

Summer is a Risky Time for Tweens

Summer! Just the mere thought of it excites most students, yet concerns many parents (and for good reason). Summer is a known time for increased alcohol, marijuana and other drug use, including first-time experimentation. What sets this season apart?

Increased-Unsupervised-Free-Time. At this transitional age, our children naturally seek their independence and our trust. But, the two can make for a risky combination, given the allure and pressure of, "friends and fun."

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Talking regularly with kids reduces their risk of using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

If you or someone you know needs information/resources focusing on parenting tips please call the Regional Support Center housed at Family Counseling Center. 888-5925 ext. 215 or 219



The Regional Support Center encourages you to keep your child safe and drug-free with these Summertime Tips:

- **Set Summertime Rules:** Make clear your rules regarding unsupervised time spent with friends, as well as your expectations surrounding drinking, smoking and other risky behaviors.
- **Supervise:** If you are unable to be physically present when your child is at home, ask a neighbor to check in, or consider hiring a "buddy-sitter" to hang out with your tween during the day. Unsupervised youth are three times more likely to use alcohol or other drugs.
- **Monitor:** Know with whom and where your child is at all times. Randomly call and text your child to check in, and don't be afraid to check up on your child by calling another parent.
- **Engage:** Provide some structure to your child's summer by engaging him/her in a supervised activity (sports, camps, classes, etc.) or maybe even a summer job (babysitting, mowing lawns, dog-walking, etc.).
- **Team Up:** Connect with the parents of your child's friends and agree to each take a turn escorting the group of tweens on a local outing of their choice (zoo, amusement park, museum, etc.).
- **Stay Involved:** Show your child you care by taking time out of your busy schedule to do something fun and interactive together this summer (head to the movies, volunteer together, take a bike ride, etc.).
- **Communicate:** Regardless of season, it is always a good time to talk to your child about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Open (or maintain) the lines of communication and be your child's trusted source of information.