



Drug & Alcohol Prevention

Drug and Alcohol Prevention Tips

Burlington Police Officers recognize that children today face incredible pressures to experiment with nicotine, alcohol and other dangerous drugs. Pressures come from one's friends, peers, the media, other social influences and family.

Children using alcohol and drugs often exhibit different warning signs of which parents need to be ever vigilant. Often times we see these signs as typical adolescent behavior and don't realize that our children are using drugs. Regrettably, it is sometimes too late.

The mood swings and unpredictable behavior that most teens experience makes it difficult for parents to tell if a child is using drugs.

What are the signs that your child is experimenting with drugs or alcohol, or is at risk of doing so?

- Change of friends (be extra wary if new friendships develop with older teenagers or young adults)
- If a best friend uses drugs
- Careless about their personal appearance
- A decline in participation at home
- Diminished interest in hobbies, sports, or favorite activities
- Irritability, overreacts to mild criticism or avoids family contact
- Eating and sleeping patterns have changed
- Lack of appreciation for values that used to be important
- Extreme emotional mood swings
- Secretive phone calls
- Lying
- Changes in school performance, tardiness, truancy, and/or disciplinary problems, frequently breaks curfews

- Missing money, personal belongings, prescription drugs or alcohol
- Trouble with the law, shoplifting, truancy, DUI, disorderly conduct
- Using street or drug language
- Eyes are red or glassy, or nose is runny, but no allergies
- Family history of drug use or alcoholism
- Cigarette smoking can be an early sign that other substance use may be in the picture
- You discover pipes (or bongs), rolling papers, medicine bottles, butane lighters, homemade pipes or other suspected drug paraphernalia

(Source: Parents with Dignity)

What can you do?

- Be aware
- Educate yourself about drugs
- Know your child's friends and where they hang out
- Establish family rules about drugs, alcohol, gangs and dress styles and enforce your rules
- Make the time to know what is happening in your child's life
- Foster self-esteem and respect in your child's feelings and attitudes
- Engage in ongoing, open dialogue about these topics. One "big talk" is not enough
- Continually reinforce your expectations and clearly state that you disapprove drug use
- If you suspect a drug or alcohol problem, get help NOW. Contact your school, church, community organization, a qualified counselor or your police department

Kids and drugs.

It can be an overwhelming issue to deal with—but it doesn't have to be. All you really need to begin are the 10 easy tips on this page. Put them into practice and your kids will reap the rewards of healthy, drug-free lives.

1. Be your kids' greatest fan. Compliment them on all of their efforts, the strength of their character, and their individuality.

2. Get your kids involved in adult-supervised after-school activity. Ask them what types of activities they're interested in and contact the school principal or guidance counselor to find out what activities are available for your child. Sometimes it takes a bit of experimenting to find out which activities your kids are best suited for, but it's worth the effort—feeling competent makes kids much less likely to use drugs.
3. Help your kids develop tools they can use to get out of alcohol- or drug-related situations. Let them know they can use you as an excuse: "My mom would kill me if I drank a beer!"
4. Get to know your children's friends and their parents. Set appointments for yourself to call them and check-in to make sure they share your views on alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Steer your kids away from any friends who use drugs.
5. Call kids' parents if their home is to be used for a party. Make sure that the party will be alcohol-free and supervised by adults.
6. Set curfews and enforce them. Let kids know the consequences of breaking curfew.
7. Encourage open dialogue with your children about their experiences. Make sure your children understand that they can ask you anything—and that you'll give them an honest answer.
8. Set a no-use rule for alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
9. Sit down for dinner with your children and use the time to talk.
10. Get—and stay—involved in your children's lives.

(Source: Parents with Dignity)