



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.



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.

Learn more at: [DrugFreeActionAlliance.org](http://DrugFreeActionAlliance.org)

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Now that you Know! The Impact of Childhood Trauma, please read on to,

## Know! The Importance of Trauma-Informed Parenting

If you are the parent, grandparent or caregiver of a child who has endured (or is enduring) painful childhood experiences, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) says it is important to provide trauma-informed parenting. This parenting strategy recognizes the impact of childhood trauma and encourages parenting through that trauma-informed "lens," to help the child develop positive coping skills.

**Help your child feel safe:** Even if physical safety is established, a child may not feel psychologically safe. By keeping your child's trauma history in mind you can work with him/her to understand what it will take to create psychological safety.

**Help your child understand and manage overwhelming emotions:** By providing calm, consistent and loving care, you can set an example for your child and teach him how to define, express and manage his emotions.

**Help your child understand and manage difficult behaviors:** You can do this by helping your child understand the connections between her thoughts, feelings and behaviors, which can assist her in taking control of her behavioral responses.

**Respect and support the positive, stable and enduring relationships in your child's life:** Guide your child in discovering the positive pieces of his past connections, then help to reshape them, and build new, healthier relationships with you and others.

**Help your child develop a strength-based understanding of his/her life story:** Your child needs to feel a strong sense of self in order to put her trauma history in perspective. Be a "safe" listener and help her realize she is a loved, valued and worthwhile young lady.

**Be an advocate for your child:** It sometimes takes a team to help your child through trauma. Serve as the team leader, a coordinator of combined efforts, and always encourage others to view your child through your same trauma-informed "lens."

**Promote and support trauma-focused assessment and treatment for your child:** Many children who have experienced trauma need specialized assessment and treatment. To avoid misdiagnosis, seek out the specialists who are trained in trauma and trauma focused treatments.



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**Take care of yourself:** Caring for a child who has experienced trauma can be exhausting. It is vital to take care of yourself and get the respite you need, in order to be most effective in your child's healing.

Experts at the NCTSN say that by creating a structured, predictable environment, listening to your child's story at his/her pace, and working with professionals trained in trauma and its treatment, you can make a world of difference for your child both now and in the future.

Source: National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN): Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma: A workshop for resource parents (2010).

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