to call the host parent to confirm there will be parental supervision and that no alcoholic beverages will be served. Be sure to follow through on these plans.
2. Be sure to know when the party ends and when your child will be home.
3. Make it easy for your child to leave a party where there is drinking or other drug use. Discuss this in advance. If, for any reason, your child wishes to leave the party early or has a change in plans, he/she should be able to call you or another designated driver for assistance.
4. Make it easy for your child to talk to you when arriving home. Being up and available when your child comes home from a party encourages communication and could alert you to a potential problem.

## WHEN YOUR CHILD IS HAVING A PARTY

---

1. Have the child develop a guest list and party plans. Suggest changes if necessary, but try to be tactful. Encourage small parties and gatherings and stick to a guest list.
2. Set specific beginning and ending times for the party. Consider theme parties to include ideas such as skating, swimming, watching a video, bowling, or miniature golf.
3. Set ground rules that are clearly understood by both you and your child in advance. These include:
  - ▷ No alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs—remember it is illegal to serve alcohol to minors even in a private home.
  - ▷ No smoking.
  - ▷ Limit the party to a certain area of your house.
  - ▷ No uninvited guests.
  - ▷ No leaving the party and returning later.
  - ▷ Lights MUST be on.
4. Try to reconcile your child's plans for the party with your own standards. Don't compromise your standards, but be understanding of your child's feelings.

# **PROBLEM SOLVING**



# SAFE HOMES Problem Solving Tips for Parents

Members of the SAFE HOMES network are naturally upset and discouraged to hear about alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use by youth at parties, especially when the young host's parents are part of the SAFE HOMES network. Questions of what to do and who is responsible for taking action are to be expected. It is wise to plan in advance how a problem or concern will be handled and try to maintain consistent protocol for such matters.

## 1. DEVELOP A WRITTEN POLICY

As you are in the planning stages of your SAFE HOMES network, develop a written policy outlining how you will handle various situations that may arise. Designate a contact person for parents to call with concerns and a person responsible for confronting the host parent of a party or gathering. The contact person should be friendly, polite, and unbiased.

## 2. PUBLICIZE THE POLICY

Be sure that all SAFE HOMES members know what your policies will be and how concerns will be addressed. Identify the contact person to call, should concerns arise. It is also important to notify school officials about your policies and contact information.

## 3. FOLLOW THROUGH

Encourage all parents or interested adults to report any incidents that bring cause for concern. Report information about any underage parties or gatherings with alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs whether they are planned or have already occurred, regardless of where they are taking place (i.e. home, hotel, community location).

## 4. GET THE FACTS

Confronting a pledge violation requires sensitivity and confidentiality. Rarely has it been found that SAFE HOMES' members knowingly provided or allowed alcohol, tobacco, or drug use by young people for a party. If alcohol was available, in most cases, it was snuck in or provided by an older sibling (over 21) in the house. Often parties occur when parents are out of town and they may be completely unaware that anything took place.

## 5. NOTIFY THE NECESSARY PEOPLE

When it is clear a party involving alcohol, tobacco, or drugs did occur at the home of a SAFE HOMES member, those with a decided interest in the matter should be alerted, including:

- The parents of the youth involved.
- The SAFE HOMES chairperson.
- The school principal (if applicable).

In some cases the host parents themselves have reported a party to the SAFE HOMES chairperson, when they found out about it. They followed up by calling the parents of all the youth who were at the gathering and informing those parents of their concern.

## 6. CONFRONTING A HOST PARENT

- Strive to remain objective.
- Emphasize the importance of following through on all reports of illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use.
- LISTEN to their side of the story; they may have a much different understanding of what took place.
- Offer to obtain some informative literature for them to fully understand the dangers of youth using alcohol or other drugs and the laws regarding such use.
- Let them know that your continued support is available.

# SAFE HOMES Tips for Parents (continued)

## 7. MID-YEAR REPORT

At some point during the year, it may be valuable to provide your SAFE HOMES members with an update on the progress of your network including reports of parties that have taken place and what actions were taken. No names need to be given unless those parents are to be removed from the SAFE HOMES directory.

## OTHER ISSUES

### ► *If the host parent is a member of SAFE HOMES...*

Your organization may wish to give a parent, who knowingly allowed an alcohol party or gathering, a second chance if they sincerely request to remain a member. You may, however, decide it is more appropriate to have their name removed from your membership list and notify the other members that this name has been removed—it is not necessary to explain why. If the offending parent or guardian wishes to remain in the group, consider having them re-sign the SAFE HOMES pledge form and send them some updated prevention awareness literature.

### ► *If someone “suspects” that a parent was the host of an underage alcohol party...*

Sometimes you cannot be sure enough that a violation took place to warrant a direct confrontation. In such instances, you may consider sending the suspected host parents a letter expressing your concern that a possible incident took place. Remind them of the SAFE HOMES pledge they signed and provide contact information for them should they wish to call to discuss the incident further. Even if the incident in question did not take place, they may call just to clarify the facts and get peer support. This type of approach can be very effective in deterring future incidents.

### ► *If a host parent of an alcohol-free party discovers that a teen guest has been drinking...*

The most important thing to remember in cases such as this is to NOT allow the teen to leave—even if he/she does not appear intoxicated or claims to have only “had a little.” Immediately call the teen’s parents and explain the situation. Request they come immediately to pick up their child or arrange for another adult to take the youth home. Secure the teen’s car keys and do not allow another youth to take him/her home. If necessary, it may be appropriate to call the local law enforcement agency. If a teen is found to be in possession of drugs or alcohol, try to find out where and how he/she obtained it. This information should be included in the incident report to the SAFE HOMES chairperson.

## **REMEMBER!**

The ultimate success of the SAFE HOMES network depends on the willingness of each member to be actively involved. No one is immune to human error and mistakes. Embarrassing experiences can be turned into valuable learning opportunities that will help and strengthen parents’ partnerships and commitment as long as the lines of communication stay open.

# Suspected Pledge Violation Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (Use of first name or Mr./Mrs. as appropriate)

When we first established the SAFE HOMES network at (name of school or group), we announced guidelines that all members agreed to follow if they became aware of a teen drinking alcohol—or alcohol being available—at another member’s home or property. Our Committee promised to follow-up on any reports so our members know that whenever their youth visits another member’s home they do not need to worry about the availability of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

It has been reported that alcohol was provided or served at your home on (state day, date, and approximate time).

It is important we check out all reports of illegal drinking of alcohol by our youth to determine the facts. We want to provide you with an opportunity to straighten out any inaccurate information or misunderstandings.

As parents, we know all youth can make bad decisions, and often, the parent is unaware of what has happened. Please call us so we can talk about the report. We want to do everything possible to eliminate criticism of members and our program. The health and safety of our youth is worth all the cooperative efforts necessary to ensure the success of the SAFE HOMES network. We look forward to discussing this concern with you and finding a resolution.

Sincerely,

The SAFE HOMES Committee

(List names and phone numbers of contact persons)

# Nonmember Violation Letter

Dear Mr. & Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_,

Many of the parents in our community have joined together in a SAFE HOMES Program to work cooperatively together to provide safe, healthy, drug-free environments for all youth. We believe no alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use should be allowed or available to our youth.

The SAFE HOMES pledge is based on the laws of the state, which prohibit the use of alcohol by anyone under the age of 21, and anyone from providing, serving, or selling alcohol to minors. It is a third degree misdemeanor with a penalty of up to one year in jail plus a minimum fine of \$1,000 per offense, for anyone who provides alcohol to a minor.

It is imperative all adults work together to prevent the serious alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use problems, and the damaging consequences our youth face when they use these substances.

It has come to our attention that alcohol (or other drugs) was served or made available in your home (or on your property) on (state day, date, approximate time). We realize youth sometimes make bad choices, and sometimes we parents are unaware of them; therefore, we'd like to give you the opportunity to contact us and discuss this matter further.

It is important for us, as the SAFE HOMES Planning Committee, to check out all reports of illegal drinking of alcohol or use of other drugs by our children, and to determine the facts. We want to provide you an opportunity to straighten out any inaccuracies or misunderstandings.

We look forward to discussing this concern with you and finding a quick resolution. Please contact us at the number listed below. We encourage you to join us in our efforts to help all the youth of our community to live safe, healthy, drug-free lifestyles. Thank you.

Sincerely,

SAFE HOMES contact person

(List names and phone numbers of persons to be called)

# **EVALUATION SAMPLE**



# SAFE HOMES Survey & Evaluation

**Please Note:** This survey suggests questions you may ask to evaluate your program or determine if parents find your program helpful. It can also be used to find out if parents are following up with their pledge. It can be distributed at a meeting, mailed out, posted on a website, or administered over the phone. You determine how you would like to present it.

## ATTITUDES



1. How did you find out about the SAFE HOMES program? Please explain.

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2. Did the SAFE HOMES program encourage you to talk more openly with your children about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

3. Do you believe the SAFE HOMES program has made parents of other children in your community more aware of the dangers facing teens?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

4. Do you believe parents of other children are implementing the SAFE HOMES program in their homes?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

5. Do you believe the SAFE HOMES program can make a difference in your community?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

## COMMUNICATION

*"Since the introduction of SAFE HOMES. . .*

6. Are you able to talk to your kids about alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs?

More Likely \_\_\_\_ Less Likely \_\_\_\_ Same \_\_\_\_

7. Would you be willing to allow your kids to host a party at your home where alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs were available?

More Likely \_\_\_\_ Less Likely \_\_\_\_ Same \_\_\_\_

8. Would you allow your child to attend a party that is not supervised by a responsible adult?

More Likely \_\_\_\_ Less Likely \_\_\_\_ Same \_\_\_\_

- 9.** Would you allow your child to host a party at your home while you are away or out of town?  
 More Likely \_\_\_\_\_ Less Likely \_\_\_\_\_ Same \_\_\_\_\_
- 10.** Would you be comfortable calling other parents to verify there will be supervision at a party hosted by their child?  
 More Likely \_\_\_\_\_ Less Likely \_\_\_\_\_ Same \_\_\_\_\_
- 11.** Will you wait up for your child to come home to talk to him or her about their activities for that evening?  
 More Likely \_\_\_\_\_ Less Likely \_\_\_\_\_ Same \_\_\_\_\_

**PROGRAM EVALUATION**

- 12.** Has the SAFE HOMES Network been helpful to you? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please explain \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 13.** Do you attend the scheduled meetings of the SAFE HOMES program? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- 14.** Did the introduction of the SAFE HOMES program seem to increase parental awareness of parties and activities? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- 15.** Did implementation of this program improve communication between parents and their children in your community? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- 16.** Did the SAFE HOMES program make it easier to talk to other parents about supervising the activities taking place in your homes? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**INVOLVEMENT**

- 17.** What parts of the SAFE HOMES program do you believe to be most effective?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 18.** Where do you see opportunities to improve the program?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 19.** Any other comments or suggestions?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 20.** In what capacity would you be willing to become involved in the SAFE HOMES program?  
 Please circle all that apply.

- |                            |                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>a.</b> Chairperson      | <b>f.</b> Make SAFE HOMES pledge |
| <b>b.</b> Committee member | <b>g.</b> Conduct a phone survey |
| <b>c.</b> Attend meetings  | <b>h.</b> School liaison         |
| <b>d.</b> Host a meeting   | <b>i.</b> Volunteer my time      |
| <b>e.</b> Phone list       | <b>j.</b> No involvement         |

# **APPENDIX:**

# **Tips for Parents**



# 10 Prevention Steps for Parents

- 1. START EARLY ...** So you can instill values and give information to your children about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs before they reach the age when they are likely to be asked to try alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, inhalants, or other drugs.
- 2. DON'T BE AN ENABLER ...** By being passive when you see anyone or anything (TV or movies) encouraging your kids to use alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or other drugs. Speak up and take a firm stand against their use. Also, be sure that alcohol and medications are safely secured in your home and stored away from children.
- 3. REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE A ROLE MODEL FOR YOUR CHILD ...** Actions speak louder than words. If you use or abuse alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs, your child is at greater risk to use them too.
- 4. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERY TEACHABLE MOMENT ...** Use news stories, events in your community, television shows, and movies as opportunities to discuss alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- 5. REINFORCE BOTH THE INFORMATION AND THE RULES YOU TEACH YOUR CHILD ...** Remember how many times you have to tell them to turn off the lights, eat their vegetables, or do their homework?
- 6. KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON IN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, AND WITH FRIENDS ...** Listen to your child and to your child's friends. Stay aware and ask questions.
- 7. KNOW THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND OTHER DRUG USE, WHICH YOUR CHILD MAY BE LEARNING ...** From babysitters, day care providers, camp counselors, neighbors, family, friends, and relatives.
- 8. IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD IS EXPERIMENTING WITH ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, OR OTHER DRUGS, DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT ...** Don't wait for the problem to go away by itself. Take appropriate action and don't back down. Parents have good instincts - trust them.
- 9. KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE PARENTS OF YOUR CHILD'S FRIENDS ...** Work together with other parents to establish curfews and other rules for all your children, whatever their ages.
- 10. REMEMBER, PARENT POWER IS STRONGER THAN PEER PRESSURE ...** Parents are the first line of defense for safe, healthy, drug-free youth! Stand together!

# The Facts About Our Youth

**Children don't stay alcohol or drug-free by luck.  
It takes caring, commitment, and communication.**

- Alcohol is a drug.
- Alcohol is the #1 drug of choice among our Nation's youth (also #1 with PA youth).
- The average age of first alcohol use is 13.
- Kids drink to gain acceptance by peers and to feel the effects of alcohol.
- More than 40% of the children who start drinking before they are 13 will develop alcohol abuse or alcohol dependence at some point in their lives.
- Penalties for minors (youth under 21) who use a false ID, drink beverage alcohol, become intoxicated, attempt to purchase, purchase, possess, or transport alcohol include: fines up to \$300, the suspension of future driving privileges (90 days), and incarceration (90 days).
- Adults who sell, furnish, or purchase with the intent to sell or furnish alcohol to anyone under 21 (even their own children), or provide them a place to consume alcohol, face the following penalties: mandatory fines from \$1,000 - \$2,500 and incarceration up to 1 year.
- Several of the strongest protective factors against adolescent substance abuse are present in families who provide a supportive, loving environment in which education is valued and there are clear expectations of behavior.
- Parents can greatly influence whether their children will experience alcohol-related problems.

Be aware that most adolescent alcohol and drug use takes place in the home when parents are absent. Kids often take liquor and beer from home or their friends' homes, especially when that supply is readily available (in the fridge, for example), rather than locked in a cabinet. Adolescents are very crafty and can usually find "hidden" alcohol products. They are also quite creative in finding hiding spots for their own supply.

## PA YOUTH ALCOHOL USE<sup>1</sup>

Alcohol, including beer, wine, and hard liquor, is the drug used most by today's adolescents. Overall, 49% of Pennsylvania students (6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders) have used alcohol at least once in their lifetime.

Students among 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders who have tried alcohol:

20.8% of 6<sup>th</sup>  
45% of 8<sup>th</sup>  
56.7% of 10<sup>th</sup>  
70% of 12<sup>th</sup>

Students among 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders who have reported binge drinking\* :

1.2% of 6<sup>th</sup>  
7.5% of 8<sup>th</sup>  
15.7% of 10<sup>th</sup>  
27.6% of 12<sup>th</sup>

\*Binge drinking, in this study, is consuming five or more drinks in a row within the two weeks before the survey.

## ADOLESCENT DRINKING AND DRIVING<sup>2</sup>

- ▶ 27% of the driver deaths in the 16 - 20 age group were drinking drivers.
- ▶ There were 1,294 underage drinking drivers involved in Pennsylvania crashes in 2009.
- ▶ 27.4% of the total number of drinking driver deaths occurred in the 16 - 20 year-old age group.

<sup>1</sup>PA Youth Survey, 2009

<sup>2</sup>PA Department of Transportation, 2009

# Planning a Party the SAFE Way

The planning of a party or gathering is the most important aspect of the event and will help ensure its success. Proper planning provides an opportunity for dialogue and cooperation between parents and teenagers. The fun and success of your party will be a direct result of your efforts!

## PARTY PLANNING

- Set ground rules in advance.
  - No alcohol or drugs allowed.
  - Party should be by invitation only.
  - No leaving the party and then returning.
  - All regular house rules apply.
- Agree on basic plan for party.
  - Who will be on the guest list? Agree to a final count.
  - What time will it start **and** end?
  - Where will the party be held? (Indoors? Outdoors?)
  - What equipment is lacking or needed?
- Agree to work together to make the party a success.

**Never allow alcohol, tobacco, or drugs at the parties you sponsor with your children. The penalty for providing alcohol to minors is a minimum fine of \$1,000 and up to a year in jail.**

## Parent Responsibilities

- ▶ Be visible and available when guests arrive and throughout party.
- ▶ Help with refreshments so your child can attend to guests.
- ▶ Enforce no alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

## Teen Responsibilities

- ▶ Take responsibility for preparation.
- ▶ Welcome people at the door.
- ▶ Be a leader in starting activities.
- ▶ Encourage guests to participate.
  - Discourage undesirable behavior.
  - Get parent help if needed.
  - Have fun yourself.
  - Make sure everything is cleaned up.

## HOSTING THE EVENT

- Expect to be available to talk to other parents about the party in advance and to be present when they drop off their children at your home.
- Be present when guests are leaving and pay close attention for any unusual or suspicious behavior.
- Immediately call the parents of any child possessing alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs or appearing to be under the influence. Under no circumstance should you let the youth alone or allow them to leave until their parents come to pick them up.

## IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES

Volleyball	Tug of War	Pumpkin carving	Costume party
Softball	Kites	Haunted House	Pancake supper
Soccer	Dancing	Art projects	Luau
Frisbee	Movies	Sundae bar	Manicure/Pedicures
Ping-pong	Magician	Ice Skating	Make-your-own Pizza
Board games	Lawn games	Barbeque	Talent contest
Charades	Piñatas	Roller-skating	Tie-dye T-shirts
Swimming	Hayride	Scavenger Hunt	Mystery

# Elementary Parent Issues

Many parents feel that elementary school-age children are too young to talk about alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention—thinking that they will wait until the teen years. There are, however, special advantages to starting early that parents of elementary students should consider.

Starting prevention practices early is easier for both the parents and the child. It is a continuation of the prevention efforts that parents have been using since their children were born.

## **Parents of children in elementary school can work together to develop guidelines concerning:**

- Family responsibilities
- Bedtime
- Sleepover parties
- Rules for babysitters or babysitting
- Invitations to parties and gatherings
- Age to go to malls alone or with friends
- Types of movies can attend or watch at home
- Attending rock concerts
- Household chores
- Allowances/spending money
- Supervision when parents not home
- Internet rules
- Dating— when appropriate
- Transportation issues
- Types of music, MTV, radio, and TV programs
- Homework/study habits
- Appropriate clothing, language, and behavior
- Makeup—when appropriate

- Developing guidelines (rules), with logical and meaningful consequences, is an effective way to educate children at any age about many important issues—not just alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- Networking with other parents provides a chance to develop positive guidelines and consistent limits on a wide variety of topics that parents face in today's changing environment.
- Parents who have been networking since the primary school years will find that their children will naturally expect this communication to continue throughout their school years— even as they mature and become part of a larger and more diverse peer group. Parents need to know these parents of their children's new friends and continue the protection that networking allows.
- Parents can take advantage of the fact that younger children want their parents to take active, visible roles in school and social activities. However, parents must not be content to think that early participation is enough. Parents must continue the effort throughout the teen years.

**Every** child is at risk to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

# Talking to Your Kids About Alcohol

## Common arguments from your children and answers that make sense.

**QUESTION:** *What's the big deal? Beer or wine coolers won't hurt me as much as liquor.*

**REPLY:** Alcohol is alcohol. Regular servings of beer and wine coolers contain the same amount of alcohol as a glass of "regular" wine or a 1.5-ounce shot of liquor. They all have the same effect.

**QUESTION:** *What's wrong with kids drinking?*

**REPLY:** A young person who has had just two drinks is ten times more likely to have a car crash than an adult who has had two drinks. Kids who drink get lower grades and are less likely to finish school. Alcohol affects concentration, coordination, and development. This not only hurts your grades, but also keeps you from doing your best at sports, music, art, or whatever else it is you like to do.

**QUESTION:** *It's okay for you to drink, so why can't I?*

**REPLY:** First, using a drug like alcohol is a privilege, which comes with being an adult. There are many things you can do at your age that you would consider dangerous for a child younger than you. In the same way, using alcohol at your age is dangerous for you. You are still developing physically, socially, and emotionally. Second, it is illegal for you to drink alcohol. You could face many consequences as a result of drinking as a minor—both physically and judicially. The risks are just too great for a child to fully comprehend. As a parent, it is my job to help you mature into a responsible, healthy adult who respects the law.

**QUESTION:** *Since I don't drive yet, I don't have to worry about having my license suspended, so what's the problem?*

**REPLY:** Because you are under 21, it is against the law for you to drink alcohol. If you are caught drinking, possessing, trying to buy alcohol, lying about your age, using a fake ID to purchase alcohol, or transporting alcohol before you are 21, you will face serious trouble. Penalties include fines, loss of driving privileges, and jail time. For those under 16, the loss of driving privileges begins when applying for the permit.

**QUESTION:** *Everybody my age drinks. If I don't drink, I'll lose my friends.*

**REPLY:** More and more kids your age are choosing to be alcohol-free, but the perception many students have—that everyone drinks—is a myth. Besides, a real friend won't pressure you to do anything you don't want to do, especially something dangerous. Your real friends—the ones that want the best for you—will stand by your decision not to drink. Maybe they would be happy to have someone support them in their decision to be alcohol-free, too.

**QUESTION:** *Wouldn't you rather I drink than take drugs?*

**REPLY:** Alcohol is a drug! Recent studies have shown that the heavier the alcohol use, the more likely it is that the heavier use of other drugs will also be an issue. Consuming alcohol when using other drugs can multiply the effects of those drugs and have disastrous outcomes—even accidental death (overdose).

# Quiz for Parents

## DOES MY CHILD HAVE A PROBLEM?

This can sometimes be a difficult question to answer, especially during the initial stages of alcohol and other drug use, when you may see little direct evidence that your child is using. Some signs of alcohol and/or other drug use can often be confused with "normal" adolescent behavior or other health problems. Other signs, however, are very strong indicators.



Please circle your answer.

1. Has your child's personality changed remarkably?  
YES NO UNSURE
2. Do your child's moods change quickly? Does he/she seem sullen, withdrawn from the family and/or display sudden anger or depression?  
YES NO UNSURE
3. Does your child spend hours alone in his/her room?  
YES NO UNSURE
4. Has your child lost interest in school, school activities, or school athletics?  
YES NO UNSURE
5. Has your child stopped spending time with old friends and started spending time with kids that worry you?  
YES NO UNSURE
6. Is your child secretive or evasive about his/her friends, where they go, and what they do?  
YES NO UNSURE
7. Have you suspected that money or other objects have been missing from around the house?  
YES NO UNSURE
8. Have you noticed your child having more money than you would expect?  
YES NO UNSURE
9. Has your child been in contact with the law and have alcohol or other drugs been involved in any way?  
YES NO UNSURE
10. Does your child get angry and defensive when you talk to him/her about alcohol and other drugs or refuse to discuss the topic at all?  
YES NO UNSURE
11. Has your child become dishonest? Do you feel you're not getting straight answers about what your child is doing, who he/she is with, or where he/she is going?  
YES NO UNSURE
12. Are there physical signs of alcohol use? Have you smelled alcohol on your child's breath?  
YES NO UNSURE
13. Are there physical signs of other drug use? Have you smelled the odor of marijuana or tobacco on your child's clothing or in his/her room?  
YES NO UNSURE
14. Has your child had slurred speech when talking to you or thoughts that seem to be unclear?  
YES NO UNSURE
15. Has your child had bloodshot eyes, swaggering gait, or has he/she been physically unable to stand?  
YES NO UNSURE

# Quiz for Parents (continued)

- 16.** Have you seen evidence of alcohol? Have you ever found a hidden bottle or beer cans carelessly left in the car?  
YES NO UNSURE
- 17.** Have you seen evidence of other drugs such as tobacco, marijuana seeds, pipes, rolling papers, or other drug paraphernalia?  
YES NO UNSURE
- 18.** Have your child's relationships with you or other family members deteriorated?  
YES NO UNSURE
- 19.** Is your child less interested in siblings or does he/she now verbally (or even physically) abuse younger brothers and sisters?  
YES NO UNSURE
- 20.** Has your child ever been caught with alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs at school or school activities?  
YES NO UNSURE
- 21.** Has your child's grooming deteriorated and/or does he/she dress in a way that may be associated with drug use?  
YES NO UNSURE
- 22.** Has your child's taste in music changed or become more drug-oriented?  
YES NO UNSURE
- 23.** Has your child lost interest in school and/or other activities?  
YES NO UNSURE
- 24.** Does your child seem unhealthy, lethargic, more forgetful, and less active?  
YES NO UNSURE

This questionnaire is not a scientific instrument and is not meant to diagnose alcohol and drug problems. It is meant to alert parents to the signs that help determine when problems exist. The questions are red flag detectors and may show a need for further investigation. Keep in mind that some of these questions can be answered "yes," but simply reflect normal adolescent behavior. "Yes" answers to questions directly related to alcohol and other drug use are, of course, cause for concern.

Parents should look for an emerging pattern. A few "yes" or "unsure" answers should alert parents to suspect alcohol and drug use. Monitor the child more closely, talk to knowledgeable sources, and prepare to receive outside help.

If you answered "yes" to 3 or more questions, help is probably needed. Your child may be in the experimental stages or may already be heavily involved in alcohol or other drugs. Remember that it is very difficult to handle this problem without the help of others. Do not fool yourself into believing it will pass with time. It may be a more serious problem than you realize.

Trust your instincts. If you are concerned, there is probably a good reason. Take action! Call a knowledgeable source and discuss this questionnaire with them.

# Understanding Adolescent Drug Use

*For a community to be successful in preventing adolescent alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use, it is necessary to learn how and why children experiment with drugs.*



- **Adolescent Curiosity**

The numerous stories heard about other young people and their reactions to drugs stimulate a natural curiosity to experience these same feelings. There is also an element of adventurous risk-taking that is a normal part of adolescence.

- **Availability**

Drugs are readily available in most communities. Younger children get them from older siblings. Teens have many potential sources for obtaining substances—friends and neighbors, co-workers, people on the street, and at parties. Sometimes, the family medicine cabinet, liquor cabinet, or refrigerator can provide an adequate supply.

- **Peer Pressure**

The need for acceptance and the desire to be part of the group have a strong influence on young people to experiment with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. This is reinforced by the need of those using drugs to involve others in their lifestyle.

- **Modeling**

For some, using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs is a way of coping with the anxieties of adolescence and everyday stresses of home and school. One of every six commercials on prime time TV advertises some sort of drug or chemically related relief. It is a short step for the average teenager to connect this message with that of the local dealer who dispenses chemicals that will make you forget about your problems for a while.

- **Cultural Acceptability**

Television, movies, and the Internet all carry messages and commercials that either directly or indirectly signal the acceptability of the adolescent use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. The lyrics of many of today's popular songs carry similar messages. The availability of drug paraphernalia in record shops and mall kiosks leads young people to conclude that society approves of the use of drugs. Celebrities from all fields talk openly of their drug use and are common stories in the daily news. Based on all of this, it is easy to see how young people are getting the message that "everyone does it" and it's OK.

- **Parental Denial**

Most adults are woefully unaware of the harmful effects associated with adolescent use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. They generally have no idea what common drugs look like or the side effects of their use. They are often ill equipped to discuss the topic with their children, cannot recognize its presence in their home, and consequently, are not prepared to confront the problem of drug use or experimentation as they should. Many parents ignore the symptoms of drug use and label unusual behavior as a phase their child will eventually outgrow.

# Reporting Underage Drinking

A statewide toll-free hotline for anonymous tips and complaints about underage drinking is available in Pennsylvania. The callers can report underage drinking parties—planned or in progress—or establishments selling or serving alcohol to minors. Callers can also report sellers or manufacturers of false identification. Calls and information are then relayed to the appropriate local law enforcement agencies for investigation.

The hotline is designed to provide citizens with the opportunity and power to do something about community underage drinking problems.

**ALL CALLS WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL AND  
MAY BE MADE ANONYMOUSLY**

**To report underage drinking, call:**

**1-888-UNDER-21**

**For underage drinkers, the party's over.**

# Local Resources

**The PLCB provides contact information and referral sources for each county at their web site: [www.lcb.state.pa.us](http://www.lcb.state.pa.us).**

The following programs are included:

- Comprehensive Highway Safety Programs
- Driving Under the Influence Association
- PLCB's Responsible Alcohol Management Program (RAMP)
- Pennsylvania State Police, Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement
- Pennsylvanians Against Underage Drinking (PAUD)
- Single County Authorities

## **PA Comprehensive Highway Safety Programs**

**1 (800) 422-2358**

The Comprehensive Highway Safety Program provides education and information on highway issues. Highway safety programs and training are available for preschool through senior high, colleges, business and industry, law enforcement, senior centers, community groups, and public service organizations.

## **Pennsylvania Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Association**

**1 (800) 62-PA-DUI**

The Pennsylvania Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Association is a professional organization which is working to address the DUI problem in all of its many stages—from prevention to enforcement up to, and including, adjudication and rehabilitation. They provide information, direction, training, and support with the purpose of working toward the elimination of impaired drivers and the harm they can cause.

## **Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board, Bureau of Alcohol Education, Responsible Alcohol Management Program**

**1 (866) 275-8237**

The program includes pamphlets, brochures and other printed materials, video presentations, educational seminars, and consulting for licensees. RAMP is offered to supplement, not replace, established server training programs.

## **Pennsylvania State Police, Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement**

**1 (800) 932-0602**

The Pennsylvania State Police, Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement has the responsibility to investigate violations of beverage alcohol law. To report liquor law violations, you may call the 24 hours a day Hotline at 800-932-0602. All complaints, anonymous or otherwise, are investigated.

## **Single County Authorities**

**(717) 783-8200**

The PA Department of Health Single County Authorities can be a good starting point when searching for additional information. These local programs provide education, prevention, intervention, and treatment services to all individuals without restriction.

# Additional Resources

## **Crisis Hotlines**

PA HIV/AIDS Helpline	<b>1 (800) 662-6080</b>
Childline-Child Abuse	<b>1 (800) 932-0313</b>
Crisis Hotline-Suicide, National Helpline Network	<b>1 (800) 784-2433</b>
Parents Anonymous	<b>1 (800) 448-4906</b>
American Association of Poison Control Centers: (National office-will direct call to local poison control)	<b>1 (800) 222-1222</b>
Toughlove	<b>1 (800) 333-1069</b>

## **Enforcement**

Pennsylvania State Police, Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement	<b>1 (800) 932-0602</b>
To Report Underage Drinking (anonymous)	<b>1 (888) UNDER-21</b>

## **Legal Help**

Pennsylvania Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service	<b>1 (800) 692-7375</b>
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## **Prevention**

Pennsylvania DUI Association and SADD	<b>1 (800) 62-PA-DUI</b>
Pennsylvanians Against Underage Drinking	<b>(717) 238-4354</b>

## **Resources and Referrals**

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention	<b>1 (800) 662-HELP</b>
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America	<b>1 (800) 54-CADCA</b>
Communities That Care (Channing Bete Company)	<b>1 (800) 828-2827 ext 6361</b>
National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information	<b>1 (800) 729-6686</b>
National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependency Hope Line	<b>1 (800) 622-2255</b>
Pennsylvania Department of Health—Health Information Line	<b>1 (877)PA HEALTH</b>

## **Support Groups and Self-Help**

Alateen	<b>1 (800)356-9996</b>
Al-Anon	<b>1 (800)356-9996</b>
Alcoholics Anonymous (general information number)	<b>(212) 870-3400</b>
MADD Pennsylvania Victims Hotline	<b>1 (800) 848-6233</b>
MADD (Pennsylvania state office)	<b>(717) 657-3911</b>
The Family Compass (Hotlines & Helplines in the US)	<b>1 (866) 490-3666</b>

# Websites for Parents

The Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board is pleased to provide you with links to other prevention resources through the Internet.

## **Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board**

[www.lcb.state.pa.us](http://www.lcb.state.pa.us)

## **Parent Resources**

American Outreach Association

[www.americanoutreach.org](http://www.americanoutreach.org)

Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids

[www.tobaccofreekids.org](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org)

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

[www.cadca.org](http://www.cadca.org)

Developing Capable Young People

[www.empoweringpeople.com](http://www.empoweringpeople.com)

Growing Up Drug-Free

[www.health.org/govpubs](http://www.health.org/govpubs)

Informed Families

[www.informedfamilies.org](http://www.informedfamilies.org)

Keeping Youth Drug Free

[www.health.org/govpubs/PHD711](http://www.health.org/govpubs/PHD711)

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information

[www.health.org](http://www.health.org)

National Inhalant Prevention Coalition

[www.inhalants.org](http://www.inhalants.org)

National PTA

[www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)

National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign

[www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com)

PA DUI Association

[www.padui.org](http://www.padui.org)

Parenting is Prevention

[www.parentingisprevention.org](http://www.parentingisprevention.org)

PRIDE-Omaha, Inc.

[www.pride.org](http://www.pride.org)

Security on Campus

[www.securityoncampus.org](http://www.securityoncampus.org)

Talking with Kids About Tough Issues

[www.talkingwithkids.org](http://www.talkingwithkids.org)

## **Support Groups and Self Help**

Al-Anon/Alateen

[www.al-anon.alateen.org](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org)

MADD

[www.madd.org](http://www.madd.org)

Parents Anonymous

[www.parentsanonymous.org](http://www.parentsanonymous.org)

# **RESOURCE MATERIALS**



# SAFE HOMES PARENTS' NETWORK

MISSION STATEMENT—“Parents, guardians, and community working together for drug-free, violence-free youth”

## GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING RESEARCH-BASED DRUG PREVENTION MATERIAL

A major factor contributing to drug-free lives has been the dissemination of factual, updated, research-based drug prevention information. The keystone for drug prevention programs will always be: knowledge of the serious health and safety risks associated with the use of mind-altering substances, and recognition that every child is at risk to use drugs. Documented medical and scientific research-based information is the cornerstone of effective drug prevention education.

### 1. Check the date of publication.

If printed more than 10 years ago, the publication is probably out of date (unless it has been revised). There are exceptions. Some of these publications can contain information which is still valid today. Likewise, be aware that a recent publication or copyright date does not necessarily mean that the material is accurate and up-to-date.

### 2. Research the author's affiliations.

Authors who support drug legalization or who are associated with the drug culture do not present valid drug prevention information. Identification of the drug culture is made through studying histories and associations with some of the following: The National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), the Drug Policy Foundation, the Marijuana Policy Project, MAPS, the Criminal Justice Foundation, or other pro-drug legalization organizations. Materials provided by the alcohol or tobacco industries rarely conform to acknowledged drug prevention educational standards, and often contain subtle messages that promote drug use by adolescents.

### 3. Make certain that current, accurate information concerning the effects of drugs on the mind and body are adequately described. Typical facts that should be included (but not be limited to) are:

- The higher potency of marijuana on the market today makes it more harmful than ever.
- The 61 psychoactive cannabinoids in marijuana are fat soluble and accumulate in cell membranes, causing many adverse biological effects.
- Alcohol and tobacco are drugs.
- Over-the-counter drugs contain risks and should be used with caution.
- Cocaine, methamphetamine, LSD, MDMA, ephedrine, and heroin are addictive and are dangerous to everyone.

### 4. Be alert for contradictory messages. Reject materials which:

- Contain messages that discuss or illustrate how to use drugs.
- Tell young people under the age of 21 “Don’t drink and drive.” (Tell them: “Don’t drink. Period!”)
- Glamorize “wonderful” or “positive” feelings associated with drug use while minimizing or not listing harmful effects.
- Create confusion of issues. For example, the pro-drug statement that “legalization of drugs will reduce crime” appeals to young people’s desire to stop violence. Materials should provide information to contradict the pro-drug argument that smoked marijuana is medicine or that marijuana hemp will save the environment.

### 5. The message of school-based information must be clear and unequivocal, as mandated by Congress:

**NO UNLAWFUL USE OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, OR OTHER HARMFUL PSYCHOACTIVE DRUGS**

### 6. Material should promote positive standards of behavior, especially for children. The message must:

- Provide information to reinforce the person’s courage to stay drug-free.
- Teach people, especially youth, to make decisions for which they are responsible and accountable.

### 7. Material should focus on reasons NOT to use drugs and not focus on reasons TO use drugs.

### 8. Since drug use is a root cause of many other problems, drug education materials should focus on drug prevention and not be diluted by addressing resulting problems such as violence, car crashes, teen sex, school problems, etc.

### 9. “Nondrinking programs,” “alternative activities,” and “self-esteem programs” have not proven to be very effective at preventing drug use by adolescents.

### 10. No one program can solve the drug problem. Solutions must be comprehensive, and all segments of society that influence children must support and enforce a clear, consistent “no use” message regarding children and drugs. Schools and parents must be supported by media, law enforcement, businesses, etc.

### 11. When arranging speakers to talk about drug prevention to young children:

- DO NOT USE recovering addicts or people who talk about former use—it is too easy for children to think that drugs “can’t be so bad, after all, this person did them and survived, and is even famous.”
- Make certain that presentations are age-appropriate and sensitive to cultural and ethnic differences.

## **When evaluating drug prevention materials, beware of “warning flag” PHRASES:**

**EXPERIMENTAL USE**— Drug users do not experiment with drugs as a scientist experiments with substances in the laboratory.

**RECREATIONAL USE**— The word “recreation” means doing something healthy. Using drugs is NOT an acceptable form of recreation.

**SOCIAL USE** —Drugs are anti-social and destroy families, friendships, and social interaction.

**“SOFT” DRUGS**—No harmful, illegal psychoactive drug is “soft” on the body or mind.

**MOOD-ALTERING DRUG**—The implication is that only temporary feelings are involved when, in fact, what causes these moods are biological changes in the brain. The term should be “mind-altering.”

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE**—This term implies that USE is okay but ABUSE should be avoided. Any use of an illegal, harmful, psychoactive drug IS abuse.

**CONTROLLED USE**—There is no way to control the use of addictive drugs by adolescents. What happens if the child likes the effect, the high? Studies show the earlier a child uses any drug, the more trouble drugs will cause in his/her life.

**LUMPING TOGETHER UNLIKE SUBSTANCES**— A common ploy used by those who profit from sales of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs to young people is to compare medications, sugar, aspirin, or chocolate with illegal mind-altering drugs. There is a vast difference, and this approach minimizes the difference between legal and illegal substances and gives a message that dangerous, psychoactive drugs have a benign quality.

**“THERE ARE NO GOOD OR BAD DRUGS, JUST IMPROPER USE”** — This expression is found in pro-drug literature, which confuses the reader and minimizes the distinct differences among substances. Clarification is needed to differentiate between prescription medicines and illicit drugs.

**“IT’S YOUR CHOICE”**— “Now that you know the facts, it’s your choice whether or not to use illegal drugs.” In what other area do we teach our children, “It’s your choice to break the law?” Decisions that break the law are unacceptable. Everyone should make decisions for which they are responsible and accountable.

**“SCARE TACTICS”** — Scientific research results are NOT scare tactics. Facts are facts. Carefully interpret statistics. Commonly used percentages can be misleading; i.e.: 50% of 2 is vastly different from 50% of 1,000.

**“INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS”**—Legal rights and freedoms do NOT pertain to dangerous, ILLEGAL activity.

**“WHAT LITTLE WE KNOW” or “LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT MARIJUANA”**—Since 1965, over 12,500 scientific research papers on marijuana have been published and are listed in *An Annotated Bibliography of Marijuana, Volumes I & II and supplements*. All reports state that marijuana is harmful to health. Available from the University of Mississippi Research Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences. Always check the affiliations and sponsors of research since the alcohol and tobacco industries as well as drug culture individuals and organizations often fund their own research, supporting their own goals.

**“RESPONSIBLE USE”**—The use of illegal psychoactive drugs is irresponsible, harmful to health, and is NEVER responsible. Judgments and perceptions are impaired when using any psychoactive drug. After using a psycho-active substance, one cannot make “responsible” decisions.

**“DRUGS AND ALCOHOL”**—This term ignores the fact that alcohol is a drug. Both alcohol and tobacco are illegal and harmful to growing adolescent bodies, so the standardized prevention term is “Alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.”

**“ACCIDENTS”**—Motor vehicle, boating, or other crashes and trauma related to the use of alcohol or other drugs are not accidents. They are preventable and predictable.

**“HARM REDUCTION”** — The drug culture promotes this term which accepts drug use as inevitable, therefore, society should try to control use or reduce the harm caused by drug use, not prevent drug use.

References: Committees of Correspondence, *Guidelines for Evaluating Drug Prevention Materials*, Danvers, MA, 1990; Melear Multi-media, Inc., *Guidelines for Evaluating Visual Resources*, Marietta, GA; Texans’ War on Drug, *Drug Use Prevention Terminology*; Lake County Prevention Services/In Touch, *Prevention Speaker Guidelines*; US. Dept. of Education, *What Works: Schools Without Drugs*, 1989; US. Dept. of Health, Human Services, *Prevention Plus II*, 1989; Natl. Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Info, *Style Sheet on alcohol and other Drug Terminology*; Campuses’ Without Drugs, *Recommended Reading List*, June, 1989; Tex. War on Drugs, *Guidelines for Evaluating Texts/Curriculum*; Region 6 Behavior Health Administration, *REGION VI GUIDELINES FOR THE INFORMATION DISSEMINATION STRATEGY for primary Drug Prevention*, 1997.

## **GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING VISUAL RESOURCES**

The following elements are considered essential to effective anti-drug education in a school setting. Items marked \* are “must-have” elements; other items serve to increase learning.

### **VIDEO IS THE COMMUNICATIONS MEDIUM OF CHOICE FOR YOUTH.**

More importantly, an audio-visual presentation is a practical and economical system through which to deliver instructional techniques that are essential to a drug deterrent program.

### **\*THE MESSAGE MUST CLEARLY BE DRUG-FREE AND PROMOTE A DRUG-FREE LIFESTYLE.**

### **SELECT FILMS THAT ARE REALISTIC.**

Youth respond best when real people, places, and events are on the screen. They understand that actors deal in fantasy. Students may not react to a message that involves actors, fictional script, cartoons, or other “showbiz” trappings.

### **SELECT FILMS WITH CREDIBLE COMMUNICATORS.**

To accept the message, students must first accept that the communicator is credible. Children like hearing from alcohol-and-drug-free youth role models. Health issues should be discussed by knowledgeable doctors or health professionals on this subject. Legal consequences of drug use are best presented by a uniformed police officer. Recovering drug users can speak of their personal tragedy. Roles should not be mixed.

### **SELECT FILMS FROM A QUALIFIED DRUG-PREVENTION WRITER.**

### **\*SELECT FILMS THAT DEMONSTRATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF DRUG USE.**

A discussion of consequences is vital to the psychology of drug prevention. Medical science has established that serious health consequences accompany drug use. Make sure these are adequately described.

### **\*AVOID FILMS THAT INCLUDE EXPLICIT SCENES OF DRUG USE.**

Scenes of drug use can open a “Pandora’s box” of mixed messages—on one hand, “DON’T” and on the other, “HERE’S HOW.”

### **AVOID FILMS THAT PROMOTE FORMER DRUG USERS.**

A good-looking, smooth-talking former drug user can radiate a host of unintentional messages about the ability to bounce back from drug addiction. Limited presentation of former addicts may have benefit, but avoid films that dwell on former users.

### **AVOID FILMS THAT ARE INTENDED FOR ADULTS. THESE ARE INAPPROPRIATE FOR YOUTH.**

### **BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT FILMS THAT LACK DEPTH.**

Programs must do more than urge the student to “say NO” to drugs; they must give the student sufficient motivation to reject drugs, show the student how to tactfully avoid drugs, and suggest practical alternatives to drug use.

### **\*THERE SHOULD BE NO ACCUSATION OR CONFRONTATION OF ATTITUDES. THE VIDEO SHOULD PRESENT ONLY OBJECTIVE FACTS AND SHOW CONSEQUENCES OF DRUG-USE.**

# **GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING TEXTBOOKS AND CURRICULUM**

- 1.** Must be appropriate to age level.
- 2.** Presumption of nonuse.
- 3.** Use is wrong, harmful, and illegal.
- 4.** Nonuse is right, healthy, and legal.
- 5.** Outline realistic consequences of drug use, not just physical effects.
- 6.** Both short-term and long-term effects of drug use should be listed.
- 7.** Emphasis on student's responsibilities to say NO, to help others say NO, to uphold the law, to be as healthy as possible, to do what is right, etc.
- 8.** Resource materials should be up-to-date, accurate, protective of children, and pro-parent.
- 9.** Textbooks must be nonpromotional of drug use.
- 10.** Positive behavioral expectations.
- 11.** Family, teacher, police, etc. mentioned as resources for assistance.
- 12.** Extensive listing of warning phrases, misleading concepts, pro-drug terms, etc. in teacher text along with rationale.
- 13.** The unique harmful nature of each drug must be noted.
- 14.** Alcohol included as an illegal drug for those under legal drinking age.
- 15.** Display of positive, healthy role models.
- 16.** Clear and consistent messages.
- 17.** Conforms to existing guidelines for textbook adoption.
- 18.** Avoid history of drugs, reasons for doing drugs, student choice and responsible use concepts, which usually tend to "normalize" the pro-drug ethic.
- 19.** Study "NO USE" techniques and teach refusal skills.
- 20.** Mention of student anti-drug groups, support groups, and positive future trends.
- 21.** Study of addiction and addictive process with emphasis on empowering nonusers to help users.
- 22.** Positive statement about drug abuse: preventable, treatable, recovery success rates are rising, NO USE = no addiction.
- 23.** Include the relationship of drugs to HIV/AIDS.
- 24.** Adaptable to different target audiences.
- 25.** Easy to update.

# PARENT GUIDELINES FOR DRUG-FREE CHILDREN

- Know the facts. Know today's scene. Understand that drugs are a life-and-death issue for all children and that every child is at risk to use drugs. Know what works. "Self-esteem" and "keeping kids busy" aren't enough.
- Use clear, consistent "no use" messages, policies, and expectations regarding your children and drugs. Know that prevention starts with the drugs kids use first: alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or inhalants — the gateway drugs.
- Set rules and meaningful consequences—NO RESCUING children from those consequences.
- Talk to children—often—about no drug use. Use "teachable moments." Help them learn ways to say "no."
- Remember that children don't always tell the truth. In fact, they lie. It's normal. A parent's job is to check it out—and hold kids accountable. ANY drug use needs parental intervention immediately.
- Monitor children's tv, movies, music, clothing, and internet access. With every pro-drug, or mixed message, your child becomes more vulnerable. Online computers in children's rooms are invitations to disaster.
- Supervise children's activities. Know where they are, who they are with, and what they are doing.
  - ▶ ALWAYS check out social plans. Phone ahead and confirm supervision.
  - ▶ Say "no" if plans are not supervised, productive, safe and drug-free.
  - ▶ Start networking with other parents early and continue through jr. and sr. high school.
- Be a good role model. (Children should have the right to live in safe, healthy situations where no family member is a law breaker.)
  - ▶ No illegal use of drugs.
  - ▶ No tobacco use around children.
  - ▶ If you choose to drink, do so in a low-risk, responsible manner.
  - ▶ No alcohol at children's functions. Show young people that adults don't need alcohol in order to have a good time.
  - ▶ Establish early that family members tell each other where they are. This practice will help later on when you expect to know where they are.

- continued -

- Parents alone cannot keep their children drug-free. Reach out. Talk to the parents of your child's friends. Agree on acceptable social activities. Follow up. Support each other. Use parent peer pressure to stop unsupervised or unsafe activities. Stay in touch as children grow. Add parents as your children grow and their circle of friends expands or changes. (SAFE HOMES Network)
- Network with other parents and adults—in your neighborhood, at your school, in your community—and beyond. Drug prevention won't get better for your children until drug prevention gets better for all children. Hold adults accountable to support clear, consistent "no use" messages to kids.
- Work with your schools for drug-free curricula and policies. This includes smoke-free campuses.
- Before allowing your child to take a part-time job, know that the employer truly supports drug-free children.
- Know your lawmakers, those who govern and those who enforce laws. Insist on support for drug-free norms.
- Challenge—individually or with other parents—anyone who promotes any drug to any child.
  - ▶ Don't shop at stores that sell drug paraphernalia, hemp products, alcohol, or tobacco to children.
  - ▶ Don't shop at businesses that fight effective laws to reduce alcohol or tobacco use by minors.
  - ▶ Don't be silent. Write a letter to the editor, call talk shows, and contact legislators.
  - ▶ Understand the way drugs are marketed to children. Work to reduce the Appeal, the Availability, and the Affordability of drugs to young people.

# HOW PARENTS ENABLE YOUTH TO USE ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND OTHER DRUGS

- By **NOT INSISTING** that parties are supervised.
- By **NOT SETTING LIMITS** and enforcing those limits.
- By **BEING UNAWARE** of where their children are.
- By **OFFERING ALCOHOL** to their own and other youngsters. This ranges from one glass of wine at dinner to supplying alcohol at a graduation or other party.
- By **HOSTING A PARTY WHERE ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS ARE BEING USED** with the rationalization that “I’d rather have them here drinking than somewhere else.” OR “I’ll take their keys so they can’t drive after drinking.”
- By **IGNORING THE EVIDENCE** that may be left in the child’s room or car, or in a house following a party.
- By **LEAVING YOUTH UNATTENDED** for a week or a weekend.

# Parenting & Prevention

## Building Healthy Families - Building Strong Children

The research on prevention of alcohol/drug problems consistently says that positive family relations, involvement in the family, and closeness to the family seem to discourage alcohol/drug use by children. There are many things we can do as a family to bring us closer together and raise healthy children. We can have family traditions, family holidays, share meals together, ask questions about each other's day, and a multitude of other things. One part of building a healthy family is "Building Strong Children."

### In Building Strong Children it is important to:

**1. Teach Children to Care.** Teach them to care about you and others. Teach your children empathy; ask questions like, "How would you feel inside if you were the only one not asked to the slumber party?" Help them to understand other people's feelings. Children can learn early in life the joy and satisfaction that comes from doing things for others.

**2. Teach Children Responsibility.** You can increase children's self-worth by giving them responsibilities, even when they are young. All kids need to have chores. One parent talks about how even his three-year-old has a job she is responsible for. She is the "Shoe Patrol." Her job is to go around the house picking up any shoes left lying around. That's her job and she is proud of her accomplishments.

**3. Teach Family Values.** What does your family stand for? What is acceptable and what is not acceptable? Children should be proud to be part of their family. Knowing what is acceptable in your family gives children an anchor and guidelines to follow. When peer pressure strikes, they will then have a base from which to make decisions to say "no."

**4. Catch a Child Being Good.** Be on the lookout for times when your child is doing something neat and let them know you like it. The average parent gives eight negatives to a child for every positive. ("Quit twirling your hair," "Your room is a mess!") Make the ratio of positive to negative comments more even.

**5. Let Children Experience the Natural Consequences of their Behavior.** Shielding children from the consequences of their behavior will emotionally cripple them as adults. If your child's behavior causes him or her to lose friends, the child needs to learn this and experience the loss of friends because of his or her behavior.

**6. Include Children In Family Discussions.** By asking for your child's opinions and input in certain family decisions, you are telling them that they are important members of the family.

**7. Expect Children to Work to Their Ability Level.** Helping children reach their potential builds self-esteem. If your child has the ability to get 'A's in math, expect 'A's.' If your child has 'C' ability in math, expect 'C's.' Children need to be recognized for their accomplishments, as well as for just being your child.



# ASSERTIVE PARENTING



There are no easy answers in raising teenagers. They can be obstinate, bold, disrespectful, lazy, disorganized, and reckless. But they can also be brave, insightful, idealistic, and full of compassion and enthusiasm. It is up to parents to assume the task of guiding their teens through these teenage years and help them during this period of development from youth to adulthood. Children don't need parents to be "friends"; children need parents to be "parents." While there are no easy answers as to how this is best done, the task can be made easier by practicing assertive parenting.

## The following guidelines will help in this task:

1. Identify the nonnegotiable standards you believe in.
2. Establish unyielding limits for those standards (i.e. no use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs).
3. For other questions of living, set limits according to what you believe, not what "society" believes.
4. Say "no" when you need to.
5. Stick to your decision.
6. Believe in your decision.

It is realistic to expect that parents' best efforts will be met with resistance when their expectations and rules differ from those of their children. When this occurs and protests arise, the following responses can be helpful:

### Kids say:

### Parents say:

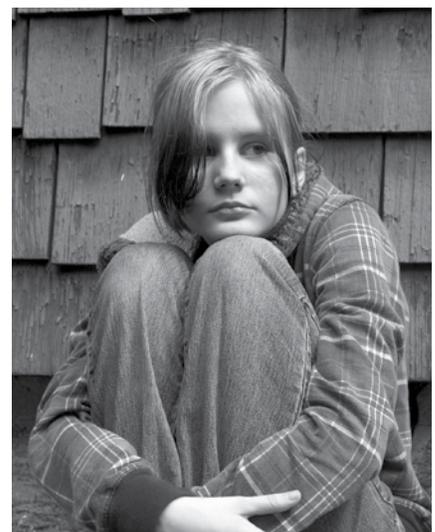
- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Everybody's doing it. _____                    | → | You're not everybody. You're somebody special.   |
| Why can't you be like Molly's mother? _____    | → | I'm not Molly's mother. I can only be myself, and I want you to be yourself too.                   |
| You want me to be weird. _____                 | → | I want you to be yourself.   |
| You don't understand. _____                    | → | I understand that I love you and want you to be safe.  |
| We can afford it. _____                        | → | We can afford it but we don't need it.   |
| You treat me like a child. _____               | → | No, I am treating you like a person your age.  |
| Don't you want me to be one of the gang? _____ | → | I'd rather you were one of a kind.   |
| You don't trust me. _____                      | → | I trust you to handle situations appropriate to your age; I don't trust the environment out there. |
| You hate my friends. _____                     | → | No, I love you.  |
| You never let me do anything. _____            | → | I love you and will continue to let you do many things that are safe and healthy.                  |
| You won't ever listen to my side. _____        | → | I have listened to your side and I understand how you feel.  |

# ALL CHILDREN ARE AT RISK TO USE DRUGS! HOWEVER, SOME ARE AT EVEN GREATER RISK.

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## PREDICTORS OF DRUG USE BY YOUTH—CHILDREN MOST AT RISK:

- Children who have alcoholism in their family
- Children who have little commitment to school
- Children who come from homes with management problems (no rules)
- Children whose parents have favorable attitudes towards alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use
- Children who have favorable attitudes toward alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs  
(Drug music, clothing, beer t-shirts, beer signs, tobacco clothing and merchandise, etc.)
- Children who hang around with other children who use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs
- Early first use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs-especially before the age of 15
- Children who have unsupervised time at home or away from home



# A Memo From Your Child

RE: Me

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Set limits for me. I know quite well I ought not to have all I ask for. I am only testing you.

Be firm with me. I prefer it. It lets me know where I stand.

Lead me rather than force me. If you force me, it teaches me that power is all that counts. I will respond more readily to being led.

Be consistent. Inconsistency confuses me and makes me try harder to get away with everything I can. Make promises you will be able to keep. That will encourage my trust in you.

Remember I am being provocative when I say and do things just to upset you. If you fall for my provocations, I'll try for more such victories.

Keep calm when I say "I hate you." I don't mean it, I just want you to feel sorry for what you have done to me.

Help me feel big rather than small. I will make up for feeling small by behaving like a "big shot."

Let me do the things I can do for myself. If you do them for me, it makes me feel like a baby, and I may continue to put you in my service.

Correct me in private. I'll take much more notice if you talk quietly with me in private rather than with other people present.

Discuss my behavior when the conflict has subsided. In the heat of conflict, for some reason, my hearing is not very good and my cooperation is even worse. It is all right for you to take the action required, but let's not talk about it until later.

Talk with me rather than preach to me. You'd be surprised how well I know what's right and wrong.

Help me feel that my mistakes are not sins. I have to learn to make mistakes without feeling that I am no good.

Talk firmly without nagging. If you nag, I shall protect myself by appearing deaf.

Let my wrong behavior go without explanations. I really don't know why I did it.

Accept as much as you can what I am able to tell you. I am easily frightened into telling lies if my honesty is taxed too much.

