

Washington Middle School Program Encourages Students to Make Healthy Choices, Helps Parents Communicate

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Helping students make healthy choices is the goal of the Partnership for Student Success Program at Washington Middle School. Principal Curt Mayer explains the pilot program started with Iowa State University. In phase one, sixth-grade students took an at-risk survey to see what concerns and behaviors students were exhibiting. In phase two, research-based life skills curriculum was added to the school's health program. Mayer says they're now in year three of implementing those lessons of social, behavioral, and emotional skills, "It deals with lessons related to drugs, alcohol, at-risk behaviors, social issues and concerns, those types of things. And then we also partnered with Iowa State Extension Office, and Amy Green comes in and does our fidelity checks to make sure that we're teaching those with fidelity and if there's any questions or concerns that we might have, and then how Iowa State Extension Office and then support us and our community."

A community support team was then created with school officials, the Washington County Department of Public Health, law enforcement and the county attorney's office. Director of public health Danielle Pettit-Majewski adds the group reaches out to parents to help their children through adolescence with curriculum from ISU called Empowering Families to Grow Together, "Children don't come with an instruction manual and as you get into the adolescent years you've got hormones raging, but you know, still that brain development that's happening. So, it's a complicated time for parents and for their adolescents. So it's a good way to help them gain some additional skills. And really what I think is most important about this program is that it's for all families, no matter what your situation is. You know, even if you aren't having any issues, even if your child is doing just fine. It just is a great way to improve that communication, so we really wanted to open it up."

Empowering Families to Grow Together can be accessed online and used at home by any family. [Click here for the Empowering Families to Grow Together](#) [2] information; at this time they're only

available in English but Iowa State University is working to update them and offer them in Spanish and audibly.

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[1] Image: <http://kciiradio.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Demon-logo.jpg>

[2] Click here for the Empowering Families to Grow Together : <https://triple-s.ppsi.iastate.edu/signup>

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