

Don't we all want to create the best community and environment for our kids? Sometimes, we want to wave a magical wand so our kids grow up healthy and with no problems! But the reality is that no single program will inoculate our youth. Instead, research tells us that a collaborative effort that uses evidence-based strategies provides the best outcomes.

Communities That Care (CTC) is an evidence-based prevention system that works with different sectors throughout the community, including volunteers, to implement tools and strategies to help prevent the use of substances among youth. The objective of CTC is to promote the healthy development of young people through the high-quality implementation of prevention science in all domains of a child's life.

The school is one area where CTC may implement prevention science through partnerships with schools or Parent Teacher Associations (PTA). Many coalitions throughout the state have partnered and collaborated to strengthen children's connection to their schools.

CTCs and PTA collaborations demonstrate working together to provide positive social opportunities for kids and their families through supporting festivals, carnivals, movie nights, and school dances. Through Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs), CTCs can provide opportunities to support PTA efforts to increase school commitment or positive social opportunities. CTCs have access to resources for training PTA leaders and parents to support kids and families through prevention programs, like the Guiding Good Choices Workshop and Strengthening Families courses. CTCs and PTAs can collaborate in creating family activities to share prevention information, such as practical tips to engage youth in conversations or community resources to help struggling families, among other things. There are also opportunities to bring in speakers for events and host booths at events activities.

A PTA president shared that after participating in a parenting class, Guiding Good Choices, she wanted to recruit additional participants and took the idea to the local PTA Board. Together, they approached the elementary school principal to see if they could jointly sponsor a Guiding Good Choices Workshop at their school. The principal agreed and went the extra mile by sending a letter to each family represented by his student body to come and take this parenting class *with* him and his wife. Nearly 10% of the school's families enrolled due to this collective approach, and the learning environment was supportive and helped preventative principles integrate into the applicable families, schools, and community.

The PTAs can support their local CTCs by increasing awareness of local coalitions by sharing online content through social media to engage prevention coalitions in their community. Through PTAs' assistance, they can ask others to join and participate in local coalition efforts.

Collaboration between CTCs and PTAs to strengthen children and youth connections to their schools and communities will create a buffer. It reduces the chance of our children participating in risky behaviors in the future. CTCs and PTAs demonstrate the power of community partnerships in promoting our children's well-being. If you would like to engage your local coalition, visit the Utah Prevention Coalition Association webpage to contact your coalition at

[Utah Prevention Coalition Association](#). To learn more about prevention in your local area, check out the Utah Department of Health and Human Services at <https://sumh.utah.gov/contact/location-map/>.