



PIRCCA PRESS

Parent Information and Resource Center of Central Alabama, a project of the Alabama Parent Education Center

Volume 3.4 **Tips for Keeping Kids Drug Free** Winter 2006

Research shows that recent trends in youth drug use have stabilized; however, the rates of use remain at high levels. It has been shown that the earlier drug use is initiated, the more likely a person is to develop drug problems later in life. Youth substance abuse may lead to many other problems that affect the child, the family and community. Parents are the most important role models in their children's lives. What you say and do about drugs means a lot when it comes to the choices your children make. You can:

- set a positive example and get involved in your children's lives;
- get involved in their activities, know their friends and know where they're going and what they're doing;
- create clear, consistent expectations and enforce them;
- talk early and often about drugs;
- discuss the consequences of drug use; and
- show you care enormously about what choices your children make about drugs.

Children learn by example. They adopt the values you demonstrate through your actions.

Tips to Help Keep Schools Drug Free

Children have the best prospects for leading healthy, drug-free lives when schools support parents in their anti-drug message. There should be nothing confusing or contradictory in what children learn about drugs from the adults in their lives, and school policies need to reflect the same attitude toward alcohol and drugs that you express at home: Drug use is not acceptable. Drugs diminish a child's ability to concentrate and follow through on academic responsibilities. They cause absenteeism and loss of motivation, and students who use them can be disruptive and drain teachers' time and energy.

The best way to ensure that the anti-drug policies at your child's school are strong is to be involved. You can:

- Learn about the current policies regarding alcohol and other drugs at your child's school. If there is no anti-drug policy in place, attend parent volunteer or curriculum review meetings, or schedule an interview with the principal to help develop a policy. The policy should specify what constitutes an alcohol, tobacco or other drug offense, spell out the consequences for failing to follow the rules, and describe procedures for handling violations.
- Familiarize yourself with drug education in your child's school. Faculty members should be trained to teach about alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. Drug education should be taught in an age-appropriate way at each grade level throughout the year rather than only once during a special week. There should be a parent education component.
- Immerse yourself in the school's drug education program at home. Ask your child to show you any materials distributed during or outside class and take the opportunity to review them together.
- Find out if your child's school conducts assessments of its drug problem and whether these results are used in the program.
- Ask what happens to those who are caught abusing drugs. Does the school offer a list of referrals for students who need treatment?
- Research indicates that some of the most effective programs emphasize the value of life skills such as coping with anxiety, being assertive and feeling comfortable socially. When these lessons are combined with drug education, students confronted with drugs are better equipped to resist them.

THE FACTS ABOUT *NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND*

- **Funding:** *No Child Left Behind* gives school districts more money. In fact, President Bush and Congress are spending more money than ever before on the education of America's children.
- **Flexibility:** *No Child Left Behind* gives states and school districts more control and more flexibility to use resources where they are needed most. Principals and administrators will spend less time filling out forms and more time helping your child learn.
- **Accountability:** *No Child Left Behind* holds schools and school districts accountable for results. Schools are responsible for making sure your child is learning.
- **School District Report Cards:** *No Child Left Behind* gives parents report cards so they can see which schools in their district are succeeding and why. With this information, *No Child Left Behind* gives parents, community leaders, teachers, principals, and elected leaders the information they need to improve schools.
- **Public School Choice:** *No Child Left Behind* may let you transfer your child to another public school if the state says that your child's school is "in need of improvement." Your school district may pay for transportation for your child. Contact your child's school district to find out if your child has this opportunity.
- **Extra Help with Learning:** *No Child Left Behind* may also provide your child with free tutoring and extra help with schoolwork if the state says your child's school has been "in need of improvement" for at least 2 years. This extra help is often referred to as Supplemental Educational Services. Contact your child's school district to find out if your child qualifies.
- **Parental Involvement:** *No Child Left Behind* requires schools to develop ways to get parents more involved in their child's education and in improving the school. Contact your child's school to find out how you can get involved.
- **Measuring Knowledge:** *No Child Left Behind* requires states to test your child in reading and math every year in grades 3-8. Your child will also be tested at least once in high school. By the end of the 2007-2008 school year, the law requires testing to be conducted in science once during grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12. The tests will help you, your child, and your child's teachers know how well your child is learning and when he or she needs extra help.

PIRCCA Is Here To Help

In October 2003, the Alabama Parent Education Center won a Parent Information and Resource Center grant to open the Parent Information and Resource Center of Central Alabama (PIRCCA). PIRCCA serves Montgomery, Coosa, Tallapoosa, Elmore County Schools and Tallassee City Schools.

We work closely with families in schools that have been identified as low performing to help parents and teachers raise student achievement. If PIRCCA is not in your school and you need help, contact our office.



PIRCCA

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“Parents Helping Parents Help Their Kids”



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