

# Prevent This

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



## S.T.A.N.D. Coalition

- Suicide Prevention Week—September 6–12, 2009
- Family Day—Monday, September 28, 2009
- Jasper County Asset Builder of the Month—An asset builder builds the strengths of the community by investing in the lives of those in the community. This is a person who is dedicated to helping community members succeed and making the community a more asset rich environment in which to live. To nominate a Jasper County asset builder please contact Vaneta Andrews for a nomination form.

### Contact Information:

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## Keeping Youth Drug Free—Communication

**Establish and maintain good communication with your child** - 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.

## Action Steps to Good Communication

1. **Take the following Quick Quiz.** Then ask your child the answers. You can talk about one question a day or one a week. Think of other questions you can ask one another. Consider making the questions and conversations part of your daily routine.

What is your child's favorite color?

Who is your child's best friend?

What are the names of your child's teachers? Who is your child's favorite teacher? Do you know why?

Who are some of your child's role models? What does he admire about these individuals?

What would your child wish for if she saw a falling star?

What is your child's favorite food?

What is your child's favorite movie or TV show?

What three words would your child use to describe himself?

To describe you?

What are your child's hobbies?

What are your child's future goals?

## Action Steps to Good Communication continued

- 2. Set aside a few minutes a day.** Talk about problems or challenges that might have come up during the day and discuss how you handled them. Ask your child for his ideas on simple matters to help him build problem-solving skills.
- 3. Validate your child's feelings.** Sometimes, children react to situations in ways we think are inappropriate, silly, or overdramatic. That's because children don't have the benefit of our adult experience. What is minor to us may be very important to them. Validate your child's feelings, investigate the situation, and guide her toward a better understanding of the situation.
- 4. Practice active listening.** When you show interest in what your child has to say she will open up. One technique to show you're listening and understanding is to paraphrase what your child tells you.
- 5. Ask Questions.** Children have a lot to share when they think their opinions matter. Ask for your child's input about family decisions. These decisions may range from what to have for dinner or where to go for a family outing.

If you are successful in establishing open lines of communication with your child about day-to-day events, he will be more likely to seek your input on more serious issues as well. Many of the skills you use in daily conversations may prove useful when discussing tougher issues.

### Decision making skills are important

Children need to learn how to make decisions. You can guide them with a key set of questions to ask when faced with a choice:

- ◆ What am I trying to decide and what do I know about it?
- ◆ How do I know my information is accurate? Who gave me the information?
- ◆ What more do I need to know before going ahead?
- ◆ Who has the added information I need?

And once the decision is made, ask these questions:

- ◇ What are the good effects of this decision?
- ◇ What are the bad effects?

After this, you can ask your child to reconsider a decision and take responsibility for the consequences.

### Family Day—A Day to Eat Dinner With Your Children—Monday, Sept. 28, 2009

Whether you're cooking a gourmet meal, ordering food from your favorite take-out place or eating on the go, rest assured that what your kids really want during dinnertime is YOU! Family meals are the perfect time to talk to your kids and listen to what's on their mind. *The more often kids eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs.*

### Communication is Important Because... some kids use drugs to satisfy curiosity.

Children are very curious about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. They are exposed to drug messages on TV, in the movies and videos, in newspapers and magazines, at school, on the Internet, and in conversations with friends and family. Their sources of drug information may not always be accurate or have their best interests at heart. But you do. That's why it's important for you to **communicate** with your children.