

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORKING WITH PARENTS

1. Take advantage of milestone transitions, such as the following:
 - When a child changes grades
 - Moves from elementary to middle school
 - Joins a school club or team
 - Because milestones can be anticipated, activities, materials, and messages that relate specifically to the transition should be used. For example, club or team orientation meetings, to which the parents are invited, could include presentations on alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs as they relate to the purposes of the club.
2. Communicate with parents during other life events such as moving or family breakups.
 - Activities and messages should relate to the specific event. For example, marriage counselors, school counselors, or others could include information on special risks to children during times of parental estrangement, including the risk of using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.
3. Use mini-transitions to communicate with parents.
 - For example, a family going on vacation could receive a packet of information from a tourist bureau or a State park that includes materials concerning preventing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use by young children.
4. Increase parents' awareness and knowledge of potential risks.
 - Parents need more information to better understand the probability of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use by their children; the role of gateway drugs (cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana); and heredity issues.
 - It is also important for parents to know as much or more about drugs as their children are likely to know, and to be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use.
 - Information about AIDS and its relationship to alcohol and other drug use may heighten parental awareness.
5. Increase parents' knowledge and understanding of parenting skills.
 - Parenting skills for the current generation of parents must include communicating with children about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
 - Print materials, such as magazine articles and brochures, may help increase parents' knowledge and understanding about parenting skills. These materials also may emphasize the parents' role as primary prevention agents for their children.
 - Parenting seminars, religious and school programs, and audiovisual materials may be more valuable because they allow demonstration of roles and parenting techniques.

Recommendations for Working with Parents continued

6. Develop materials for parents.
 - While materials exist on certain topics for parents, others need to be developed or adapted from existing materials. Particular attention should be given to materials that fit into parents' often- crowded schedules, such as audiocassettes for cars.
7. Create resource centers in libraries.
 - Special areas in public libraries could be set aside for a variety of print and audiovisual educational materials on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug issues.
8. Create resource packets for intermediaries to distribute.
 - Intermediaries that have access to parents during transitions might be persuaded to distribute packets of information, particularly if the packet included space for the intermediary's own logo, name, and other information.
9. Use intermediaries having direct access to parents in transitions.
 - Schools, employers, businesses, and services that come into direct contact with parents during these times could be considered as channels for messages concerning alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use by youth.
10. Work with local media.
 - Media attention such as a feature article on record shops that sell paraphernalia, a talk show with a school principal discussing alcohol at a local middle school, a news segment on compliance checks, or a story about the activities of a SADD Club can help overcome parental ignorance or denial.
11. Influence the mass media to help reach parents.
 - Print and broadcast reporters cover issues they consider newsworthy. Prevention practitioners can provide new angles on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use issues, suggest story lines for shows, or praise appropriate coverage as it occurs.
12. Conduct research on the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of parents.
 - There is a serious lack of data on the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of parents of children at moderate risk. Such data need to be updated frequently as alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use patterns change.