Positive Parenting for Healthy Youth
PAYS 2021 Risk and Protective Factors

What is PAYS?
The Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) is a student survey administered in odd-numbered years (e.g., 2015, 2017, 2019) to youth in 8th, 10th, and 12th grades in participating schools throughout the state. The questions asked in the survey cover many types of attitudes, knowledge, behaviors, and experiences. Below are results from Downingtown Area School District students.

DASD Top Protective Factors
- Assets that decrease risk taking behaviors among youth. Here is where we are doing well:

  Family Attachment:
  Young people that feel they are a valued part of their family.
  70%

  Family Rewards for Prosocial Involvement:
  When parents, siblings, and other family members praise, encourage and attend to things done well by their child.
  64%

  Family Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement:
  Youth that are exposed to more opportunities to participate meaningfully in the responsibilities and activities of the family.
  68%

DASD Top Risk Factors
- Characteristics in the community that are likely to increase risk taking behaviors among youth. Here’s where we need support:

  Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Drugs and Antisocial Behavior:
  In families where parents use illegal drugs, are heavy users of alcohol, are tolerant of children’s use, and/or use drugs or alcohol with their kids, children are more likely to become drug users in adolescence.
  46%

  Low Commitment toward School:
  Students that report not liking school, spending time on homework, and perceiving the coursework as irrelevant.
  52%

  Perceived Risk of Drug use:
  Students that do not perceive drug use to be risky.
  42%

Ways to Strengthen Our Protective Factors
- Take an interest in what your child is interested in and make time to do that activity with them—be present and limit distractions.

  Eat meals as a family.
  It can be any meal of the day, and even if schedules only allow a few times a week, it matters. Eating together sets the stage for conversation and sharing.

  Be available. Make space for daily play or interaction with your kids, even if for only 10 minutes. This sends the message that your relationship is a priority and connects you to your child. Feeling connected leads to more positive choices.

Ways to Decrease Risk Factors
- Talk early and often with your kids about drugs and alcohol, starting around age 8-11 years old. Early conversations can prevent early use.

  Role model healthy behaviors. Most youth report their parents are the biggest influence on their decision of whether or not to drink or use drugs. Show your kids how to cope with stress in healthy ways, without using substances.

  Seek out help from trusted sources. Visit CTC’s Resource Page for useful links and resources. See link below!

For more tips and info visit us at www.downtownctc.org & follow us at:

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