

The Life Education Center

The Life Education Center (LEC) program teaches students in kindergarten through high school the benefits of making sound, healthy choices for their bodies and minds.

Two mobile units travel to 61 public and private schools in Kankakee and Iroquois counties -- reaching approximately 14,000 students annually.

The LEC's curriculum aligns with Illinois State Standards. Instructors use hands-on materials, visuals, discussion and role playing to teach students about the human body, the dangers of its abuse and about the different skills needed to deal with peer pressure. TAM, a transparent anatomical mannequin, teaches the younger students about their bodies and provides older students with an inside view of how chemical substances harm the body. LEC mascot, Harold the Giraffe and his friend, Jocko the Monkey, are favorites with the younger students who learn the importance of exercise and eating good foods.

The LEC also provides a forum for older students. A three-part research-based curriculum proven to delay the onset of alcohol use is taught to 6th, 7th and 8th grade students at participating schools and "Class Action" is being used with high school students. Junior and senior high school students, along with their parents, are encouraged to make a pledge to follow and support laws prohibiting underage alcohol use in the Partnership's annual "***Make a Pledge - Make It Stick***" social marketing campaign.

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**Life Education Centers
Pledge for Life Partnership**

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Visit our website at: www.i-kan.org

Parents of Fifth Graders

In the Life Education Center, fifth graders learn to choose ***Wise Highs***, choices for a happy, healthy body and mind...***Choices You Can Live With!***

Lessons focus on how neat the body is and the things that cause it to change. Influences like friends and the media are discussed along with the impact they have on our choices. We encourage you to talk with your child about these lessons and to add your own family values.

Topics covered include:

- ▲ The elements of the different body systems and how they must work together to keep the body healthy.
- ▲ Why some people become addicted to alcohol and different types of drugs.
- ▲ Why people abuse drugs knowing that they are harmful.
- ▲ How to handle peer pressure and finding alternatives to using drugs.
- ▲ How the media and advertising can influence behavior.
- ▲ Personal choices: Despite outside influences, we are ultimately responsible for the decisions we make and how we treat our bodies.
- ▲ Why we should choose ***Wise Highs*** -- healthy choices for our bodies and minds.

Review Questions:

By asking the following questions, your child can share with you what he has learned in the Life Education Center:

- **What did you learn about the effects different substances have on how the body functions?** (*Alcohol slows the nervous system; marijuana gives the body mixed messages, speeds the heart and slows the nervous system; nicotine speeds up the circulatory system.*) For additional resources, consult the *KAN-I HELP Information Network at www.kan-i-help.org.*
- **What did you learn to do when friends urged you to try a cigarette, alcohol or another drug?** (*Use the refusal skills:*
 1. Ask questions - What ... ? Why ... ?
 2. Identify --- *Body Consequences; Friends and Family Consequences; Laws and Rules Consequences.*
 3. Suggest an alternative -- "*Instead, why don't we ...;*"
 4. Get away -- "*If you change your mind, I'll be ...;*"
 5. Talk to an adult. Who can you talk to?)
- **How do advertisers try to get us to buy their products?** (*They try to influence us by making products like candy and beef jerky look like real cigarettes, chewing tobacco, etc.*)



- **Who influences your choices?** (*Friends, parents, brothers and sisters, other family members, coaches, clergy, teachers, television, magazines, books, etc.*)

- **Why is it important to be able to tell the difference between good and bad influences?** (*Good influences help you be the best you can be now*

and in the future. They care about you and want the best for you. Bad influences try to get you to do what you know is wrong and only care about now and not the long term effects of your actions. They are selfish and really don't care about you.)

Follow-up Activities

The following activities can be used to reinforce the Life Education Center lessons.

- Have your child imagine she is very tiny and is able to journey through her body. Ask her to describe what the trip is like as she goes into each part of the body.
- Discuss why alcohol and other drugs which are liquid travel more quickly into the blood stream and do not need to be digested like food. Talk about how drugs will affect you, especially your brain and reactions.
- Help your child recall a choice she made during the past week to break a rule. Was she influenced by anyone in making the decision? What were some of the other choices she could have made instead?
- Ask your child what makes a dare so tempting. How should he handle dares from friends?
- Talk about how your child might find herself in a group that is acting tough and cool. All of a sudden they begin doing something she is afraid will get them all in trouble. What can she do to get out of this situation as fast as possible?

These are just a few ways that we can teach our children how special they are and how important it is for them to take care of their bodies and minds. These discussions will later help them to choose *Wise Highs...Choices You Can Live With!* To visit the LEC or to learn more, call Brenda Wetzel, director of Life Education programs, at 815 936-4606.