

Make Prom and Graduation Season a Safe Time for Teens

Parents Should Talk To Teens About Risks, Rules

(NAPSA)—For many high schoolers, the prom and graduation season brings good times and happy memories. It also brings increased peer pressure...the pressure to make unwise choices and even disobey the law.

But mothers and fathers have parent power, a positive force they can use to help teenagers stay safe, make smart decisions, and even resist negative peer pressure.

And while few teens will readily admit it, three out of four cite their parents—not their peers—as the No. 1 influence in their decision about whether or not to drink alcohol, according to the Roper Youth Report.

Lonnie Carton, Ph.D., director of Teen and Family Resources for the Web-based “Warm2Kids” program and an advisory panel member of the “Family Talk About Drinking” program, offers these suggestions for using positive parental power when talking to teens as they celebrate these rites of passage.

- Let your children know that we make rules to protect them, not to punish them. Remember that love means having to say “no” to some things.

- Remind them to be in control of themselves and to make their own decisions based on what *they* know is right.

- Tell them to call you immediately if they get into a situation they know isn’t safe—no matter what time it is, no matter where they are. Assure them they will hear *nothing but praise* from you if they make that call.

In fact, according to Carton, parents should begin talking with their children about underage



Lonnie Carton, Ph.D.

drinking long before their teenage years. Ages 9 to 11 are “prime time” for a conversation on this topic.

“By helping children get the facts and make the right decisions, parents help prevent underage drinking, while underscoring the importance of exercising personal responsibility,” Carton explains.

Carton encourages parents to set good examples for their children by openly communicating with them about drinking, by setting firm rules and guidelines, by teaching them critical decision-making skills, and by having the good sense to say “no” to hosting a party and providing teens and their friends with alcohol—no matter what the occasion. In addition, for parents who choose to drink, always drink responsibly and in moderation.

“Family Talk About Drinking” program materials, including a parent guidebook and video, are available at www.familytalkonline.com or by calling 1-800-359-TALK (1-800-359-8255). The materials are provided free of charge as a community service of Anheuser-Busch Cos.