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**ParentUpVT.org Helps Start Discussions about Substance Misuse**  
*April is Alcohol Awareness Month*

BURLINGTON – The Vermont Department of Health wants people to know at least two key things about teens, drugs and alcohol: 1) All teens are at risk for substance misuse, and 2) Parents are the number one influence on their kids’ deciding to not misuse drugs and alcohol. To help families start the conversation and keep it going in a way that is meaningful to teens, the Health Department has expanded its [ParentUpVT.org](http://ParentUpVT.org) web resource to include more interactive tools and how-to guides for parents and caregivers.

“We know kids are at risk for substance misuse, because they told us so,” said Barbara Cimaglio, deputy commissioner with the Vermont Department of Health. “Every two years, our Youth Risk Behavior Survey asks high school students about their risk-related behaviors. What we learned from the students is that in the month before the survey, 30 percent drank alcohol, 16 percent binged on five or more drinks in a row, and 22 percent smoked marijuana,” said Cimaglio.

The good news, she said, is that children who learn about the risks of drugs and alcohol from their parents are significantly less likely to misuse these substances. “Every parent needs to have these conversations with their kids, and it will make a difference,” said Cimaglio. “Solid research shows the number one reason students give for not drinking or using drugs is that they don’t want to disappoint their parents.”

ParentUpVT.org helps parents figure out how to have these difficult conversations with their children. “Every family is different, but the common element is that our kids look to us for guidance, whether we know it or not,” said Cimaglio. “The tools, tips and videos will give parents what they need to talk with their teen in a way that they will hear you.”

To view the videos and find all the tools for talking to your kids, visit [ParentUpVT.org](http://ParentUpVT.org).

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