

PRESS RELEASE

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"PARENTS ARE THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT TEACHER A CHILD WILL HAVE"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JACKSON (March 14, 2013) – Children begin learning the moment they are born—everything they see, hear and touch is a new experience. These events form the foundation for learning language, how the world works, how people work and play together, how to control one's own body—all types of learning. Parents are the first teachers their children will have as they create the environments and experiences in which learning happens. By using everyday experiences as teachable moments, you will help your child learn and grow.

It can be hard as a parent due to work hours and busy schedules, but teachable moments can be just a few minutes or even a few seconds. The trick is to be aware of what we see and do as we go through our day. Events that seem mundane to us may be a wonder to our children.

As children grow, teachable moments turn from numbers, colors and shapes, to more difficult subjects like puberty, drugs and dating. Regardless of the topic, parents can still use these times to introduce the topic of dating, alcohol and drugs. These topics may be scary and serious, but the talk doesn't have to be. When talking with your child, there are five important points to keep in mind:

- You don't have to be an expert on the subject matter. It is ok to say "I don't know the answer to your question, maybe we can search for information together."
- You don't have to go it alone. Reach out for help if you are uncomfortable talking with your child.
- Be open and honest about how you feel about dating, drinking and drug use. Don't assume your child knows how you feel or what you are thinking.
- Set clear, firm expectations and rules regarding your child's behavior. Along with expectations and rules, be clear about what the consequences will be if they are not followed.
- Be the example you want your child to follow.

More information about:

- *Breakout Drug Education Program*, contact Shelly Milligan at (517) 787-7920 or via email at smilligan@strong-families.org
- *Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition* and its activities, please contact Kelsey Haynes at (517) 796-5133 or via email at khaynes@uwjackson.org

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