

The end of the school year is upon us, which often means parties and play. The likelihood that drugs and alcohol will be at a high school party is relatively high. Eighty percent (80%) of parents believe that alcohol and marijuana are usually not available at parties their teens attend. But the reality is sobering: 50 percent of teen partygoers attend parties where alcohol, drugs - or both - are available.

While your teen probably won't let you tag along to a party, there are some things you can discuss with him before he heads out. Here are a few suggestions about how you can help your teen safely transition into the summer months.

Please take a moment to read the tips brought to you by TheAntiDrug.Com and Prevention First to keep your children safe this Summer.

Summer Tips

Ask Questions. Find out where your teen will be, whether or not the party will be supervised by responsible adults, the contact information of the adults who will be supervising, other friends who will be there, and so on.

Contact the Adults in Charge. Some parents feel uncomfortable doing this, but it's an important step to ensure that your teen will be supervised by a responsible adult during the event. If you don't feel comfortable with the situation, avoid feeling obligated to let your child go. Remember, you are the parent.

Establish Rules. Make sure your teen clearly understands that she is not allowed to use drugs or alcohol. Tell her the consequences. Establish a curfew, and be clear about what will happen if she doesn't arrive on time. If your teen is driving, ask her to call home before leaving the event so that you can know she's on her way.

For more tips and advice, visit TheAntiDrug.com.

Conversations for Parents

Many parents wrestle with the issue of underage drinking or marijuana use. Ideally, no parent wants their teen to drink or use drugs, but some parents are tempted to accept their teen's use with the hope that the parent can better control it. So what are you to do? Here are some tips:

There is no "safe" level of alcohol or drug use when it comes to teenagers. To keep your kids safe, adopt a "no use" policy. Make sure your kids know they are not allowed to drink at other people's homes as well.

As parents or caregivers, present a united front whenever possible, especially when it comes to issues regarding your teen's safety and protection.

If you disagree, try not to argue or discuss your conflict in front of your teen. If your teen knows you disagree, he/she may try to take advantage of the situation and play one parent off of another.

Remember that your spouse has your child's best interests at heart, even if you disagree. Try to talk when you are calm and be respectful. If you still can't agree, seek out a third-party together (a trusted friend, minister or counselor) for guidance.

Don't send mixed messages by trying to "bargain" with your teen about drinking and other risky behaviors. Trying to limit use to a parent's house or restrict driving tells your teen that drinking is okay, and puts him at risk.

Forget about being the "cool" parent. Parents who are permissive have kids who are more likely to get into trouble, including traffic crashes and engaging in violence, sex and substance use.

Make sure you model responsible behavior when it comes to alcohol.

Know that in many states you are breaking the law if you provide alcohol to underage kids in your home.

Monitor and address sources of alcohol and tobacco for teens in your community. Talk to school or city officials or other parents to learn more about where teens are getting these substances, including social sources (e.g. young adults) and commercial establishments.

Advice

Using prescription medications to party has become a popular thing to do. In fact, many teens are under the false impression that they can get a "safe" high and party longer by using these types of drugs. Before your teen goes out, double-check your medicine cabinets.