



Tips for Parents

Parenting is not easy. The challenges can often feel like they outweigh the rewards. And our intentions often exceed our patience and energy.

1. **HAVE COURAGE!** Sometimes fear of negative reactions keeps parents from talking to their kids. Short and frequent conversations that include listening to your child can open doors. Find time to give your child your full attention, for whatever period of time, each day. Talk with them, listen to them, and love them for who they are.
2. **BE A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL.** What you do is often more important than what you say!
 - Practice self-care. There's a correlation between stressed parents and stressed kids.
 - Be conscious of the language used around drinking. "What a tough day! I need a drink!" and "It's a party! Give me a drink!" may not be the lessons you wish to give your child about how to manage stress and how to have fun.
 - If you host a kid-focused event, don't serve alcohol. If you attend youth activities, don't bring alcohol.
 - As a general rule, if it's about the kid, don't make it about the drink. For example: Youth sporting events, end-of-season parties, children's birthday parties, graduation celebrations, trick-or-treating.
3. **CONNECT WITH OTHER PARENTS.** Foster a relationship with your child(ren)'s friends and family. Be part of a network of engaged parents. Call before your child goes out for the night or spends the night with a friend to confirm an adult will be home all night and that the kids will be supervised. If the kids are going out for the evening, confirm where they are going, how they are getting there, and who will be supervising them.
4. **EMPOWER YOUR CHILDREN WITH FACTS TO MAKE GOOD CHOICES.** Begin early in giving your kids the information and opportunity to make their own decisions and mistakes. Use real-life experience and news to have an ongoing dialogue around responsible decision-making. As your children get older, make sure they know the effects of alcohol and drugs on brain development, the law, and social & physical risks.
5. **REMOVE EASY ACCESS IN YOUR HOME.** 84% of local high school students report that alcohol is very to fairly easy to obtain and the number one place they get it is from their home or the home of a friend (11th graders, TUHSD, CHKS). Keep track of the alcohol in your home. Dispose of unused prescription medications. Prescription drug abuse amongst youth is increasing and the consequences are significant.
6. **LISTEN.** Your child is the expert on their friendships, school challenges and successes, current trends, pressures, etc. Listening to them will help in developing trust and an attitude of understanding that will become the basis of communication during the teen years.
7. **MAKE YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH AND SAFETY NON-NEGOTIABLE.** Place your child's health and safety above any momentary disappointment. Despite the desire to be independent, teens self-report that the most important influence in their lives are their parents. Our children will fight against our boundaries, but it's our job to keep them safe.