

For Immediate Release

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As summer vacation approaches, the KC STAAR Project would like to take a moment to remind parents of a few things. Summertime for students can be especially difficult as they fall out of a school routine. They often have gained more freedom to make decisions about the activities and events. Below are some tips for families to navigate through the summer months:

- Make a clear list of expectations at the start of the summer—Discuss questions such as:
 - Has their curfew changed?
 - Are they expected to do additional chores or tasks while at home?
 - How do they communicate with you while you are gone or working?
 - Are they allowed to watch TV or use the Internet more?
- Encourage them to be active in community events, activities, and projects. There are some great volunteer opportunities as well, such as visiting the nursing home.
- Help your children plan their time. Check the newspaper, library, or church for scheduled activities. Each week, go over what the plan is. Each day, ask for a more specific plan, such as “Shelly is coming over and we will play Scrabble, bake brownies, and go swimming.” Always ask the questions, “What? When? Where? Who?”
- Even though they are not in school, summer is a great time to continue learning. Encourage exploration of the world around them, safe science experiments, and reading for fun.
- Let them know your rules are the same for summer as they are during the school year—tobacco, alcohol, other illegal drug use, or other negative behaviors will not be tolerated, ever.
- Remember that other parents may be going through the same parenting issues you are; you are not alone. Talk and network with others. Parents are encouraged by phone calls and visits from other parents.

As your children get older they tend to “hang out” with their friends and classmates more. With this greater independence come opportunities to make decisions, both positive and negative. Parents are still the biggest influence on their children’s decisions from now through adulthood. Talk to them now about risky behaviors that could hurt them or someone else. Let them know your expectations—they will live up to them.

The KC STAAR Project hopes everyone has a safe and fun summer.