

PREVENTING YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE

10 TIPS FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Saying "Just Don't Do Drugs" Isn't Enough

START THE CONVERSATION



Even if your child seems uninterested or doesn't want to talk—they are listening to you!

EMBRACE PROBLEM-SOLVING



Ask your child what situations they may find themselves in, then help think of ways to handle them. Try to understand their point of view.

LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD



Talk to your child without judging—they want to feel heard and understood. Asking open-ended questions is helpful.

HAVE FAMILY RITUALS



Family dinners, game nights, and other activities are great ways to build trust with your child and make starting these conversations easier.

SET A GOOD EXAMPLE



Your children are always watching you. Remember that your actions speak louder than words and children learn behaviors at home.

KNOW YOUR CHILD'S FRIENDS



Make sure to talk to the parents or caregivers of your children's friends, so you know who they're spending their time with.

SET LIMITS WITH YOUR CHILDREN



Have set rules and consequences for when rules are broken. Start talking to your child about substance use no later than third grade.

CHECK ON YOUR CHILDREN



Know where your children are and check in on them frequently.

WATCH FOR WARNING SIGNS



Changes in mood, appetite, behavior, or sleep patterns could all be warning signs that something isn't right.

SEEK HELP WHEN NECESSARY



You don't have to do this alone! Talk to your neighbors, family, or other parents, and use your community as your support system!

CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. "WHAT ARE YOUR FRIENDS SAYING ABOUT ALCOHOL, VAPING, OR CANNABIS? WHAT DO YOU THINK? CAN WE LOOK UP SOME INFORMATION TOGETHER?"
2. "HAVE YOU BEEN IN A SITUATION WHERE YOU HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO USE DRUGS? HOW DID THIS MAKE YOU FEEL AND WHY?"
3. "DO YOU WANT TO PRACTICE DIFFERENT WAYS TO SAY NO OR GET OUT OF THAT KIND OF SITUATION? I CAN GIVE YOU IDEAS ON WHAT TO SAY - LIKE, I DON'T WANT TO GET IN TROUBLE, I'M NOT INTO THAT, MY PARENT(S) WOULD BE REALLY MAD, I'VE GOT OTHER THINGS TO DO, ETC."
4. "HAVE YOU SEEN SOMEONE EMBARRASS THEMSELVES OR MAKE A POOR DECISION WHILE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS?"

EVEN IF YOU HAVE USED IN THE PAST, THIS IS ABOUT THEIR FUTURE. BE HONEST AND OPEN, INCLUDING WHY YOU DON'T WANT THEM TO DRINK OR USE DRUGS. YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HEAR FROM THE ADULTS THEY LOVE ARE 50% LESS LIKELY TO USE SUBSTANCES.