



Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free

Talk early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough.

Start Talking! 
Building a Drug-Free Future



Click here to print a PDF of this article so you can start a conversation with your child

Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

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Know! Youth's #1 Drug of Choice

Quick Quiz: What is the leading drug used by our youth today? If you're thinking marijuana or heroin, guess again. The answer is ALCOHOL. It has long been and still remains the most widely used drug among young people, making alcoholism and alcohol-related problems the number one public health problem in the United States.

April 2016 is the 30th annual *Alcohol Awareness Month*, founded and sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD). "*Talk Early, Talk Often: Parents Can Make a Difference in Teen Alcohol Use*," is this year's theme, focused on the significant role parents play in preventing and reducing underage drinking and other drug use.

NCADD says fostering healthy and responsible attitudes, talking openly and honestly, encouraging supportive relationships and showing children that their opinions and decisions matter, are all ways to help prevent the use of alcohol and other drugs. These experts also point to research showing that kids who have conversations with their parents about the dangers of alcohol and drug use are 50% less likely to use than those who don't have such conversations.

NCADD shares the following basic guidelines to encourage and assist you in your on-going conversations with your children:

Listen Before You Talk: As parents we want to have "all the answers." And, sometimes we are so anxious to share our wisdom – or our opinion – that we don't take the time to listen. For kids, knowing that we are really listening may be the most important thing we can do to help.

Ask Open Ended Questions: Talk to children about their feelings, their friends, and what's happening in general in their daily lives. Avoid simple "yes/no" questions to get them talking as much as possible.

Be Involved: Get to know your children's friends and their parents, and don't hesitate to reach out to check on a gathering they're hosting or confirm plans of your children going somewhere together.

Set Expectations, Limits and Consequences: Make it clear that you do not want your children drinking or using drugs, as well as the consequences should the rules be broken.



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Be Honest, Open and Positive: Talking honestly, openly and positively with a child not only gets him/her educated on the issues, but it helps to build a bridge as opposed to a wall between the two of you.

Share Family History: Addiction is a chronic, progressive disease that can be linked to genetics. So, if there is a family history of problems with alcohol or drugs, be matter of fact about it, as you would with any other chronic disease, such as heart disease, diabetes or cancer.

Talking with your children about alcohol and other drugs is critical to their health and well-being both now and in the future. The longer children delay drinking, the less likely they are to develop the many problems associated with it. You are your child's the first line of defense. Get the conversation started today!

The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) is the founder and sponsor of NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month. For more information please visit www.ncadd.org.

Source: [National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. \(NCADD\): 30th Annual Alcohol Awareness Month – Organizer's Guide.](#)

Visit starttalking.ohio.gov to get the conversation going !!!