



Children's Health

Substance Abuse

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO BE DRUG-FREE

Many schools offer drug and alcohol prevention programs to educate children about the dangers of abuse and addiction. The most important prevention is what children learn at home. Taking an active role in drug prevention is important.

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

It's important to recognize how our actions affect our children's behavior. Never get drunk in front of your child. And don't involve children in your drinking by allowing them to mix you a cocktail or get you a beer. And most important, never drink and drive.

SET AND ENFORCE RULES

Make it clear what you expect and what the consequences are for breaking rules. Be consistent and reasonable. Make it clear that the no-drug, no-alcohol rule applies in your home, at school, at a friend's house or anywhere your child is. Know where your children are and who they are with. Have them check in if their plans change.

MAKE YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILDREN AWARE

Parents should make themselves aware of the different types of drugs and alcohol most often used by kids and teens. Be able to identify drug paraphernalia. Be familiar with the street names of drugs and what the drugs look like. Know the signs of alcohol and drug use, and be alert for changes in your child's behavior or appearance. Get your child professional help if you suspect drug or alcohol use.

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CHILDREN

Young people who use alcohol, drugs and tobacco will typically do so before they leave the ninth grade. Waiting until there's a problem is too late. Discuss the negative health effects, dangers and consequences of using

these substances. When talking about tobacco, be sure to also stress its undesirable effects such as: bad breath, stained teeth, yellow fingers and burned clothing, in addition to its negative health effects. Contrary to many parents' fears, educating children will not put ideas into their heads. By knowing how drugs will affect their bodies and minds, children can more easily say no to them.

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO SAY NO

- ▶ Role-play realistic situations that your child might be confronted with in social situations.
- ▶ Practice ways to say no. Help them learn to say no and mean it.
- ▶ Teach them to walk away. When nothing else works, get out of the situation immediately. Go home, go to class, join another group of friends or talk to an adult.

