

# PRESS RELEASE

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## MARCH IS MICHIGAN PARENTING AWARENESS MONTH

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JACKSON (March 9, 2009) – If you could do one thing to help your child succeed in school, live a healthier life, and help them develop skills to reduce negative influences would you do it? If your answer is yes, the Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (JCSAPC) encourages you to become involved with your children and talk with them about ways to offset the pressures of substance use and abuse. Children today are exposed to multiple messages promoting the use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. They receive mixed messages from the media, friends at school, and even at home with parents or caregivers. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), most children, in one way or another, have witnessed the drinking of alcohol or smoking of cigarettes by the time they enter preschool.

As a parent, the tasks of child rearing in today's world are overwhelming; there is advice about what to say, what not to say, and when and how to say it. One fact remains, children need support and guidance when it comes to making healthy decisions about their future. The good news is, that most kids who choose not to smoke, use drugs or drink alcohol, credit their parents' disapproval as a primary reason for not engaging. According to the 2008 Michigan Profiles for Healthy Youth Survey (MiPHY), 87% of Jackson County youth reported that their parents would feel regular use of alcohol to be wrong or very wrong. The same statistics for tobacco and marijuana use were 93% and 94%, respectively.

When it comes to substance use and other antisocial behaviors such as stealing or bullying, there are many proven strategies to help parents. Six key things parents can do to directly impact their children's lives include:

1. Establish and maintain good communication with your child
2. Get involved in your child's life
3. Make clear rules; enforce them with consistency and appropriate consequences
4. Be a positive role model
5. Teach your child to choose friends wisely
6. Monitor your child's activities

Additionally, make your position clear on alcohol, drugs and smoking; have expectations and hold your children accountable; set a curfew and have kids check in when they are away from home – these are all key to the success of your being and staying connected with your child. Involvement is not merely a physical presence, but includes an emotional component as well; try and meet your child where they are emotionally. Establishing a close relationship with your child will make it easier to address many situations they find themselves confronted with now and in the future.

It is never too early, and it is never too late to START talking with your kids! March is Michigan Parenting Awareness Month. For resources, brochures and further information, visit their website at <http://www.preventionnetwork.org/pam%20homepage.htm>.

### **More information about:**

- *Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition* and its activities, please contact Kelsey Winston at (517) 796-5133 or via email at [kwinston@uwjackson.org](mailto:kwinston@uwjackson.org)
- If you or someone you know would like more information about tips parents can utilize in helping kid's make good decisions please visit [www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com) for materials tailored for parents.

- If a parent you know is struggling with a youth in trouble in Jackson, parents can contact S.T.A.N.D (Supportive Techniques and New Directions), a monthly parent support group at (517) 416-7182 or by dialing 2-1-1.
- March is Michigan Parenting Awareness Month. For more information, visit <http://www.preventionnetwork.org/pam%20homepage.htm.s>