

Fastbreak For Fathers

a monthly e-mail to help you be the kind of dad your child needs you to be.

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In this issue: You are your child's MVP (most valuable parent)!

OBSERVATIONS

How would you like to have Troy Aikman, Marcus Allen, John Elway and Barry Sanders hounding you for your autograph?

That's the premise of a new 30-second television spot sponsored by the *Coors Brewing Company* in partnership with *The Search Institute* and *Players Inc.* In the spot, NFL greats lead a group of autograph seekers who surround Bob, an average dad who is considered a hero for his efforts in spending a lot of time with his kids and speaking openly with them about the challenges they may face. The spot concludes with the text, "Involved parents are the real heroes."

More than a "Just say don't" approach, the *MVParents'* resources build on *Search Institute's* widely used, framework of 40 Developmental Assets™. *Search* has identified 40 concrete, positive experiences and qualities that have a tremendous influence on young people's lives and choices. *The Search Institute's* surveys of more than 1 million 6th – 12th grade youth in communities across the United States consistently show that young people who experience more of these assets are more likely to make healthy choices and avoid a wide range of high-risk behaviors.

The *MVParents* web site (www.mvparents.com) is a hub for information, advice and resources for dealing with everyday parenting issues, including curfews, family communication, and underage drinking. Dads can register for *Everyday Parenting Ideas*, a weekly e-mail update with tips, ideas, and encouragement. The site also includes testimonials from the NFL players geared specifically toward fathers.

Parenting our kids is a "home game" that demands 110%. The *Coors Brewing Company*, *The Search Institute* and *Players Inc.* have provided some great scouting reports that will go a long way to creating a win for both you and your child.



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RESEARCH

Using data from comprehensive questionnaires administered to approximately 3620 students in 11 high schools in six districts in the Houston area each semester for four years, Susan Nash and colleagues found that **greater parental expectations of nonuse of alcohol** was associated with less alcohol use, greater self-efficacy to refuse alcohol, and lower peer influence on alcohol use.

Nash, S.G., McQueen, A., & Brey, J.H. (2005) Pathways to adolescent alcohol use: family environment, peer influence, and parental expectations. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 37:19 –28.

ACTION Plan

The heart of the *MVP*parents is to provide parents with ideas they can use everyday, like these tips from *The Search Institute* to reduce the chances that your son or daughter will drink:

Stay Involved

- Monitor** — Keep track of where your children go and whom they're with. If they go to a party, check in advance whether an adult will be actively present and whether alcohol will be available.
- Keep your child involved** — Being active in youth clubs, school activities, religious activities and other caring environments with adult role models offers important reinforcements for your positive messages at home.
- Have a plan** — As your teen gains more independence, negotiate a plan for what you'll do if he or she is in a difficult alcohol-related situation. Make safety a top priority.
- Set consequences** — Be clear about any consequences of underage drinking before there's a problem. However, do not make the consequences so serious that your teen won't ask for help if they are in serious trouble or need a safe ride home.

Communicate

- Talk** — Help your children feel comfortable talking with you about important and difficult topics.
- Be proactive** — Don't wait for your children to bring up alcohol drinking. Use news stories, ads, personal incidents and other opportunities to raise the issue—before it becomes a crisis.
- Share what you believe** — Be clear about your values and expectations regarding alcohol use and the reasons young people should not drink.
- Be honest** — Be honest about your own alcohol use. If you drank as a teenager, share why you believe it was a poor choice.

Think Community

- Don't be part of the problem** — Never purchase alcohol for young people or provide alcohol to a party for teenagers, no matter what the occasion.
- Connect** — Talk with other parents about your values and concerns. Discuss what you expect from your kids and encourage them to set boundaries with your children when needed. If you're struggling with issues, ask them for advice and support.



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Teach

- ❑ **Model** — Model restraint. If you drink, use moderation. If you or your partner struggles with alcohol use, seek professional help.
- ❑ **Teach** — Help your children develop skills to resist pressure to use alcohol. Do this by giving them opportunities to make decisions and be responsible, starting when they're little. Role play with your child to teach them how they can say no along with other options they have when they're under pressure.
- ❑ **Keep perspective** — If your children try alcohol, address the issue directly, but don't assume that they are "beyond hope." Use it as an opportunity to help them learn from mistakes. However, if the problems persist or become more serious, seek professional support and help.

RESOURCES

The 10 Basic Principles of Good Parenting by Laurence Steinberg (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004). Steinberg, one of the nation's leading psychologists, draws on the entire scientific literature on child-parent relationships to offer something uncommon in parenting books: a succinct, fundamental guide to what mothers and fathers need to know in order to raise happy, healthy, successful children.

Parenting at the Speed of Teens: Positive Tips on Everyday Issues
Edited by Renie Howard & Ruth Taswell (Minneapolis: Search Institute, 2004). Practical, easy-to-use guide that offers positive, commonsense strategies for dealing with everyday and serious issues that may be a part of parenting teens.

Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility
Edited by Richard J. Bonnie and Mary Ellen O'Connell (Washington D.C.: National Academy Press, 2004). Addresses such questions as; Why this dangerous behavior so pervasive? What can be done to prevent it? What will work and who is responsible for making sure it happens? *Reducing Underage Drinking* proposes a new way to combat underage use. It explores ways in which different individuals and groups may contribute to the problem and how they can be enlisted to prevent it. A version of this resource is available at:

www.nap.edu/catalog/10729.html?onpi_newsdoc0309089352



Connections & Classes (Metro Denver & Beyond)



Denver's WB Work and Family – The WB's Morning Anchor, Natalie Tysdal discusses work and family issues with Rich Batten at approximately 6:40 AM every other Tuesday. Additional information on each segment is available at www.douglascountyextension.org (click on the WB2 logo). Recent & upcoming segments include: July 12 – *The Motherhood Study: Fresh insights on mothers' attitudes and concerns*, July 26 – *Being your child's MVP (Most Valuable Parent)*, August 9 – *First Aid for Entering the Empty Nest*.

Directions for Dad: A Lifetime Guide – A workshop for expectant dads and dads of infants and toddlers. Dads play a crucial role in the lives of their children. By learning to discover and work on being the dad your child needs you to be, you will bring a depth of meaning, purpose and joy not only to your child but also to your relationships and self. Topics covered in this half-day workshop include: Becoming a Father, Connecting with your Baby, Changes and Challenges, and Parenting Together.

August 13 & October 29; 9:00 – 12:00 This class is offered through the Sky Ridge Medical Center in Lone Tree. Call 720-225-BABY (2229) or visit www.skyridgemedcenter.com to register.

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Strengthening Father-Daughter Relationships – For fathers with daughters ages 10-15. There's a special connection between fathers and daughters. Fathers can have a significant impact on their daughters' self-esteem, identity and values. This class will allow fathers to discuss some of their concerns and hopes about raising their daughters and will provide them with practical ideas about nurturing a relationship that will help their daughter face the future with confidence. **September 10, 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.** \$10.00 per person. This class is designed for dads only and is offered through the Douglas County School District's Parent University. Call 303.387.0128 to register or [download the course booklet and registration form](#).



Fathers' Fraternity - A workshop for expectant dads and dads of infants and toddlers. Join other new "dads-to-be" learning the ins and outs of fatherhood. A fun and casual group setting to prepare for the changes to come. Participants in this two-session class will interact with such topics as: Becoming a Father, Connecting with your Baby, Changes and Challenges, and Parenting Together. **Monday evenings, October 3 & 10 7– 8:30 p.m.** This class is offered through the Parker Adventist Hospital. Call 303-777-6877 or visit www.parkerhospital.org to register.



Bringing Baby Home
A Workshop for Pregnant Couples and Parents of Infants and Toddlers

Prepare yourself for life with your baby and learn how to be the best parenting team possible. Learn how to stay connected with your partner, interact with your baby, keep both parents involved, and deal with conflict in a positive way. This workshop will help to energize your relationship and prepare you for the most important and rewarding job you will ever have, *raising a child*.

Saturdays October 15 & 22 from 9 AM to 4 PM - \$150.00 per couple. Class size is limited to 12 couples. Offered through the Sky Ridge Medical Center in Lone Tree. Call 720-225-BABY (2229) or visit www.skyridge-medcenter.com to register.

You can't be the kind of dad that you want to be. You can't be the kind of dad that you wanted to have. You've got to be the kind of dad that your child needs you to be.

Roland Warren, The National Fatherhood Initiative

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