



## **Tips and Ideas to Help Parents Make a Difference**

### **Learn to Communicate**

- ***Be absolutely clear*** with your kids that you don't want them using drugs. Don't leave room for interpretation. Talk often about the dangers of drug and alcohol use – more than one or twice a year.
- ***Give honest answers.*** Don't make up what you don't know. If asked whether you've ever taken drugs, let your child know what's important: that you don't want them using drugs.
- ***Don't react*** in a way that will cut off further discussion. If your child says things that challenge or shock you, turn them into a calm discussion of why he or she thinks people use drugs; whether they're worth the risk.

### **Walk the Walk**

- ***Be a living, day-to-day example*** of your value system. Show the compassion, honesty, generosity and openness you want your child to have.
- ***Know that there is no such thing*** as “do as I say not as I do” when it comes to drugs. If you take drugs, you can't expect your child to take your advice. Seek professional help is necessary.
- ***Examine your own behavior.*** If you abuse drugs or alcohol, your kids are going to pick up on it. Or if you laugh at a drunk or stoned person in a movie, you send a bad message to your child.

### **Lay Down the Law**

- ***Create rules*** – and discuss in advance the consequences of breaking them. Don't make empty threats or let the rule-breaker off easy. Don't impose harsh or unexpected new punishments.
- ***Have kids check in*** at regular times.
- ***Call parents*** whose home is to be used for a party. On party night, don't be afraid to stop in to say hello (and make sure that adult supervision is in place)

*Source:* Parenting Skills: 21 Tips & Ideas to Help You Make a Difference, Truth. The Anti-Drug, [www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com), 1.800.788.2800