



## PARENTS: "HANDS-ON" VS. "HANDS-OFF"

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University has repeatedly found that various actions that parents take influences whether their teen will use alcohol or other drugs.

### PARENTAL AGREEMENT IN WHAT TO SAY TO TEENS

“Teens whose parents don’t agree completely with each other on what to say to their teen about drug use are more than three times likely to use marijuana and three and a half times likelier to expect to try drugs in the future than teens whose parents are in complete agreement.”

“Teens whose parents do not agree completely with each other on what to say to their teen about drinking are twice as likely to use alcohol as teens whose parents are in complete agreement.”

### “HANDS-ON VS. HANDS-OFF” PARENTING

“When parents are “hands-on”—meaning they supervise their teenagers and impose rules or standards of behavior—their teenagers are at substantially lower risk of substance abuse than teens from “hands-off” households.”

Teens living in "hands-on" households have parents who consistently take 10 or more of these 12 actions:

1. monitor what their teens watch on TV
2. monitor what they do on the Internet
3. put restrictions on the music CDs they buy
4. know where their teens are after school and on weekends
5. expect to be and are told the truth by their teens about where they *really* are going
6. are "very aware" of their teen's academic performance
7. impose a curfew
8. make clear they would be "extremely upset" if their teen used pot
9. eat dinner with their teens six or seven times per week
10. turn off the TV during dinner
11. assign their teen regular chores;
12. have an adult present when the teen returns from school.

- 47 percent of teens living in "hands-on" households report an excellent relationship with their fathers compared with 13 percent of teens living in "hands-off" households.
- 57 percent of teens in "hands-on" households report an excellent relationship with their mother compared with only 24 percent living in "hands-off" households.



In households where:

- Parents monitor teen television viewing, internet use or CD purchases of their teens  
or
- Parents know where their teen is after school and weekends and expect their teen to tell them where they are going
  - **Teens are at half the risk of substance abuse**
- Parents are “very aware” of how their teen is doing in school  
or
- Teens believe their parent would be “extremely upset” if the teen used marijuana
  - **Teens are at about one-third the risk of substance abuse**
- Teens with "hands-on" parents are at one-fourth the risk of teens living with "hands-off" parents.

#### AGE INCREASES SUBSTANCE ABUSE RISK

Substance abuse risk increases dramatically with the age of the teen.

Among 12 year-olds:

- 78 percent are at low risk of substance abuse
- 20 percent are at moderate risk
- 3 percent are at high risk

By comparison, among 17 year-olds:

- only 17 percent are at low risk
- 47 percent are at moderate risk
- 37 percent are at high risk