

# PARENTS: YOU MATTER!



## A How-To Guide to Organizing and Running “Parents: You Matter!” in Your Community

Thank you for your interest in the Partnership for Drug-Free America’s “Parents: You Matter!” program\*. The following provides a step-by-step guide to implementing the Partnership’s local prevention presentation program in your community.

The purpose of “Parents: You Matter!” is to deliver information to parents that will empower them to help their kids avoid drug and alcohol use, or help them if their kids have already gotten involved. “Parents: You Matter!” is designed to be co-delivered by law enforcement, prevention, and treatment professionals. When the information in the presentation is combined with local knowledge, the result is a powerful learning experience for everyone in the room.

The success of this program starts with the commitment of a few people within a community. This commitment can come from parents or other concerned adults who have learned about the program and want to bring it to their hometown. It can come from prevention organizations or treatment providers who are working to change community attitudes and behaviors around substance abuse. Or, it can come from a law enforcement agency that is working to protect and connect with community members.

### **Getting Started ...**

If you are a parent or concerned adult, you can bring “Parents: You Matter!” to your community as a “Parents: You Matter!” Champion. Champions are men and women who call together the key players, introduce them to the presentation, and lead the process to make your community healthier and safer.

1. Talk to other parents you know about the “Parents: You Matter!” Find out if they would be willing to help you bring the program to your community. If so, you can share the tasks listed below.
2. Reach out to prevention, treatment, and law enforcement providers in your community. If you aren’t sure who to call, start with law enforcement. Call the non-emergency number, and ask for the person in charge of community policing, or simply ask to speak with the Chief or Sheriff. Explain that you have identified a free community presentation from the Partnership for a Drug-Free America that helps parents talk with their kids about substance abuse, and you would like help delivering these presentations. Use the program overview to explain the program.
3. If you have school age kids, contact their principal. (If not, call the superintendent’s office.) The principal will be able to direct you to the person or team who handles substance abuse issues at your school.
4. Contact anyone else who you think can help, such as the Parent Teacher Association, the local Boys and Girls Club, health care providers, or local government officials.

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\* When we use the word “parent” anywhere in the “Parents: You Matter!” program, we are talking about anyone and everyone who is a caring presence in a child’s life – grandparents, aunts, uncles, other caregivers, mentors, even big brothers and sisters. When we say the word “parent” we are talking about you.

5. Invite the people you speak with to come a meeting to plan your local effort. It is very possible that the people you've contacted are already working together, and you may be able to participate in a meeting that has already been scheduled. Emphasize that the "Parents: You Matter!" presentation is designed to complement, not compete with, any existing prevention programs that may be running in your community.

If you are a law enforcement professional, "Parents: You Matter!" offers a free presentation that can help parents and concerned citizens understand how they can help you protect their kids. If your agency is not already part of a community coalition, this program provides a way to start working with other people and community groups committed to community prevention efforts. Follow the steps above to bring together partners in your community.

If you work for a community coalition, prevention organization, or handle community outreach for a treatment provider, "Parents: You Matter!" provides a free, "off-the-shelf" presentation that you can localize and make your own. The presentation delivers consumer-friendly, science-based information about risks and protective factors and effective parental intervention tips in a manner that parents can relate to. You can use your next coalition meeting as a planning meeting for the program.

### **The Planning Meeting**

Investing the time to carefully plan your community's "Parents: You Matter!" presentations will pay off in a more successful and effective program. We recommend an initial planning meeting. The agenda for this first meeting should include the following topics:

- What other programs/events/initiatives are already going on?
- Who will be a presenter?
- What module will you use?
- Do you have all the tools you need to present?
- What local information can you use in the presentation?
- Do you want to deliver a single presentation, or make the presentation available to groups in the community?
- When will the first presentation take place?
- Who will coordinate the presentation?

What is already going on? In many communities, efforts are well underway to help parents communicate with their kids. You should strive to complement, rather than compete with, existing programs. At the start of the meeting, ask attendees to share information about what they do, and how they are currently helping parents.

Who will present? Ideally, this presentation should be co-delivered by prevention, treatment, and law enforcement professionals, but other concerned community members are welcome to become presenters. The experiences and expertise of each professional complements the strengths of the others and provides audience members with a greater understanding of the issue. Others outside of these professions may also wish to – and are welcome to be -- presenters. The most important characteristics for presenters are that they are comfortable speaking before groups and can commit the time to prepare for, and participate in, the presentation.

What module will you use? Currently, there are two drug-specific modules available. One addresses methamphetamine abuse and the other addresses prescription/over-the-counter drug abuse. Additional drug modules are in development for future presentations. The presentation can be delivered with one module, both modules, or none. You should consider how much time you have to present, what drug is the greatest threat in your community, and which module your audience would be most interested in.

Preparing Presenters: The PowerPoint presentation can be downloaded at [www.drugfree.org/parents360](http://www.drugfree.org/parents360). While each presenter will focus on only one part of the presentation, presenters should be familiar with the full presentation. The script and presenter's guide provide background and context for the information on the slides, but the presenters

should make the presentation “their own.” The presenting team should meet – even by phone -- prior to the presentation to figure out who will be delivering which slides. However, the most important thing that presenters can do is practice, practice, practice.

Confirm that you have the tools you need to present: At a minimum, you will need the following resources to deliver the “Parents: You Matter!” presentation:

- A laptop computer that has PowerPoint
- Speakers, with enough volume to serve your audience;
- A projector that is compatible with the laptop computer
- Copies of the audience handouts, evaluations, and event report form (electronic file masters are provided by the Partnership for Drug-Free America)

Find local information to use in the presentation: Local prevalence data, crime reports, and personal experiences can be used to paint a picture of the drug and alcohol scene in your community. If you have existing community presentations, you can import slides from your presentation into the “Parents: You Matter!” presentation.

Determine if you want to deliver a single presentation, or make the presentation available to groups in the community:

We want to see the “Parents: You Matter!” delivered as widely as possible. However, we recognize that communities have different needs and different resources. “Parents: You Matter!” can be delivered as a single, or annual, presentation – at a back-to-school night, before prom and graduation season or another special event. That said, we encourage you to make “Parents: You Matter!” available to groups across the community.

Plan the first presentation: The law enforcement agency or prevention group you are working with may already have a system in place for organizing and delivering community presentations. If so, use their proven system. We encourage you to involve your local school as the venue for your first presentation. Schools are the place where parents come together. As a **free** resource, “Parents: You Matter!” will be especially valuable to schools that are trying to serve their community with limited resources. Your Parent Teacher Association can be especially helpful in scheduling and delivering this presentation.

As a group, you will need to assign roles and responsibilities. The following is a partial checklist you can use:

- Who will present?
- Who will gather information and add it to the “Parents: You Matter!” presentation?
- Who will handle the coordination tasks?
- Who will ensure that the technology needed works and is available for the presentation?
- How will you make the community aware of the presentation?

Who will coordinate the presentation? It is important to find at least one detail-oriented person who will coordinate the event, and make sure that all of the required tasks that are completed.

Your planning meeting will likely require follow-ups and further coordination by phone. Make sure that you have a phone and e-mail list of all attendees.

What should you do for your first presentation?

- Encourage anyone who is interested in being a presenter to attend. Actually seeing the presentation being delivered will build confidence.
- Get to the site early to make sure that the PowerPoint, projector, laptop and speakers all work properly.
- Know the size and composition of the audience – this is very helpful for the presenters to know what parts of the presentation to emphasize.
- Leave plenty of time for questions from the audience and try to keep to the schedule you announced.

Once the presentation is completed, please take the following steps:

- If you have decided to continue the program, provide audience members with a way to contact you to request future presentations.
- Urge every audience member to complete an evaluation (available at [www.drugfree.org/parents360](http://www.drugfree.org/parents360)). The Partnership will not be able to continue to provide this program if we do not have documentation that it is being delivered at the local level. Audience comments and feedback are essential to continuous improvement of the presentation
- Complete an Event Report (available at [www.drugfree.org/parents360](http://www.drugfree.org/parents360)) and return it to the address below, or fax it to 212-922-1570, ATTN: Parents: You Matter
- Once collected, please return Audience Evaluations to the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, ATTN: Parents: You Matter, 405 Lexington Ave, Suite 1601, New York, NY 10174.

### Continuing the Program

Most of the work of establishing a “Parents: You Matter!” program is done by the time you have completed the first presentation. It is our hope that the event is a positive experience for everyone involved and that you will decide to continue the program. Parents **need** the information you can provide through the “Parents: You Matter!” presentation, and this live and localized presentation is an effective way to deliver these tips and tools to them. If you decide to continue the program, check off the following tasks:

- Form a team or pick a coordinator who will spearhead the program
- Recruit presenters: You will need a point person or small group of people to recruit and maintain contact with each other and with the trained presenters in your program
- Train presenters: You will need to make sure that your presenters are experienced public speakers able to perform the task effectively
- Identify and secure audiences: Your program’s coordinator(s) will need to find audiences and secure their interest, then get times, dates and venues when the presentations can be delivered. We recommend seeking pre-gathered groups such as civic organizations, PTA groups, faith-based gatherings or local businesses who host lunch-and-learn sessions
- Schedule presenters: Once you have a venue, and a date, find presenters who will be available to deliver the program
- Deliver presentations: Ensure that the presentation takes place as scheduled with all the necessary equipment and materials in place
- Maintain contact with the Partnership for Drug-Free America: We ask any group that takes on this project to keep us informed by submitting a simple one-page event report and completed audience evaluations after each presentation.

How will you promote the program? In the coming weeks, documents will be posted at [www.drugfree.org/parents360](http://www.drugfree.org/parents360) that you can use to promote the program. In the interim, contact the planning meeting attendees to brainstorm a list of groups that may be interested in the presentation. We advise selecting one or more people to manage the marketing and promotion of the program in your community.

### Keep in Touch...

At the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, we are committed to making the “Parents: You Matter!” program a success. Please contact us by visiting [www.drugfree.org/portal/contact](http://www.drugfree.org/portal/contact) (select Parents You Matter from the dropdown) if you need more information, are facing challenges, wish to share a success story, or for any other reason!

Parents **DO** matter, and we know how much **YOU** matter to America’s parents and their kids. **THANK YOU** for everything you do!