

Helping You Navigate Your Journey Through Parenting

Prevention through Education and Parenting, Part 2 Ages 12-18 years



BY KIM DeMARCHI

As parents and caregivers, we are all committed to raising healthy and substance free children. But, how do we do that? We know that the greatest influencers in children's lives are their parents and other caring adults. Research shows the parents who talk with their kids about alcohol and drugs contribute significantly to a child's decision to be substance free. Another contributing factor is parents who set and enforce clear rules and expectations.

Starting these conversations with children can be difficult and uncomfortable for parents and other adults who care for or about children. But, it's necessary. The following steps will help you prepare for those difficult conversations:

- #1 It's NEVER too early to talk to your child.
- #2 Make every opportunity a teachable moment.
- #3 Educate yourself on the topic of conversation.
- #4 Consider your child's reactions and ways you might respond to certain questions or feelings.
- #5 Choose a time where you and your child can sit down with any distractions.
- #6 Remember, this is a conversation, NOT a lecture.
- #7 Do NOT use scare tactics. Simply discuss the consequences without overstating the case.

Last month, I covered this topic for ages 3-11. Now on to the older kids!

12-14 Year Olds: During these years, your teen will most likely be exposed to situations where they'll need to make decisions about alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. The average age of first use usually happens during these years, so talk to your teens frequently.

- Repeat your expectation over and over that your teen will not use and will set rules around that expectation.
- Decide together what the consequences will be if they should make a choice to use.
- Help them prepare for difficult situations with their peers and let them know they can also blame you, "My parents would be so disappointed in me." Or, "my parents will ground me for life."
- Remind them to never share medications with friends and not to take any meds that aren't prescribed by their physician.
- Keep your prescriptions locked up in a safe place where your teen or their friends can't get to them.
- Also, lock up all your alcohol and explain to your children that it's not that you don't trust them, but you don't want anyone under age to have access to it.
- Ask open ended questions, make time for your teen, encourage positive activities, listen to them.

15-18 Year Olds: By now your teen has had to make choices about whether or not to try substances. They've certainly seen their friends use, and they may have unfortunately witnessed extreme ramifications. Teens at this age need more than just a generic message to not use IF they are going to be able to resist all the peer pressure.

- Discuss how alcohol and drugs can seriously affect their future including college and a job.
- Make sure they know ANYONE can become addicted.
- Give detailed and reality driven messages, such as using a drug just once can have a serious or permanent consequence.
- Use stories in the media to start conversations: drinking and driving, using at school, in sports, in the community.
- Talk to your teen regularly about all sorts of things: school, social life, interests, sports,

hobbies, relationships, and goals. They need to be comfortable talking to you.

- Communicate with other parents, especially around sleepovers, expectations, Homecoming, Prom, spring break and graduation.

18 and Older: At this age, the decisions your young adult makes about substances will have a big impact on their current and future life. They will start determining how involved they will be with substance use.

- Keep the line of communication open. Let them know they can contact you at any time.
- Talk often and ask them all about their classes, work, friends, and interests.
- Make sure you and your child know what college campus resources are available if they needed it in the areas of mental health or substance use.
- Make sure your young adult knows their college's alcohol and drug policy. Also, discuss how underage drinking and substance use can have serious consequences such as academic failure, date rape, and violence.
- Remind them they can still have fun while being responsible and that not everyone uses.
- Revisit positive stress relievers your teen can partake in.
- Reiterate that if they are at college, their education is their #1 job.
- Make sure they know that there are no mood altering drugs that enhance their academic performance.
- Remind your teen not to take anyone else's medication and to keep their meds locked up.



- Let them know that it is always okay to call 911 if needed!
- If addiction runs in your family, your child needs to know they are more at risk for also developing an addiction.

Even though these conversations can be difficult, they are critical to helping develop healthy young adults. You, being a primary caretaker, in a child's life, can make a profound difference if you start talking as early as toddlers. A lot of prevention is directly related to healthy relationships and effective communication. YOU are the most important protective factor in keeping your child substance free. Don't underestimate the power of early and clear communication throughout the years. You do make a difference!

Kim DeMarchi, M.Ed., Certified Parent Educator and Certified Family Coach, is a Tualatin resident with 18 year old boy/girl twins, and has been an educator for almost three decades. Kim is trained and certified through Positive Discipline, as well as the International Network for Children and Families in a program called Redirecting Children's Behavior. Kim is active in supporting her local parenting community by providing workshops, coaching families and writing articles for our newspaper. Kim is a monthly guest on KATU's Afternoon Live and AM Northwest. She also blogs twice a month for Knowledge Universe's Kidcare online community. Kim's goal for you is to help reduce conflict, foster mutual respect, and create deeper communication and connections with your loved ones. She can be reached through EmpoweredParenting.com.



Strong Voices Smart Choices

Parents who talk with their kids about **Mental Wellness** and **Substance Use** contribute significantly to a child making healthy decisions.

Kim DeMarchi, M.ED., Certified Parent Educator, Certified Family Coach & Speaker

September 26th, 6:30-8:00PM
Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/strong-voices-smart-choices-session-1-tickets-69812134978>

October 1st, 6:30-8:00PM
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/strong-voices-smart-choices-session-2-tickets-69814225227>

Register Today

Starting the conversation can be difficult. Learn **tips** on how to **talk** with **your child** and where to find support.

Hosted by Empowered Parenting in partnership with Tualatin Together.
www.empoweredparenting.com | www.tualatintgether.com

Coffee Talk

Join us for Coffee & Learn About

"How to have an open dialogue around substance-abuse and mental health."

* Parents with youth of all ages welcome*

Thursday, October 3rd
8:45-9:45AM
Marquis Cafe
19945 SW Boones Ferry Rd,
Tualatin, OR 97062

Presented By

Coffee Talk Series Dates:
Thursday, Nov. 7th: "Practicing Refusal Skills"

For more information about this event or Tualatin Together, contact us at tualatintgether@gmail.com or 503.431.4151

Learn positive parenting strategies

Strengthen your family

Improve relationships

Building Resilient Families Workshop

Kim DeMarchi, M.ED., Certified Parent Educator, Certified Family Coach & Speaker

"My life's work is sharing my passion in raising cooperative, respectful, resilient and responsible children."

Join us on any date from 6:15pm - 8:45pm

November 6th
Winona Grange 8340 SW Seneca Street, Tualatin, Oregon

November 12th
Location TBD

November 20th
Winona Grange 8340 SW Seneca Street, Tualatin, Oregon

Register Today
Search EventBrite "Building Resilient Families"

Join us for "Light Bites" from 6:00-6:15PM before we sit down and engage together to build compassion and prevention through education & parenting.

Empowered Parenting, Winona Grange & Tualatin Together are honored to partner so Kim DeMarchi, M.ED., Certified Parent Educator, Certified Family Coach & Speaker can present specific training designed by Dr. Amy Stoerber, PH.D, LLC Child Psychologist & Trainer and a team of local pediatricians.

Prevention through Education & Parenting

To register for one of these free events please go to:

Nov. 6th: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/building-resilient-families-workshop-tickets-69827669439>
 Nov. 12th: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/building-resilient-families-workshop-tickets-69828684475>
 Nov. 20th: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/building-resilient-families-workshop-tickets-69828830913>

For more information visit Kim's website at: EmpoweredParenting.com
 Or Tualatin Together's at: TualatinTogether.com