

PARENT GUIDELINES FOR DRUG-FREE CHILDREN



Stay informed! Know the facts. Understand that **drugs are a life-and-death issue for all children and that every child is at risk to use drugs.** Know what works. “Self-esteem” and “keeping kids busy” are not enough.

- ❖ Use clear, consistent **“NO-USE” messages**, policies and expectations regarding your children and drugs. Know that prevention starts with the drugs kids use first: alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or inhalants ~ the gateway drugs.
- ❖ Set rules and meaningful consequences. **Do not rescue children from those consequences.**
- ❖ Talk to children **often** about not using drugs. Use “teachable moments.” Help them learn ways to say “NO.”
- ❖ Remember that children don’t always tell the truth. In fact, they lie. It’s normal. A parent’s job is to check it out and hold children accountable. **ANY drug use needs parental intervention immediately.**
- ❖ Monitor your child’s television, movies, music, clothing, and Internet access. With every pro-drug message or mixed message, your child becomes more vulnerable. **Do not allow unsupervised on-line computer access.**
- ❖ **Supervise children’s activities.** Know where they are, who they are with, and what they are doing.
 - **ALWAYS** check out social plans. Phone ahead and confirm supervision.
 - Say **“NO”** if plans are not supervised, productive, safe, and drug-free.
 - Start networking with other parents early and often. Continue networking through junior and senior high school.
- ❖ **Be a good role model.** Children should live in a safe, healthy environment where no family member is breaking the law.
 - No illegal use of drugs.
 - No tobacco use around children.
 - If you choose to drink, do so in a low-risk, responsible manner.
 - No alcohol at children’s functions. Show young people that adults don’t need alcohol in order to have a good time.

- Establish early that **all** family members tell each other where they are, what they are doing, whom they are with, and when they will be home.
- ❖ Parents need help keeping their children drug-free. **Reach out. Talk to the parents of your child's friends.** Agree on acceptable social activities. Follow up. Support one another. Use parent peer pressure to stop unsupervised or unsafe activities. Stay in touch as children grow. Expand your parent network as your children's circle of friends expands or changes. Find out more about the SAFE Homes Parents Network.
- ❖ **Network with other parents and adults** – in your neighborhood, at your school, in your community – and beyond. True drug prevention is possible only when every segment of society supports and enforces clear, consistent “no-use” messages and policies regarding children and drugs. Always hold adults accountable to support clear, consistent “no-use” messages to kids.
- ❖ **Work with your schools for drug-free curricula and policies** including smoke-free campuses.
- ❖ **Before allowing your child to take a part-time job,** know that the employer truly supports drug-free children.
- ❖ **Know your lawmakers,** those who govern and those who enforce laws. Insist on support for drug-free societal norms.
- ❖ **Challenge** (individually or with other parents) **anyone who promotes any drug to any child.**
 - Don't shop at stores that sell drug paraphernalia, hemp products, alcohol, or tobacco to children.
 - Don't shop at businesses that fight effective laws to reduce alcohol or tobacco use by minors.
 - Use the MIP hotline (393-4444) to report those who sell alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs to children.
 - Don't be silent. Write letters-to-the-editor, call talk shows, and contact legislators.
 - Understand the way drugs are marketed to children. Work to reduce the **Appeal**, the **Availability**, and the **Affordability** of drugs to young people.

***Encourage all adults to support nurturing, safe,
drug-free environments for all children.***

DRUG PREVENTION WORKS!

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~ John Crudele, 1993