

# PARENT ACTION IS NEEDED WHEN KIDS START USING DRUGS

When children start drinking or taking other drugs, they know from day one that it's wrong, and they do everything in their power to keep it from their parents.

Most parents make this deception easy by not wanting to know. These parents get caught up in PARENT DENIAL. The more denial, the more the problem can escalate.

**PARENT DENIAL** is the world's best drug-taking enabler.

- ▶ It keeps parents from having to face the problem.
- ▶ It keeps the family name intact, and
- ▶ It allows parents to go on being the "world's best parent."



**PARENT DENIAL** takes many forms. Parents...

Minimize Behavior – If grades drop sharply, we say, "At least he's still going to school." If she becomes a discipline problem, we rationalize, "At least she's not as bad as the Jones kid down the street."

Accept the Con – "All the kids are doing it." "That's not my pot; I'm holding it for a friend." "I know what I'm doing."

Ignore the Advice – Often teachers, friends, police or other family members try to warn us and we become defensive, ignore it, or ask, "What do they know about raising my child?"

Play the Blame Game – When things go wrong, we blame ourselves, our mate, our divorce, our family problems, our schools, **ANYTHING** except the real cause – the child's choice to do drugs.

Look for Another Cause – Parents would almost rather believe just about anything about their child (he/she's sick, he/she has a learning disability/it's anorexia) than accept the fact he/she's on drugs.

No matter what problems exist in your family, the kid who makes the decision to try drugs does so of his/her own free will. He/she does it knowing right from wrong. He/she does it fearing that he/she might be caught.

The child does it. Not you. He/she did not do it because you were too strict on him/her. He/she did not do it because he/she is not as talented as his/her siblings. He/she did not do it because he/she was smaller or weaker or bigger or stronger than other kids. The child probably did it because friends told him/her that it felt good or because he/she was curious or because he/she wanted to be just like his/her friends.

The more parents deny the problem, the more the problem grows.

**The IMMEDIATE CONCERN must be the DRUG USE and HOW TO STOP IT.**

Parents must take a stand to stop the child's use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. This is a life or death issue! Parents must support and enforce a policy of "no use" regarding children and drugs. And they must demand that all others who have influence over that child (counselors, schools, law enforcement, media, businesses, policy makers, the judicial system and all others) back them up with a "no use" policy.

~From Not My Kid, by Beth Polson and Miller Newton, PhD, Avon, 1985.