

Communicate with Other Parents

The best offense in the battle against alcohol and drug use is to **KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON**. Being your child's friend should not be your primary role during this time in their life. It's important to resist the urge to win their favor or try too hard to please them. "All the other kids' parents let them..." is a tactic often used to make you feel alone in your decision making.

Get to know your son or daughter's friends. (If your children are associating with kids that are using, they are at risk. Ask for phone numbers of their friends in case you need to call them.)

Get to know the parents of your child's friends. (Develop a "united front", network and discuss concerns openly. Call or e-mail and introduce yourself, it will be appreciated.)

Develop consistent family rules. (Share these rules with others. Make it clear that alcohol/marijuana use under 21 is illegal. Agree on consequences if rules are broken and always follow through.)

Call to confirm the activities your child plans to attend. (Find out if parties will be parent-supervised and that no alcohol/drugs will be permitted. Ask if parents will actively be checking on the party, not just in another room. **Don't be shy to call and find out!**)

Ask for help. (Give permission for other parents to call if they see your child using. Encourage your teen to ask for help if their friends are using.)



Provide Help. (Call parents of any child at any event who you perceive to be under the influence. It takes a brave parent to call another with bad news. Be willing to provide a ride to protect the child.)

Know what to do if you suspect a problem. (Realize that no child is immune to alcohol or other drug use. If you think there might be a problem, there probably is. Addiction is a disease, not a cause for shame. **Seek professional help.**)

HELP—What Can I Do If I Think My Child is Using?

Confront the problem—Agree on a course of action with your spouse or other family member BEFORE talking with your child. Be open and honest but do not let anger overwhelm your effectiveness to communicate.

DO let your child know that you do not condone the behavior.
DO set new guidelines and limits for their behavior.
DO become more aware of their activities.

IF your child is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs:

Right now:

Remain cool and calm.
Try to find out what they have taken and under what circumstances.
Call a doctor or take them to the hospital if they are incoherent and/or seriously ill.
Tell your child that you will talk about the matter the next day.
Do NOT shout, excuse, or use physical force.

Suspend your critical judgment while you listen attentively. This is probably the single most important aspect of good communication.

The Next Day:

Talk to your child as soon as possible and have them assume responsibility for their actions.
Try to find out the circumstances, including others who were with them. Consider calling the other parents.
Don't name call, belittle, blame or discuss anything if you are too angry.

No matter what happens, be sure your child feels loved.

Other Resources

Friends of Youth Issaquah 425-392-6367

Youth Eastside Services 425-747-4937

24 hour Crisis Line 866-427-4747

www.drugfree.org www.samhsa.gov www.madd.org

www.starttalkingnow.org

www.issaquah.wednet.edu/family/health/HYS.aspx

What I Wish I Knew When I Had A Teenager!



How to help your student lead a healthy, drug-free life.

Open for more details!

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GOOD NEWS! Parents have **MORE** influence over their teen than friends, music, TV, the Internet and celebrities.

Issaquah Schools FACTS:

44% of 12th graders reported using **alcohol** in the last 30 days.

28% of 12th graders have used **marijuana** in the last 30 days.

31.5% of 12th graders reported **binge drinking**—having 5 or more drinks at a time—well above state average!

60% of teens obtain alcohol from their own home.

Kids who learn about the risks of drugs and alcohol from their parents are up to 50% less likely to use than those who do not!

Early alcohol use puts the developing brain at risk and substantially increases the risk of addiction. Kids whose parents allow them to drink at home, drink more often and heavily outside the home.

Ways to Keep Your Child off Drugs/Alcohol

Many parents hesitate to discuss alcohol and drug use with their children. Some believe that our kids won't use. Others delay because we don't know what to say or how to say it or are afraid of putting ideas into our children's heads.

Talk to your child about drugs/alcohol, and do it early. An ongoing dialog is the best way for your teen to know that you have an understanding of the temptations they face, and are going to do what you can to help them.

Take a firm stand against any form of alcohol, tobacco or other drug use. Do not accept getting high or drunk as normal at any age. **Do not serve alcohol/marijuana to any underage kids** and don't allow them to bring it into your home. Establish rules, curfews, and consequences. Exercise parental authority. It is **illegal** to provide alcohol to people under 21. **Parents can be arrested and criminally charged** for providing a place for minors to consume alcohol. (RCW 66.44.270)

Seek discussion; don't lecture. Share your own experiences and opinions and how they have changed over the years. As you tend to open up so will your child. **Ask your children what they think.** Listen and try to understand without being defensive. **Keep comments short.** You don't have to say everything that comes to mind. Be short and to the point.

Remove the stigma of failure from your home. Young people need to understand that the only failure is not trying. Mistakes are not failures. Mistakes provide new information to help us succeed. We all need freedom to be imperfect.

Teach resistance skills. Talk through strategies with them for saying "no" and make sure they know who to call for help.

Be at home while your kids are getting ready to go out and be awake when they come home. When leaving remind them of your expectations that they not drink or use drugs. Be awake or have your teen wake you up when they arrive home, be aware of any signs of use.

Watch for signs of drug use. Hopefully you are able to prevent drug use altogether, but you should also watch for signs such as depression, falling grades, isolation, and change in friends and find help if you suspect your child is using.

Keep all drugs/alcohol locked up. If you have prescription drugs, be sure that your teen cannot get their hands on them. So many young people today have easy access to all sorts of drugs and alcohol in their homes. Don't make it easy for them to access it. You might not think your child will get into it, but others that come to your house might.

Keep your child active. Students that have a goal they are working toward in life or are busy with sports, music or other activities are much less likely to get involved with drugs. Encourage outside interests.

Take care of their emotions. Teens today are under a lot of pressure with school, sports, and relationships. Be careful that they are not too worried or stressed about these things. Teach them good techniques to handle stress.

Model good behavior. If your teen sees you doing things like getting drunk, smoking, or self-medicating somehow, they will be more likely to do so themselves, and sometimes this can lead to worse habits, like drug or alcohol abuse.

Don't leave your child unsupervised for long. In a world where many families require 2 incomes or single parents are raising children, this may be difficult, but it is so important to not just leave your child to fend for themselves after school. The time when most teens get into trouble or start a harmful behavior is the **time between school letting out and when their parents get home.**