

## PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

November 2011

The School Community Intervention Program (SCIP) provides an opportunity for parents to address concerns they or the school may have regarding their students' behaviors. The idea behind **prevention** is to educate and prevent problems from occurring. The idea behind **intervention** is when a concern is identified, to bring it to the students' and parents' attention early enough to prevent the concern from continuing or developing into something more serious. SCIP is available to assist with both prevention and intervention strategies to assist families.

### PREVENTION:

- SCIP Teams in many schools offer prevention activities during Red Ribbon Week or health fairs that showcase positive choices kids can make. Parents can offer support to them in planning and carrying out their efforts and taking an interest in the information your student is bringing home.
- SCIP provides publications to all SCIP teams that are often very helpful to parents. This includes information regarding new trends and resources so parents can stay current on what is happening with youth. The publications may also address mental health and bullying issues that keep parents up-to-date.
- Research shows that parents have a tremendous impact on their children deciding whether or not to use alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. Taking the time to talk to children about dangers, your expectations, consequences, etc. can help children establish their own guidelines in accordance with the ones of their parents. These talks are most helpful if done early and often, not just one time.

**WHAT IS AN INTERVENTION?** It can be as simple as a conversation with the purpose of approaching your child directly about your concerns. It can be successful even if it tackles small goals at first. Addressing the concerns may be uncomfortable for both parent and child or you may think it is unnecessary. But it is necessary to make it clear that you do not want him/her to engage in such behaviors. That is why it is so important to address the concerns as soon as your instinct tells you that something is wrong. An intervention can address concerns regarding behaviors, mental health and substance abuse issues.

**INTERVENTION:** What to do if you think or know that your child is using drugs or alcohol:

- Take action right away
- Have productive conversations, remaining calm, sharing concerns and listening
- Set tighter limits with clear consequences
- Get outside help and support, if strategies you try aren't as successful as you'd like
- Closely monitor activities and behaviors

Things to say if your child becomes defensive:

- Child says, "You went through my stuff?! You're a snoop."  
Parent says, "I'm sorry you feel that I broke your trust, but as a parent, my job is to keep you safe and healthy, so I have to be nosy when I believe you're doing something unsafe."
- Child says, "You smoke/drink! You're such a hypocrite."  
Parent says, "I wish I had never started smoking because it's so hard to stop." Or "I love you too much to let you make the same mistakes I did."
- Child says, "I've never done drugs! You're wrong."  
Parent says, "I love you way too much to let anything happen to you. I need you to tell me the truth so I can figure out how to help you. I have no intention of getting mad or punishing you."

These suggestions can also be used with younger children who exhibit behaviors that are unacceptable. They can be used with older children whom you may suspect are using alcohol or drugs. The important thing is to act...the sooner the better. Don't be dissuaded by arguments such as "all kids do this" or "they'll grow out of it." Prevention and early intervention are valuable tools for any parent! And remember that SCIP at your child's school can help!

(Source:www.drugfree.org)