

Community-Based Treatment Services

Peers, Parties and Parents

Adolescence is a time for trying new things. This experimentation can be both positive and negative. Teens express a desire for more independence and less parental control. At the same time they want to be liked and valued by their peers. Parents find themselves conflicted by their teens requests for more freedom and their own need to know that their teens are behaving responsibly. Many parents can't believe that their mostly responsible teenager would ever experiment with alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. Why would they?

Teens use alcohol and other drugs for many reasons, including wanting to feel grown up, to fit in and belong with their peers, to relax and feel good, to take risks and rebel, and to satisfy their curiosity. Young people who use alcohol and other drugs are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, experience failure in school, and be the victims or perpetrators of violence. It is difficult to determine which teens will experiment and stop and which will develop serious problems.

The Role of Parents

Parents possess a unique ability to help their children remain healthy and drug free. Adolescents are less likely to use alcohol and other drugs when they have caring adults who are involved in their lives and when they are involved with positive activities at school or in the community. Parents can help through early education about drugs, open communication, good role modeling, and early recognition if problems are developing. Get involved -- develop a weekly routine for doing something special with your child. Don't be afraid to ask where your child is going, who they'll be with, and what they'll be doing. Get to know your child's friends and their parents. Youth are more likely to experiment with drugs if their friends do. Establishing relationships with your teen's friends will place you in closer touch with your child's daily life.

Communication Expectations

- Be absolutely clear that you don't want your adolescent using drugs ever and leave no room for interpretation. Talk often about the risks and results of drug use. Be careful not to react in a way that will hurt further discussions – avoid harsh, judgmental accusations and threats.
- Make clear rules and enforce them with consistency and consequences. Do not make empty threats or let your teen off the hook if rules have been broken.
- Set a curfew.
- Have your teen check in with you at regular times.
- If your child hosts a party, be in attendance. Invite other parents over so that you also have a good time. Be clear that you will not tolerate alcohol or drug use in your home.
- Call parents whose home is to be used for a party. Offer to bring food or beverages as a way to connect with other parents.
- Make it easy for your teen to leave a party where alcohol or drugs are being used. Discuss in advance how you will come to pick your child up the moment they feel uncomfortable. Later, be prepared to discuss what happened.
- Listen to your instincts. Don't be afraid to intervene if your gut tells you that something is wrong.
- Have your child sign the *Teen Promise* and *Party Checklist* before heading out for the evening (see back of this flyer for sample Teen Promise and Party Checklist).

Bellefaire JCB - Parent/Teen Party Checklist

Parents and their children should have open discussions about expectations before the teen heads out to a party, event or activity. The Party Checklist and Teen Promise below are great tools to guide discussions.

The Party Checklist

Dear (insert name of teen):

If we don't know, then you can't go.

What is happening?

Why/what is the purpose?

When are you going?

Where will this event take place (address and phone number)?

Who is going to be there?

Who are the parents? Will the parents be home?

When will you be home?

How will you get there?

How will you get home?

Love, Mom and Dad

The Teen Promise

Dear Mom and Dad:

I promise to call you for a ride if there is alcohol or any other illegal substance at this party, and/or if I am feeling pressured to do something against my will.

Love, (insert name of teen)

About SAY - Social Advocates for Youth

SAY is a school-based prevention and early intervention program of Bellefaire JCB for students in middle and high school. **SAY** services are offered in eight east suburban school districts in Cuyahoga County (Beachwood, Chagrin Falls, Cleveland Heights-University Heights, Mayfield, Orange, Shaker Heights, Solon and South Euclid-Lyndhurst). **SAY** is also a coalition of community representatives working to strengthen families, youth and their communities in order to:

- Help prevent the use of alcohol and other drugs by teens and adolescents
- Help reduce the incidence of social and behavioral problems, such as teen violence, depression and suicide
- Support teens and their families through adolescence


Bellefaire JCB

for excellence... for wellness... for children

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Bellefaire JCB is accredited by The Joint Commission, has Hague Accreditation through the Council on Accreditation, and has commendation from the Ohio Step Up to Quality System. It is licensed by the Ohio Departments of Job and Family Services, Mental Health, and Developmental Disabilities. It is certified by the Ohio Departments of Mental Health, and Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, and chartered by the Ohio Department of Education.

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