



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



ParentUpvt.org Helps Start Discussions about Substance Abuse



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BURLINGTON – All teens are at risk for substance abuse, and parents are the #1 influence on their decision to not drink alcohol or do drugs.

The Vermont Department of Health has just redesigned and expanded its ParentUpvt.org website to include many new resources and interactive tools that take into account differing parenting styles.

“By setting clear rules, limiting access to alcohol and refusing to host underage drinking parties, parents can protect children from consequences that may affect them for the rest of their lives,” said Deputy Commissioner Barbara Cimaglio.

Teens who drink before the age of 15 are more likely to experience academic failure, engage in risky sexual behavior, become alcohol dependent and develop other substance abuse problems.

A majority (59 percent) of high school students reported ever having used alcohol, and only 74 percent believe their parents would think it was wrong, or very wrong to drink alcohol, according to the 2014 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey. A third of students in grades nine through 12 drank alcohol in the past 30 days.

Research shows that the key reason kids give for not drinking is that they don't want to disappoint their parents.

“Every parent should prioritize having these conversations with their children, even in the everyday, quiet moments you have together,” Cimaglio said. “This is a critical time in their development, and the guidance you provide now will strengthen them and give them the tools they need when they are pressured by their peers.”

April is Alcohol Awareness Month. For more information about alcohol and drug abuse prevention, treatment and recovery, go to healthvermont.gov.

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