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Drug-use finger points at parents

Parents can discourage their children from using drugs by enforcing a strict behavior code at home, a writer-anthropologist said here today.

Dr. Miller Newton, a clinical anthropologist and author of the book "Not My Kid," told parents it's their responsibility to educate children about the dangers of drugs use.

Newton's remarks came at a parents' forum sponsored by Gaining Awareness Through Education (GATE), a group of Floyd County parents trying to curb drug use among teenagers.

Newton's book, "Not My Kid," will be dramatized in a television movie on CBS, to be aired from 8-10 p.m. Tuesday.

"Parents had better accept the fact that they're not going to win a

popularity contest with their children," Newton said.

"A parent's job," he said, "is to draw a tough bottom line on drug use. If a parent does that, children are less likely to turn to drugs in any form."

Also, parents should better control social and educational activities of their children, Newton said.

Most children, he said, are exposed to drugs at school or at parties.

"Kids have a right to go to school and not be exposed to drugs," he said.

"And parents have a responsibility to enforce stiff penalties for drug use, either at school or at parties with their child's friends."

Parents concerned about drug use in Floyd County should try to organize "drug-free" social activities

for their children.

Newton said parents often deny their children are involved in drugs.

"The old excuse, 'it's not my kid who uses drugs,' is popular," Newton said, "but it just doesn't work anymore."

Eighty percent of the children treated in drug-use clinics have a healthy family life and high self-esteem, Newton said.

"Children don't go crazy on drugs all at once," Newton said. "It's a gradual process of deterioration and loss of control of reality."

He said parents sometimes justify their children's drug use by saying they use beer and marijuana and not "hard drugs" like cocaine or heroin.

"Kids don't think of beer as a beverage," Newton said. "They chug beer to get drunk."

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