

March 2015

Volume 3, Issue 15

# Parents Matter

Havana Area Prevention Team

## Special points of interest:

- Developing Good Judgment
- Kids in the House Links
- Prevention Team Contact Info

## Prevention Team Goals

One of the goals of the Prevention Team is to promote healthy, happy, and responsible lifestyles for area youth and families. One way of reaching this goal is by sharing important prevention information with parents and guardians. In looking for ideas to put in March's newsletter, we found a helpful article from *parenting.com* about how to assist your child in the development of good judgment. Good judgment is a skill that students will use throughout their lifetime, especially when it comes to drugs and alcohol. The article is provided below.

## How To Help Your Child Develop Good Judgment

Dr. Laura Markham

Many adults are crippled with indecision when faced with difficult choices. Others, worse yet, make self-destructive choices and repeatedly demonstrate poor judgment. But no one is born with good judgment and the ability to make wise decisions. Good judgment and decision-making skills develop from experience combined with reflection. As one sage noted, *"Judgment develops from experience. Good judgment develops from bad experience."*

Your goal is to give your child experience in making decisions, and make sure she has the opportunity to reflect on them and learn. You also want to raise a child who feels good about herself, so that she takes pleasure in making good decisions, rather than bad ones. Research shows that kids who've been treated less than kindly get used to feeling bad, so as teens and adults they make decisions that make them feel bad.



**1. Practice makes perfect.** Give your child practice making choices even before she begins talking and she'll never have a problem making decisions. (Who cares if the stripes and flowers clash? She thinks she looks like a rainbow. And if other people can't figure out that she dressed herself, you don't really care about their opinion of your parenting, do you?)

**2. Be clear about his span of control.** Emphasize what he has the right to make decisions about, and what areas you as the parent retain the right to exert control over.

With toddlers: *"Yes, I guess you may wear your superman outfit again, although you've worn it every day this week. You're in charge of your own clothes. But you'll need to change before we go to services, because there we dress up to show respect. And you'll need to brush your teeth. Do you want to do it now or before we leave the house?"*

With preteens: *"You can invite your friends for Friday night dinner if you want, but you're expected to have dinner with the family on Friday night as usual. You can either go to the movies with your friends after dinner on Friday, or on Saturday."*

**3. Consciously help your child develop good judgment.** Many people never develop good judgment because their experience isn't accompanied by reflection. Help him to make decisions consciously (*"How will you decide what piece to play for the recital?"*) and to think through the possible repercussions of various choices before he makes them (*"I wonder if you'll feel too pressured about getting your homework done if you add another after-school activity."*)

Just as important, offer her the opportunity to reflect on how her decisions worked out (*"I know you were worried about having two girls over at once this afternoon. Are you glad you invited Clarisse to join you and Ellie for the play-date?"*)

*continued on back*

# Havana Area PREVENTION TEAM

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**Promotes comprehensive community-wide prevention efforts.**

**Empowers youth & families to develop and lead healthy lifestyles.**

Havana Area Prevention Team is a non-profit organization that seeks to promote:

- **Healthy, happy, and responsible lifestyles for area youth and families.**
- **Awareness of positive alternatives and support of positive actions and activities for youth and families in and around the Havana area.**

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## How To Help Your Child Develop Good Judgment *continued*

**4. Model decision making.** Share how and why you make decisions from the time your child is tiny. (*"I think I'll bring an umbrella on our walk. It looks like rain."* *"I'm going to try the salmon; it's really good for you."* *"I'd like our family to help with the drive for school supplies; all children deserve a good education, and this is one way to help."*)

**5. Know that it's ok for your child to make bad decisions.** He's still learning about himself as well as about life. It's just more opportunity for reflection and the development of good judgment, as long as you help him consider afterwards how things could have been different if he had made different choices. Teens have more decision making latitude, and they're bound to make some bad decisions. Just try to resist the universal impulse to say *"I told you so,"* and they'll learn from them.

**6. Give your children control of their own decision-making as it becomes age appropriate.** What's age appropriate? The list to the right provides some examples for the pre-teen and teen years. Remember to slowly build the degree of freedom and responsibility you offer your child, giving them as much help as they need to handle each level until they master it comfortably.

### REFERENCE

**Dr. Laura Markham > Help Your Child Develop Good Judgment**  
<http://www.ahaparenting.com/parenting-tools/raise-great-kids/child-character/judgment>

Responsibilities Preteens & Tweens (10-12) can be in charge of:

- Packing their school lunch
- Self-grooming: nails, hair, etc.
- Make (or help make) the family contributions for the class bake sale and other events.
- Staying alone in the house, with certain rules about who can be with them.

Responsibilities Early Adolescents (13-15) can be in charge of:

- Getting themselves up in the morning (you may need to be the backup plan.)
- Doing their own laundry (eliminates you feeling like the maid when they suddenly need a certain item.)
- Temporary changes in appearance (i.e., permanent tattoos are out in my family till they're eighteen, but temporary ones are their choice. Piercings are discussed on an as-requested basis, and are discouraged because of the risk of infection and permanent scarring.)
- Going to movies with friends.
- Earning spending money by babysitting or other jobs.
- Budgeting their own spending.



For more parenting tips please visit

<http://www.kidsinthehouse.com/teenager/substance-abuse/prevention/>