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Summer

Summer vacation is almost here. School will be over and both parents and kids will be searching for activities to fill up the days. Teens may be especially vulnerable particularly if they have nothing to do. Teens report that summer is a time they are most likely to experiment with drinking and taking drugs— usually out of boredom. This summer may be more difficult for some teens because of the economy and lack of job opportunities. If your teen cannot work, encourage them to volunteer.

Check out the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Lower Naugatuck, the Valley YMCA, town recreation departments and the Ansonia Nature Center for youth activities for both younger children and teens. Some churches and schools also offer summer programs.

If possible, share child care with friends, other family members and/or the parents of your child's friends.

The following are some things you may consider:

1. Establish a curfew for both day and evening— depending upon the age of your child and their activities
2. Help to plan activities that will keep your child or teen busy
3. Be sure you know where your child/teen is spending his/her time and with whom
4. Connect with other parents—develop a network
5. If your child has a cell phone, establish check-in times
6. Be sure you or another adult is always available
7. Plan special activities as a family to give your child/teen something to look forward to

FAST FACTS

- ↪ Moms, dads and grandparents are the most trusted sources of information for 9 to 13 year olds.
- ↪ 4th, 5th and 6th grade students believe there is harm associated with drinking
- ↪ From 6th to 9th grade the belief, that drinking is harmful, decreases
- ↪ Studies show that kids whose families eat together at least 5 times a week are less likely to be involved with alcohol or drugs
- ↪ 32% of Valley 11th grade students engaged in binge drinking 2 weeks prior to the 2007 VSAAC Student Survey

Parents– Beware of Summer Parties: Did you know that adults can face both civil and criminal liability if they provide alcohol to anyone under the age of 21; or, if teens host a party with alcohol in their homes– with or without a parent's consent.

TWEENS AND TEENS

Tweens (ages 9 to 12) are just beginning to become capable of self awareness. Their thinking is more concrete and less abstract. In other words their thinking is more 'black and white'. Parents must match directions with tween's abilities. This means *parents must make clear, easy-to-follow rules with clear, easy-to-follow consequences— both positive and negative.*

Although teens are capable of understanding the world in more abstract terms and they are gaining self awareness, they still need easy-to-follow rules with easy-to-follow directions, both positive and negative. www.theantidrug.com

Consequences must be appropriate to the behavior and enforcement should be consistent. This information is truly important when tweens and teens may be spending more time without parental supervision during the summer when they are out of school and parents are working.



TALK WITH YOUR CHILD

One way to encourage ongoing communication with your child would be to start when your child is very young. Cuddle up at the end of the day and ask what made him/her happy or sad that day, and what made him/her angry or proud. This not only helps a child recall the day but encourages a child to express him/herself. Rephrasing your child's comments show you have been listening and understand what s/he has said. Non-verbal support such as smiling or nodding also shows you are paying attention. Your active listening will teach a child listening skills.

This time together also validates the child's feelings and acknowledges that s/he is important to you and what s/he has to say is also important. This open communication would also be a good time to help develop anger management skills and problem solving skills. Talk together about problems and help your child find solutions.

It is, perhaps, easier to begin the communication connection early but that doesn't mean it is ever too late to start listening and talking. Be open and non-threatening and don't be critical. Don't be demeaning or insulting. Ask about what you don't understand and share your concerns so that your child understands your feelings.

By listening and accepting your child's thoughts and ideas, trust will develop that leads to open communication. It will be easier to ask questions and, hopefully, easier to hear the answers!



The following are some clues that you are witnessing and impaired driver.

Keep out of their way and contact authorities. You may save a life.

Driving very fast or very slow	Starting/stopping in a jerky manner
Driving in spurts	Staring straight ahead
Driving with head out of window	Following the center line
Frequent lane changes	Driving on the wrong side of the road
Passing cars with insufficient clearance	Frequent braking
Disregarding traffic control signals	Improper use of signals
Approaching signals too fast or too slow	Wide Turns
Driving at night without headlights	Placing face close to the windshield
Failing to dim lights to oncoming cars	Loud radio and windows down in all weather
Stopping for green, going on red lights	Weaving in traffic
Driving the wrong direction	

Check out two great websites: www.vsaac.org and www.settherulesct.org