

## **Whether you smoke or not you make the difference! Tips for Parents**

The CDC offers the following tips for parents and guardians to help them keep their kids smoke-free:

- Remember that despite the impact of movies, music, and TV, parents can be **THE GREATEST INFLUENCE** in their kids' lives.
- Talk directly to your children about the risks of tobacco use; if friends or relatives suffer with or died from tobacco-related illnesses, let your kids know. Let them know it strains the heart, damages the lungs, and can cause a lot of other problems, including cancer. That's not even mentioning what it can do to appearance: making hair and clothes stink, causing bad breath, and staining teeth and fingernails.
- If you use tobacco, you can still make a difference. Your best move, of course, is to try to quit. Meanwhile, don't use tobacco in your children's presence, don't offer it to them, and don't leave it where they can easily get it.
- Start talking about tobacco use when your children are 5 or 6 years old and continue through their high school years. Many kids start using tobacco by age 11. Many are addicted by age 14.
- Know if your kids' friends use tobacco. Talk about ways to refuse tobacco.
- Discuss with kids the false glamorization of tobacco on billboards and in other media, such as movies, TV, and magazines.

If you are a smoker yourself and don't want your children to start, know that you probably won't have any less influence on your child's decision, and may even have more, because you've been there. You can speak to your child firsthand about:

- how you got started smoking and what you thought about it at the time
- how hard it is to quit
- how it has affected your health
- what it costs you, financially and socially