

## Why Small Conversations Make a Big Impression

- Short, frequent discussions can have a real impact on your child's decisions about substance use.

### **Talking often builds an open, trusting relationship with your child.**

- Show you care about your child's health, wellness, and success.
- During dinner, in the car or at bedtime

### **Lots of little talks are more effective than one "big talk."**

- It should be natural
- Takes the pressure off a big one-time conversation
- You should also let them know that if they have any questions you should be the first person they come to and if you're not make sure that you know who they would turn to.
- Show you're a good source of information about alcohol and other drugs. If you don't know, tell your student you will investigate it or research it with your student.

### **Make sure you go over your family rules around alcohol and other drug use.**

- Show you disapprove of underage drinking and other drug use.
- Most student know their parents disapprove of underage use, but most of them also don't know what the consequences are.

### **As children get older, the conversation changes.**

- Make sure it is age appropriate. You are the best person to judge how much your student can handle.
- Find parents that you trust and talk to them about what they are doing. It never hurts to get an opinion from one of your peers.

### **When you do talk about alcohol and other drug use, make your views and rules clear.**

- Build your students skills and strategies for avoiding underage drinking and drug use.

- Maybe your family creates a contract. (if you do this, we recommend revisiting it every year).
- In addition to talking often with your child, it's important to set a good example. If you choose to drink, you can positively influence your child by drinking in moderation and NEVER driving when you've been drinking.
- Be aware of where you keep your alcohol, and always remind your child that the alcohol in your house is off-limits.
- Also, be aware of presenting alcohol use as stress relief or entertainment, as many popular television shows do.

### **Show your student you are paying attention.**

- Know their friend's names, better yet know their friend's parents' names!
- Ask them how they are doing? School, friend, tests and if they need your help with anything.
- Show you're aware of what your student is up to, as young people are more likely to drink or use other drugs if they think no one will notice. Do this in a subtle way, without prying.

### **It is never too early to talk to your students. Or too late!**

HELP YOUR CHILDREN GROW. Spend time together to show you care about your child's health, wellness, and success. Young people are more likely to listen when they know you're on their side. Explain why you don't want your child to drink or use other drugs—not just because you say so, but because you want your child to be happy and safe. For tips on how—and when—to begin the conversation, visit:

Content adapted- [www.underageddrinking.samhsa.gov](http://www.underageddrinking.samhsa.gov)

For more information visit our website at [www.influencethechoice.org](http://www.influencethechoice.org)