

Pointers For Parents

Love: The Anti-Drug

(NAPS)—Picture the scene: you take your daughter to the mall and she doesn't want to walk too close to you, or you drop off your son at practice and he leaps out of the car practically before it's come to a stop.

You love your kids and want what's best for them, but sometimes it can be hard to demonstrate how much you love them, particularly as they grow up and become more independent.

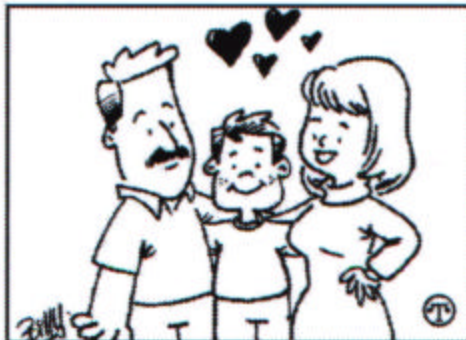
Research shows that one of the best ways you can help your kids avoid drug use is by spending time with them. Here are some helpful suggestions for knowing what's going on in your child's world when they seem to close every door to you:

Be a good role model for your kids. There is no such thing as "do as I say not as I do" when raising children. If you take drugs or abuse alcohol, your children are observing and learning from your behavior. On the other hand, if you are a living, day-to-day example of your value system, your children will learn and emulate the compassion, honesty, generosity and openness that you want your children to have.

Be involved in your children's lives. According to behavioral scientist, Tony Biglan, Ph.D., there are simple ways to be part of your child's life:

1) Create "together time."—Start a tradition or fun, weekly routine to do something with your child, such as going out for ice cream.

2) Eat meals together as often as possible.—Mealtime is a great opportunity to talk about the day's



events, unwind, and reinforce a family bond. Studies show that kids whose families eat together at least five times a week are less likely to be involved with drugs and alcohol.

3) Try to be home after school. The "danger zone" for drug use and other risky behavior is between 4 and 6 p.m. If you can, arrange to have flextime if it's available at your workplace. When your child will be with friends, make sure there is adult supervision.

If you would like more tips on communication and parenting, visit www.theantidrug.com, a web site designed to help parents learn how to talk to their children about staying clean, safe, and drug-free, which is part of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy's National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign offers a brochure called "Parenting Skills: 21 Tips and Ideas to Help You Make a Difference," that can also be ordered by phone at 800-788-2800.

For additional information about drugs, alcohol or tobacco, visit the following web sites: www.drugfreeamerica.org/drug_info.html, www.nida.nih.gov/Infofax/Infofaxindex.html or www.health.org.