

Your student is participating in "Too Good for Drugs and Violence," a comprehensive prevention education program. Teenagers who feel their parents' support, communicate effectively with their parents and live with clear no-use standards are much less likely to become involved with drugs or violence. We hope you will use this newsletter as a resource for – and as a way to talk with your teen about living a safe and drug-free life.

Communication

Communicating with Teenagers

Sure, they talk to their friends all the time, but are they talking to you? It is normal for teenagers to want to spend more time with friends than their family, but it is important to stay connected to your teens. This means communicating with them. It may seem like a daunting task to communicate with teenagers, but here are some tips to remember when communicating with the teenagers in your house:

- Listen to your teenagers with an open mind.
- Look at your teenagers. Be sure to turn off the TV, put down the paper, or turn off the PDA so you can focus on them.
- Create times just to talk. Not every conversation has to be a lecture or discipline session. Find time to talk with your teens about everyday events. Talk in the car, over a meal, while playing sports or shopping.
- Make sure the conversations are positive. Talk about their successes, interests, or who they are, not just their mistakes or misbehaviors.
- Remember, you can agree to disagree. It is okay if you don't agree, but strive to understand.
- Ask for and show respect for their opinions.
- Ask your teens open ended questions. This allows you to hear more information

from your teens and gives them the opportunity to talk.

- Spend time together. Teenagers want to know you are available when they need you. You don't always need a reason to be with your teens.
- Send your teens text messages and voice mails as follow-ups to your talks, not instead of talking.
- Keep trying. Communicating with your teens is important, so don't ever give up.

Genuine Listening

Listen with your eyes, heart and ears.

7% of communication is contained in the words we use.

55% is contained in body language.

38% is in how we say the words – the tone or feeling reflected in our voices.

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

— George Bernard Shaw

Technology 101

You know how to use a cell phone. You're pretty good on a computer. You may even have a PDA, an iPod or a MP3 player, but do you know what your kids are doing with all of the technology they have at their fingertips? Teens stay connected 24/7.

They don't know a life without cell phones, blog sites or text messaging. With the evolution of this technology comes a whole new way of communicating. Teens use acronyms and symbols to communicate an entire conversation. Do you know what they are saying? Here is a quick list to help you decipher what your teens are saying online and in text messages.

PIR – Parents In Room

WUF – Where Are You From

PAL – Parents Are Listening

:*(- Crying

KPC – Keeping Parents Clueless

% - Hangover

ASL – Age/Sex/Location

%*} – Drunk

LMIRL – Let's Meet In Real Life

These acronyms and symbols change frequently. Staying connected to your teens' lingo is an important communication skill that should not be overlooked. It lets your teens know you are involved in their lives and that you care about what they are doing.

“Words will never hurt me”

is a phrase from a childhood rhyme. How untrue it is, particularly when the words are directed from a parent to a child. Words can hurt and damage. Once they are uttered they can never be totally taken back. They can be forgiven, but truly hurtful words are not forgotten easily, if ever. Labeling is limiting, defeating and judgmental. It cuts off communication, builds walls between people and damages relationships. Use words that build up, affirm, and foster confidence – words that open communication lines and build trust. Honest words from the heart – free from blame, labeling and judgment - are words that will be taken in, honored and remembered.

Resources

The Anti-Drug

Find out the latest drug information, advice and news for parents.
www.theantidrug.com

Family Education

Provides current information, including message boards, newsletter and resources, for parents children of every age.
www.familyeducation.com

About.com: Parenting of Adolescents

Interactive site for parents with quizzes, advice and support.
www.parentingteens.about.com

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens by Sean Covey
“The ultimate teenager survival guide,” by Stephen Covey's son, Sean, provides information and practical examples with warmth and humor that benefit both parents and teens.