

Prevent This

**Southeastern Illinois Counseling Centers, Inc. and Illinois
Department of Human Services**



S.T.A.N.D. Coalition

- Mission Statement— to promote healthy, drug-free lifestyles in Jasper County.
- Next meeting—Wednesday, August 26 @ Parklanes from noon—1 pm (lunch at 11:30 am)
- Action Planning—identify & analyze existing problems, assess community needs & resources, develop a road map for coalition's work.

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Keeping Youth Drug Free

If you could do one thing that would help your child succeed in school, live a healthier life, and develop to his/her fullest potential, would you do it?

Of course you would—then talk with your child about alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs. Find out what your child knows. Explain that using these substances can interfere with studying and can cause grades to suffer by affecting memory and learning skills. Describe the harmful health effects of substances. Let your child know how these substances can cause problems in relationships and among friends and can tear families apart. Study after study has found that parents make a difference in the choices their children make.

By the time they enter preschool, most children have seen adults smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol either in real life or in the media or both. Children today are exposed to illegal drugs as early as elementary school, so it's never too early to talk with your child about drugs.

This month's newsletter will highlight six key things you can do to help your child grow up drug free.

6 Key Elements to Keeping Your Youth Drug Free

1. Establish and maintain good communication with your child.
2. Get involved in your child's life.
3. Make clear rules and enforce them with consistency and appropriate consequences.
4. Be a positive role model.
5. Teach your child to choose friends wisely.
6. Monitor your child's activities.

Establish & Maintain Good Communication

Get into the habit of talking with your child every day. Your child is an individual with hopes, fears, likes, dislikes and special talents. The more you know about your child, the easier it will be to guide her toward more positive activities and friendships. As a result, your child will be less likely to experiment with alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs. Establishing a close relationship with your child now will make it easier for her to come to you when she has a problem.

Get Involved in Your Child's Life

Young people are much less likely to use drugs when they have positive activities to do and when caring adults are involved in their lives. Get involved in your child's life by participating in his activities and praising his accomplishments. Your participation and encouragement tell your child that these activities are worthwhile and may help him identify and pursue other positive activities as he gets older.

Make Clear Rules & Enforce Them

Would it surprise you to learn that parents' permissiveness is a bigger factor in teenage drug use than is peer pressure? If you let your child know up front that you don't approve of underage drinking, tobacco or illegal drug use, your child is less likely to use those substances.

Be A Positive Role Model

Children like to imitate adults. Every child wants to be a grownup. Being "grown up" means freedom. Being grown up means making your own decisions. Being grown up means being able to eat and drink anything you want, wherever you want. What "grown up" behavior will your child be imitating?

Teach Your Child to Choose Friends Wisely

Youth drug use often has more to do with wanting to fit in, to belong, than an inability to say no to their peers. Children want others to like them. By teaching your child to choose friends wisely, you are giving her skills she needs to feel confident in her own judgment. This can help her resist peer influences to use alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs or engage in other dangerous behavior.

Monitor Your Child's Activities

Ask questions about what he's doing, with whom, for how long, and where. Get to know the friends he spends time with and the other parents as well. Be sure children have easy access to a wide range of appealing, drug-free activities especially during after-school hours.