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## Parents need to take the lead against drug abuse

Posted by dawicker - 2008/04/05 00:14

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By Rev. Ned Wicker,

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I remember a conversation I had with a police detective some 35 years ago. He was telling me about what a mother had told him over the phone about her teenaged son. "Once he's out of the house, he's not our problem." The detective, who served an upscale suburban community, was explaining to me that parents can be irresponsible and in his mind almost criminal in their neglect of children.

Parents are the most important people in a child's life. They set the tone for everything. If parents abuse drugs, the children are likely to abuse drugs. If husbands beat their wives, their sons will likely be wife beaters too. If parents divorce and abandon their children, those children are not likely to become model parents either. Parents are the front line in the prevention of drug abuse and there's so much they can do to try to secure the best possible future for their children.

The trouble is parents want schools to do everything. Teachers become parents, because "once he's out of the house he's not our problem." What happens in the home is more important than what happens in the classroom. Parents can set the example by being informed. That begins with understanding the dangers of prescription medication. What is in your medicine cabinet? Do you know what medications are in the house, and how much of that medication you have? Are medications out of date?

Take an inventory and keep track of what is in the house.

If a medication runs out too quickly, that is a sign that someone might be abusing that drug. Talk to your kids and make this a family project.

Teens especially will experiment with drugs. They hear about the experiences of their friends. They want to be cool and part of the crowd. If they experiment with the drugs in your house, what will happen? If you have a pain medication, what will that do? If you have a stimulant of some kind, what will that do? What are the dangers of overdose? Ask yourself, what are the dangers to my child?

Take control. Be the parent, the adult. Have an open conversation with your children about drugs, especially the drugs in your house. Stay on top of it and know the inventory. Make connections with principals and teachers at the school, with your family doctor and pharmacist, and with local law enforcement officials.

Be savvy. Know what is in your house, in the community and the potential negative impact it will have on your family. Drug abuse prevention starts in the home with responsible parents. Having this family discussion and having a plan about how to handle the medications in your home will be an effective preventative measure.

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## Re:Parents need to take the lead against drug abuse

Posted by findhelp - 2008/04/05 14:23

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Great advice, I couldn't possibly agree more. Too often families don't ask themselves these questions until it's too late, and the damage is already done - the importance of being eternally vigilant can't be stressed enough. As an expectant father, I'm already thinking ahead to the steps I can take to give my daughter the best chance of avoiding the mistakes I made, and the pain and destruction that addiction has wrought in my life. Well said! Thanks!

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