



2024

# Toolkit to Plan and Host Positive, Drug Free Activities



# Positive, Drug Free Events for Youth

Engage Douglas County encourages Youth Empowerment and Prevention to support positive, drug free activities within the county. Specific protective factors have been identified by science to have the greatest positive impact on youth. One protective factor is having engagement and connections within school, community, with peers, in athletics, religion, and culture. Families, schools and communities all need to work together to create an environment that facilitates healthy, safe development for our youth and allows opportunities for engagement and connection.

While we are teenagers (and even into our mid-20s), we are still growing and developing. When we expose our brain to substances like alcohol, marijuana, tobacco/e-cigarettes, prescription drugs, and other substances during this time in our lives, we rewire our brain to make ourselves more vulnerable to things like mood disorders, permanent lowering of impulse control, and addiction in adulthood. So even though we might be tempted to use drugs or alcohol, there are a lot of other ways to have fun and connect with our peers without damaging our brains and bodies with substances.

One way to have fun is to plan and host youth-led, positive, drug free events for you and your peers. These can be especially important on nights where your peers might be more tempted to engage in risky behavior, such as after prom, graduation, home sporting events or other identified times in your community. Positive, drug free events are an opportunity for youth to take the lead in planning to keep your peers in Douglas County safe, happy, and well.

Youth leadership in planning alcohol-and drug free positive activities is critical to create well attended events, as well as building your leadership skills and enhance connectedness. Connectedness is an important protective factor for youth that can reduce the likelihood of a variety of health risk behaviors and you can lead the way in providing this opportunity for other young people in your school and community.

# Examples of Positive, Drug Free Activities

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- Open Gym
- Movie Night
- Game Night
- Drop In Hangouts After Sporting Events
- 5K or Fun Run/Walk
- Dances
- Video Game Tournaments
- Yoga Class
- Bingo
- Dodgeball Tournament
- 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament
- Paint Nights
- Concert with Local Band
- Carnival
- Art Club
- Talent Show
- Tutorial or How-To Class
- Inflatables
- Laser Tag
- Guest Speakers or Guest Events such as a Hypnotist
- And more!



**Activity Spotlight:**  
Billy Mills Middle School (Lawrence) hosted a game day open to all students on an early release day. It was a time for students to come together, have snacks, play games, and have fun.

# Planning Your Event



## 01. Meet as a team to brainstorm event ideas.

Agree on the event(s) and create an action plan. Decide who will complete various tasks including coordinating the food, coordinating the prizes, leading games, creating posters and other marketing materials, etc.



## 02. Decide on event date, time, and location.

Utilize school calendar and review home game schedule and other upcoming events to help with scheduling a time. When determining a location, keep access in mind for all of your peers. Get permission to announce the event at school.



## 03. Contact other student organizations.

Partner with other student organizations to help get the word out and/or to collaborate to plan & implement the event.



## 04. Food and Prizes

Begin planning food donations and purchases early; contact local businesses for crowd-drawing prizes. Make sure there is enough food for everyone that “could” attend.



## 05. Identify adult support

Identify and outreach any adult support and/or adult sponsors that are needed.



## 06. Create safety protocol

Work alongside your identified adult support/sponsors to develop any protocol and guidelines needed for safety and security.

# Event Flyer or Social Media Posts

When making an event flyers or social media posts, there are a few tips to consider:

- Just the facts: only include the information they need to know
  - Who, what, when, and where
  - Example: 5th Quarter Party, for middle and/or high school youth, time, location
- Use the word FREE & PRIZES to help generate interest! Make sure youth know this event is free and tell them what they could be getting.
- Feel empowered to hand out the flyers - It is better for the invite to come from you instead of adults. Take ownership of planning the event and lean on your adult support for guidance and supervision!





# Questions?

For questions or additional support on how to plan and host effective positive, drug-free activities, feel free to scan the QR code to visit Engage Douglas County's website for more resources. You can also reach out using the contact information below!



**YOUTH EMPOWERMENT  
& PREVENTION**



*Engaged Adults, Thriving Youth.*

**ENGAGE**  
Douglas County

## Contact

Ariel Cohn  
*Prevention Supervisor*  
*YEP! Coordinator*  
DCCCA

[www.engagedouglascounty.org](http://www.engagedouglascounty.org)  
[acohn@dcca.org](mailto:acohn@dcca.org)  
[@douglascoyep](https://www.instagram.com/douglascoyep) (Instagram)