

## DEALING WITH ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

**QUESTION:** How can I communicate with my child about alcohol and drugs?

**ANSWER:** Parents have a great deal of control and power to prevent children's use and abuse of drugs. The key to this power is to establish open communication and positive role models while children are still at the age when they are easily influenced. The following ideas will help parents raise children who will say "NO."

### BE A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL

Children will imitate a parent's example. Lead the type of healthy lifestyle that exemplifies the ability to resist the pressure to use alcohol and drugs.

### SPEND TIME WITH YOUR CHILDREN

Get to know your children by spending time with them. Make children realize they are special and help them feel good about themselves.

### SET LIMITS FOR YOUR CHILDREN

Children need a framework for their actions. Rules and expectations should be reasonable and consequences of unacceptable behavior should be established.

### ESTABLISH OPEN COMMUNICATION

Learn to listen to your children. Let them know that their opinions are important to you. Respect what is being said and respond by expressing your feelings honestly.

### TEACH RESPONSIBILITY

Provide children with the opportunities to complete meaningful tasks within their ability. When children are accountable for their actions their self-image will become stronger.

### TEACH DECISION-MAKING

Children will be more capable of resisting peer pressure if they have learned to make good decisions. Talk with children about choices and judging between right and wrong. Teach children how to say "NO."

### TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Learn about the effects of alcohol and drugs and present these facts to your children. Use information from TV, newspapers, books, and movies to educate children about the harmful effects of alcohol and drugs. This teaching process should continue throughout a child's school years.

Remember, peer pressure is a powerful force. Fortunately, the ability of parents to influence children's decision-making is even greater if parents learn to communicate with their children.