

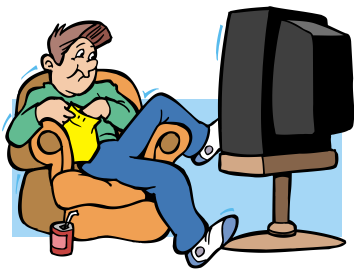


Parenting Skill Matters

A Resource for Parents of Middle School Students

Published Cooperatively by the Sequim School District
and the PROTECT Coalition

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Buy It, Use It, Try It

Researchers are trying to understand how much young people in 3rd, 6th, and 9th grade are influenced by alcohol ads. This is

a topic worth talking to your teen about. Who and what convinces people to buy, use or try different products?

We all should be aware of the impact of ads on our views of subjects and on our purchasing habits. See how your teen thinks people are influenced by ads and what they see on television or in magazines. Talk about all people, not just teens being influenced. Sometimes, talking about teens seems so personal he may withdraw from the discussion.

Underage Drinking, *Alcohol Alert*, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, January 2006.



A Boost to Academic Performance

Research tells us that a home environment that encourages learning contributes significantly to student achievement at all levels and is a more important factor than income, education level, or cultural background. What have you done today to encourage your child?

Getting Involved in Your Child's Education, National Education Association, www.nea.org

Your Teen and Money

By middle school, your child understands that money is limited and that there is a difference between need and want. This



is a great age to put her on a budget and let her decide whether she would rather

have one pair of high priced jeans or several shirts for less money. "Are Your Kids on Track?" *Money Magazine*, December 2007.

"It's up to the parents to not only allow but encourage reading fun books. People tend to push books that are good for you, like broccoli instead of ice cream. But if you let them read Spider Man--I sure did--they are going to move on."

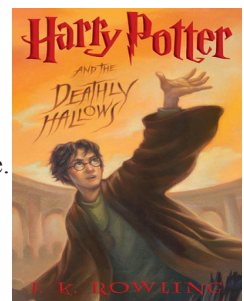
-Nora Roberts

Harry Potter helps inspire young readers

A professor of English at Pepperdine University says the Harry Potter books have made "millions of kids smarter, more sensitive, certainly more literate and probably more ethical and aware of hypocrisy and lust for power. They've made children better adults." Even people who are critical of the books admit that these "fat books with complex plots" have inspired a generation of readers.

The important part of this lesson is to remember to encourage kids to read by letting them read what they love. Whether it is a sports magazine or science fiction, it all helps improve their reading.

Time, December 31, 2007.





The Value of After-School Activities

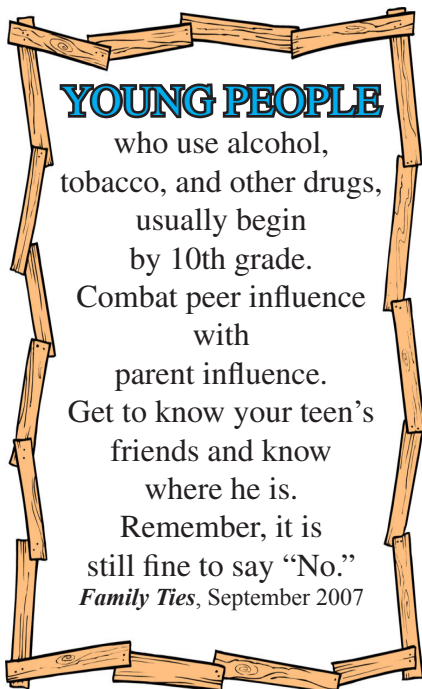
According to the U.S. Surgeon General, more than half of the nation's teens turn to alcohol to relieve stress and boredom. If your teen seems to have "nothing to do" after school, encourage her to participate in some after-school activities. Aside from their social and learning attributes, after-school activities are a great way to relieve that stress and boredom. Wouldn't you rather have her spend quality time with friends?

Teens and Alcohol – Get the Facts, <http://life.familyeducation.com>

WHEN "NO" MEANS "YES"

When you tell your child no, then change it to a yes after she whines, begs, and pleads, you are teaching her that she doesn't have to listen to what you say. You are also showing her how to manipulate you to get what she wants. Your inconsistent behavior is not a good learning tool for her. When you've told her no in response to a request, do not change your mind.

Fontenelle, D. *Keys to Parenting Your Teenager*, Barrons, NY, 1999.



"If you take time to talk together each day, you'll never become strangers."

-Leo Buscaglia

LOGS TO TALK ABOUT

There are a number of tough topics that parents need to discuss with their teen; sexuality and healthy relationships are two of them. Here are a few ideas how to do that.

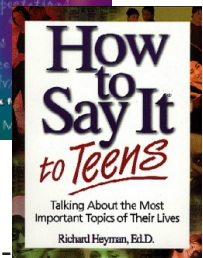
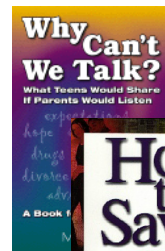
- When you begin the discussions and he says, "Dad, I already know that," ask what he does know. You might be surprised by his answers! This is a good starting point for conversation.
- Make sure you have correct information. Go to the library or the internet and find out some ways to make sure you know what you are talking about and how to talk about it.
- Educate him about the risks of all forms of sexual behavior.
- Discuss ways to handle peers who may be pressuring him to take risks he doesn't want to take.
- Think about your own sexual values. What do you believe is "right" and "wrong"? Thinking through your values will help you communicate them more effectively to him.
- Talk about popular media such as music and television and their impact on relationships.
- Educate him about the personal costs (physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and social) of sexual relationships. Having at least some information about sexually transmitted disease helps him see your concern.
- Pour on the love. Just because he is a teenager and may be exerting his independence doesn't mean he doesn't need and want your affection and attention.

Talking with Adolescence about Sexuality Issues. Family Life Council

GOAL

Your Teen's Goals

As the year goes on, talk with your 8th grader about goals that she has for high school. What grades are important to her? What activities does she want to try? Which electives is she interested in? If you want her to plan ahead and set goals, you need to talk about them. You aren't trying to put them in concrete, just trying to talk about them.
Family Ties, September 2007.





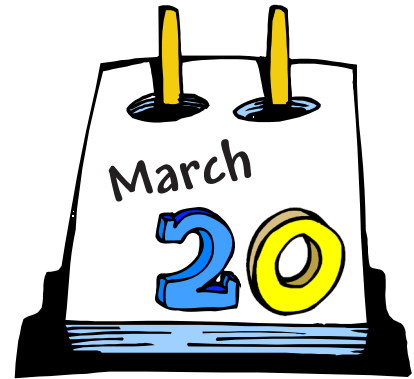
DENTAL HEALTH

At this age it is difficult to see how your adolescent is caring for her teeth. You can't exactly watch her as she will usually shut the door and make it clear where your place is. Even if you can't watch her brush, you still need to talk about how important it is, especially if she has braces. Health warnings

may not work but reminding her that flossing twice a day helps:

- Keep you kissable by preventing dragon breath
- Keep food from rotting between your teeth
- Prevents staining and tartar from ruining her smile
- Prevent making too many trips to the dentist

Trachtenberg, J., *Good Kids Bad Habits*, Collins, NY, 2007.



Save The Date

Across the nation there will be Town Hall Meetings to talk about the problems of underage drinking in our local community. Parents, students, and interested citizens are invited to this Monday night informative session sponsored by The Protect Coalition. It will begin at 7 p.m., at the High School Auditorium. Don't miss this important evening.



Homework Success

You can increase your chances of having homework being properly attended to if you involve your teen in choosing the most appropriate time of day it will be done. Consider her schedule of after-school activities, sports, and other events and have her suggest a suitable time. Whether it's immediately before or after school or dinner if she chooses the time, she will be more likely to focus when the time arrives.

Tips for Parents, National Education Association, www.nea.org

A New Way to Keep Up

There are pluses and minuses about the internet. Now, it also is one more way to keep up with your teen's attendance, grades on individual assignments, and even their cafeteria debt. Check it out. If you don't have a computer, the library or the tribe have access for you. You received a letter about this at the beginning of the year. Parents are raving about it. Contact your local school to get your password.



Make a Plan

If you want to know ways to help your child, contact the school. Home, school and the community need to work together for your student's success. Call your school at 582-3500 to speak with a counselor, teacher, or the principal. If you have questions about this newsletter, call 681-2250 or email us at ms@parentingmatters.org.

The newsletter is published by the **P.R.o.T.E.C.T. Coalition in cooperation with the Sequim School District**. It is funded in part by a Drug Free Communities grant with the Office of Justice & Delinquency Prevention and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.

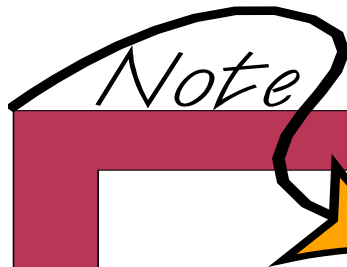




Opening a Discussion with Your Teen

There is no magic way or time to talk to your teen about drug abuse. One of the best ways to approach the situation is to be alert for natural openings, such as when drug use is in the news you hear or movies you view. The best time to talk about drugs is before you suspect any drug use. This gives you a chance to talk together about the dangers involved. Then, in the course of your conversation, be honest. If there is something in your past that you do not want to disclose to her, explain why.

Safety First: Take Action, <http://safety1st.org>



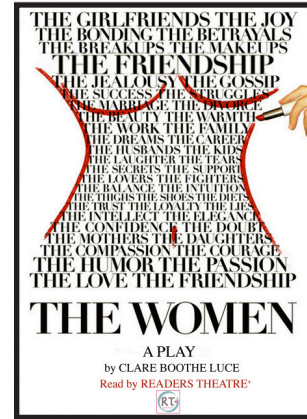
Why?

Why do kids use drugs? Look at some of these reasons and think about your teen. Then talk about it.

- To fit in with their peers
- To escape or relax
- To relieve boredom
- To seem more grown up
- To rebel
- To experiment

The most effective weapon in the war on drugs is education.

The Truth About Drugs, Foundation for a Drug-Free World, 2007.



Join us for "The Women" by Claire Boothe Luce on March 14, 15, or 16 at the

Old Dungeness School House.

This very timely and humorous reading about relationships will be performed by a cast of 13 from Readers Theater+. This would make a wonderful family evening out.

Proceeds from the performance will benefit Parenting Matters Foundation to help support this nonprofit foundation in providing parent education newsletters like this one.

Tickets may be purchased from Pacific Mist book store or at First Teacher at the Community School for \$10.

Make it a family event and children over 10 are free.

PRACTICE WITH YOUR CHILD WAYS TO SAY "NO."



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