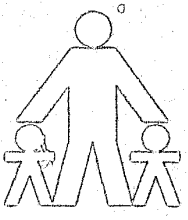
Bringing Up A Drug-Free Generation



How Communities Can Support Parents

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TAKE A BITE OUT OF
CRIME

The National Crime Prevention Council is a private, nonprofit tax-exempt [501(c)(3)] organization whose principal mission is to enable people to prevent crime and build safer, more caring communities. NCPC publishes books, kits of camera-ready program materials, posters, and informational and policy reports on a variety of crime prevention and community-building subjects. NCPC offers training, technical assistance, and national focus for crime prevention: it acts as secretariat for the Crime Prevention Coalition, more than 130 national, federal, and state organizations committed to preventing crime. It also operates demonstration programs and takes a major leadership role in youth crime prevention. NCPC manages the McGruff "Take A Bite Out Of Crime" public service advertising campaign, which is substantially funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

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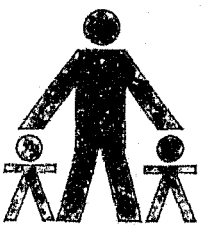


How Communities Can Support Parents

Foreword

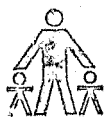
Families in the United States today are far from the old "Leave It to Beaver" model—an employed father, a stay-at-home mother, and two or three closely spaced children. Two out of five of today's families have two wage earners. Many children spend at least part of their childhood in a single-parent home. Many families live far from other relatives, once a source of immediate support.

The need for community support of parents is greater than ever. The alcohol and other drug problems that continue to plague our nation—large and small cities, urban and rural areas—present an ongoing challenge to parents in trying to bring up children who are drug free. There are many things that community leaders can do to help parents in their effort to raise drug-free children. This booklet suggests some of them and gives examples of ways in which these ideas are already at work in communities around the country.

This booklet doesn't pretend to contain all the answers. We hope that it will stimulate you to discover new and better ways that your community—and others—can support healthy, safe, drug-free children and families. The ideas are not presented as recommendations but as food for thought, as morsels to stimulate your thinking about what might work best in your community to support parents. Let these ideas be a starting point, not a prescription.

This publication had its genesis in a Parents' Forum that the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) conducted in conjunction with the March 1991 PRIDE (Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education) Conference, thanks to funding from the U.S. Department of Justice (Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance). Counterparts, Inc., assisted immeasurably by serving as rapporteur and by beginning the process of refining and interpreting those discussions into the meat for the booklet you have today. Doris Watkins while at NCPC provided much help in redrafting; Beth Pausic of NCPC pitched in as well. Marty Pociask of NCPC assisted with design and production. Jean O'Neil helped with policy framework and with writing and editing; Jack Calhoun, NCPC Executive Director, was enthusiastically supportive throughout. John Rosiak not only managed the project, but generated the Parents' Forum, recognized the need for a publication that could help communities help parents who want to raise drug-free kids, and persevered in bringing the project to fruition.

My daughter, Marie, is only 15, but she's started experimenting with alcohol—mostly beer and wine. When I discovered it, I confronted her, but all she'd reply was, "You just don't understand. All my friends drink. They even get wasted. I don't get bombed or anything. Only geeks don't drink." I've talked with Marie about so many reasons not to drink—drinking and driving, how alcohol use could physically harm her, and so on—but she dismisses them. I've even tried arguing to myself that I should relax, that alcohol is less harmful to her than other drugs, even if it is illegal. I don't buy that line, but what can I do? I'm battling single-handed against peer pressure, the community attitudes that condone keg parties and underage drinking, and the other messages she gets from TV, magazines, and even adult remarks in the community that portray alcohol as fun, attractive to the opposite sex, and a mature, competent person's choice.



At Stake and At Issue

It's an all too familiar scenario. Whatever the parent has done (or not done), the child decides that using alcohol or some other drug is acceptable. The child can't see the consequences down the road—long-term health damage, the costs of a criminal conviction, the loss of his or her potential, the dangers of addiction, the financial damage. The parent may see the potential danger, but is confronted with social messages that contradict his or her guidance. Perhaps the parent is unsure of what to say or how to say it.

The community sees—and pays—the costs all too clearly when children turn to use of illegal substances. Evidence suggests that children and youth who use drugs are also involved in other illegal behaviors. People who abuse drugs tend to be involved with other self-defeating behaviors as well—dropping out of school, committing crimes, developing serious health problems stemming from the substance abuse. Whether these relationships are cause-and-effect ones or not, the damage that drugs can do is all too well documented.

Helping Marie's parent and millions of other parents become more effective in their efforts to bring up drug-free sons and daughters is a wide-ranging challenge. Many books and articles have been written about it. Parent groups have formed to provide mutual support in the task. Often

overlooked, however, are changes in policy and practice—many involving little or no cost—that can do much to help create a community atmosphere in which parents are better able to bring up drug-free children. This booklet outlines some of these policy steps—many of which cost little or nothing—that key institutions in the community can undertake to help parents apply the ounce of prevention that can truly avert the need for a pound of civic cure.

Whose Job Is It, Anyhow?

Just who *does* have the job of persuading kids not to use illegal substances? Schools? Law enforcement? Parents? Religious leaders? TV and other mass media? Aren't parents responsible for their kids? Shouldn't they be held responsible?

Even if you feel that parents must bear the brunt of responsibility for rearing drug-free children (and most people familiar with the problem would argue that we *all* share in that task), you would agree that the community shouldn't make things worse for parents. Yet some policies and practices do just that—send the message, often unintended, that using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs is an acceptable behavior, even a social asset. And you would probably agree that parents who may not know what to say or do on this subject, or how to do it effectively, deserve some helpful information.

The fact is, we all pay the price if the next generation become substance abusers. Our communities' futures could well be mortgaged to detoxification centers, AIDS treatment, unskilled workers, prison costs for those incarcerated for drug-linked crime, and people too sick to work because of the damage wrought by drugs. So prevention—especially early prevention and help to parents, who play a key role in

it—is the smartest investment we can make. Changing policies and practices to create a more supportive climate for parents is part of that investment.

Parents Are Key

Parents are the first, best source of drug prevention education for their children. The example, education, and attitudes they provide, as research has proved, often shape the child's view of the acceptability of using alcohol and other drugs. And many, many parents in all walks of life and all kinds of circumstances are working hard to keep their children out of the clutches of drug use and addiction. Without community support, however, that battle is lonely, painful, and sometimes futile.

As the parents of any teenager can attest, peer and community attitudes and behaviors become an increasingly powerful influence as children pass through adolescence. No matter how well-intentioned the parent, no matter how thorough the preparation, any parent can face a situation in which a child is tempted or persuaded by peer pressure, public attitudes, and other forces beyond a parent's control. Sometimes the pressure is relatively benign—certain fashion fads, for instance. In other cases—unlawful behavior, drug use, and the like—public attitudes of acceptance or tolerance, combined with peer pressure, can be the downfall of a child who "knows better."

Many parents, through organizations such as PRIDE (Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education), National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth, National Families in Action, and similar groups, have found that parent peer groups can be a significant offsetting force. For example, parents talking together quickly find out that, whatever the teens might say, "everybody else's parents" aren't permitting inappropriate behaviors.

Don't forget that nonbiological parents—foster parents, grandparents, adoptive parents, aunts, uncles, close family friends, and others—may play key parenting roles for many of today's children. Their need for support in the parenting task is equally strong—or sometimes even stronger, if the child they are caring for has undergone great stress, such as abusive behavior from a trusted adult or the death or other loss of a parent.

The Parent's Role

Preventing the use of illegal substances—and alcohol and tobacco are illegal for children—should begin at home. Parents need to:

- communicate with their children;
- encourage and support healthy lifestyles for their children;
- help their children develop strong self-confidence and self-esteem; and
- serve as good role models in both attitudes and actions.

Drug prevention should be a continuous aspect of parenting, starting with the youngest of children and going on through the child's teen and young adult years. Just as drug prevention education in school is most effective when repeated and reinforced, parents' efforts need to be repeated and reinforced as well.

But parents can't always be there. Work and other responsibilities take them away. Children can't always be right beside their parents. They go to school from six to eight hours a day, and they need to play with other children and interact with other adults as part of growing up. Even when

children and parents are together, messages in public places—ads, popular culture, other adults' behavior and comments, etc.—can deliver messages contrary to those that parents send. The school and the community also send messages—either explicitly through policies and actions or implicitly through informal positions or through silence on the subject. These messages need to sustain and reinforce no-use policies for alcohol and other drugs for young people.

Even when parents are present, they may not be sure how or where to start, what to say, how to say it, and when to mention what. Parents need skills and knowledge, as well as a supportive community atmosphere, for their drug prevention efforts to have the greatest chance of success.

Parents Need Support

It is vital for the community to back up parents' no-drugs messages both in thought and in action. Especially as children grow older and begin to observe and become part of the world beyond the immediate family, the community needs to ensure that the messages it sends support the drug prevention messages that parents and other caring adults have given and continue to give.

Parents need direct support, too. One study showed clearly that although 97 percent of parents have discussed drugs with their children, 70 percent said they needed help with such discussions. Communities can help parents get the skills and knowledge that they need and want. Communities can establish networks of parent groups, facilitate exchange of information and standards, and help create or adapt education programs that transmit and reinforce sound parenting skills.

Community Leaders Can Help

Community leaders—those people who make and influence community policies, both officially and unofficially—have many remarkable opportunities to work with and encourage parents to bring up healthier children, reduce drug use, build stronger families, and reduce drug-related costs for treatment and enforcement. Moreover, community leaders can help shape both official and informal policies and attitudes about use of alcohol and other drugs to ensure that children and youth are receiving consistent messages supporting a no-use posture.

What do we mean by "community"? Agencies of local governments, schools, religious institutions, and employers are vital components. Each of these organizations has an intense interest in bringing up a community of drug-free children and in developing and sustaining the strong families fundamental to civic well-being.

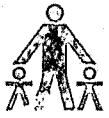
This booklet highlights a number of ways in which community leaders can set and support policies that increase parents' effectiveness in teaching their children why and how to avoid using illegal substances. It outlines basic policy and other community supports that can help parents; suggests ways in which legislative initiatives, tax policies, and spending priorities can help parents with their drug prevention tasks; shows how key local actors such as police, local businesses, media, churches, hospitals, and schools can be supportive; provides numerous examples of how policies have actually been implemented; and suggests novel approaches to communicating helpful messages. Some are quite simple and straightforward; others are more complex. All are designed to help the community help parents rear healthier children.

In many communities throughout the country, both new and renovated ideas are helping to shape policies, practices, and

priorities toward a supportive climate for parents and other caring adults. Their common aim is to prepare their community's children to become responsible adults.

Positives and Negatives

Sometimes the need is for positive statements or actions supporting anti-drug messages that parents (and others) seek to deliver to children. Sometimes the need is for negative steps—putting a stop to attitudes and behaviors that tacitly or directly suggest that drug use by young people is acceptable. Local and state government agencies have many powers of regulation, taxation, prohibition, incentive, and leadership by example that can be brought to bear in developing a community climate that not only rejects drug use but also provides positive alternatives for young people and assistance for parents in delivering anti-drug messages. The persuasive, ethical, and exemplary powers of schools, businesses, mass media, religious institutions, the medical community, and service organizations, among others, can be an enormous boost in the positive anti-drug efforts of families.



Ideas for Action

Briefly outlined below are some ideas on how various groups can build more positive, more drug-resistant communities that help parents bring up children who are more nearly crime and drug free. In addition, we point out some innovative ways to reach parents that may spark your thinking. This list is by no means exhaustive; it should serve only as a base for your own further creative efforts.

Government Agencies

What: Require clearly identified, independent parent membership on all task forces and committees dealing with prevention of drug abuse. Other members may also be parents, of course, but they serve on the task force on behalf of some other group or agency.

Why: People serving specifically on behalf of parents can provide fresh perspective, ensure that parents' needs and relationships with their children are considered and strengthened, and gather ideas and views from other parents to take back to the task force.

What: Require that parents be included in conducting any community needs assessment and that their comments receive full consideration.

Why Needs assessments often set long-term policy priorities and funding agendas for many aspects of community life. Conscious parent input can prevent inappropriate priorities from becoming embedded in policy, as well as help to craft workable new priorities.

> *The city of Cambridge, Massachusetts, formed a policy development group that included parents as well as city officials, service providers, and educators. That group's work led to creation of the Coordinating Council on Children, Youth, and Families—the Kids' Council, for short. The Kids' Council is required to have parent membership, drawing in particular from among parents whose children need city services.*

What Mandate parent involvement in development of local programs and in applications for federal and other grants.

How Parents can help incorporate into program design elements that will build more healthy, drug-free climates for themselves and their children. They often bring fresh perspectives on ways to get work done differently and more effectively.

> *Prevention programs seeking funds from the state of Montana are required by the grant application to include a parent component within the program. Montana also requires any such program to network within the community and demonstrate that it will engage young people as positive resources.*

What Establish "use-lose" policies for young people who drink (or use other drugs) and drive. These policies impose a mandatory revocation or suspension of driving privileges for the violators. For those still too young to drive, the privilege may be withheld for a year or more after they reach legal driving age.

Why: Parents (as well as enforcement officials and policy makers) will have a clear, unequivocal sanction that addresses a privilege dearly prized by most teens—the driver's license.

> *In California, the law requires that a driver involved in any way with any unlawful use of alcohol or other drugs give up driving for one year. Both parents and law enforcement officers now can point to an immediate (and, to teenagers, painful) consequence of being part of alcohol or other drug use. In the first year of operation, 300,000 driver's licenses were suspended, but in the first six months alone, alcohol-related deaths fell 8.5 percent.*

What: Formalize community standards through any of a variety of approaches, such as a coalition or task force policy declaration that is endorsed by local legislative and executive branch leaders. Seek publicity for the standards.

Why: Local governments, by supporting such standards, can help reward and reinforce supportive attitudes and actions. Publicity for these standards helps all parents draw on them in setting limits for their children.

> *San Diego County's Drug-Free Bill of Rights, a community plan for the entire jurisdiction, begins, "We, the residents of San Diego County, are endowed with certain inalienable rights. Examples of these rights include: the right to a place of work, homes, neighborhoods, schools, parks, etc., free of illegal drugs and alcohol abuse." Though putting the declaration into practice is sometimes arduous, community support for drug-free lifestyles is mounting: A rally drew 35,000 residents, and more than 250,000 families have signed pledges to lead healthy, drug-free lives.*

What: Ban sales of drug-related paraphernalia.

Why: Ready availability of rolling papers, pipes, and other devices for using illegal substances sends a tacit message that the community considers use of these substances to be so routine that commercial sale of the necessary accessories is acceptable.

> A *group of angry Chicago residents, led by a clergyman who had seen too much drug-related harm to the community, started out by confronting local merchants about why they were selling drug-linked paraphernalia if they were truly against drugs. Their efforts resulted eventually in a statewide law banning the general sale of such paraphernalia.*

What: Prohibit minors from selling or serving alcohol except under adult supervision.

Why: Currently, 44 states allow unsupervised minors to sell or serve liquor, wine, and beer. Such situations make it hard for young sales clerks or servers to resist peer pressure to make illegal underage sales or serve underage drinkers.

What: Restrict advertisement of or even abolish "happy hours" or other promotions that suggest to youth that using alcohol (and, by implication, other drugs) is a legitimate response to stress or a necessity for social intercourse.

Why: Young people see the ads for these promotions even if they don't see the inside of the bar. And to children, who view the world in less complicated terms than adults, the "happy hour"-alcohol link counters parents' messages that alcohol and other drug use can have unhappy results.

> *Jurisdictions across the United States—from Teton County (Jackson), Wyoming, to Braintree, Massachusetts—have banned promotional pricing of alcoholic beverages, including "happy hours." The U.S. Army has also forbidden "happy hours" at all clubs and bars on its bases.*

What: Include parent involvement in programs for young people; provide support and assistance as necessary for parents to take an active part.

Why: Parents who understand what their children are learning can more readily support those lessons at home. Parent groups enable parents to share concerns, problems, and solutions.

> *Students Mobilized Against Drugs, an NCPC program based in Washington, DC, public schools, gained favorable attention from many parents for its efforts to teach youth leadership skills, decision-making, and peer pressure resistance tactics. Program organizers quickly capitalized on that interest and concern to link parents, schools, and drug prevention in Parents Against Drugs, an auxiliary of the program.*
>
> *When young men in Memphis, Tennessee, entered an outpatient drug treatment program, their parents were brought into a support group that included a 15-week course on parenting and child management skills. To encourage participation, the parents were provided with bus tokens to enable them to attend sessions, along with points for attendance and activities. The parents—most of whom were single mothers—could then spend the points on items such as cologne, jewelry, and stockings at a special "store."*

What: Require reliable, objective evaluations of all prevention programs. Include an assessment of the program's help to parents, and make sure that parents have access to a comprehensible discussion of evaluation findings.

Why: Evaluations can help ensure that programs are delivering on their promises, an important issue in these times of limited government resources. Evaluating the program's relationship with parents keeps the policy focus on the need to support and bolster parents' efforts; making

the results available helps marshal support for good programs.

> *Evaluation of the McGruff Child Protection and Drug Prevention Curriculum sought the observations of parents as well as school administrators and teachers about what children in the K-6 school-based curriculum had learned. These observations were integrated into the general assessment.*

What: Insist that all publicly funded publications and programs send the clear message, "No unlawful use of alcohol or other drugs," and that terms such as "recreational" not be permitted in describing drug use.

Why: Words help set the community's framework. Publicly funded references to ideas like "recreational use" or "responsible drinking" (for people under 21) suggest that the community sees some drug use as acceptable—even if it's illegal.

> *California's General Assembly enacted a law requiring that tax dollars in that state fund only programs that teach and promote the message, "No unlawful use of alcohol or other drugs." This established clear, statewide policy rejecting "responsible use" messages.*

What: Use tax revenues on substances legal for adults (e.g., alcohol and tobacco)—especially revenues from increases in taxes—to fund prevention education programs for parents and children.

Why: Dedicated tax revenues help establish program stability and help taxpayers to see clearly that taxes are generating desirable results. If a tax increase is seen as going (wholly or partly) toward prevention programs, it may help make the increase easier to live with.

A $44.3 million appropriation for a Drug-Free Illinois program was funded through a ten-cents-per-pack increase in the state's sales tax on cigarettes. The appropriation provides funds for drug abuse education, prevention, enforcement, and treatment.

What: Turn seized assets of drug dealers into cash for prevention assistance to parents and others in communities around the state.

Why: Making prevention and community-based efforts eligible for such cash help means that asset forfeiture programs not only take away drug dealers' ill-gotten gains; they also turn the tables on the dealers by putting their former assets to work to reduce demand for drugs.

Washington State's Drug Education and Enforcement Account is funded through proceeds from forfeiture of real property (land, houses, etc.) that had been used in drug transactions, as well as from increases in taxes on cigarettes and alcohol.

What: Provide opportunities for young people themselves to become drug prevention resources to the community.

Why: Youth who know that they can play meaningful roles in the community have a real stake in it, and young people who have delivered the prevention message to others—peers, younger children, senior citizens—are more likely to believe it themselves.

In one South Carolina town, youth at a community center investigated the effects of alcohol use on those taking prescription drugs. They developed a presentation to help their grandparents and other elders understand the dangers of prescription drug abuse.

Youth in several New York City neighborhoods developed six-week-long summer programs of positive activity to "Take Back the Park" from drug dealers and users. Working with their neighbors, they devised programs that brought families back into these public spaces.

Junior high students in Evansville, Indiana, developed an original puppet play and discussion to present to elementary school students. The troupe—now two separate companies—has presented its messages against drugs along with skills for peer pressure resistance to more than 10,000 youngsters.

What: Ensure that existing laws are enforced—especially laws that keep illegal substances out of the reach of children. Strengthen laws against illegal sale and use of illegal identification cards, where necessary.

Why: Studies show that two out of three teens who drink—nearly seven million young people—simply walk into the store and buy it. A law that is on the books but unenforced sends the tacit message that the community is willing to wink at illegal purchases of beer, wine, wine coolers, and liquor.

College-level criminal justice students in Montgomery County, Maryland, serve as "undercover agents" to help enforce age restrictions on purchases of alcoholic beverages. In a carefully constructed operation, the students seek to make purchases under police supervision. Merchants who sell illegally are prosecuted as appropriate; police are freed from performing the undercover purchases as well as conducting the surveillance, and students get an opportunity for first-hand work in law enforcement.

What Develop an enforcement plan that ensures consistency in no-drug-use messages and has support from parents and others in the community.

Why It's important for parents to know that drug-prevention laws will be vigorously enforced and for police to know that the community supports such enforcement. For example, a neighborhood outcry against police stopping someone carrying an open can of beer can be quelled if the police can remind the residents that everyone agreed that laws against drinking in public should be enforced. Parents can provide important enforcement assistance without becoming vigilantes.

> *Parents in Deerfield, Illinois, brought together parents from neighboring communities on Lake Michigan to patrol the beach area as a show of support for state and local policies against alcohol and other drug use.*

What Establish a policy that no alcohol or tobacco will be available at public events and gatherings predominantly intended for families.

Why These substances are now widely recognized as drugs that are related to youthful use of other illegal substances. Allowing them at family-oriented gatherings sends a tacit message that the community accepts use by family members. From a practical point of view, many of these events offer ample opportunity for young people to try booze or cigarettes.

> *The social climate in Messina, New York, and surrounding areas has changed considerably thanks to parents and community leaders who worked together to establish a policy that no alcohol is served at sports arenas or at gatherings that include both adults and children—picnics, parades, festivals, social events, etc.*

Schools

What: Offer parents, through parent-teacher groups and other means, information and training in parenting techniques.

Why: Schools have access to excellent anti-drug materials and information as well as training resources.

> *Missouri's Parents as Teachers program is a home-school partnership to help parents give their children, from newborn to age three, the best possible start in life. All parents throughout the state have access to the program, which includes group meetings for parents, screenings for health and learning problems in children, and periodic monitoring.*
>
> *The Virginia State* PTA *offers grants for parent education workshops. One criterion for approval is that the content of the training must reflect the real needs of participants. Applicants have to prove that they have sought community involvement by both parents and youth.*
>
> *In more than 200 communities, Effective Parenting Information for Children* (EPIC) *helps build stronger families.* EPIC, *based in schools, includes a* K-9 *curriculum that builds self-esteem and responsible behavior. Workshops offer parents information on child rearing and an opportunity to discuss their concerns.*

What: Provide after-school (and before-school) activities or child care for young people.

Why: Studies show that young people who must stay in latchkey (self-care) situations are more likely to use drugs. Studies also suggest that youth with access to positive activities are better able to resist peer pressure and more

likely to have sufficient self-esteem to help them resist drug use temptations.

> A Hartford, Connecticut, *school stays open before and after class hours because parents and others in the community identified a need for a safe, supervised place for children.*
>
> In Trenton, New Jersey, *four schools have become* Safe Havens, *providing positive recreation and other opportunities for youth who want to stay drug and gang free. The effort is funded through the city's* Weed and Seed *grant from the* U.S. Department of Justice.

What: Work with parents, law enforcement, other municipal agencies, and social service agencies to make the school a truly drug-free zone.

Why: Partnership efforts help build support for drug-free attitudes and policies — parents' energy and initiative can be a critical resource in building a drug-free school.

> *Parents in the Chicago neighborhood of Logan Square determined that their children's first need was for a truly drug-free school zone. This core group brought together school officials, police, and other parents to establish, post signs for, and enforce the zone under state and local laws and provided supervision for children going to and from school.*

What: Teach teenagers basic parenting skills as part of their required curriculum.

Why: First of all, a substantial number of the children born today are born to teenagers. Second, finding out that parenting skills *can* be learned helps young people who do become parents understand that there is help available in many areas, including drug prevention.

The city of Minneapolis, Minnesota, in its "City's Children 2007" policy document, made an unequivocal commitment to providing the opportunity for every person to learn about the needs of children before becoming a parent.

Businesses

What: Include help for dependents' problems in the business's employee assistance plan.

Why: Employees concerned with or trying to finance help for a family member experiencing substance abuse problems are likely to be less productive.

> *The Lincoln, Nebraska, Employee Assistance Program* (EAP) *provides training, consultation, and counseling for* 24,000 *employees (and their families) in* 70 *firms—at a cost of less than* $19 *per employee per year. Forty percent of member companies have fewer than* 100 *employees. The benefit of the* EAP *is apparent in the client company retention rate: eight out of ten member businesses have been in the program for three or more years.*
>
> *A no-alcohol deli that recycles, shares profits, give surplus food to the homeless, provides free employee assistance plan services to all its workers and their families—*AND *makes a profit? That's the story of* Zingerman's Deli *in* Ann Arbor, Michigan. *The deli, now just ten years old, has been grossing* $4.5 *million a year through its catering and retailing business—without any alcohol sales.*

What: Host employee education seminars on parenting skills, techniques, and concerns, especially ones centered on drug-use issues.

Why: "Brown bag luncheons," "family days," and similar events can convey useful information and send the message that the company values drug-free families.

What: Take an active role in neighborhood improvement groups.

Why: A neighborhood that is thriving may not be immune to drug use and dealing, but it's certainly less susceptible. Moreover, a neighborhood striving for improvement is good for business.

> *In East Wilmington, Delaware, business owners teamed up with other residents in a comprehensive neighborhood effort to drive drug dealers out of town. Major city businesses contributed funds as well, recognizing that a healthier community climate returns big dividends.*

What: Develop benefits and policies that support and encourage parents in meeting their obligations.

Why: Such benefits as reliable day care, adequate health insurance, flexible work hours, and parental leave provisions are more than just attractive frills—they are a key signal that your company knows that effective parents are also more effective workers.

What: Support positive activities for young people and recognition of those who have made positive achievements.

Why: Businesses can sponsor family festivals, sports competitions, and other civic events that have drug-free policies. They can also give discounts, certificates, in-store publicity, or awards to youth or families who sign drug-free lifestyle pledges or complete drug prevention training.

> *In Cape May County, New Jersey, more than 100 local businesses have agreed to be part of the Sheriff's Pass Jail program. Teens are educated about the jail and other costs*

resulting from illegal drug use and sign a drug-free pledge in the form of a photo ID. This card gets them discounts at the participating businesses on things like clothes, videos, hair cuts, food, and books. Cards must be renewed every two years, and teens who are found to be involved with drugs lose their privileges.

What In sports stadiums and other public places, ban or restrict sales of alcohol.

Why Many children come to games or other events to see their heroes; the prevalence of alcohol there sends the message that drinking and sports do mix.

Jack Murphy Stadium, home of the San Diego Padres, has set up family sections where no alcohol consumption is allowed. In addition, the sale of alcohol anywhere in the stadium ends at the end of the seventh inning.

A motor sports race track near Denver, Colorado, has set aside one seating section where adults may enter to purchase and drink beer. Everywhere else in the stands, the sale or consumption of beer and other alcoholic beverages is banned.

Mass Media

What Provide tips and programs that help parents learn effective ways to talk with and teach their children about preventing alcohol and other drug use.

Why Some people learn better with visual cues; others respond better to verbal messages. Newspapers, radio stations, and television stations can provide either or both to more people and with greater impact than any other method.

"Talk Is Better for Your Kids Than Drugs, So Talk," proclaimed McGruff the Crime Dog, a communicator

known and trusted by adults and kids. Six points in this public service campaign summarized effective ways for parents to communicate drug prevention messages to children. Newspapers, magazines, transit companies, and others donated advertising space to bring this message to millions of parents around the nation at very low cost.

What: Include parents as a specific, independent component in discussions of editorial policy.

Why: Ensuring that parents' viewpoints are represented and that parental concerns get appropriate attention helps to ensure that stories presented, positions taken, and viewpoints framed are supportive of parental needs.

What: Be a leader. Initiate community efforts that help create drug-free climates for children and families.

Why: The station's or newspaper's employees live in the community and will benefit; managers are usually part of the community's power structure and can gather and coordinate vigorous support for such efforts.

WRC-TV in Washington, DC, and Blue Cross-Blue Shield of the National Capital Area designed a three-year Drug-Free Zones program that helps neighborhoods, schools, and individuals make their areas drug free. In a $5 million effort, awards were made to schools for student projects, a public education campaign was launched and sustained, and a community handbook was published to encourage local efforts by citing local examples. The partner agencies say their investment has "paid off handsomely" in community action.

What: Encourage parents and their children to help develop public information and education messages.

Why: Parents and children can reach their peers with surprising insight and effectiveness.

> *An award-winning rap video, "I'd Rather Drive," resulted from a concerned parent's work with the California Attorney General's Office. The message was clear, memorable, phrased in language that young people understand, and gave a persuasive, acceptable reason to choose not to use illegal drugs. The video was distributed throughout the state to all television broadcasters and cable TV companies and all junior and senior high schools.*

What: Establish a policy that prohibits alcohol advertising during prime family viewing or listening times.

Why: Studies show that children see as many as 100,000 TV commercials for beer before they turn 18. Separating family- and child-related programming from alcohol ads avoids the suggestion that alcohol is an appropriate accompaniment to child-related activities.

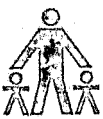
Other Community Groups

There is no limit to the kind or number of community groups who can reach out to parents to provide support that will help them bring up drug-free children. The *Boy Scout Handbook* now contains a pull-out section for parents about preventing drug abuse. Veterans' groups have mobilized to support or create community programs that include parents as key clients. Churches, synagogues, mosques, and other religious institutions have offered education, peer counseling, meeting places, ethical guidance, and moral support to innumerable parents seeking to help their children stay off drugs.

A church in Silver Spring, Maryland, has been the base for a parent support group that provides prevention and intervention guidance for parents, as well as treatment and counseling referrals. The nonsectarian effort helps families from all over the area.

Community Board, a San Francisco group that teaches community residents (including young people) how to mediate disputes, used its skill in explaining how to discuss difficult issues to develop an informative brochure about how parents can talk effectively with their children about smoking.

Some groups focus especially on work with families. The National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth, and PRIDE are among those that have local chapters. Other groups—the PTA, Jaycees, and Kiwanis, to name just a few — include drug prevention among their key agenda items and can be excellent sources of help in developing a parent assistance program.



Novel Avenues

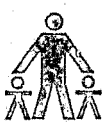
Working with parents—developing messages that are constructive, educational, and, above all, understood and believed—often presents a real challenge. In Memphis (see page 16), a direct incentive did the trick. Reaching out often requires cultural sensitivity, an ability to forego old assumptions, and energetic creativity.

In one Hispanic neighborhood in New York City, a prevention program is reaching young mothers through their devotion to soap operas called "novelas." They are invited to come to watch the novelas and have coffee. The TV programs are followed by a short talk on alcohol and other drugs and a discussion about what parents can do to protect their children.

Some thoughts to provide a springboard for your imagination:

- See if local grocers will have messages on effective parenting and on drug prevention printed on the bags they provide for customers.
- Work with local shopping malls to show parenting messages on ad boards or video displays that depict typical parent-child situations and suggest effective resolutions.

- Ask the local medical society to help place parent-oriented drug prevention brochures in clinic, hospital, and doctors' office waiting rooms.
- Conduct a contest in which youth design posters and fliers with messages on how parents can be effective in bringing up drug-free kids.
- Check with local fast food restaurants or other locally owned family dining spots. For example, placemats or activity sheets could encourage parent-child cooperation and communication about drug prevention.



Is It Worth Getting Involved?

Perhaps you've read this and said to yourself, "Surely today's children will grow up to raise drug-free kids of their own. After all, they've heard so many anti-drug messages." Or maybe you feel a bit uneasy intruding into other people's relationships with their children.

If you are reluctant to venture into the admittedly delicate area of parent-child relations, ask yourself whether *any* parents know how to raise kids just because they themselves were once kids. Consider how much uneasier you would feel if you knew a family might have been saved from the heartache of an addicted child or a child arrested — or even killed—for drug dealing.

If nothing else, think about the costs to the entire community of drug use—in lost potential, scarce resources expended, medical and criminal justice resources needed, to name just a few. Consider the degradation and the further crime that, as we all have learned, inevitably accompany drug abuse as it wrecks a community.

Supporting parents—both directly and indirectly—is a sound prevention investment. As we have learned through recent national experience, prevention is a great deal less expensive than the cure for drug abuse.