A PARENTS GUIDE TO PRE-PROM AND AFTER PROM

Prom is meant to be an enjoyable and memorable experience. However, there are also many pressures associated with prom. Children are expected to dance and attend post-prom activities (often not chaperoned) with peers that they do not know very well. There is also a lot of pressure on children to have intercourse with their prom date, irrespective of how well they know them.

To deal with this stress, many children turn to alcohol and/or other drugs. Use of these substances can result in your child doing things that they normally would not do, including making questionable choices about sexual behavior, as well as other behaviors that put their health and safety at risk.

PRE-PROM

*** These conversations should occur at least a week before prom, and reinforced on the day of prom ***

- *Discuss the dangers of alcohol and other drug use with your child*
    - Make it short and simple. Be direct.
    - Review the school's prom rules, as well as the consequences of violating them.
    - Let your child know that vomiting, passing out, and other substance abuse related incidents could damage reputations and ruin relationships.

- *Create a plan with your child*
    - Make sure you know who is driving to/from both the prom and after-prom event.
    - Speak to the driver of the limousine/party van about your expectations for an alcohol/drug free ride. Do not permit opened beverages of any sort in the limo.
    - Remind your child that driving while tired can be just as dangerous as driving while intoxicated.
    - Remind your child to wear his/her seatbelt at all times.

- *Make sure you know what your child's plans are for both the prom and after-prom*
    - Get a complete itinerary that includes phone numbers for who they will be with and phone numbers for the parents of who they will be with.
    - Require your child to call if their plans change, regardless of how minor the change or what time of day it is.

- *Offer your child the unconditional option of calling you at anytime*
    - Assure your child that you will not embarrass him/her in front of others.
    - Ask your child to create a 'code-phrase' that indicates your child would like to be picked up if he/she calls and uses it.

- *Tell your child what to do in case of a medical emergency (ex: alcohol poisoning)*
    - Encourage them to get help if a friend is in trouble.
    - They can call POISON control for anonymous advice.
    - They need to immediately find an adult if someone is unconscious.
    - If someone is unconscious or barely conscious they need to call 911 and get to a hospital ASAP.
    - Make sure that your child knows to never leave his/her drink unattended

AFTER-PROM

- *Talk to your child when he/she comes home*
    - Ask about his/her experience.
    - Constructively talk about difficult situations your child may have been in.
    - Compliment him/her on good choices that were made.

- *If your child comes home intoxicated*
    - Immediately attend to the health of your child.
    - Find out what they consumed and how much of it they took.
    - Don't let your child fall asleep. It is possible that they could vomit while sleeping and choke.
    - Call 911 if need be … it is better to be safe than sorry!

- *Worry about giving consequences once your child is sober*
    - He/she will be irrational while intoxicated and probably won't remember the conversation.

SOCIAL HOST LIABILITY LAW

Every town in Putnam County has recently passed legislation entitled Social Host Liability Law. These local laws make it a misdemeanor to "host, suffer, permit, organize, or allow a party, gathering or event at his or her place of residence…where three or more minors are present and alcoholic beverages are being consumed by any minor." **In other words, it is illegal for anyone to host a party at their home and allow underage drinking to occur. This crime is punishable by up to one year in jail and/or a $3000 fine.**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Arms Acres (845) 225 - 3400
- National Council on Alcoholism & Other Drug Dependencies/Putnam (845) 225 - 4646
- Putnam County Youth Bureau (845) 225 - 6316
- Putnam Family and Community Services (845) 225 - 2700