

# Starting a Parent Circle



You can maximize the benefits of the SAFE HOMES network in your home by starting your own Parent Circle with the parents of your children's friends. This is the most effective way to build lasting relationships with parents who are all dedicated to providing a safe and healthy environment for children—those who share your same belief that there should be “No Use” of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs by youth.

1. Identify your child's closest friends and obtain parent contact information.
2. Invite the parents to an informal gathering at your home.
3. Host the gathering in your home. Keep it friendly and informal.
4. Discuss the three top concerns the parents have about their children.
5. All parents work together and develop a list of clear expectations for youth.
6. Sign the SAFE HOMES Parents Pledge form.
7. Commit to contacting each other in the future regarding additional information or questions about permission to attend an event, setting a uniform curfew, etc. This is the SAFE HOMES network at work!

## PARENT CIRCLE SUGGESTIONS

- Tell the parents you call that you are contacting all of the parents in your child's friendship peer group so no one feels singled out.
- Let them know your get-together will give them a chance to become better acquainted and share your parenting concerns with each other.
- You may decide to send the parents a SAFE HOMES brochure in advance of your meeting or distribute them at the meeting.
- Allow time for introductions and some get acquainted time. Light refreshments often help to break the ice.
- Be organized and plan an agenda in advance, but be flexible with the needs of the group.
- Don't take differing viewpoints personally; some people will need to learn to open up to a new way of thinking about their children and their role as parents - this can take time.
- Follow up afterwards with a letter to the parents recapping what was accomplished at the meeting.