**40 Tips for Raising Drug-Free Kids**

- Teach about information on label of prescription medications (name, date, dose, expiration date, etc.)

- Teach about not sharing medications and not taking medications from others except parents, a doctor, or a babysitter with parental permission

- Dispose of unused medications properly and lock up medications and alcohol. Give the message that they are dangerous to children.

- Have family meals together as often as possible.

- Use positive reinforcement when your child has made a good choice or handled a situation well.

- Give a clear message that no illegal drug use is allowed in your home. Reinforce often.

- Raise children to believe that it’s your family rule to follow the law. Inform them of consequences of failure to do so (police involvement, courts, jail).

- Explain law that adults over age 21 can drink alcohol legally but it is against the law for people under the age of 21.

- Consider creating a culture of no alcohol use in your home and not drinking in their presence so they will not be desensitized.

- Consider not allowing family/friends to use alcohol in the presence of your children.

- Explain rationale for adults using alcohol on holidays, and serve children grape juice.

- Do not allow children to even taste alcohol. Doing so gives the message that you approve. Be consistent in your messages.

- Be a good role model regarding health, following the law, and substance use.

- Get professional help if you need it.

- Educate them about family history of addiction and their risk.

- Teach the difference between tattling and reporting. Set the expectation that siblings should report on each other about risky behaviors.

- Role play difficult situations. “What would you do if...”

- Look for “teachable moments.” Share stories from the newspaper, television news, people you know. Watch people who are smoking and discuss health risks.

- Monitor and restrict access to media as long as possible.
- Get professional help early. Children with mental health problems often become adolescent substance abusers because they self-medicate.

- Educate yourself so you can teach your children.

- Take parenting classes to learn how to communicate effectively with your children.

- Ask questions about their activities when you were not present.

- Call parents of their friends, inquire of their rules, and define “supervision.”

- Encourage only healthy friendships. Give permission to end unhealthy friendships.

- Encourage assertive behavior and saying “no” when uncomfortable, even to adults.

- Teach how to avoid peer pressure and being mean to others.

- Set rules for your child far in advance so they grow up knowing the rules.

- Teach healthy ways to relax, cope, and combat boredom--exercise, listen to music, talk to a friend, instead of “I had a rough day. I need a drink.”

- Educate!!! Root beer is pop—that’s ok to drink. Rubbing alcohol is for wounds—do not touch.

- Empower them to think for themselves (haircut, food choices, clothing, classes, activities).

- Have a code word your child can use to inform you he needs to be picked up from an uncomfortable situation with no questions asked.

- Share stories of your life and good choices.

- Use visits to the doctor/dentist/vaccinations as examples of ways to take care of their bodies.

- Teach them to stop and think before acting.

- Greet your teen when he/she returns home with a hug. Smell him/her and look in his/her eyes.

- Teach them who the “helping people” are in their home, school, and community.

- Teach them about good and bad touching, and “Stranger Danger.” Children who have been sexually abused have a higher likelihood of growing into adult substance users.

- Have a drug test at home “just in case it’s needed.” This may serve as a deterrent.

- Hold them accountable for their behavior. This increases their sense of responsibility.

Prepared by Lisa Kaplan, LMSW, CAADC, ACSW