

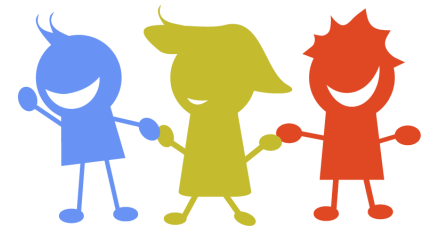
Parenting Tips Sheet

Adolescent Substance Use: What can parents do?

Puberty

Notice: Pay attention to when your child is maturing and be prepared for behavioral changes when they start to go through puberty.

Create an environment of support: Kids draw support from families in childhood. Work on a supportive relationship with your kids before they're teens. Encourage exercise and other physically beneficial activities.



Child Characteristics

Set clear limits and rules to restrict problem behavior.

Engage in your teen's learning: Engage in their academics. Teach your teen healthy coping skills: encourage healthy hobbies, exercise, and talking through stressful events.

Reward positive behaviors. Make sure your teen knows when they're doing well. Give them positive attention, not just negative attention when they've done something wrong.

Encourage mindfulness-based activities such as meditation, yoga, and martial arts to improve emotion and behavior regulation and sustained attention.

Redirect: Focus on other novel experiences that will draw your teens' attention away from substance-related rewards.

Communicating without Stigma

Be open and expressive: Create an environment where children can participate in discussions about substance use. Keep an open mind and try to remain curious and calm. Give your child power in the direction of the conversation.



Use "I statements": Focus on how a behavior makes you feel rather than focusing on how your teen did something wrong.

Choose a **time and place** where the teen feels comfortable to talk. Try less eye contact.

Have **targeted conversations** or "drug talks" dedicated to the topic. Ask open-ended questions, give the teen space to talk, and use active listening strategies. Offer support and empathy.

Parenting

Increase parent involvement: Practice active listening with your child. Listening will improve your relationships and will also increase your knowledge and involvement in what your child is experiencing and feeling



Improve parent-child communication: Don't assume that you know your child's motivations- ask and listen instead. Clearly communicate your expectations. Do your best to regulate your own emotions in conversations - you can model this behavior.

Enforce rules regarding underage substance use: clearly communicate what your rules are and have appropriate consequences at the ready – and follow through.

Siblings

Facilitate relationship: Help siblings work through problem solving by encouraging positive communication and support, especially in childhood when they are more open to your help. Sibling relationships are practice for later relationships, and behavior patterns become entrenched – help kids start off with a positive and solid base.

Be understanding: Sibling relationships are emotionally powerful in both closeness and conflict.

Disrupt deviancy training: Ask older siblings how they and their peers might negatively affect younger siblings (raise awareness), and then come up with proactive steps to take in certain situations (for example, when older sibling's friend offers younger sibling a drink).



Peers

Skill Build: Talk with kids about strategies they might use to reject peer pressure. Foster kids' self-confidence. Practice problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.

Monitor teens' leisure time activities and peer groups, and manage peer exposure as best you can.

Availability/Access

Be aware: Pay attention teens' access to substances, both in the community and through informal peer and family networks. Be aware of teens' home environments, and especially their rooms.



Be planful: Where do you keep alcohol, prescription drugs, cigarettes, other drugs in your home? Can you put a barrier in place to make it harder to access?

Do not host drinking parties at your home. Hosting drinking parties at your home might be viewed as a way to keep an eye on your kids and make sure they're safe, but in reality it increases access and can cause some youth to use when they otherwise wouldn't. Plus, it's against the law!