



## Six Keys to Talking about Alcohol and Drugs

1. You are your child's example. Children model what they learn from the adults around them. If you abstain from alcohol, you give your child the message that alcohol has no role in your life and hence not theirs.
2. "Just the Facts". Information that is true and factual in a straight forward way will benefit your child. Give them the facts about alcohol and drugs and how they affect the body.
3. Have open and clearly defined rules. Share your beliefs and opinions about drinking and drug use. Clarify rules and consequences for drinking. Make sure that everyone understands.
4. Use good parenting techniques. Do things together on a regular basis as a family. Keep communication open, teach decision making skills and be consistent.
5. Know who your children "hang out" with. Get to know their families. Peers have a significant influence on your child. You want to encourage your child to choose friend with similar values. Open your home as a place for kids to gather.
6. Seek help if you need it. Sometimes you have done everything to encourage your child's abstinence from alcohol and drugs and they still choose the wrong path. Look for a professional to help you deal with this problem.

NORTH STAR COUNCIL FOR ALCOHOL  
AND DRUG EDUCATION

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## FAMILIES HELPING FAMILIES

### TALK ABOUT ALCOHOL AND DRUGS



### TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

It is difficult to be a parent today. This pamphlet has some guidelines to use when discussing the use of alcohol and drugs. You are the most important influence on your child's decisions. Start early, talk often, you can make a difference.

## Family Values are Important

We've all heard it, "Today is just not the same as when I grew up." To some extent it's true. Today's kids are growing up in a different world than their parents. Family life has changed. Parents and children have less time together. Outside distractions: T.V., video games, cell phones and computers are everywhere. However family values and open communication are more important than ever.

Children need to be educated on the facts of drinking and drug usage and the consequences of irresponsible behavior. They need concrete examples and words to put your family values into practice when they are faced with difficult choices.

How do you prepare them? Be honest, be forthright and tell them about your experiences-good and bad. Role play some 'touchy' situations they might encounter as they grow up. Point out the answers/ solutions that best match your family values.



## Family Conversations

The best time to start conversations with your child about drinking and drugs is **BEFORE** their teen years. The optimum time to talk with your children is between the ages of 9 and 11 years old.

Some tactics work and others don't. Giving children lectures or using threats isn't the key to prevent underage drinking and drug usage. Serve as an example to your children. Abstain from alcohol and illicit drugs. Speak openly and honestly to them about alcohol and drugs. This will be one of the most precious gifts that you can share with your children.



## Talk to Your Teens

Have you given any thought to what to say to your teenager when he/she goes out for the first time and one of their friends is driving? It is a big milestone in your child's life and you want to prepare him/her for it.

What about the party scene? Your son or daughter will inevitably be at a party where drinking is involved. What will he/she say when they are offered an alcoholic drink? Will they stand tall and stay true to your family values? Will they have the courage to say "No"?

Just like learning to ride a bicycle, you must teach your child how to respond in these uncomfortable situations. Teach them to make smart choices. Practice saying "No" to alcohol and drugs. Tell them how you handled the situation when you were their age.

Encourage and support them to  
"Be Alcohol and Drug Free"