

Parents Make A Difference!

The recent Southwest Wisconsin Youth Survey of 3,727 teens in Southwest Wisconsin found six parenting practices that are related to lower levels of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, lower incidence of sexual intercourse and higher grades. Those parenting practices include:



Parental Monitoring is about knowing your teen's friends and their parents. It is also about knowing what your teen's plans are before they go out and expecting them to call when plans change.

Family Love and Support refers to showing the love you have for your child and supporting them when they need it. It is not about allowing the teen to do whatever he or she wishes.

Consistent Family Rules. Teens that report their parents frequently let them know ahead of time what the consequences will be for violating family rules and then consistently enforce those consequences when the rule is broken also report lower incidences of risky behaviors like alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.

Supporting School Codes. Teens who report that their parents would turn them in to school officials if they violated a school code, reported lower levels of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, lower levels of sexual intercourse and higher average grades than teens who said their parents would not turn them in, but would instead punish them at home.

Eating Dinners as a Family. The survey confirms other research which says teens who eat three or more dinners a week with their whole family are less likely to engage in risky behaviors.

Communicating Your Values about what is appropriate teen behavior when it comes to alcohol, tobacco and sexual intercourse. Teens who report their parents disapprove of these behaviors were less likely to be involved in them, and teens who thought their parents approved were more involved. Teens who weren't sure acted like the teens who thought their parents approved.

For more information about the Southwest Wisconsin Youth Survey or the six parenting practices listed above, visit the survey web site at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/grant/tap/SWYS2005.html>

