

TALK EARLY. TALK OFTEN.

Tips on Talking to Youth



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Kanabec County Community Health



EVERY CONVERSATION COUNTS

Parent, guardians, caregivers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, mentors, coaches, educators and anyone who is in some way connected to youth - **you have more influence than you realize!** Research suggests that one of the most important factors in healthy child development is a strong and open relationship. Although it may seem like kids aren't listening - they really are! Here are some ways you can help them make healthy choices.

It is never too early to talk to your kids about drugs and alcohol as long as your conversations are age-appropriate. Open and trusting communication is crucial to prevent youth from using alcohol and other drugs.

BE RESPECTFUL

If you value your child's viewpoint, they will more likely listen and respect yours.

SHOW YOU CARE

Approach discussions with focus, curiosity, and empathy. Stay calm and refrain from passing judgment, inducing shame, or resorting to scare tactics.

CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS

If you hear something you don't agree with, refrain from reacting emotionally. Instead, pause and take a few deep breaths, then share your feelings in a way that is constructive.

BECOME AN ACTIVE LISTENER

Listen to what your child has to say. Do not interrupt.

WORDS MATTER

Pay attention to how you speak, your facial expressions, and the words you choose. For instance, instead of stating "Marijuana is bad," consider saying, "Using marijuana can be harmful because your brain is still developing, and it may lead to negative long-lasting effects."

SET AND ENFORCE GUIDELINES

Establishing shared guidelines and expectations for healthy behaviors creates an environment to promotes positive choices.

ASK OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Encourage your child to express what they feel and think about the issues you are discussing.

FIND TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Use recent events or real world situations as an opportunity to start a conversation. Ask your child what they think. Spontaneous conversations can be impactful.

SHARE ACTIVITIES

Eat meals together. Make time for activities that you enjoy together. Plan an adventure together. Listen to new/old music.



RESOURCES



www.better2gether.me

