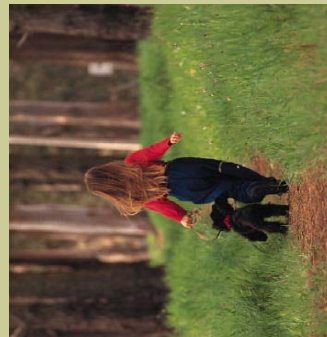




Australian Greek Welfare Society
7 Union St., Brunswick
Victoria 3056
Phone: 9388 9998
Email: agws@agws.com.au



Resilience building

*Making a
difference*

Additional free information - Order form



Please tick required titles

- Inhalants — Fact Sheet
- Marijuana — Fact Sheet
- Drug Information For Parents
- Ecstasy — Fact Sheet
- AGWS Drug Services Guide
- Our Strongest Defence Against Drugs (Commonwealth publication)
- Positive Parenting & Drug Prevention
- Know the Facts — Youth Drug Guide
- Heroin — Fact Sheet

Preferred Language

- English
- Greek

Your Details

Name

Address

Postcode

Comments

[Return to - AGWS, 7 Union Street, Brunswick Victoria 3056]

Written by Evan Sycamias

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Further information and support

Australian Greek Welfare Society

Address: 7 Union St., Brunswick Victoria 3056

Phone: 9388 9998

Fax: 9388 9992

Hours: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday to Friday

A bi-lingual service providing community development focusing on a wide variety of areas including families, women, youth, men and their families, aged, disability, and workcover.

Parent Zone – Anglicare Victoria

Northern region 9478 9499

Eastern region 9876 8945

Southern region 9783 4888

Western region (Ask for

ParentLink at reception)

Gippsland region 5136 9273

Hours: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday to Friday

A parenting service providing parenting groups for families and those recently separated, classes in Positive Parenting, Parenting Adolescents, as well as consultation on such issues as youth communication, violence and self esteem. Telephone consultations exist, but only on a limited level.

Parent Line

Phone: 13 22 89

Hours: 8 a.m. - 12 a.m. Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Sat. & Sun.

A free specialist service providing assistance to parents who are concerned about their children. Areas covered include relationship building, violence, risk taking, drug use and counselling. Interpreters can be provided.

Resilience benefits

Resilience based learning communities have shown that young people develop a stronger bond with their schools - greater participation, higher levels of self control and efficiency, concern for others, better decision making as well as conflict resolution skills, and less involvement with outside negative activities ⁽³⁾.

Other research has noted that children fairing best against negative experience and developing into healthy productive adults are those who possess social competency (ability to establish and maintain positive relationships), problem solving skills (ability to plan and seek help when required), autonomy (ability to maintain their identity), and a sense of purpose in future – all products of successful resilience building ⁽³⁾.

How does resilience work?

Over the years, child education and information programs (particularly in relation to drug use) tended to be delivered in a fear-arousing manner. This technique discouraged children's quest for knowledge, and in turn limited development of critical decision making skills. In contrast, resilience building reorientates its educational focus on honesty, accuracy and the provision of complete information ⁽³⁾.

It relies on the capabilities of youth to make informed decisions, as supported by the landmark Carnegie Report on Adolescent Development, which "...challenges longstanding beliefs that adolescents are not competent to make good decisions about a variety of choices facing them ⁽³⁾.

As a parent you can make a difference

1. Talking with our children comes naturally and we don't often give it a great deal of thought. It's something that we do, like preparing lunch. However, the quality of our communication does make a difference. Good communication helps children shape positive attitudes about themselves, allows parents a window into their children's thinking and promotes good relationships.

Most important is our ability to truly listen. True listening is vital to any conversation. A two-way conversation can only really take place when each person receives the other's message as it is meant. Listening properly gives you a chance to draw your teenagers out and let them know you are really interested in what they have to say whilst validating the importance of their thoughts, feelings and opinions.

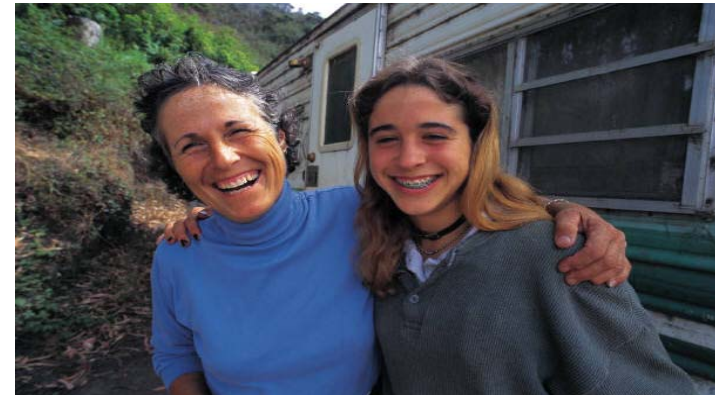
Remember, a good listener is one that evaluates their own performance – how they sound, what they say and their actions. Actions and facial expressions often communicate more than words, and rejection may be present even when verbally communicating acceptance.

2. Teach your child that rights and responsibilities go hand in hand, and provide them with increasing responsibility for their well being as well as that of the family.

Begin by providing your child opportunities to become involved in family decision making discussions.

For this reason it is important that guidelines relating to what is and what isn't acceptable behaviour in the household should be drawn up by both parents and children and be held firmly. Decide what is important, and what isn't – then decide what you can and should ignore for your teen's growth, otherwise you may find yourself in a position of continual confrontations that may lead to a split in the family.

Though kids don't want their parents hovering over them at every moment of the day, they do want their parents to be available for when they do need them.



In basic terms, teenagers want their parents to:

- Understand what it is like to be a teenager;
- Understand that they have to make up their own mind on things;
- Be interested in their life, yet respect their privacy;
- Understand that their friendships are important;
- Trust them;
- Support them when needed; and
- Give advice and opinions when asked (without a lecture) (1).

Ultimately, it is our attitude as parents and guardians, as well as the family environment that predominantly shapes children's early life and behaviour. It is at this stage that children learn from their immediate families, mimicking both good and bad habits. For instance, if you are a smoker, the chances are three times higher that your children will develop into smokers with time ⁽⁶⁾. For this reason it is important to set good standards, encourage responsibility, spend quality time together, praise them when they do well, build their confidence when they find the going tough – and above all else, show them trust.

Experimentation

The young are possessed of greater physical, mental and emotional capacity and therefore of a greater thirst to try out their abilities. Experimentation thus becomes important, as it is a manner with which to learn. In experimenting, children will take on many different styles, cultures etc. this is their way of learning about themselves and their surrounding environment.

A climate that enhances this developmental process is one that allows children to experience the joys of life, to be creative, to do their own thing, and to learn to interact with all kinds of people. Unfortunately, such an environment also involves risks. Because of children's nature, they jump at things without thinking and may find themselves in real trouble. This is an important time for parents to come to the rescue.

What teenagers want from their parents

Teenagers can be a handful at the best of times, causing parents to lose their tempers and generally making matters worse.

3. Inform yourself about drugs or any sensitive issue for that matter. This will allow you to discuss the issues with your child more accurately.
4. Begin and sustain an ongoing dialogue about alcohol, tobacco and drugs. In doing so, children will feel more at ease in discussing such matters with you at a later date – but be sure to make it clear that it is unacceptable to use drugs.
5. Look for opportunities to grow together, establishing 'together time' – a regular weekly routine for doing something special with your child. Furthermore, try and eat meals together as often as you can. Meals are a great opportunity to talk about the day's events, to unwind, reinforce and bond.
6. Help them become and remain physically active. Studies show that a young person involved in sport is 40 percent less likely to get involved with drugs than an uninvolved peer ⁽⁵⁾.
7. Set curfews and enforce them strictly - but be ready to negotiate on special occasions.
8. Model good behaviour. Children learn by example as well as teaching, so make sure your own actions reflect the standard of honesty, integrity and fair play that you expect from your child.

Be aware that your own use of drugs such as medication, alcohol and tobacco may have an influence on the decisions your child makes about how and when to use them too.

Actively participating in your child's life

It has been noted that as children move on to middle school they seem to want to move closer to their peer group and away from their parents, which can be an upsetting and strenuous time for both parties. This adjustment occurs for several reasons including



physical change, increased expectations as well as the development of self-esteem. It is only through successful adjustment to the expectations and needs of their group that children ultimately strengthen their feelings of belonging and self esteem ⁽⁴⁾.

With time, teens become even more independent and the challenges they face begin to further escalate. This period in their lives can be extremely confusing, and for this reason parents must remain patient whilst continuing to discreetly set broad boundaries that assist rather than hinder their children through this particularly challenging stage.

Remember, even if your child insists they do not need your help, research has shown that children are better off when parents get involved and stay involved, particularly in relation to drug education as it has been found that parents play a decisive role in helping their kids avoid drugs (teens who say they learned a lot about the risks of drugs from their parents are 40 percent less likely to start smoking marijuana) ⁽⁵⁾.

So talk to your kids about drugs, teach them how to deal with peer pressure, and boost their self-esteem and self-confidence to reduce the risk that they will ever try drugs or abuse alcohol.

Consistency in such parenting practices promotes resilience. It should be further noted that resilience building can be provided by all types of families, not just conventional nuclear families (i.e. husband, wife and children) ⁽²⁾.

Parents, drugs and resilience

To develop drug resilience within your child, be consistent, honest, accurate and informative. Begin by asking them what they have already learnt about drugs, and then continue by correcting any misunderstanding, expanding and introducing new topics. Make sure that the information you offer is also suitable for your child's age and stage in life.

Parents should encourage open dialogue with children about their experiences, (especially in light that 74% of fourth graders wish their parents would talk to them about drugs) and ensure that an understanding exists that any questions will not be rejected, but answered with honesty ⁽⁶⁾.

It has been noted that children who learn about the risks of drugs from their parents are 36 percent less likely to smoke marijuana than those not informed. If you talk to your children about the dangers of drug use, they are also 50 percent less likely to use inhalants, and 56 % less likely to use LSD⁽⁶⁾.