



*Make Prevention a CHOICE*

## Ten Steps to Help Your Child Say No to Alcohol and Other Drugs

1. **Talk to your children about alcohol and other drugs.** Make sure they understand the dangers and problems of alcohol and other drug use.
2. **Learn to really listen to your children.** Just talking to your child is only half the job. You can help keep open the lines of communication by knowing how to listen, and by knowing when to listen and not talk.
3. **Help your children feel good about themselves.** Preteens and adolescents are often unsure of themselves. Knowing that their parents have confidence in them and believe in their self-worth means a lot. You can communicate this faith in them by giving lots of specific and believable praise and encouragement to your children at appropriate times.
4. **Help your children develop strong values.** A strong value system anchored in a clear sense of right and wrong can give your children the courage to make decisions based on facts and sound values rather than peer pressure.
5. **Be a good role model.** Your children are very aware of your habits and spoken and unspoken attitudes concerning alcohol and other drug use. They will tend to follow your example.
6. **Help your children deal with peer pressure.** Children who are taught to be gentle and agreeable also may need skills to resist peer pressure. Help them practice ways to say “no” and feel confident about themselves and their decisions.
7. **Set firm rules against alcohol and other drug use.** Have clear family rules. Tell your children that they are not allowed to drink, smoke, use other drugs, or engage in other activities to which you object. Be sure they thoroughly understand the consequences of breaking these rules. Enforce the rules consistently.
8. **Encourage healthy, creative activities.** Make sure your children have enough structure in their daily lives. Create activities for them or encourage them to take part in sports, school programs, or hobbies they might enjoy. Join your children in having fun!
9. **Talk with other parents.** They are all going through the same things you are. Networking with neighborhood parents and community groups can help. If your child is going to a party or getting together with friends, make sure there is a chaperone and that there will be no alcohol or drugs.
10. **Know what to do if you suspect a problem.** Learn to recognize the telltale signs of alcohol and other drug use (listed on the other side), and get appropriate help quickly from a doctor or other professional.\*

### Signs of Alcohol and Other Drug Use

Changes in patterns of behavior, appearance, and attitudes may signal use of alcohol and other drugs. Not all youth who use alcohol also use other drugs and not all youth who use other drugs use alcohol, but use of more than one type of substance is not uncommon.

### **Signs of Drug Use**

- Possession of drug-related paraphernalia such as pipes, rolling papers, small decongestant bottles and small butane torches.
- Possession of drugs or evidence of drugs, peculiar plants, or butts, seeds or leaves in ashtray or clothing pockets.
- Odor of drugs, smell of incense or other “cover-up scents.”
- Identification with the drug culture.
  - Drug-related magazines, slogans on clothing.
  - Conversation and jokes that are preoccupied with drugs.
  - Hostility in discussing drugs.
  - Flashy, expensive clothing and jewelry not purchased by parent.
  - Possession of large amounts of money and expensive items.

### **Signs of Alcohol Use**

- Drunkenness, including slurred speech or difficulty walking.
- Possession of a fake identification card.
- Odor of alcohol.

### **Signs of Alcohol or Other Drug Use**

- Physical Deterioration
  - Memory lapses, short attention span, difficulty in concentration.
  - Poor physical coordination, slurred or incoherent speech.
  - Unhealthy appearance, indifference to hygiene and grooming.
  - Bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils.
- Dramatic Change in School Performance
  - Distinctive downward turns in student’s grades - not just from C’s to F’s, but from A’s to B’s to C’s. Assignments not completed.
  - Increased absenteeism or tardiness.
- Changes in Behavior
  - Withdrawal from family
  - Changes in friends, evasiveness in talking about new ones.
  - Increasing and inappropriate anger, hostility, irritability, secretiveness.
  - Diminished interest in extracurricular activities and hobbies.
  - Chronic dishonesty (lying, stealing, cheating). Trouble with the police.
  - Use of eye drops.
  - Sleeping more than usual and at unusual hours.
  - Car accidents, fender-benders.

## **How to Contact Us**

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