

Talk to teens about sex, drugs Survey says parents should discuss dangers of drinking, sex and drugs with teen-agers

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By BETH SHERMAN Newsday

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Yes, said 400 parents who were asked this question in a recent study conducted by North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, N.Y. But actually having that discussion can be one of the hardest tasks a parent faces.

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If you can't talk to your child about drugs, alcohol or sex without either yelling or turning red in the face, there are resources to turn to. According to Fisher, approximately 1,000 of the nation's 50,000 pediatricians now specialize in adolescent medicine. Besides doing checkups and treating illnesses, these doctors are trained to work with teens and discuss substance abuse and sexual activity. The American Academy of Pediatrics (141 Northwest Point Blvd., P.O. Box 927, Elk Grove Village, Ill. 60009-0927) will refer you to specialists in your area if you send them a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

There are several books available on these subjects, too. One written for children is "Growing Up, Feeling Good: A Child's Introduction to Sexuality," by Stephanie Waxman (Panjandrum, \$5.95). Among the choices for parents are "Not My Kid: A Parent's Guide to Kids and Drugs," by Beth Polson and Miller Newton (Avon, \$4.50), and Eric W. Johnson's "People, Love, Sex and Families: Answers to Questions Preteens Ask" (Walker & Co., \$14.85).

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Education Focus of Adolescent Behavior - Resources Help With Tough Topics

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YO!

Houston Chronicle (TX) (Published as Houston Chronicle) - APRIL 13, 1993

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- Column: YO!

No grown-ups allowed

Kids unanimous; want to know if adopted

Q: People who have adopted children often worry what they should tell the child and when. Should the child be told -- and if so, at what age -- that he or she was adopted? How much should parents tell children about their birth parents? What are the positive things about being adopted?

My mom was adopted at birth by two wonderful people whom I call Grandma and Grandpa. My mom asked when she was 4 after seeing a show on television about adoption. She was told, yes, she was adopted at birth and that she was very special. Her biological mother could not care for her and wanted better for her than she was able to give her other children.

Through a biological relative, a call was made and my mom spoke with her biological mother and agreed to a meeting. After this meeting, my mom really was glad that because of her biological mother's decision, she was able to meet two wonderful people who couldn't have children and who wanted her to be part of their family. That's why she still calls them Mom and Dad, because they are the only ones she has ever had or needed. -- Philip Grice, 17, Houston.

I'm your normal, 9-year-old, third-grade adopted kid. Yes, the child should be told before they're 5. My parents told me when I was a toddler but they might not remember, so you should really tell them before they are 5-years-old.

How much should the parents tell children about their birth parents? You should tell them everything the parents know because the child has the right to know. Should the kids meet their birth parents? Yes, but not too soon. I asked my parents if I could meet my birth parents when I am 18. The child should really see their birth parents when they are older than 15. I always get Christmas presents and birthday presents from my birth mother. -- Laura Blue, 9, Spring.

I don't think that parents should tell their children they are adopted all at one time. Parents should say a little at a time as the child grows up. Then it wouldn't hurt the child as much. I don't think parents should tell a lot about their adoptions, just some of the main things. If you told them too much, they might feel bad and want their real parents instead of the ones they still have.

Adopted children should only see their birth parents if they really want to see them and if the birth parents want to see their child. -- Ashley Ward, 9, Katy.

I am adopted and I think the child should be told immediately upon adoption and regularly from then on. My parents told me repeatedly in my crib, and as I grew up I always knew. They also have brought me books about it and we talk a lot. The child must be told, and the longer the parents wait, the more upset the child will be. The child will then resent their parents and want to find their "real" parents.

It is the child's choice whether to find their birth parents. I chose not to but I want to tell them, "Thank you for my life." That is the best thing about adoption. It gives everyone involved a greater appreciation of life. -- Caroline Chandler, 15, Houston.

I think a child should be told he or she is adopted between the ages of 8 to 10. The parents should tell the child about their birth parents, as much as they want to know. I think the kids should meet their birth parents because I don't think the child would want to have a bad image about their parents. I think the positive things about being adopted are that you have great people looking after you. -- Brenda Salazar, 12, Houston.

This week's question

Q: When the Texas Tech women's basketball team won the national championship recently, it was mainly because of one very good player. Sheryl Swoopes scored 47 points in the game against Ohio State -- more than any man or woman had ever scored in a single NCAA championship game.

But now Swoopes, a senior who'll soon graduate, has to think about the future. A male player as talented as Swoopes would surely go on to play professional basketball, but there are no pro teams for women basketball players in the United States.

Should there be? How do you think she feels? What do you think Swoopes can do now to use her talent?

Mark your envelope Talkin' back and send it to the Houston Chronicle, P.O. Box 4260, Houston, Texas 77210. Please include your name, age and address.

For parents only

Talking to your teen about sex, alcohol and drugs

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Beth Sherman writes for Newsday.

Listen up

A non-abusing parent may not be safe haven

Q: As a survivor of sexual abuse by a parent, I have some advice for you. It's dangerous to advise kids to go first to their non-abusing parent for help. Many children cannot trust either parent. When parents are in a state of denial, neither is reliable. If this had been suggested to me, it would have upset me so much it probably would have prevented me from considering any other options.

Kids need an advocate they can rely on, someone who will protect them if both parents should turn on them. I suggest you say something like this: "What you are experiencing is NOT right. The important thing is to tell someone you KNOW you can trust, someone you know can do something about this.

"Although it could be, it doesn't have to be one of your parents. It could be a teacher, a counselor, or other professional, etc."

This would focus on the message to "get help," and would provide options for kids who see practically their whole world as threatening. -- Sincerely, T.T.

A: The voice of experience is always the best. Thank you for your good suggestion for any young person being abused.

You may write to Ask Beth, care of the Houston Chronicle, Box 2000, Los Angeles, Calif. 90053.

Los Angeles Times

Kids ask

Air pollution varies by locale

Q: How much pollution do we breathe in each day?

A: That depends on where you live, where you spend your time and how many pollutants, which are anything that dirties the air, you

count. Pollutants could include chalk dust in a classroom, school bus fumes, secondary cigarette smoke, pollen from plants growing again outside, even pollution from a remote volcano. But no one keeps an exact measure of all those things.

Cool and overcast weather yields less smog, a pollutant produced when sunlight heats chemicals in the air, such as those from car exhausts.

Clean air rules are set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Knight-Ridder Tribune News Wire

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FYI

Commercial Appeal, The (Memphis, TN) (Published as The Commercial Appeal) - April 23, 1993

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- Newsday

Movie reviews

High Text Corp. has announced the publication of Parental Discretion, a newsletter published every three weeks containing reviews of current movie releases.

The reviews are targeted toward parents of children under age 18. Each contains a summary of potentially objectionable elements contained in the film, as well as viewing recommendations for different age groups. Suggested discussion topics are included at the end of every review.

A subscription to Parental Discretion is \$18 a year. To subscribe or for more information call (817) 428-2001, or write Parental Discretion, P.O. Box 758, Colleyville, Texas 76034.

- Staff report

• Memo: Families

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IMAGE MAKERS ENCOURAGE UNDERAGE DRINKING

Record, The (Hackensack, NJ) (Published as The Record (New Jersey)) - August 9, 1993

- Author/Byline: By TERESA M. McALEAVY, Staff Writer, The Record
- Edition: All Editions
- Section: LIFESTYLE
- Page: b03
- Column: COPING

Statistics on underage drinking in the United States are mind-boggling. Of 20.7 million youths in grades 7 through 12, 12 million drink alcohol weekly. Of that 12 million, 454,000 binge (take at least five drinks in a row) weekly. Fifty percent of teenage deaths each year are alcohol related.

Alcohol consumption among young people in America is a widespread problem, driven in part by advertising, say health care professionals.

The March/April edition of *Addiction & Recovery, Bringing Providers and Payors Together*, a magazine for health care professionals and bill payers, explored possible links between advertising and drinking among youth.

Dr. Jean Kilbourne, a writer and lecturer on the impact of advertising and addictions, said in an interview with the magazine that advertising itself doesn't create addiction, but that it normalizes addictive behavior.

Advertising "makes heavy use or daily use seem normal by showing it in a variety of life situations. It never shows the negative consequences of alcohol abuse, and by doing so it reinforces denial that such consequences exist," she said.

Kilbourne favors several restrictions on alcohol advertising. These include prohibiting promotions aimed at young people or associated with dangerous activities like driving, and placing health message labels on TV and print ads.

Dr. Antonia Novello, former U.S. Surgeon General, has taken a harder stance on alcohol advertising. In comments published in *USA Today* at the end of her three-year tenure, she urged a voluntary end to advertising geared toward youth and suggested an increase in federal taxes to curb consumption.

And, though the beer industry has somewhat revised advertising geared toward youth and eliminated marketing representatives from college campuses, Novello said efforts to reduce underage drinking need to continue.

Studies show the average binge drinker in this country is white, male, 16 years old, and in 10th grade. Noting that nearly 14 percent of the nation's eighth-graders binge and 26 percent of them drink, Novello said drinking among youth simply is "out of control."

Reading:

- "Not My Kid: A Parent's Guide to Kids & Drugs," Beth Polson and Miller Newton, Avon Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10019. (212) 261-6800. \$4.50.

- "Young Alcoholics," Tom Alibrandi, CompCare, 3850 Annapolis Lane, Suite 100, Minneapolis, Minn. 55447. (800) 328-3330. \$8.95.

- "Young Alcoholics: A Book for Parents," Jack Mumey, Contemporary Books, 180 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60601. \$8.95.

Programs:

- Parent Support Group, for parents of chemically dependent children. Meets 6:30 p.m. Monday, Lady of Consolation Church, 7799 Hamburg Turnpike, Wayne.

- National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth. Write 1423 N. Jefferson St., Springfield, Mo. 65802.

- Alcoholics Anonymous. Write 1878 Springfield Ave., Maplewood, N.J. 07040. 763-1415.

- Rational Recovery, for recovery from alcohol/substance abuse through self-reliance. Meets 8 p.m. Monday, Westside Presbyterian Church, Monroe and Ridgewood avenues, Ridgewood.

Please send ideas or questions you would like addressed in this column to Teresa M. McAleavy, Coping Column, The Record, 150 River St., Hackensack, N.J. 07601.

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