



Providing evidence-based substance misuse prevention services by enriching life skills through education and strength-based practice, providing creative outlets and enhanced youth protective factors.

# NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2026

## MEET OUR PREVENTION SPECIALIST



**LLOYD ROBERTS**

**Endeavour Elementary School**

I joined Eckerd Connects as a Prevention Specialist in 2024. I bring patience, kindness, and a love for helping students grow. I work with teachers and families to find the best ways to support each student. I try to make sure every student feels listened to and confident each day.

Outside of school, I've spent over 20 years as a football and basketball referee for kids and teens, including several state championship games. This has helped me build strong leadership skills and great connections in the sports community. I also enjoy cooking, baking, and gardening. No matter what I'm doing—helping a student, making a call on the field, or growing something new—I always give my best and try to help others succeed.

## SPECIAL DATES

Monthly Calendar

# March

### March 1 - Self-Injury Awareness Day

A good day to remind your child that big feelings are normal and that it's always okay to ask for help. This is a sign of strength, not weakness.

### March 16-22 - Brain Awareness Week

Celebrate how amazing the brain is! Talk with your child about how their brain is still growing and how protecting it matters.

### March 20 - International Day of Happiness

What really makes us feel good? Sleep, movement, friends, creativity. Make a family "Happy List" to boost your mood.

### March 22-28 - Drug & Alcohol Facts Week

A great week to bust myths! Ask your child what they've heard at school about drugs or alcohol and talk through the facts together without judgment.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Kids who talk openly with their parents about drugs are up to 50% less likely to use them.**

That means you are the most powerful prevention tool there is! Not a rule, not a search, not a lecture. Just a relationship built on trust and honest conversation.

 **Your child's brain is still growing until they are 25!**

The part of the brain that makes decisions and controls what feelings is the last to finish developing. That's why what kids put into their bodies during these years really matters.

### Hidden in Plain Sight

Some drugs today are designed to look exactly like everyday items. Knowing what to look for helps you start a conversation, not a confrontation.

- **Edibles that look like candy**
- **Stash Containers**
- **Hallowed-out school supplies**
- **Vape Pens**
- **Candy wrappers or gum packs**



### ✦Try this at home: Stay Curious, Not Suspicious

Teach your child that not everything is what it looks like and that it's always okay to ask a trusted adult before eating or drinking anything given to them by a friend. Make "check with me first" a rule at home, not a punishment.

## CONVERSATION CORNER

### Start the Conversation - No Lecture Needed

Kids are more likely to open up when they don't feel like they're in trouble. The best conversations can happen in the car, during dinner, or on a walk, not face-to-face at the kitchen table.

Try these openers: What was the best part of your day? Did anything feel confusing today? Was anything worrying you? Is there anything you want help with? I'm here for you and we can figure this out together.



Each school day we work with youth on ways to build their personal strengths.

Join our efforts in ensuring they LIVE BEYOND these activities and have an opportunity to practice these skills with you and with their community.

# PREVENTION TOPIC: STAY CONNECTED, STAY INFORMED

Every caregiver wants to keep their child safe. But one of the hardest things about today's world is that dangers don't always look like dangers. Drugs can look like candy. Alcohol can look like a sports drink. Vapes can look like a pencil.

**The good news:** The most powerful protection isn't a rule or a search — it's connection and relationship. Kids who feel safe talking to their parents are more likely to come to them when something feels wrong. That connection is built over time, through small moments every single day.

**Nine out of ten people with addiction started using substances in their teen years, with the average first-time use happening as early as 13 or 14 years old.**

Connection doesn't mean knowing everything your child does. It means your child knows they can come to you. It means you notice when something seems off, not because you are watching, but because you know them.

## WHEN KIDS LEARN THESE SKILLS, THEY CAN:

- Ask for help when something doesn't feel right
- Tell the difference between a safe and risky choice
- Talk about peer pressure without feeling ashamed
- Feel that adults in their life are on their team

### Who are your Child's trusted adults?

Help your child name three adults they can talk to. Write them down and keep the list in a place you can see.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

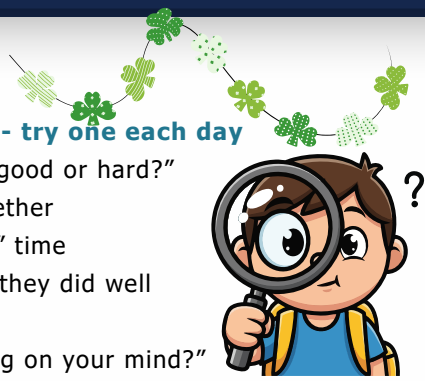


**Tip:** Tell your child: "You can always come to me. You won't be in trouble."

## CONNECTION CHECK

Small moments build trust - try one each day

- Ask: "How was your day - good or hard?"
- Share a snack or meal together
- Do a 10-minute "no phone" time
- Say one thing you noticed they did well
- Take a short walk and talk
- End the day with: "Anything on your mind?"



**Tip:** Kids talk more when they feel calm and safe.

## MYTH vs. FACT

### Staying Informed



- MYTH:** "If it looks normal, it is safe."  
**FACT:** Some harmful things are made to look normal.
- MYTH:** "Talking about drugs puts ideas in kids' heads."  
**FACT:** Honest talks help kids make safer choices.
- MYTH:** "My child would never face peer pressure."  
**FACT:** Most kids face pressure at some point. Practice helps.
- MYTH:** "If my child is quiet, everything is fine."  
**FACT:** Quiet can mean "I don't know how to talk about it yet."

## AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Holiday Stress Busters** - Make a list of things or activities that help everyone feel calm.
- Kindness Countdown** - Do one small act of kindness a day
- Family Talk Time** - Use meal or car rides to ask: "What was the hardest part of your day? What helped you get through it?"
- Create a Comfort Kit** - Include a journal, fidget, coloring page, or positive notes