



# School Tools

Volume 10, Issue 5

January, 2013

## Helpful Resources

- National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse—St. Louis Area  
314-962-3456
- Behavioral Health Response—24 hour Crisis Mental Health Hotline  
800-811-4760
- St. Louis County Youth Connection Hotline:  
**877-928-2929;**  
**Text—4HLP to 31658**
- Catholic Family Services:  
**see below.**
- Al-Anon and Alateen  
888-425-2666  
314-645-1572

Please copy and distribute to Teachers and Parents

If you would like to receive School Tools via e-mail rather than mail, contact:  
**mwilper**  
**@ccstl.org**

Published by:  
Catholic Family Services  
School Partnership Program  
9200 Watson Rd.  
Suite G101  
St. Louis, MO 63126-1528  
314-544-3800 phone  
314-843-0552 fax  
www.cfsstl.org

## Talking With Students About Drugs and Alcohol



*Dear Teachers and Parents,*

You may have more influence over your child than you realize. In a report from the Dept. of Health and Human Services, kids said that the number one reason for refraining from drinking was due to parent disapproval. This shows

why it is so important to communicate with your kids, especially when they are younger and not as tempted to engage in the use of illegal substances.

It is obvious that kids will be less likely to drink when parents and other adults are involved in their lives as well as when they are able to limit their use of addictive substances.

It is also important not to be naïve and think this doesn't apply to your child. Talking with them and listening to them at any age is always better than no communication at all.

### Parental Involvement

1. Get to know the parents of your child's friends. Have everyone agree to forbid each others' children from using illegal substances in their homes.
2. Call parents whose home is to be used for a party. Make sure they can assure you that no illegal substances will be dispensed.
3. Make it easy for your child to leave a place where substances are being used. Discuss in advance how to contact you or another designated adult in order to get a ride home.
4. Make sure children who are unattended for periods during the day feel your presence. Give them a schedule and set limits. Give them chores and enforce a phone-in-to-you policy.

## How to Effectively Talk With Kids

1. **Start when they are young.** As soon as your child begins to talk, the questions come. "Why is the grass green?" "What's wrong with the man sitting in the park?" If you show them that you are ready to give answers at any time, even if the topics make you feel uncomfortable, you will forge a trusting relationship, and your child will feel comfortable coming to you with concerns.
2. **Be a good listener.** Ask them questions about their interests...fashion, music, TV, movies and then ask follow-up questions. In these conversations, you can steer the talk to alcohol and drugs and why they're harmful. Don't be afraid that you are putting ideas into their heads. You're letting them know about potential dangers

in their environment so that when they're confronted with them, they'll know what to do.

3. **Ask specific questions.** To introduce the topic, ask them what they've learned about drugs and alcohol in school. They may even mention kids who are using them. If so, don't react in any way that cuts off further discussion. If they seem defensive or assure you that they don't know anyone who uses drugs, ask them why they think people use them. Discuss whether the risks are worth what people may get out of using them and whether they think it would be worth it to take the risks.
4. **Role play various situations to help them learn how to say "no."** With the right words at the tip of their tongue, kids can learn how to

reject their friends' poor choices without rejecting the friends themselves. For instance, take the role of a friend trying to persuade your child to share a six-pack of beer with you. What can she say? "You're such a jerk!" is alienating. "I don't know..." leaves the door open and sounds like she could be coaxed. The middle ground of being firm, but friendly, works best. Such as:  
**"No, I'm not into that stuff."**  
**"I tried it once, and I hate the taste."**  
**"My parents trust me not to drink, and I don't want to break that trust."**  
**"Drinking would make me feel out of control, and I hate that feeling."**

Important info. For  
Parents & Teachers!

Catholic Family Services  
School Partnership Program  
9200 Watson Rd.  
Suite G101  
St. Louis, MO 63126-1528