

- ✓ Changing friends or changing lifestyles — new interests, unexplained cash.
- ✓ Physical deterioration — difficulty in concentration, loss of coordination, loss of weight, unhealthy appearance.
- ✓ Refuses to talk or be around family.

TAKE A STAND!

- ✓ Educate yourself about the facts surrounding alcohol and other drug abuse. You will lose credibility with your child if your information is not correct.
- ✓ Establish clear family rules about drug use and enforce them consistently.
- ✓ Develop your parenting skills through seminars, networking with other parents, reading, counseling, and support groups.
- ✓ Work with other parents to set community standards — you cannot raise a child alone.
- ✓ Volunteer at schools, youth centers, Boys & Girls Clubs, or other activities in your community.

FOR INFORMATION

- ✓ State and local government drug abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment agencies.
- ✓ State and local mental health agencies.
- ✓ State and local law enforcement agencies.
- ✓ Private drug abuse treatment services listed in the telephone book Yellow Pages.
- ✓ National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)
PO Box 2345
Rockville, MD 20852
800-729-6686
301-468-2600

Crime Prevention Tips From
National Crime Prevention Council
 1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor
 Washington, DC 20006-3817
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TALKING WITH YOUR KIDS ABOUT DRUGS



The National Citizens' Crime Prevention Campaign is substantially funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.



TAKE A BITE OUT OF
CRIME

Developed by the
 National Crime Prevention
 Council in Partnership with
MOTOROLA

Don't put off talking to your children about alcohol and other drugs. As early as fourth grade worry kids about pressures to try drugs. School programs alone aren't enough. Parents must become involved, but most parents aren't sure how to tell their children about drugs.

Open communication is one of the most effective tools you can use in helping your child avoid drug use. Talking freely and really listening shows children that they mean a great deal to you.

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

- ✓ Tell them that you love them and you want them to be healthy and happy.
- ✓ Say you do not find alcohol and other illegal drug use acceptable. Many parents never state this simple principle.
- ✓ Explain how drug abuse hurts people. Physical harm — for example, AIDS, slowed growth, skin discoloration, impaired coordination. Emotional harm — sense of not belonging, isolation, paranoia. Educational harm — difficulties remembering and paying attention.
- ✓ Using drugs can put you in danger. People get hurt and killed buying drugs.
- ✓ Discuss the legal issues. A conviction for a drug offense can lead to time in prison or cost someone a job, driver's license, or college loan.

- ✓ Talk about positive, drug-free alternatives, and how you can explore them together. Some ideas include sports, reading, movies, bike rides, hikes, camping, cooking, games, and concerts. Involve your kids' friends.



HOW DO YOU SAY IT?

- ✓ Calmly and openly — don't exaggerate. The facts speak for themselves.
- ✓ Face to face — exchange information and try to understand each other's point of view. Be an active listener and let your child talk about fears and concerns. Don't interrupt and don't preach.
- ✓ Through "teachable moments" — in contrast to a formal lecture, use a variety of situations — television news, TV dramas, books, newspapers.
- ✓ Establish an ongoing conversation rather than giving a one-time speech.
- ✓ Remember that you set the example. Avoid contradictions between your words and your actions. And don't use illegal drugs, period!

- ✓ Be creative! You and your child might act out various situations in which someone tries to pressure someone else to take a drug. Figure out two or three ways to handle each situation and talk about which works best.
- ✓ Exchange ideas with other parents.

WHY DO PEOPLE USE DRUGS?

Young people say they turn to drugs for one or more of these reasons:

- ✓ To do what their friends are doing.
- ✓ To escape pain in their lives.
- ✓ To fit in.
- ✓ Boredom.
- ✓ For fun.
- ✓ Curiosity.
- ✓ To take risks.

HOW CAN I TELL IF SOMEONE IS ABUSING DRUGS?

Identifying possible signs of drug abuse may help prevent further use. Possible signs include:

- ✓ Change in moods — more irritable, secretive, withdrawn, overly sensitive, inappropriately angry, euphoric.
- ✓ Less responsible — late coming home, late for school or class, dishonest.