

**A SUBSTANCE
ABUSE
PREVENTION
GUIDE FOR
PARENTS**

**Ann Arbor Public Schools
Ann Arbor, Michigan**

INTRODUCTION

Parents have always had the challenge of finding a balance between encouraging their children to freely explore life and giving the children adequate protection from the harms of life. In today's society, it is becoming more of a challenge daily for parents to find this balance.

One of the major harms that concern parents today is young people's involvement with alcohol and other drugs. Many parents, community organizations, and schools are continuously working to keep that involvement from happening in the first place, through being a part of prevention efforts. Experts now know that "anti-drug" talk alone is not enough. Kids need skills and support to make productive choices.

This guide is designed for parents to learn what does work in the area of preventing alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) use, and what to do when children are using. It lists many helpful resources, but obviously cannot list every resource available. The resources given often have links to further information or referral sources.

Also, another purpose of the guide is to encourage parents to continue their supportive efforts to help children to stay healthy, to succeed in school and to stay drug free. This effect of substance abuse on today's society has made this issue a vital public health concern. No matter what opinion people hold on the ways to deal with the issue, there must be agreement that children deserve to be safe and have a chance to live healthy lives.

This is just one of many publications that the Ann Arbor Public Schools have issued to parents over the years. The Ann Arbor School district is dedicated not only to offering the best academic education available to its students, but also to teaching the life skills necessary to build character and to help children face today's life challenges.

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PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON EARLY PREVENTION

Recent research now says that the number one reason kids report why they are choosing not to use drugs is because they do not want to disappoint their parents.

This, not only shows that the feelings of parents still matter to kids, but parents still have a major impact on children's decision to use or not to use. Since national statistics have demonstrated that alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) use has now become a problem on the elementary level, it is never too early to start discussions with children about making healthy choices. Parents don't hesitate to warn young children not to put things into their mouths that may be poisonous or dirty. Parents can comfortably expand that discussion to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and continue to talk with the child (not at the child) so the child gets a clear message of what the parent is saying. Parents need to express their belief of kids not using drugs. Elementary age kids as well as pre-schoolers are often aware of drugs in the community, even if they don't see it or know the harm.

Here are some approaches already used by many parents to foster communication with young children about ATOD.

- Choose times for discussion when everyone is relaxed. (Be careful not to use scare tactics for young kids.)
- Watch for opportunities that are natural and spontaneous. (Ex. After seeing something on TV or news about drugs).
- Create opportunities by watching an appropriate video or TV show that touches the subject. Ask children what do they think about what was shown and do they understand it? Also, parents can always just sit kids down for a talk.
- Listen to the child's feelings. Repeat what the child says back to the child to show understanding. (Ex. You're saying the movie made you feel sad. What part was sad to you?)
- Talk about feelings, but also know the facts. Parents need to be educated about ATOD. Sometimes children will ask direct knowledgeable questions. (Ex. Can smoking kill you?)
- Be clear about family expectations centered around ATOD use and both parents should be united on those expectations.
- Give children honest reasons not to use ATOD.

- Let children know you are speaking out of love, concern and protection, and show willingness trust their judgments.

The same approaches can be used with pre-teens and teens. Often by this time, older children may know people who are smoking tobacco, drinking alcohol or using some other drug. Parents must be willing to question kids.

- Ask “Do you know what drug use can do to your body?”
- Ask “Do you know anyone who drinks or use other drugs?”
- Ask “Do your friends drink or use other drugs?”
- Ask “Do you ever drink or use other drugs?”

Sometimes parents may avoid direct questions because they are afraid of offending the child or unsure of what should be done if the child answers “yes” to some questions.

- If the answer is “yes” to others’ use, the parents can tell the child that they appreciate the child’s honesty, but continue to voice concern. Then, provide the opportunity for the child to learn what can happen when one gets involved with these chemicals. Also, parents can encourage children to come to them for help in solving their social problems with peers, without fear of punishment when they are up front and honest.
- Establish the rules ahead of time for what will bring consequences. Consequences can even be thought of before rules are broken. Then it is easier for the child to realize that he/she made the choices that lead to the consequence. Be willing to be the adult. Children should have age appropriate responsibilities but not be treated as adults. They need the safety of adult supervision. Parents can get professional help with parenting or family substance abuse education programs.
- When the child says “yes” that he/she is a user, there needs to be an assessment of how involved that child is with chemicals.
- When a child continually lies about use to the parents, that’s a sign to get a professional counselor involved.

Sometimes, parents have to be careful when they think a child is just beginning to experiment with drugs. Too many times, parents wait, thinking it is a phase in the child’s development and will pass in time. Even if a child does not develop chemical dependency, there are too many other harms that can come to children through using ATOD for parents to not intervene and help their children as soon as possible.

Parents need to assess their own involvement with chemicals. Alcohol is legal for adults, but if an adult has developed a drinking or other drug problem, it will be hard for children to listen to that adult. Health experts say that social drinking is no more than three alcoholic drinks in a three hour period. Even then, the drinker's driving is still affected with just one drink. Also, statistics show that children who have parents that smoke and/or drink, tend to smoke and/or drink. Early tobacco use by children does increase their risk of later involvement with alcohol and other drugs.

Tobacco and alcohol are the nation's leading *gateway drugs* meaning drugs that tend to lead to further use of other drugs.

Parents are children's first role models.

While children need to be accepted just as they are, they need an idea of what they can become. Through encouragement and support from the people around them, who mean the most to them, children will develop and add other aspects to what they are.

A helpful contemplation for parent role models:

Ask yourself "What type of adult person would I like my child to become?" Explore inner characteristics, values, attitudes and write down your thoughts.

After completion, read through the list. Ask yourself "Do I have these characteristics, values and attitudes?" **Are you willing to become that person you want your child to be?**

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- 1. Research shows that children say "no" to drugs because they care what their parents think about them and don't want to disappoint parents.**
- 2. Parents have to be willing to talk about ATOD use to children and implement family expectations or rules about no use.**
- 3. Parents must assess their own use of ATOD.**
- 4. Parents are children's first role models.**

Local Resources for Parenting

Ann Arbor Center for the Family – 2300 Washtenaw, Suite 203
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
734-995-5181

Family counseling, support, parenting sessions, referrals, etc.

Ann Arbor Community Center – 625 N. Main St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
734-662-3128

Offers parenting classes several times a year

Building Strong Families – Michigan State Extension/Washtenaw County
Various locations
Contact: Terry Jones, 734-997-1678

Parenting Education and support for families.

Grandparents as Parents – Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County
734-712-3625

Support and parent education for grandparents rearing grandchildren.

Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) – WISD
1819 S. Wagner Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

For parents of children with disabilities 734-994-8100, ext. 1510

Parent helpline – Confidential crisis counseling and information regarding child rearing problems, referrals to parenting classes and counseling services.
1-800-942-4357 (24hours) www.gatewayservices.org

Parents Without Partners
Support group for single parents 734-973-1933 www.aapwp.org

Parenting for Prevention and Growing Tree – St. Joseph Mercy Health System
Parent education sessions 734-995-5181

Peace Neighborhood Center – 111 N. Maple Rd
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Counseling support and parenting classes 734-662-3564
www.peaceneighborhoodcenter.org

University Center for the Child and the Family – Suite 1465 East Hall
525 East University
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
734-764-9466

Parenting workshops for all parenting situations including adoptive and divorce.

BUILDING RESILIENCY

Researchers have gained the most information about drug prevention by surveying and studying the lives of kids who choose *not* to use drugs. Researchers have discovered certain community protectorate factors and developmental assets that can build enough resiliencies in children to reduce their chances of using drugs. Many government approved prevention programs and school health curriculums have incorporated these factors and assets. Research shows that it is even better for children when parents and community institutions unite to promote these assets. These findings were brought to national attention by an independent nonprofit, nonsectarian organization called The Search Institute. From their data they have built a framework of forty developmental assets that promote high-risk prevention and resiliency in children. Schools are incorporating curricular activities that help with character education and building life skills that are based on the Search Institute framework of assets.

These 40 assets fall into the following eight categories:

1. *Support* 2. *Empowerment* 3. *Boundaries & Expectations* 4. *Constructive use of time* 5. *Commitment to learning* 6. *Positive values* 7. *Social competencies* 8. *Positive Identity*. A detailed description of the assets and how to promote them is available on the website (check resource list) or call 1-800-888-7828. When parents have already begun developing these assets at home, it will help to create balance in their children's lives.

CREATING BLANCE THROUGH MAKING CHOICES

At the basis of all our life experiences is the skill of ***making choices***. The choices parents make for their lives will affect the way their children make choices. Parents can help children at very early ages to become aware of looking for more than one way to solve to a problem. Also, parents can have the children look at the rewards and consequences of choices they make on a daily basis. **Have children pay attention to how they inwardly feel about their choices.**

When harmful choices are made, particularly impulsively, a person may feel off kilter or just not happy with the decision. Too many of these type choices can make one's life feel unmanageable and out of control (unbalanced). Learning impulse control is part of maturation. Children need adults to help them to know that their daily lives are

okay, since children need adults to help them form a self image anyway. **When alcohol and other drugs are used by a child, this will interfere with a clear image of self or create a false image for the child.** Also, when a child is in harm's way with ATOD, the child's ability to make productive choices will be hindered.

It is important that parents give children the guidance to learn to make their own decisions at an early age, but it must be with the understanding that life carries rules and principles that everyone must live by in order to survive.

A life skills activity for parent and child. Tell your child about an experience in your youth, when you had to make a tough decision and was unsure of what to do. Make sure you share how you were *feeling* at the time of the challenge. Ask your child what he/she thinks you could have done or what would he/she might do in that situation. The object is to explore options. Then discuss the outcome. This is an activity that can be practiced concerning any problems that the child and family may face. *Exploring options is recognizing that there are choices in every situation.*

Some Other Components of Effective Prevention for Parents

1. Have a support system that extends beyond immediate family to other trustworthy adults who will help, particularly in crises or emergencies.
2. Encourage children's self-worth and self-identity. Love and praise them just as they are.
3. Parents need to truly *know* their children the best they can and know what they are about as people. (ex. A child may show a different side of himself at school and the parents may be surprised to see this side of the child when a teacher reports it.)
4. Know children's friends and their friends' parents (and be willing to talk to other parents about concerns).
5. Have family *connectiveness* to some form of a higher power.
6. Have family awareness sessions and talk on issues that affect family balance and harmony. These can be times to educate the whole family on issues such as ATOD, and and other high-risk behavior. Always end sessions with a time of sharing and expressing gratitude for one another.
7. Parents must be willing to admit that they don't know all the answers, and work with children to find solutions.

Resources on parenting, building character & life skills.

Books:

Friel, John C., The Seven Best Things Smart Teens Do
The Seven Worst things Good Parents Do

Garbarino, James, PH.D., & Bedard, Claire, Parents Under Siege,
Why you are the solution, not the problem in your
Child's life

Glenn, H. Stephen, Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent
World

Procaccini, Joseph, & Kiefaber, Mark W., Parent Burn-Out

Schwebel, Robert, PH.D., Saying NO is Not Enough, helping kids
make wise decisions about alcohol,
tobacco and other drugs

Weil, Andrew M.D., & Rosen, Winifred, From Chocolate to Morphine

Wilmes, David J., Parenting for Prevention, How to raise a child to
say no to alcohol and other drugs

Websites:

Michigan Resource Center (MRC)... www.wearemrc.org
Resource for local, state & national prevention services, brochures, videos, etc.

Prevention Network...www.preventionnetwork.org
Network of state organizations providing all types prevention information

The Search Institute ...www.search-institute.org
Site with researched information promoting the well-being of children

Talking with Kids about Tough Issues...www.talkingwithkids.org
A national initiative sponsored by Children NOW, 1-800-CHILD-44

Violence prevention Guide for Youth – Developed by the American Psychological Association & MTV. <http://helping.apa.org> 1-800-268-0078

Parenting is Prevention Site – www.parentingisprevention.org
Links to many sites promoting parenting and families

PRIDE USA – www.prideusa.org Parents Resource Institute for Drug Education
site promoting prevention programming for youth and parents.

PARENTAL INTERVENTION

What to do when a child is using alcohol or other drugs.

Because parents are too close to the situation, they may be the last ones to notice or at least to admit that their child is using drugs. It is a painful situation experienced by the worst and the best of parents. When elementary school age children are involved with ATOD, this is a definite sign of a lack of adult supervision or even neglect. This can be true for older kids also, but after children get into the middle and high school years, the influences outside the home become greater. It takes a very aware and committed parent to catch drug use in the early stages. There mainly are three reasons why parents do not notice drug use by their children and get help for the child.

1. **Denial.** Because it hurts to see drug use as the problem, a parent may look for some other reason the child's behavior has changed.

2. **Enabling.** To keep the child from experiencing consequences from the use, the parent may try to keep the child out of trouble by covering up or lying for the child.

3. **Shame and Blame.** It can be difficult for parents to admit a child's substance problems because of the shame that they connect with it. They may blame themselves, or the child is shamed and blamed for creating the problem. Families need to know they are not alone. This is why is important to get a substance abuse professional involved in the situation as soon as possible. Intervening on a child's use can be very difficult and the parents and child need the help and support that can come from a counselor.

A using child needs to have a **professional assessment.** This is an evaluation of the child's use, done by a licensed substance abuse professional to determine the stage of use, which could be experimentation, harmful involvement or chemically dependency. There will be recommendations made to the family (no matter what stage of use) that may include referral for support or treatment.

Chemical dependency (addiction) is a medical diagnosis.

It is considered a disease because there are signs and symptoms to look for like in any other disease (such as cancer, diabetes or tuberculosis for example). Parents should not put off getting help for a child because they think the problem is not serious. The problem will get worse, rather than better. Parents often do not pay attention until there are failing grades. In some cases, this may not happen,

but the child can still be using. *Besides actual physical damage, alcohol and other drug use affect children's emotional growth, therefore their maturity.* Some experts say that the age at which a child begins active drug use will be the emotional/mental age he/she will stay unless they began recovery. Sometimes people are afraid of treatment because they do not know what that entails. This can be explained in the assessment process.

Parental steps to take to help a using child:

Remember, there are NO quick fixes to this challenge.

You will not be able to control, scare or bribe the child out of using.)

1. Parents need to get support for themselves (through a counselor and other parents who have gone through this with their child, such as Families Anonymous).
2. When talking to a using child or confronting them about use, stay calm and don't argue. The child may attempt to make parents feel guilty. Describe the behaviors and situations that have led to these conclusions of drug use. Let the child know that caring parents will get help for their child and that is what is going to happen. Stand firm and united. Single parents can have another family member present for support.
3. With very difficult children, an intervention facilitated by a professional may have to take place. Also, a counselor may help with breaking the child's resistance to therapy or support.
4. Get the assessment and follow through with the referral recommendations for the child and the family. The evaluator will consider a family's financial circumstances and other needs.
5. Keep in mind that getting help for the child is expressing love and taking care of the child's well-being.

People who have problems with alcohol or other drugs can be very manipulative and parents in particular are sometimes not sure if they are over-reacting or have a true concern. Many counselors can give a behavior checklist to parents so to notice certain behaviors in the child. Checklists can come in many forms, some short and some extensive. It can be helpful to parents to obtain a behavioral checklist to compare to their child's behavior. The following is an example of a checklist.

BEHAVIORAL CHECKLIST

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish normal adolescent behavior from emotional problems or substance abuse. Teens can have emotional and substance abuse problems simultaneously. Most teen rebellious behavior will improve when discipline and support measures are applied. When it is substance abuse, a change for the better will not be seen until the substance use is addressed.

Behaviors that are more direct indicators of teen involvement with alcohol or other drug use.

- teen in obvious “drunk” or “high” state (ex. Swaying, slurred speech, not comprehensible)
- smell of alcohol or marijuana
- drug paraphernalia in teen’s possession (ex. Rolling papers, pipes, spray aerosols, inhalant bottles, needles, etc.
- hidden stashes of marijuana, pills, alcohol, etc.
- talking about his/her drug use to others
- physical signs (particularly in several combinations) – tremors, shakes, abnormally small or enlarged pupils, sweating, red watery eyes, smoky chemical smells, needle marks, burnt finger tips, unexplained changes in mood or body weight, etc.
- wearing clothing or jewelry that advocate or promote drug use, such as T-shirts with pro-use messages, or gold marijuana leaf necklaces.

Behaviors that are more indirect indicators of teen involvement with alcohol or other drug use. If teens show these behaviors and are found not to be users, consider them at high-risk for use.

- unexplained change in behavior or attitude
- mood swings, depressed or hyper
- drop in grades
- in school truancy – skipping classes, but still on school premises
- out of school truancy
- hanging out in locations that are know drug-use locations
- frequently requesting hall passes at school
- does not return on time when given passes
- cannot be trusted to go where he/she is expected to go
- sleeping in class
- friends are known drug users
- frequent discipline problems at home or school
- stealing or suspected of stealing
- lies
- excessive need for privacy
- gives verbal or physical threats when disciplined
- threatens to run away
- getting in trouble with the law

Some of the indirect behaviors can be signs of other emotional problems, but if traditional methods of therapy do not seem to be working, then substance abuse problems should be considered. Even if some other disorder is the primary problem, little will be gained in therapy until the substance abuse is properly addressed. Also, by the time any significant behavior signs appear, usually the teen has been involved in substance use for some time. The earlier the intervention, the better chance of the teen working a successful recovery program.

Informative books:

Schaefer, Dick, Choices & Consequences, What to do when a teenager uses alcohol and drugs

Jay, Jeff & Jay, Debra, Love First: Intervention for Alcoholism and Drug Addiction

Community Resources – agencies offering either drug education, intervention information, assessments, referral to therapy or support.

Ann Arbor Police Department 743-994-8775
Pittsfield Twp. Police Department 734-994-1039
Will provide information on latest street drugs and laws to parents. Will also intervene on situations involving use, possession and trafficking .

Complete Counseling 517-546-4445
721 E. Grand River
Howell, MI
Assessments, individualized treatment, parent education
(for school mandated assessments – no cost) does not bill insurance.

Health Access Service 734-481-2502
Ann Arbor, MI 1-800-440-7548
Provides substance abuse services, assessments and referrals for all ages. Will provide assessments for the uninsured.

Home of New Vision 734-975-1602
2500 Packard Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48104 No insurance accepted
Minor in possession referrals, school referrals and adolescent assessments, no treatment for teens, urine screens are offered.

Key Alliance 810-220-8192
210 S. East St. suite 2
Brighton, MI 48116
Assessments, urine screens w/cost, Insight class and smoking program.

Occupational Health Solutions (Drug Screen Option for Parents)
Alcohol and Drug Testing 810-229-3232
10524 E. Grand River, Suite 100
Brighton, MI
Offers confidential complete drug screenings for parents who bring in their teens. Client pay. No appointment necessary, walk in 9:00am – 5:00pm

Ron Harrison, SW 734-214-5883
Adolescent assessments will determine treatment options. Client pay

Spectrum Prevention Services 734-973-1900
3879 Packard Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Assessments, prevention programs, support groups for schools and
community.

Other Youth and Family Support Options

Alateen 1-800-344-2666
Free support for teens from families affected by substance abuse

Community Learning Post 734-769-0288
211 N. Fourth Ave.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Support for high-risk youth and homeless families

Neutral Zone 734-214-9995
637 S. Main St.
Ann Arbor, MI
Provides various prevention and drug free social & recreational activities
for teens.

Older Adolescent Support Group (ages 15-18) 734-712-4399
St. Joseph Mercy Health system
Ann Arbor, MI
Group exploration of teen issues

Parent Support Group – Adolescent Behavioral Services 734-712-4328
St. Joseph Mercy Health System
Ann Arbor, MI
Free parent-facilitated support group for parents of substance using kids

Parents Together 734-484-6461
448 S. Huron St.
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
Prevention support for youth and families

Peace Neighborhood Center 734-662-3564
111 N. Maple Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Provide youth and family support, job training, and drug free recreation.

Serenity House of Ypsilanti 734-481-1370
269 S. Harris Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48198
Meeting place for several self help/12 step groups. Offers safe, drug free
social activities.

T.R.U.E. (Teens Recognizing and Understanding Each Other)
Organized and lead by teens. Teens present prevention programs to
children and other teens. Community service hours available.

Contact 734-973-7892 or Spectrum Prevention at 734-971-1900
Washtenaw Alano Club 734-668-9401
995 N. maple Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
AA, Alanon meetings and drug free social activities

Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment Options

Greenbrook Recovery Center 734-712-4300
St. Joseph Mercy System
Ann Arbor, MI
Assessments, adolescent treatment and recovery

Growthworks 734-455-4095
271 S. Main St.
Plymouth, MI 48170
Assessments, adolescent treatment & recovery, parent education groups.

Institute of Psychology and Medicine 734-973-7377
2010 Hogback Road, suite 6
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
Assessments and therapy

Maplegrove Treatment Program 810-231-9591
West Bloomfield. MI
Assessments, early intervention program and intensive outpatient
treatment, accepts most insurances.

The Pathway Family Center 248-443-0105
231 Providence, suite 300
Southfield, MI
Assessments and intensive outpatient, much parent involvement.
Family must bill insurance for reimbursement.

Insured families can also contact their healthcare providers to find
agencies and private therapists who will provide needed services

CRISIS help:
Emergencies...911

SOS Crisis Center, 114 N. River St, Ypsilanti, MI 734-485-8730

Ozone Youth and Family Services (Ozone House) 734-662-2222
1705 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor, MI 48105
Crisis counseling, shelter for youth, 24 hour crisis hotline

Websites for support

Alateen – www.alateen.org
Alcoholics Anonymous – www.alcoholics-anonymous.org
Families Anonymous – www.familiesanonymous.org
Narcotics Anonymous – www.na.org
Cocaine Anonymous – www.ca.org
Al-Anon – www.Alanon.org

Websites for national adolescent treatment programs:

Caron Foundation – www.caron.org
Johnson Institute – www.johnsoninstitute.com
Hazelden Foundation- www.hazelden.org
Phoenix House – www.phoenixhouse.org
More treatment programs can be found at www.samhsa.gov

Other Important Website Resources

TEENS USING DRUGS – What to know & what to do.
<http://www.hvcn.org/info/teensusingdrugs> Site with scheduled talks by
Ron Harrison SW, and links to most important substance abuse websites.

Washtenaw & Livingston Counties Resources & Referrals provided by
SOS Crisis Center... [Http://comnet.org/soshelpnet](http://comnet.org/soshelpnet)

Drug Testing as a Tool for Parents... FDA cleared hair tests
Psychomedics Corp. Cambridge, MA... www.drugfreeteenagers.com
1-800-628-8073

Latest street drugs information – www.streetdrugs.org
Chemical makeup of drugs – www.erowid.org

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)...
www.health.org Updated prevention & treatment information, catalogues,
brochures, videos, posters, street drug info. etc.

Substance Abuse and Mental health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
www.samhsa.gov Links to many substance abuse & mental health sites.
Latest research, prevention and treatment resources, catalogues, etc.

***Research cited in this guide can be found on the NCADI and SAMHSA websites.**

Drugs Commonly Abused (categorized).

Stimulants: stimulates nervous system, increases heart rate

Amphetamines (speed) tobacco

Amyl nitrite (inhalant) Anabolic steroids (body building)

Ecstasy (also hallucinogenic) Cocaine, crack cocaine

Club drugs – can be stimulating & hallucinogenic

MDMA (Ecstasy), GHB, Rohypnol, Ketamine, Methamphetamines, LSD

www.clubdrugs.org website.

Hallucinogens: causing hallucinations

LSD, magic mushrooms, very high potency marijuana

Depressants: depresses nervous system, lowers heart rate

Alcohol Cannabis (marijuana)

Opiates, such as heroin, morphine , methadone

Benzodiazepines – tranquilizers such as Valium & Temazepam

Other prescription pain relievers (such as Oxycotin)

For a detailed description & street names call NCADI for free brochure 1-800-729-6686

or go to website www.health.org .

SUMMARY

Recent research shows children are choosing not to use drugs because they don't want to disappoint parents.

It is important for parents to communicate with children at an early age about concerns over use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Parents must be willing to discuss and question teens about ATOD and enforce family expectations concerning no use.

Parents are children's first role models.

In studying children who choose not to use, experts have identified the assets and skills needed to promote children's well-being.

Children can learn at an early age how to make productive choices.

There are many local agencies and groups that are willing to support parents with parenting issues.

When children choose to use drugs, parents need to find out how involved they are with drugs by getting a substance abuse assessment for the using child.

Parents and kids need to know they are not alone when dealing with the challenges of substance abuse. Parents should seek support for themselves to deal adequately with the issues.

A professional counselor can help with intervention on a difficult child in order to get the needed help.

When parents are unsure of use, a behavioral checklist can point out what to look for in a using teen.

The earlier a teen is helped, the better chance of recovery.

Parents can educate themselves about ATOD and handling related issues by accessing the many resources listed in this guide.