



## Parents play a vital role in preventing youth drug use.

Parents can help prevent their child from trying illegal drugs like tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs, and other substances through:

- Family bonding time,
- Open communication,
- Enforcing family policies on substance abuse,
- Parent monitoring, praise, and support

Becoming educated about drugs and the harmful effects they have on a person and families will help open opportunities for discussion.

**Positive parenting starts with you.**

For more information on...

*risk and protective factors:*

[www.youth.gov](http://www.youth.gov)

*health information:*

[www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)

*conversations with kids of all ages:*

[www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)

*how to get involved:*

[www.lightunitedred.org](http://www.lightunitedred.org)



**LIGHT & UNITE RED.**

**Protective Factors**

**Risk Factors**

**Conversation Starters**

*to prevent  
substance  
abuse*

**Risk factors** increase a person's chance for drug use.

**Protective factors** can help prevent drug use.

### Infancy/ Early Childhood

Risk Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Difficult temperament</li><li>•Cold and unresponsive mother behavior</li><li>•Parental modeling of drug/alcohol use</li></ul>
Protective Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Reliable support and discipline from caregivers</li><li>•Responsiveness</li><li>•Protection from harm and fear</li><li>•Opportunities to resolve conflict</li><li>•Adequate socioeconomic resources</li></ul>

### Middle School

Risk Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Poor impulse control</li><li>•Mental health diagnosis</li><li>•Substance use among role models</li><li>•Lenient parenting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Family conflict or violence</li><li>•Inconsistent discipline</li><li>•Poor school connections</li></ul>
Protective Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Positive school experience</li><li>•Follow rules</li><li>•Able to make friends</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Consistent, language-based discipline</li><li>•Positive support system</li></ul>

### Adolescent

Risk Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Negative emotions</li><li>•Difficulty coping</li><li>•Rebellious</li><li>•Favorable attitude towards drugs or experimentation</li><li>•Antisocial behavior</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Substance use among parents and peer group</li><li>•Failure or low commitment in school</li><li>•Lack of adult supervision</li><li>•Aggression</li><li>•Availability of substances</li></ul>
Protective Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Positive physical and emotional health</li><li>•Good coping and problem solving skills</li><li>•Engaged in school, peers, athletics, a job, religion, or culture</li><li>•Strong family structure, limits, rules, monitoring, predictability</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Mentors</li><li>•Positive norms</li><li>•Safe environment</li><li>•Supportive relationships and clear expectations with family</li></ul>

## Start the Conversation

Use open-ended question that show care and concern.

Instead of: "How do you get yourself into these situations?"

Say: That sounds like a difficult situation. Were you confused?"

Encourage problem-solving thinking.

Instead of: "What did you think was going to happen?"

Say: "What do you think would have been a better way to handle that?"

Plan a good time to talk with your child. Actively listen to what they say. Stay calm to control your thoughts and actions.

