

# RJ Ahmann Company Prevention Newsletter



...for the health and well-being of you and your family.

## Volume 1, Issue 2

*Whether your kids are in school or out for summer vacation, they are making new friends and picking up where they left off with their old ones. And even though school and summer vacation are times for learning, it's also a key time for your kids to be exposed to drugs and alcohol.*

*Many parents feel like they are no match against all the peer pressure kids experience every day at school. But what parents need to remember is that they should be the major source of information on drugs and alcohol and be their kids' role models.*

*Don't ever under estimate the power of a parent's influence. It's the single most important way to make a difference in a child's future!*

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## Drug and Alcohol Prevention for Your Kids

### How to Talk to Your Kids about Drugs and Alcohol:

You make your kids use germ killing soap and sunscreen, and wear their seatbelts and bike helmets, but when it comes to talking to them about the dangers of drugs and alcohol, you're just not sure how to do it.

To start, you can't talk to your kids about these types of topics if you're not first talking on a regular basis about their day-to-day lives and things such as school, friends, clothes, activities, and even their dreams and ambitions.

By following the five suggestions below, you can work on developing a regular communication flow with your child so you can start talking about their day-to-day lives. This regular communication will make it much easier to bring up the harder topics, such as drugs and alcohol, when the time is right.

1. **Listen.** Make eye contact with your child, nod along so he knows you're paying attention, and if it's the end of a long day and you really need to relax, tell him. Explain to him that you need a few minutes to unwind and finish reading the paper, and then you'll be ready to give your full attention.
2. **Create moments for the two of you to talk.** Do chores together and talk while you're working. Or, run to the supermarket together — car rides can be a great time to spark up conversation.
3. **Set up regular family meetings.** Use this time for everyone to discuss what's on their minds so you're in the loop on what each person is currently going through.

*" School is a  
place for  
learning, but  
it's also a  
key place for  
exposure to  
drugs! "*



4. **Role-play with your child and teach them how to say no.** Pretend you're a friend who's pressuring her into drinking at a party or smoking marijuana. Then teach her how to think through a situation and the potential consequences of her choices.
5. **Encourage and support your child in all he or she does.** If you regularly encourage and support him in school, sports, and so on, then he'll know you'll also be there to encourage him to say no, and be there to support him in his decision.

### **Why kids use drugs and alcohol:**

Kids use drugs and alcohol for many reasons, but their first notions about them usually come from the actions of their own family members. So parents need to recognize the behaviors they're modeling to their kids. Also, some kids are drawn to start using drugs and alcohol during adolescence because it's often a confusing time and they use them to escape from unpleasant emotions or to feel more confident.

There are many psychological reasons why kids use drugs and alcohol, but the ones that seem to carry the most weight include:

- Fitting in,
- Rebellion,
- Curiosity,
- Wanting to feel grown-up,
- Wanting to feel more relaxed, and
- Thinking it feels good.

### **What to do:**

Below are some steps you can take if you believe your child has a drug or alcohol problem:

- Learn more about drug and alcohol dependency.
- Find drug treatment programs available in your area.
- At a time when you can remain calm and your child is clean and sober, talk calmly and honestly about the changes you see, and about the harmful consequences of drug and alcohol abuse. And, talk about seeking treatment together.
- Talk with other parents and join a support group.

### **Resources available:**

The following two Web sites are useful resources for helping to keep your kids drug and alcohol free:

- National Family Partnership: <http://www.nfp.org/>  
*This site offers strategies on tools to help parents keep kids away from drugs and alcohol.*
- National Family Partnership: <http://www.nfp.org/main/body/quicktips.html>  
*The "Quick Tips" section offers parents ideas on ways to be a positive force in the fight against teen drug and alcohol use.*