



CONGRATULATIONS TO YOUR 8TH GRADE GRADUATE!

DEAR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS,

High school is on the horizon and this is an exciting time in the life of your child. Ray County Coalition is here with four tips to help navigate this important transition and ensure that your child stays alcohol and drug-free:

- 1. Keep Connecting:** Despite the eye-rolling and natural desire for independence, know that your child still desperately needs and wants your involvement. Carve out time each day to hang out, laugh, or connect over a family meal. This connection will help when it comes time to enforce rules.
- 2. Care about your child's growing brain.** The teen brain is especially vulnerable to the impacts of substance use because it doesn't finish developing until about age 25. Nine out of ten adults struggling with addiction started using substances in their teen years, so it's important to take early and ongoing action to keep your child drug-free. Underage substance use can also cause long-term damage to your child's memory, learning, and overall mental health.
- 3. Set clear rules and expectations** about drinking and drug use. Chances are your child will be offered vapes, marijuana, or alcohol between now and 10th grade. Communicate that you want your child to remain alcohol and drug-free. With an attitude of love and concern, talk through scenarios, share the brain science, and offer your support.
- 4. Pay careful attention and take action** if you suspect any underage drinking, vape use or other drug use. Underage substance use can cause serious and irreversible damage to the growing brain, increase the risk of addiction, and lead to other problems. Intervening early is essential.

Parent Up KC is here to help! Visit our resources at ParentUpKC.com.

BEST REGARDS,

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