

Parents Should Always Be Present at Teen Parties

According to the National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XI: Teens and Parents, an annual back-to-school survey conducted by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University, teens who say parents are not present at the parties they attend are 16 times likelier to say alcohol is available, 15 times likelier to say illegal and prescription drugs are available and 29 times likelier to say marijuana is available, compared to teens who say parents are always present at the parties they attend.

“Teen drinking and drugging is a parent problem. Too many parents fail to fulfill their responsibility to chaperone their kids’ parties. They have no idea how drug- and alcohol-infested their teens’ world is,” said Joseph A. Califano Jr., CASA’s chairman and president and former US Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare.

Califano said he was “appalled” at the findings. “We need to tell parents, did you know that in this country five million 12-17 year-olds can buy pot in an hour?”

The survey also found:

- Eighty percent of parents believe that neither alcohol nor marijuana is usually available at parties their teens attend, but 50% of teen partygoers attend parties where alcohol, drugs or both are available.
- Ninety-eight percent of parents say they are normally present during parties they allow their teens to have at home, but one-third of teen partygoers report that parents are rarely or never present at the parties they attend.
- Ninety-nine percent of parents say they would not be willing to serve alcohol at their teen’s party, but 28% of teen partygoers have been at parties at a home where parents were present and teens were drinking alcohol.
- Only 12% of parents see drugs as their teen’s greatest concern, but twice as many teens (27%) say drugs are their greatest concern.

CASA’s teen survey also found that teens attending three or more parties a month are at two-and-one-half times the risk for substance abuse compared to teens that do not attend parties. The transition from age 13 to age 14 is a particularly risky time for American teens. Compared to 13-year-olds, 14-year-olds are four times more likely to be offered prescription drugs, three times more likely to be offered Ecstasy and marijuana, and two times more likely to be offered cocaine.

CASA said parents need to be present and aware of what’s going on when their teen is having a party at home. “And if your teen attends a party at someone else’s home, confirm that the parents will be present and that alcohol and drugs will not. The reality is that even when parents are present at a party, some kids will try to sneak in substances,” Califano said.

For more information about CASA’s National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XI: Teens and Parents, visit www.casacolumbia.org



Alcohol Advertising Should Be Monitored

If alcohol companies had done a better job of following their voluntary standards, youth exposure to alcohol ads on the radio in the summer of 2004 would have been substantially reduced, according to data from the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) published recently in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) publication, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (MMWR).

The alcohol industry's voluntary standard, adopted by beer and distilled spirits trade associations in the fall of 2003, stipulates that alcohol advertisements not be placed on programs with more than a 30% youth audience (12 to 20 years old). For 11 of the 25 most advertised brands, approximately half of youth advertising exposure resulted from placements that exceeded the 30% standard, including five brands for which approximately three-quarters of youth exposure resulted from these placements.

"Young people spend more time listening to the radio than they do reading magazines or surfing the Net, so reducing youth exposure to alcohol ads on radio is critical," said Dr. David Jernigan, executive director of CAMY. "In September 2003, the alcohol

industry made modest revisions to its voluntary code in order to reduce youth exposure to alcohol advertising. While progress is being made, the industry still has a long way to go."

With longitudinal research showing that increased exposure to alcohol advertising is associated with an increase in underage drinking, reducing youth exposure to alcohol ads is a key strategy to combat underage drinking.

The National Academies also recommended that the federal government monitor the exposure of youth to alcohol advertising, and that it report the results annually. "The fact that the industry is still not in compliance with its own voluntary standard underscores the importance

of tracking and monitoring alcohol advertising so parents, teachers and policy makers can be assured that these reforms are taking place," said Jernigan. "Companies can and should change their policies to reduce exposure of kids to alcohol advertising."



Media Influence and Self-Image

Children observe and are exposed to prejudice by watching television, reading books and magazines, or even studying school textbooks that present stereotyped views of various groups of people. In addition to stereotypes, some books present misinformation; others exclude important information about some groups in any positive way. Television shows and books exert undue influence when they are the only exposure a child has to certain groups. Although some improvements have been made, it is not difficult to find TV shows that depict some well-established stereotypes.

Children who have poor self-images are more vulnerable to developing prejudices. They may try to bolster their own worth by finding a group of people whom they can put down. An insecure child might think, "I may not be very good but I am better than those people." For some, putting down others may serve a psychological function, allowing them to feel more important and powerful than those they put down.

Some children may exclude or make fun of others because they believe it is the popular thing to do. Children may begin to use unkind names for different groups if they feel it will help them to be more accepted by their peers. Over time, such actions can result in prejudice and discrimination against specific groups.

All children notice differences. This is developmentally appropriate and, by itself, not a problem; but when negative values are attached to those differences, problems occur.

(Source: Anti-Defamation League)

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Self Esteem Tip Sheet

1. When you make a mistake, it is best to own up to it and correct it, rather than ignore it and pretend it didn't happen.

Self-respect and power come from admitting your mistakes, learning from them and taking corrective action.

2. When you look at yourself in the mirror, embrace your beauty rather than pointing out your flaws.

When you embrace your own beauty and uniqueness, that is true self-acceptance.

3. Take responsibility for your own results instead of blaming others for your problems.

Taking responsibility for your thoughts, words, and actions will set you free from the pain of blame and guilt.

4. You have the right to express your wants, needs, and self-worth and have them treated with respect by others.

Claim your needs as important and respectfully assert yourself.

5. You are capable of creating anything when your life has purpose, focus and direction.

You have the potential to be so much more than you might imagine; the most important thing is that your life has meaning for you.

6. Honor your commitments to yourself and others.

By keeping your commitments you demonstrate integrity, credibility, and earn respect.

7. Positive self-talk empowers you, makes you stronger, and builds confidence.

To eliminate negative self-talk: (1) recognize it; (2) interrupt it; and (3) replace it with a positive message.

8. By trusting yourself, you can keep others' words in perspective without becoming defensive.

Your strong sense of self-worth allows you to maintain your power and still hear what others have to say without feeling bad about yourself.

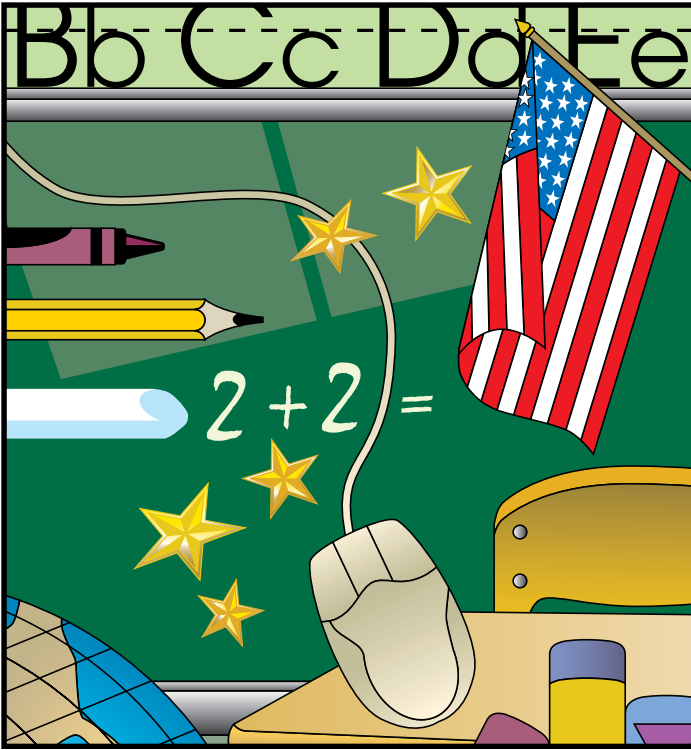
9. Direct eye contact can help create rapport and demonstrate your sense of self-worth.

When you're interacting with others it's important to create a sense of connection. Your direct, "easy" eye contact is a great way to help others feel connected and form a good impression of you at the same time.

(Source: National Association for Self-Esteem)

Keeping Students Safe in the Classroom

Children need a safe and comfortable environment to learn to the best of their capabilities. This means they have to feel safe in their school and be able to positively interact with their teachers and classmates. By doing the following, parents and other adults can help make sure children have a positive school experience.



- Talk to your children about their day. Sometimes children won't tell you right away if they are having problems at school. Ask your children if they see anyone bullied, if they are bullied, or if anything else makes them feel uncomfortable. Look for warning signs, such as a sudden drop in grades, loss of friends, or torn clothing.
- Teach children to resolve problems without fighting. Explain that fighting could lead to them getting hurt, hurting someone else, or earning a reputation as a bully. Talk to them about other ways they can work out a problem, such as talking it out, walking away, sticking with friends, or telling a trusted adult.
- Keep an eye on your children's Internet use. Many elementary schools have computers with Internet access. Ask your children's school if students are monitored when they use the Internet or if there is a blocking device installed to prevent children from finding explicit websites. Talk to your children about what they do online – what sites they visit, who they e-mail, and who they chat with. Let them know they can talk to you if anything they see online makes them uncomfortable, whether it's an explicit website or a classmate bullying them or someone else through e-mail, chat, or websites.
- Ask about the safety and emergency plans for your children's school. How are local police involved? How are students and parents involved? What emergencies have been considered and planned for?

(Source: McGruff.org)

For more information, contact: