



Tip Sheet

Tips for Changing the Setting and Mindset Around Drug Use and Parties (Page 1)

- ❖ No parties without communication with parental hosts (if possible)
 - Parent hosts send out notice/announcement via parent listserv or email list (compiled outside of school) notifying of time, date, knowledge of party, what they know about drugs/alcohol and their feelings about it, whether they'll be there, etc.
- ❖ Parents adopt “risk management” and “risk reduction” strategies around drug/alcohol use at parties
 - Read about drug and alcohol use (especially *Over the Influence* and *Uppers, Downers and All-Arounders*) and be prepared to help your child help him/herself reduce the risk associated with drug and alcohol use...because the bottom line is that you cannot stop them from taking drugs or going to a party unless they voluntarily agree to it OR they are involuntarily confined and under 24-hour guard. Know the effects of the drug of choice (e.g., that even short-term alcohol use has now been shown to effect short- and long-term memory retrieval ability in adolescents)
 - Set consistent limits and let those limits be set in conjunction with your kids—they get to have input, but not veto power or “final say;” the older and more mature the student, the more the input; the more successful demonstration of responsibility, the more the leeway, e.g., you don't freak out when an otherwise responsible teen is home 20 minutes late every once and a while
 - Parents having a NQA or “Get out of jail free” card where parents pick up their child and take them home, any time, **No Questions Asked** (that night, anyway; it is unreasonable to expect that parents won't pursue the issue when all participants are sober and awake and things have calmed down)
 - Parents being willing to be put on a “NQA” list (no questions asked); they can be called on party night and will pick up any child who needs a ride and would otherwise be driving under the influence or would be in a car with someone under the influence
- ❖ Align with Teachers (But Don't Expect them to Parent)

As teen parenting expert and educator Mike Riera points out, in grade school, when kids have problems, they go to their parents, teachers and then friends, in that order. Teens reverse the order and go first to friends, then teachers, and finally parents. So it makes good sense to align with teachers because the teachers often hear of struggles before you do. It's not about interrogating the teachers, though; it's about knowing the adults in your child's life.
- ❖ Adopt a “Silence=Death” policy

This is a dramatic way of putting it, but the point is, that you send the message that, “in our home, we talk about drug, alcohol use and parties...no exceptions; its on the table for discussion because we love you and will help protect you and help you protect yourself.” This doesn't mean you interrogate your child or get into every aspect of their business; it does mean that you will ask questions respectfully and demonstrate your care, regardless of whether they want it or it makes them uncomfortable.

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