

Research shows that parents are the #1 reason young people decide not to drink.

The sooner you talk to your children about alcohol and other drugs, the greater chance you have of influencing their decision not to drink or use drugs.

For different reasons, kids are experimenting with alcohol at very early age. Studies shows that the average age is 9 years old. It's never too early to start to talk with your kids about alcohol and other drugs.

Parents have the power!

Parents think what they say has little influence on their child's substance abuse however, studies show that over 80% of young people ages 10-18 say their parents are the leading influence on their decision to drink or not to drink.

Talk. They will listen. Think of the influences, marketing and social media messages your child sees and hears.

It's better that your children hear and learn from you than from friends, the internet, or the media.

Kids who drink alcohol are more likely to:

- Use other drugs
- Get bad grades
- Hurt themselves or someone else
- Have unwanted or unprotected sex
- Make bad decisions
 - Have health problems



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A Parent's Guide For Substance Abuse Prevention



COMMUNICATE

It's very important to develop strong communication with your children. Be involved in your child's life. Have fun together. Share simple activities such as a walk to a park or a game. Have daily positive interactions. Eat dinner together. Listen to them. Speak respectfully. Communicate openly. Always express your love and appreciation.

SET BOUNDARIES

Be clear and consistent with your message: "No alcohol and no drugs in this house". Establish consequences and enforce them. Parental disapproval is the number one reason why teens say they don't drink. It's important to explain your message: take the time to discuss your beliefs and concerns, and listen to what they have to say. Don't be afraid to be a parent.

MONITOR YOUR KIDS

To keep your child safe and not involved with friends who are drinking or using drugs, it is crucial to ask: Where are you going? Who are you going with? What you will be doing? When will you be home? Will there be alcohol or drugs? Be sure to explain that you trust your children, that you love them and want to be certain they are safe. Get to know your kids' friends and their parents. Let them know your no-alcohol and no-drugs rules. Talk with your kids and together, create some refusal skills and excuses to deal with peer pressure. Don't forget to monitor your children's online social networking.

Why do kids try alcohol and drugs?

- Fun
- Stress
- Relieve boredom
- Feel good
- Satisfy their curiosity
- Ease their pain
- Feel grown up
- Show their independence
- Belong to a specific group

Be aware when several of the following warning signs occur at the same time:

- Sudden mood changes
- Low grades, poor attendance and poor concentration
- Rebelling against family rules
- Resistant to introducing their friends to you
- A "don't care" attitude
- Asking for money more often
- Slurred speech
- Bloodshot eyes

Nobody will ever love and care for your children the way you do. Keep them close and keep talking! A happy and drug-free life is the best gift that you can offer to your child.

If you are already suspicious that your child is using alcohol and drugs, seek professional help. Don't wait. Don't assume it will just stop. Regular use of alcohol and drugs can progress to a chronic addiction.



Scientific Fact: The teen's brain isn't fully developed until he/she is 25 years old. Alcohol and drugs affect the brain by tapping into its communication system and interfering with the way the brain processes information. Drugs affect motor coordination, impulse control, memory and, judgment and decision-making capacity.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Online:
www.ParentsEmpowered.org
www.DrugFree.org/the-parent-toolkit/
www.teens.drugabuse.gov/parents
www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking

Books:
How to Raise a Drug-Free Kid,
by Joseph A. Califano Jr.,
A Parent's Guide to Substance Abuse and
Addiction by Kellena Page

Local:
LifeSteps Council on Alcohol and Drugs
www.LifeStepsCouncil.org
* Parents are welcome to participate on the
Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition to work
together towards a safe, healthy and drug-free
community

National Helpline (Treatment Locator)
1-800-HELP
www.FindTreatment.samhsa.gov

Poison Help
1-800-222-1222
www.PoisonControl.org

Phoenix House
www.PhoenixHouse.org

Rock Springs
www.RockSpringsHealth.com

Georgetown Behavioral Health Institute
www.GeorgetownBehavioral.com

RightStep
www.RightStep.com