

BACK-TO-SCHOOL CHECKLIST

Starting school, moving to a new school or grade creates anxiety for children. Parents are encouraged to talk to their children about their worries. This checklist will help parents to remember that conversations with their child about peer pressure, alcohol and other drug prevention and good decision making is important.

Know!, a program of Drug-Free Action Alliance, reminds parents and mentors to:

Talk. Be clear that using alcohol, tobacco or other drugs is not acceptable. Let your child know that you would be very disappointed if he/she chose to use. Make sure to discuss your child's feelings about starting school and talk over any concerns that may be the source of anxiety.

Are you talking with your child about alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention? Yes No

Listen. Provide opportunities for your child to talk about changes happening in their world. Ask open-ended questions like, "How are you feeling about the new school year?"

Are you asking open-ended questions to your teen? Yes No

Help Build Confidence. Teach your child how to "break the ice" with new people by asking things like, "What were you up to this summer?"

Are you helping to build confidence in your teen? Yes No

Encourage Open Dialogue. Remind your teen that they can always come to you with concerns - without judgement. If they don't feel that they can confide in you, they may turn to someone else who does not share your family values.

Are you committed to making sure that your teen can confide in you? Yes No

Special Bonding Time. Set aside time to spend with you teen to focus on them. Spending this special time with your child will show them that you care about what is happening to them and are available to confide in anytime.

Are you setting aside special time to talk? Yes No

Ask Questions. Asking probing questions about who they are hanging out with, where they are going during evening hours or whose house they are going to be at. Check in to let your teen know that you are concerned and that you care.

Are you making sure you know who your teen is hanging out with? Yes No

Be A Role Model. Set a good example by being a consistent, positive presence in your child's life. Being involved in your child's life and participating in shared activities will benefit you and your child.

Are you modeling behaviors you want your teen to adopt? Yes No

Research shows that adolescents are at a higher risk of first-time use during periods of "change," in order to cope with stress. Don't let these common tween changes cause your child to experiment with substances.

Make certain that you and your child have frequent conversations about not using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.