

## Message to Moms: YOUR WORDS, ACTIONS COUNT

This Mother's Day, it is essential for mothers to recognize that their words and actions count when it comes to substance abuse discussions.

Dr. Phillippe Cunningham, Research Scientist at the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Medical University of South Carolina, explains, "Kids who are close to their parents are less likely to engage in a whole host of risky behaviors, including drug and alcohol abuse."

It's important for mothers to maintain an ongoing dialogue with their kids about drugs that includes, praising appropriate activities and setting clear house rules that drug use is unacceptable. A statement as simple as, "In this house, we do not smoke marijuana", can go a long way.

Other tips for moms include:

- ✓ **Initiate conversations** about drugs and why they're harmful during the course of normal activities. Use blocks of time such as after dinner, before bedtime, before school or on the drive to or from school and extracurricular activities.
- ✓ **Talk** with your kids each day after school. **Know what they are involved in, who their friends are and help them manage their free time.** Parental involvement is an extremely powerful drug prevention measure. Your teens may be pressing for independence, but the truth is they need to hear from you and want you involved in their lives.
- ✓ **Feel comfortable with your words** and saying things like, "I would be very disappointed if you started using drugs or if you even tried them once," or "I love you and I want the best for you, so I hope you won't try any drugs." "In this family we learn how to deal with life's challenges without alcohol and drugs."
- ✓ **Give honest answers** to tough questions, and do not make up what you do not know.

Source: TheAntiDrug.com