

Prevent This

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



The S.T.A.N.D. Coalition presents the February Asset Builder of the Month to: Steve Willis. Steve is a definite asset builder to our community. He is more than willing to offer assistance, whether it is financial or food baskets from the ministerial association or just an ear to hear a problem, even when his own health may not have been the best. Steve is a member of the Newton Rotary Club and always gives a pleasant smile to those he greets. Steve was also named a Paul Harris Scholar, which is the highest honor a Rotarian can receive. Steve is also the Pastor of First Baptist Church of Newton and is always willing to lend a hand for activities. Steve always shows respect to those he is around not matter who it is. He is a person who can always be counted on. Steve is definitely an Asset Builder to Jasper County in so many ways. During his 25 plus years he and his family have been a part of this county, they have made a difference in so many ways.

Vanette King and Paula Lidy

Keeping Youth Drug Free—Monitor Your Child's Activities

Monitoring your child's activities is an important deterrent to alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drug use. One study found that latchkey youth who were home alone 2 or more days per week were four times more likely to have gotten drunk in the past month than those youth who had parental supervision five or more times a week. Another study found that children who had the least monitoring initiated drug use at earlier ages. And the earlier a child starts using drugs, the greater the likelihood that a serious problem will develop as a result.

Action Steps to Monitor Your Child's Activities

- 1. Establish relationships with your child's friends.** Children are more likely to experiment with drugs if their friends do and if they spend a lot of unsupervised time together. Knowing your child's friends can put you in closer touch with your child's daily life.
- 2. Get to know other parents.** Arrange to attend school events or other gatherings with parents. As parents, you can reinforce each other's efforts and provide a valuable support network for both you and your children.
- 3. When your child goes out, make sure you know where he's going, who he'll be with, and what he'll be doing.** Ask for phone numbers and addresses of friends and other places your child likes to go. Let him know you may call or drop by to check up on him, and don't be afraid to do just that.
- 4. Have your child check in at regular times and make it easy for her to contact you.** Make sure she has your cell phone number and knows where you are going to be and how you can be reached. Use text messaging when possible.
- 5. Make sure your child has access to enjoyable, drug-free, structured activities.**

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Monitoring your child’s activities and providing a variety of positive activities are important because ...

Some kids use drugs when they think they have nothing better to do!

Many youth say they started drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana or using illegal drugs out of “boredom.” In fact, having significant amounts of unsupervised time is a risk factor for youth substance abuse. Even if you aren’t able to be with your child during the after-school hours, you can seek out activities your child can participate in. Involvement in supervised activities not only occupies free time that could otherwise permit involvement in harmful or dangerous activities, but it helps young people develop skills, establish friendships, identify their talents, and develop a strong sense of self-esteem. They learn self-confidence and skills that last a lifetime, and studies show they are much less likely to use alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.

Parents have a powerful influence on their adolescents.

Youth are less likely to use drugs if they think their parents and friends disapprove of drug use and if their friends do not use drugs themselves.

RESOURCES to help you find activities for your child include:

1. **School programs**—check with your child’s school and ask about after-school activities.
2. **City & County programs**—check with your local community center or boys and girls park for information on youth programs.
3. **Faith-based programs**—many churches have youth programs. Check with your place of worship or with faith organizations in your community.
4. **National organizations**—YMCA, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4H, Boys & Girls Clubs of America may have local chapters.
5. **Mentoring Programs**—There’s no substitute for a caring and involved parent, but sometimes another caring adult can make a world of difference in a child’s life. Find out about mentoring programs in your area. Contact schools or prevention specialists.