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## **PARENTS CAN PREVENT DRUG USE TO PROTECT YOUR TEEN AGAINST ALCOHOL AND DRUG ADDICTION, PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION ARE KEY...**

A recent study conducted by the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS), released by the Partnership at Drugfree.org, confirmed that the age your teen begins using alcohol is critically important. Research has shown that more than 40 percent of those who start drinking at age 14 or younger, developed alcohol dependence, compared with 10 percent of those who began drinking at age 20 or older. On a local level, YES Community Counseling Center's program development has focused on the importance of prevention and early intervention aimed to strengthen the entire family. Adrienne LoPresti, Clinical Director at YES stated that "too often, warning signs in early adolescence are missed or overlooked, resulting in the progression of alcohol and drug abuse that can lead to long term or irreversible damage for the teen and their family." Ms. LoPresti added that parents who communicate consistently in both words and actions that drinking and drugging is not a normal or acceptable part of adolescence are far less likely to have a child who develops a problem with substances.

Every parent should be aware of risk and the protective factors that may exist in their family. Some risk factors are parental abuse of alcohol, drugs, and/or gambling, an abusive or conflict ridden marriage/relationship, limited parental support, limited parental monitoring/supervision, a lack of parenting skills, favorable attitudes toward teen alcohol, drug use and gambling, and untreated parental mental illness. Factors that keep children safe may include the presence of emotional support and encouragement without severe criticism, a sense of basic trust, high but realistic parental expectations, clear rules and expectations, and parental monitoring and supervision. "Children with involved parents have a 50% lesser chance of trying and using drugs." (National Survey on Drug Use and Health.)

If you are concerned about your teen, you can intervene before it is too late. YES Community Counseling Center offers both specialized and evidence based programs to adolescents and families struggling with addiction and related emotional and behavioral difficulties. For more information, visit YES at [www.yessccc.org](http://www.yessccc.org) or call (516)799-3203.

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