

# Parenting Matters

Quarterly Newsletter

January 2008

For Colorado Parents

## Teens and Domestic Violence

**National figures show that 1 in 11 high school students say they have been hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend** in the past year; and 1 in 3 teens report knowing a friend who has been physically hurt by their partner. Experts say Domestic Violence Awareness Month, observed every October, is an important reminder of how serious teen dating can be, leading many youth to turn to high-risk behaviors including drug and alcohol use.

Dating violence during adolescence can create lifelong consequences. According to the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, survivors of teen dating violence are at greater risk for truancy, substance abuse, pregnancy, suicide, and severely violent adult relationships. Dr. Loretta Novince, a developmental psychologist and Executive Director of the Northeast Community Challenge Coalition (NECC), said violence in the lives of young people is particularly concerning because it can disrupt their healthy social development.

“Adolescence is the time when youth are trying to establish caring, healthy, and meaningful relationships and interpersonal intimacy. Abusive dating experiences can interfere with that,” she said.

Dr. Novince said domestic or dating violence can also adversely affect young people who witness it occurring, not just those who are victims. “Some research suggests when young people witness domestic violence, this can set them up as victims or perpetrators, too, not only in the home but in the community,” she noted.

Additionally, teens who are frequently around violent relationships begin to see violence as the



### Teens Impacted by Domestic Violence Often Turn to Drugs and Alcohol

norm so it's important for prevention practitioners to educate youth, parents and the rest of the community and to help shed any misconceptions.

“A coalition can really work with their various sectors to educate the community about this issue, and to inform the community about what puts people at risk for dating violence and what the childhood risk factors are,” Dr. Novince said.

At the NECC, in Cincinnati, Ohio, youth coalition leaders identified teen dating violence as one of 10 adolescent health issues that teens needed help on. To help educate teens, youth leaders are developing an online resource that offers teen-friendly information about teen dating violence.

*For more information about domestic violence visit the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence's Web site [www.ncadv.org/](http://www.ncadv.org/).*

**PARENTING MATTERS, PREVENTION WORKS**

FROM THE EDITOR:

### *Make Your Home Reader-Friendly*

A home filled with books and other reading materials is a good way to encourage reading in a fun way! As a child, I often found books stacked in baskets, on the floor and at my bedside, just waiting to be read and shared. Weekly trips to our local library provided age-appropriate books for my whole family. Why not try the following in your home?

- **Offer a selection of reading materials.** Children might enjoy newspapers, comic books, magazines (for kids), Internet and audio books.
- **Have books close by.** From the changing table to the kitchen table, keep books and other reading materials close at hand so you can easily access them.
- **Create a special place to read.** A comfy chair, sofa and other favorite places to sit can easily become a “reading corner” to encourage reading time. Be sure to provide a good lamp. Have a CD or tape player nearby for audio books.
- **Read together!** Take the time to sit and read aloud to younger children, ask older children to discuss what it is they are reading. Encourage a life-long relationship with books.



### **EATING RIGHT AND BEING ACTIVE SHOULD STAY PART OF KIDS’ ROUTINES**

By: Dr. Tedd Mitchell; President and  
Medical Director of Dallas’ Cooper Clinic

Your child’s daily routine should include nutritious foods and an active lifestyle. Here are some tips to help you stay healthy throughout the school year:

- **Have meals together.** This provides families an opportunity to reconnect at the end of a busy day. Eat at the table, not in the living room. Turn off the TV, and pay attention to each other.
- **Limit snacks.** Have healthy alternatives in the refrigerator and cupboards.
- **Get the kids involved.** Let the children help you plan and prepare meals. They’ll be more likely to eat what they have helped to make. Also, when possible, let the children help with grocery shopping.

- **Teach your kids about nutrition.** At our house, our kids know what carbohydrates, fats and proteins are. You can help yours learn about different types of foods, and as they grow older, they should be able to make healthy choices for themselves.
- **Be a good role model.** Children learn what they live, and if they see Mom and Dad making physical activity a priority, it becomes part of their habits, as well.
- **Assign active chores.** Walking the dog, washing the car and cutting the grass are good opportunities to keep your children active.
- **Limit access to TVs and computers.** The more time the kids are in front of the TV or computer, the fewer calories they will burn.



Available in Spanish by request

## **Parenting Matters**

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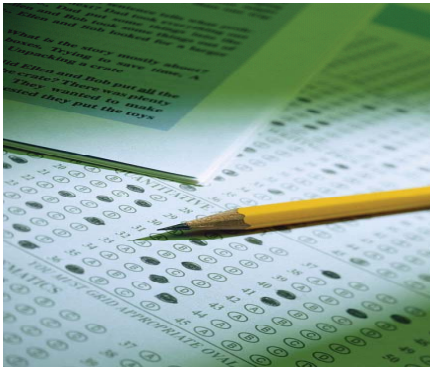
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**PARENTING MATTERS, PREVENTION WORKS**

## Help Your Teen Cope with Stress and Peer Pressure

High school has notoriously been a time of stress and peer pressure for teenagers. *Drugs and alcohol are ever present and the desire for teens to abuse substances as an escape mounts as the pressures pile on.*



**Juniors:** When teens enter the eleventh grade they are in full stride. They have, for the most part, established themselves in social groups and have much more confidence. However, this is also an incredibly stressful time for your teen: SATs, college recruiters, dating pressures, deciding whether to even go to college, athletic scouting, advanced classes and so on. This may be the first time your teen has thought about her future, and it can be scary. Guidance is critical.

### As a Parent:

- Share your own experiences, but realize that the intensity level of common pressures is significantly higher than 20 years ago and competition for college and careers is at an all-time high;
- *Listen to your teen*, including his tone. Encourage him to share his day with you;

- Tell your teen regularly *how much you love her* and are proud of her as a person, rather than focusing on accomplishments. Depth of character sometimes comes through failure. But don't neglect to praise for a job well-done;
- *Suggest that your teen cut something out of his schedule*, so that he can be more focused and successful in a couple areas, rather than so-so in many areas;
- Keep things in perspective yourself, so you can *help your teen keep things in perspective.*

**Seniors:** Senioritis. A term commonly used by seniors to convey restlessness and lack of motivation during their final months in high school. First semester requires continued focus on college applications and follow-through, as well as performance in school and sports. *Pressures wind down as your teen's future becomes more solidified during the second semester.* However a different kind of anxiousness may set in. *Teens begin to realize that they have responsibilities and there are greater expectations to "act like an adult."* They are also saying goodbye to childhood friends as they prepare to go separate ways.

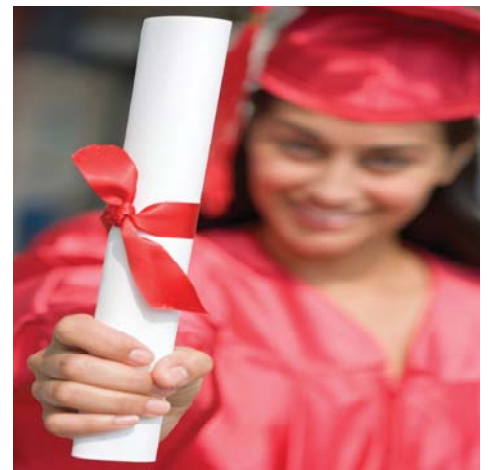
### As a Parent:

- *Be honest* with your teen; share your own lessons learned or a time when you were punished for using *poor judgment*;
- Just because your teen is a senior doesn't mean she rules the roost; be sure to let your teen know that you are still in charge

and *enforce established rules*;

- Help keep your teen motivated. Senior year is no time to slack off.
- **Continue to discuss your expectations-no drugs, no alcohol.** There will be obvious opportunities for your teen to partake in these activities (grad night, senior ball, end-of-year parties), so clearly state consequences for breaking rules.
- **Lead by example.** Talk to your teen about what you do to relieve stress and pressure in your daily life. *Realize your teen is watching your behavior, so be a good role model.*

Balance is critical during the last two years of your teen's high school education. As a parent, encourage your teen to work hard and accomplish the goals he sets for himself, but learn the signs of when he's had too much. *Parents play an essential role in their teen's health and happiness.*



Source: Parents: The Anti-Drug  
www.ParentingTips@TheAntiDrug.com  
Article edited to fit this  
publication

### Healthy Tip: Help Baby's Development

(HealthDay News) - Parents are instrumental in helping babies learn, grow and develop, both physically and emotionally.

The U.S. National Library of Medicine says you can encourage your baby's development by:

- Reading picture books to her, and letting her play with them on her own.
- Talking to her in different places and exposing her to different sights, such as at the zoo, the mall, or children's play center.
- If she's 1 year or a bit older, play ball with your baby. Toss a soft-rubber ball lightly to her and let her try to catch it or roll it back to you.



- Encourage your child to play with large toys that can be pushed around. This may help promote early walking and build leg muscles.

[www.EverydayHealth.com](http://www.EverydayHealth.com)

### PARENTING MATTERS, PREVENTION WORKS



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