



PARENTS USE YOUR POWER

December 2014

Words Your Children Need to Hear from YOU... To Help Them Stay Drug-Free

It is very natural for most parents to encourage, praise, cheer and compliment their children at every opportunity. A simple internet search of “Words Your Child Needs to Hear from You” gets more than 57 million results. What many parents don’t realize, however, is the significance of their words in building their children’s resiliency. Often parents have trouble even believing that their children are listening to them. Your words speak volumes.

You are the most influential protective factor in your children’s lives. What you say DOES matter and your children ARE listening...especially when it comes to the vital topic of drugs and alcohol. Research shows that children whose parents talk to them about drugs and alcohol are 40% less likely to use those substances. A [survey of local high school students](#) shows that 80% of those who choose not to drink, do so because they don’t want to disappoint their parents. This is why it’s so important for parents to have those conversations with their children about drugs and alcohol. Sometimes the conversation isn’t even specifically about drugs or alcohol. It’s often about building protective factors like sense of humor, problem solving skills, sense of future, healthy stress management, effective time management and social competence that prepare your children to make the healthy and successfully navigate adolescence.

Since the “Words Your Child Needs to Hear from You ...To Help Them Stay Drug-Free” isn’t a topic that is readily found or that comes naturally to most parents, this month’s Parenting Power Tips will get you started.

PARENTS USE YOUR POWER

Support in raising healthy drug-free teens

Resources • Newsletters • Parenting Tips

ThePowerofChoice.info

A project of 360 Youth Services, Naperville School District #203, Indian Prairie School District #204, Naperville Police Department, Aurora Police Department, KidsMatter, Aurora Police Department and District 203 & 204 parents. Funded in part by IL Department of Human Services.

Parenting Power Tips:

Words Your Child Needs to Hear from You...To Help Them Stay Alcohol-Free & Drug-Free

- **“You need to face the natural consequences of your actions.”** All of our decisions have consequences. Negative consequences are painful, but they help to teach us valuable lessons. When we protect our children from the natural consequences of their actions, we don’t allow them to learn those valuable lessons.
- **“Try to solve that problem/conflict on our own.”** Life is filled with difficult situations. As parents, we want to step in and protect our children from those difficulties. When we do that, we don’t allow our children to develop the coping skills to deal with adversity and it can cause anxiety. Let your child know you are there to support him, but that he needs to begin to learn those problem solving skills so he can use them in the future.
- **“It’s ok to fail sometimes.”** We live in a stressful time. Our children often feel the need to be perfect in all that they attempt. But sometimes, life’s most important lessons are learned when we fail. Don’t take those opportunities away from your child. When they attempt something that doesn’t end in perfection, applaud the attempt and help them find the lesson in the experience.
- **“I don’t expect you to be THE best, I want you to be YOUR best.”** Everyone can’t be first—and that’s OK. Everyone has different strengths and makes different contributions to this world. In order to find their strengths, adolescents need to find what THEY are good at. It might not be the thing that is recognized on report cards or at awards assemblies, but it is the thing that will lead them to a happy successful future. Your child is unique and important, they don’t have to be like anyone else.
- **“You cannot drink or do drugs.”** Parents need to send a clear message to their children that alcohol and drug use is not ok. It’s illegal for them and dangerous to their developing brains. Ambiguous or vague messages about use lead to confusion or uncertainty in adolescents and can increase their risk of using those substances.
- **“You need to get 8-9 hours of sleep every night.”** Fatigue leads to stress, anxiety, impulsivity and the inability to learn. Doctors recommend that adolescents get 8-9 hours of sleep each night to be able to succeed academically and manage stress and anxiety effectively. This can be difficult, but it can be done.
- **“It’s ok to say no to some activities.”** Our children have so many incredible opportunities. It can be stressful and overwhelming to take advantage of all of them. It is our job as parents to teach our children how to manage their time and say “no” to some of those activities. Learning to say “no” is a valuable life skill that will help your child manage stress, avoid overscheduling and develop effective time management skills.
- **“You can’t....”** There will be times that you make an important decision that your child thinks is unfair. Adolescents can be persistent and persuasive. Remember that YOU ARE THE PARENT. You have more life experience and that very important “gut feeling” about certain situations. It is your responsibility to keep your child safe. Sometimes that means saying “no” to something they really want or someplace they want to go. Your child needs to know you will provide secure and firm boundaries for them, even when they don’t think they need them.
- **Parents speak loudest not with words, but with actions. Your children are learning how to live life by watching you. Are you modeling the kind of life you want them to live?**

PowerTalk for Families

Use this [month’s PowerTalk activity](#) to help your child learn effective communication skills by having the opportunity to interview YOU!

NEXT MONTH:
Helping your child use the T-H-I-N-K model for communicating with others



Dawn Neylon
1305 W. Oswego Rd
Naperville, IL 60560
630-961-2992 x1124
dneylon@360YouthServices.org

