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STAND

Raising Drug-Free Kids Advice by Age



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Raising Drug-Free Kids: Advice by Age

How can I prevent my teenager from using drugs and alcohol?

Is elementary school too early to be talking about this “stuff”?

In response to questions such as these, **Tri-City Partners Coalition** has compiled the resource “Raising Drug-Free Kids: Advice by Age.”

Why is it so important to keep our children drug- and alcohol-free through their years in the schools? According to Joseph A. Califano, Jr., Founder and Chair of The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, “A child who gets through age twenty-one without smoking, abusing alcohol, or using illicit drugs is virtually certain to never do so.

While this issue seems most relevant to parents with teens, even parents of pre-school and elementary-age kids need to be keenly aware of their critical role.

- Parents who clearly express their expectations about the use of alcohol and drugs raise children who are less likely to use.
- Establishing a warm connection with your children, discussing health-related issues, and defining limits and reasonable consequences in the early years lay the groundwork for healthy choices in later years.
- This series (used with permission from the Partnership for a Drug-Free America) offers an excellent starting point for raising drug-free kids.

The mission of the Tri-City Partners Coalition is to promote health, reduce substance use and other risk behaviors, and build assets in our youth and communities.

"Advice by Age" is used with permission from the Partnership for a Drug-Free America at
www.drugfree.org

Raising Drug-Free Kids: Advice by Age

Facts About Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Use

- A child who reaches age 21 without smoking, using illegal drugs or abusing alcohol is virtually certain never to do so.
- Children and teens who begin drinking before age 15 are four times likelier to become alcohol dependent than those who do not drink before age 21.
- On average, teenagers who use alcohol, tobacco and marijuana begin using them between 12 and 14 years of age, with some of the highest risk kids starting to use even earlier.
- Kids are particularly vulnerable to substance use during transitions from elementary to middle school, middle to high school, and from high school to college.
- The number of Americans who abuse controlled prescription drugs nearly doubled from 7.8 million to 15.1 million during 1992 to 2003, and abuse among teens more than tripled in that time.
- One-third of teens and nearly half of 17-years olds attend house parties where parents are present and teens are drinking, smoking marijuana or using cocaine, Ecstasy or prescription drugs.
- Forty-nine percent (3.8 million) of full-time college students binge drink and/or abuse prescription and illegal drugs.
- Teens who have infrequent family dinners are more than twice as likely to say that they expect to try drugs in the future.
- Teens who have seen their parent(s) drunk are more than twice as likely to get drunk in a typical month, and three times likelier to use marijuana and smoke cigarettes.

Source: <http://casafamilyday.org/familyday/tools-you-can-use/did-you-know/>

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The Preschool Years

Since the foundation for all healthy habits — from nutritious eating to proper hygiene — is laid down during the preschool years, it's a great time to set the stage for a drug-free life. The following tips will help you work with your preschooler so that she'll grow up happy, healthy, and drug-free.



- **Talk to your child about the joys of healthy living.** Discuss how good you feel when you take care of yourself — how you can run, jump, play and work for many hours. A great conversation starter: "I'm glad I'm healthy because I can..."
- **Celebrate your child's decision-making skills.** Whenever possible, let your child choose what to wear. Even if the clothes don't quite match, you are reinforcing your child's ability to make decisions.
- **Stress the need for your child to take personal responsibility for his own health, well-being and personal environment.** Your instructions should be concrete, relate to your child's experiences, and be stated positively. Turn chores like brushing teeth, putting away toys, wiping up spills and caring for pets into fun experiences that your child will enjoy. Break the activities down into manageable steps so that your child learns to develop plans.
- **Help your child steer clear of dangerous substances that exist in her immediate world.** Point out poisonous and harmful chemicals commonly found in homes, such as bleach, kitchen cleansers and furniture polish. Read the products' warning labels out loud to your child. Explain that she should only eat or smell food or a prescribed medicine that you, a relative, or other known caregivers give to her. Also, explain that drugs from a doctor help the person the doctor gives them to, but that they can harm someone else.
- **Help your child understand the difference between make-believe and real life.** Preschoolers give meaning to things they don't understand in order to make sense of their world — but their meaning doesn't necessarily reflect the real world. Ask your child what he thinks about a TV program or story. Let your child know about your likes and dislikes. Discuss how violence or bad decisions can hurt people.
- **Turn frustration into a learning opportunity.** If a tower of blocks keeps collapsing during a play session, work with your child to find possible solutions to the problem.
- **Tell your child how proud you are of her when she helps you with things.** There's never a bad time to give your child a boost of self-esteem.

Substances in your preschooler's world can include: Tobacco, Alcohol, Cleaning supplies.

Raising Drug-Free Kids: Advice by Age

Grades K-3



Five- to eight-year-olds are still tied to family and eager to please, but they're also beginning to explore their individuality. In addition, your grade-schooler begins to spend more time at school and with peers, and begins to collect information (including messages about drugs and alcohol) from lots of new places like the media and popular culture. It's very important that you continue talking to your child about a healthy drug-free lifestyle, and stress that of all the voices your child hears, yours should be the guiding force.

Here are nine tips to help you help your child live a healthy, drug-free life:

- 1. Keep your discussions about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs factual and focused on the present.** Long-term consequences are too distant to have any meaning. Let your child know that people who drink too much alcohol get sick and throw up, or that smoking makes clothes stink and causes bad breath.
- 2. Talk to your kids about the drug-related messages they receive through advertisements, the news media, and entertainment sources.** Some TV shows or movies may even glamorize drug use. Remember to ask your kids how they feel about the things they've heard — you'll learn a great deal about what they're thinking.
- 3. Consider the following topics when discussing drugs with your child: what alcohol, tobacco and other drugs are like; why drugs are illegal; what harm drugs can do to users.** You should also consider talking about the differences between the medicinal uses and illegal uses of drugs, and how drugs can also affect the families and friends of users.
- 4. Set clear rules and behave the way you want your kids to behave.** Tell them the reasons for your rules. If you use tobacco or alcohol, be mindful of the message you are sending to your children.
- 5. Help your children explore new ways to express their feelings.** Kids who feel shy in one-on-one conversation might open up through painting, writing, or emailing a friend or relative.
- 6. Work on problem-solving by focusing on the types of problems kids come across.** Help them find long-lasting solutions to homework trouble, a fight with a friend, or for dealing with bullies. Be sure to point out that quick fixes are not long-term solutions.
- 7. Give your kids the power to escape from situations that make them feel bad.** Make sure they know they shouldn't stay in a place that makes them feel uncomfortable or bad about themselves. Also let them know they don't need to stick with friends who don't support them.
- 8. Get to know your child's friends — and their friends' parents.** Check in by phone or a visit once in a while to make sure they are giving their children the same kinds of messages you give your children.
- 9. Sign your kids up with community groups or programs that emphasize the positive impact of a healthy lifestyle.** Your drug-free messages will be reinforced — and your kids will have fun, stay active and develop healthy friendships.

Substances in your K-3 child's world can include: Tobacco, Alcohol, Ritalin.

Raising Drug-Free Kids: Advice by Age

Grades 4-6



Preteens: They're on a quest to figure out their place in the world. When it comes to the way they view that world, they tend to give their friends' opinions a great deal of power while, at the same time, they're starting to question their parents' views and messages. Your advice may be challenged — but it will be heard and will stay with your child much more than he will ever admit.

Here are eight tips to help you help your preteen live a healthy, drug-free life:

1. Make sure your child knows your rules — and that you'll enforce the consequences if rules are broken. This applies to no-use rules about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs — as well as bedtimes and homework. Research shows that kids are less likely to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs if their parents have established a pattern of setting clear rules and consequences for breaking those rules.

2. Act out scenes with your child in which people offer her drugs. Kids who don't know what to say or how to get away are more likely to give in to peer pressure. Let her know that she can always use you as an excuse and say: "No, my mom [or dad, aunt, etc.] will kill me if I smoke a cigarette." Explain why she shouldn't continue friendships with kids who have offered her cigarettes, alcohol or pills.

3. Tell your child what makes him so special. Puberty can upend a child's self-esteem. Feelings of insecurity, doubt and pressure may creep in. Offset those feelings with a lot of positive comments about his life and who he is as an individual — and not just when he brings home an "A".

4. Give your children the power to make decisions independently of their peers. You can reinforce this message through small things such as encouraging your child to pick out the sneakers he likes rather than the pair his four friends have.

5. Base drug and alcohol messages on facts, not fear. Kids can't argue with facts but their new need for independence may allow them to get around their fears. Also, kids love to learn facts — both run-of-the-mill and truly odd. For drug and alcohol facts, visit www.drugfree.org and look at the Drug Guide.

6. Preteens aren't concerned with future problems that might result from experimentation with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, but they are concerned about their appearance — sometimes to the point of obsession. Tell them about the smelly hair and ashtray breath caused by cigarettes. Make sure they know that it would be hard to perform in the school play while high on marijuana.

7. Get to know your child's friends — and their friends' parents. Check in by phone or a visit once in a while to make sure they are giving their children the same kinds of messages you give your children about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

8. Help children separate reality from fantasy. Watch TV and movies with them and ask lots of questions to reinforce the distinction between the two. Remember to include advertising in your discussions, as those messages are especially powerful.

Substances in your fourth- to sixth-grader's world can include: Tobacco, Alcohol, Ritalin, Adderall, Inhalants, Marijuana.

Raising Drug-Free Kids: Advice by Age

Grades 7-9



For parents, this is a pivotal time in helping kids make positive choices when faced with drugs and alcohol. The average age kids try drugs for the first time is 13. If your child is 13, says Amelia Arria, senior scientist with Treatment Research Institute, you should assume that he or she has been offered drugs or alcohol. But you can help your teen stay healthy and drug-free — and beat the negative statistics about drug use among teens. Kids who learn about the risks of drugs from their parents are up to 50 percent less likely to use (2007 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study). So, most importantly, stay involved. Young teens may say they don't need your guidance, but they're much more open to it than they'll ever let on. Make sure you talk to them about their choices of friends — drug use in teens starts as a social behavior.

Here are 5 tips to help you help your teen live a healthy, drug-free life:

1. **Make sure your teen knows your rules and the consequences for breaking those rules -- and, most importantly, that you really will enforce those consequences if the rules are broken.** This applies to no-use rules about tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, as well as curfews and homework. Research shows that kids are less likely to use tobacco, alcohol and other drugs if their parents have established a pattern of setting clear rules and consequences for breaking those rules. [Guo, Hawkins, Hill, and Abbott (2001)] And kids who are not regularly monitored by their parents are four times more likely to use drugs (Metzler, Rusby & Biglan, 1999).
2. **Let your teen in on all the things you find wonderful about him.** He needs to hear a lot of positive comments about his life and who he is as an individual — and not just when he makes the basketball team. Positive reinforcement can go a long way in preventing drug use among teens.
3. **Show interest — and discuss — your child's daily ups and downs.** You'll earn your child's trust, learn how to talk to each other, and won't take your child by surprise when you voice a strong point of view about drugs.
4. **Tell your teen about the negative effect alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs have on physical appearance.** Teens are extremely concerned with their physical appearance. Tell them about a time you saw a friend or acquaintance get sick from alcohol — reinforce how completely disgusting it was.
5. **Don't just leave your child's anti-drug education up to her school.** Ask your teen what she's learned about drugs in school and then continue with that topic or introduce new topics. A few to consider: the long-term effects that tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs have on the human body; how and why chemical dependence occurs — including the unpredictable nature of dependency and how it varies from person to person; the impact of drug use on society — societal costs of impaired health and loss of productivity; maintaining a healthy lifestyle; positive approaches to stress reduction; or setting realistic short- and long-term goals.

Substances in your seventh to ninth grader's world can include: Tobacco, Alcohol, prescription drugs such as Ritalin or adderall, Inhalants, and illicit drugs such as Marijuana, Ecstasy, Herbal Ecstasy, Cocaine/Crack, GHB, Heroin, Rohypnol, Ketamine, LSD, Mushrooms

Raising Drug-Free Kids: Advice by Age

Grades 9-12



When it comes to drugs, teens are a savvy bunch. Drugs and messages about living drug-free have been part of their lives for years. They can make distinctions not only among different drugs and their effects, but also among trial, occasional use and addiction. They've witnessed many of their peers using drugs — some without obvious or immediate consequences, others whose drug use gets out of control. By the teen years, kids have also had to make plenty of choices of their own about drug use: whether they should give in to peer pressure and experiment with drugs, or go against some of their peers and stay clean.

Here are 6 tips to help you help your teen continue to live a healthy, drug-free life:

1. Don't speak generally about drug and alcohol use — your older teen needs to hear detailed and reality-driven messages. Topics worth talking about with your teen: using a drug just once can have serious permanent consequences; can put you in risky and dangerous situations; anybody can become a chronic user or addict; combining drugs can have deadly consequences.

2. Emphasize what drug use can do to your teen's future. Discuss how drug use can ruin your teen's chance of getting into the college she's been dreaming about or landing the perfect job.

3. Challenge your child to be a peer leader among his friends and to take personal responsibility for his actions and show others how to do the same.

4. Encourage your teen to volunteer where he can see the impact of drugs on your community.

Teenagers tend to be idealistic and enjoy hearing about ways they can help make the world a better place. Help your teen research volunteer opportunities at local homeless shelters, hospitals or victim services centers.

5. Use news reports as discussion openers. If you see a news story about an alcohol-related car accident, talk to your teen about all the victims that an accident leaves in its wake. If the story is about drugs in your community, talk about the ways your community has changed as drug use has grown.

6. Compliment your teen for all the things he does well and for the positive choices he makes. Let him know that he is seen and appreciated, and that you appreciate what a good role model he is for his younger siblings and other kids in the community. Let him know how deeply disappointed you would be if he started using drugs. Teens still care what their parents think.

Drugs in your teen's world can include: Tobacco, Alcohol, prescription drugs such as Ritalin, Oxycontin, Vicodin, Valium and Xanax, Inhalants, Marijuana, Ecstasy, Herbal Ecstasy, Cocaine/Crack, GHB, Heroin, Rohypnol, Ketamine, LSD, Mushrooms.

Raising Drug-Free Kids: Advice by Age

College Culture



Off to College

As you prepare your child for college – and continuing after you've dropped him off at the dorm – you can help guide him to a healthy experience, without treading on his independence. According to Amelia Arria, Senior Scientist at Treatment Research Institute, "You don't show up every weekend and make his bed. You let him know you have his back."

Wrapping Up High School

- Ideally, you've already been talking to your kids about drugs and alcohol during middle school and high school. Research shows students who drank in high school are three times more likely to begin heavy episodic drinking in college. Weitzman, Nelson & Wechsler (2003)
- Don't buy into the myth that allowing teens to drink around you will help them deal with alcohol issues when they're on their own. Research shows that, no matter with whom they drink in high school, "they'll sustain and increase their drinking level in college," says Arria.

- Make sure you keep an open line of communication with them. "It's not all about the topic of drinking and drug use," says Arria. "It's about maintaining that really supportive relationship." Your child needs to know that if any problems or difficult situations arise, she can turn to you for help. Be an at-home resource for your college student.
- Don't want to come across as over-protective? "I do think the quality of the parent-child relationship has to change, but I don't think [parents have] to back off," says Arria. "Rather than asking about her friends, you might be asking about her classes and what she's interested in."
- Stay alert to possible mental health issues. "Between the ages of 18 and 25 is when a lot of things pop up, like anxiety disorders, if they haven't already done so in adolescence." says Arria. There is a strong link between mental health issues and the use of drugs and alcohol. Just in case something does happen, make sure you know what campus mental health resources are available to your child.

Prescription Drugs in the Dorms

The most popular drugs on college campuses are alcohol and marijuana, but non-medical use of prescription stimulants, analgesics (painkillers) and tranquilizers is on the rise [McCabe, West, & Wechsler (2007)]. Though prescription drugs do have an important role when prescribed by a doctor, unsupervised use of them can be extremely harmful. While some parents turn a blind eye because they think these drugs may help their child do better in school, this is something you definitely want to disapprove of. Keep in mind:

- Abusing painkillers is like abusing heroin because their ingredients are similar (both are opioids).
- Many pills look pretty much the same, but depending on the drug and the dosage, the effects can vary greatly from mild to lethal.
- "Non-medical use of prescription drugs is actually associated with decreased academic performance, not an increase," says Arria. She adds that there also seems to be "a strong relationship between the use of other drugs and non-medical use of prescription stimulants." Researchers believe that students get into a cycle of spending a lot of time with friends, drinking and doing drugs, instead of going to classes. Then they turn to prescription stimulants to help get them through. The combination does not work. More information at www.drugfree.org/Parent/Resources/Prescription_Medicine_Misuse

Drugs in your college student's world can include:

Tobacco, Alcohol, prescription drugs such as Ritalin, Oxycontin, Vicodin, Valium or Xanax, and illicit drugs such as Marijuana, Cocaine, Methamphetamine, Heroin, Inhalants, Ecstasy, Herbal Ecstasy, Cocaine/Crack, GHB, Heroin, Rohypnol, Ketamine, LSD, Mushrooms.

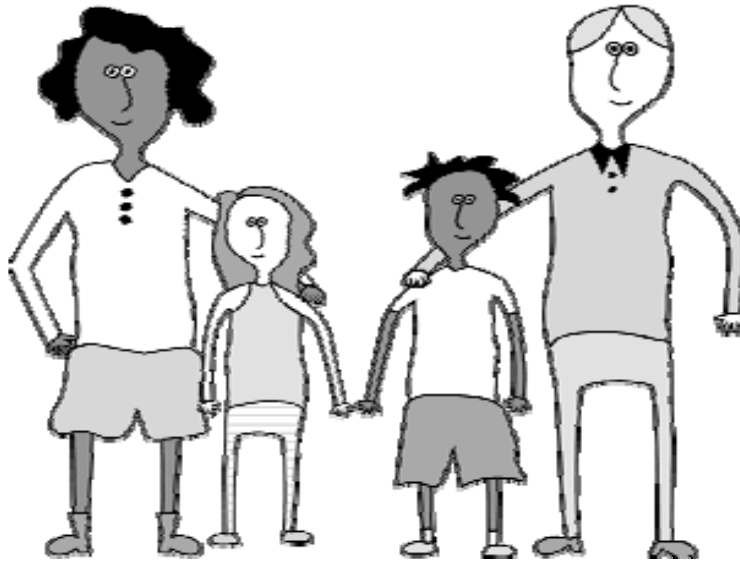
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Prevention Tools

"We have to stay connected with our kids. Whether or not they ever get involved with alcohol or drugs, adolescents need to know that their parents know about and care about what goes on in their lives." Dr. David Walsh, PhD

On the following pages you will find these tools to help initiate conversations with your teen and resources for building a parent network:

- Conversation Starters
- Family Prevention Agreement
- Online Prevention Resources
- Parent Networking (for parents of pre-teens)
- Parent Networking (for parents of teens)



Conversation Starters

Family meals are the perfect time to talk to your kids and to listen to what's on their mind. The more often kids eat dinner with their families the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs.

Looking for a way to engage in conversations with your kids? Use these conversation starters for a fun way to get everyone talking.

- What's the best and worst thing that happened today?
- What's the greatest invention of all time?
- If you were in charge of the music for our family vacation, which songs would you pick?
- Which TV family is the most fun to watch?
- If you could have a wild animal from anywhere in the world as a pet, what animal would you choose?
- Where would you go for a dream vacation?
- If you could have any superpower, what would it be?
- What is one thing you could absolutely not live without?
- If you won the lottery, what would you do with the money?
- If you could live in any time period, which one would it be?
- What is your favorite thing you learned today?
- If you had to eat just one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?
- What is one thing you want to accomplish in your lifetime?
- What book are you reading right now? What do you like about it? What do you dislike about it?
- If you could donate \$1,000 to any charity, which charity would you select?
- If you could trade lives with anyone, who would it be?

Source: <http://casafamilyday.org/familyday/tools-you-can-use/conv-starters/>

For more conversation starters, the TCP coalition has a resource called "Let's Talk 2: Conversation Starters for Busy Families." It is a tin holding 120 strips of paper – each with a unique question. To order this tin, contact Denise at Bloomington Public Health: 952-563-8984. The cost is \$8.

Family Prevention Agreement

The _____ Family

Date: _____

This is a tool for your family to help initiate conversation about alcohol and drugs and to discuss an alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention agreement that reflects the values and expectations of your family.

As **parents/guardians** in the family we agree to:

- Create an environment of open communication in our home
- Have open communication with other parents to ensure that our homes are safe and drug-free environments for our teens
- Supervise youth activities in our home
- Not allow underage drinking in our home
- Prevent easy access to alcohol and other drugs (including prescription drugs)
- _____(add your own)
- _____(add your own)

As a **young person** in the family I agree that:

- I will remain alcohol- and drug-free
- I will not use any alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs
- I will not allow my friends to bring alcohol, drugs, or drug paraphernalia into our home
- I will not stay in environments where other teens are drinking or using drugs
- I will call and ask to be picked up if I am in a situation where drugs and alcohol are present
- I will not drive or ride in a vehicle with a driver who has been drinking and/or using drugs
- _____(add your own)
- _____(add your own)

Parents/Guardian Signature(s):

Child/Youth Signature(s):

Online Prevention Resources for Parents

Shoulder to Shoulder Website

<http://www.shouldertoshoulderminnesota.org/>

From the Search Institute

<http://www.parentfurther.com>

From the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign

<http://www.antidrug.com>

From Mothers Against Drunk Driving

<http://www.madd.org/underage-drinking/the-power-of-parents/>

This is the new parent information site including "The Power of Parents Handbook" (free)

From Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

<http://www.toosmartostart.samhsa.gov/>

Fact Sheet on prevalence of alcoholism in young drinkers

<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/NewsEvents/NewsReleases/earlydrinking.htm>

From The Tri-City Partners Coalition for Healthy Youth and Communities

<http://www.tricitypartners.org>

From Edina Chemical Health Partners Coalition

<http://www.edinatoolkit.com>

Time to Talk Tool Kit for parents

<http://www.timetotalk.org/ParentTalkKit/>

From governmental agencies

<http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/default.aspx>

A comprehensive portal of Federal resources on underage information drinking for parents, educators, community-based organizations and youth.

<http://www.toosmartostart.samhsa.gov/default.aspx>

Programs, strategies, downloadable materials, interactive games and exercises to help tweens, teens, families and educators prevent underage alcohol use.

Bloomington Public Health

<http://www.ci.bloomington.mn.us/cityhall/dept/commserv/pubheal/healthpromo.htm>

Hennepin County Juvenile Curfew Hours

<http://www.shouldertoshoulderminnesota.org/?q=node/56>

