



Keep
them safe.

ARIZONA SUBSTANCE ABUSE
PARTNERSHIP

KeepThemSafe.AZ.gov



Governor's Office
of Youth, Faith and
Family

What are the risk factors?

Individuals are more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as alcohol, tobacco, or drugs if their life includes:

- Peers who use drugs and tolerate abuse
- Insufficient social skills
- First use at early age
- Low self-esteem
- Exposure to drugs in the community
- Family history of substance abuse
- Economic disadvantage
- Perception of use as the norm
- Chaotic home environment
- Perception of low risk associated with alcohol or drug use
- Undefined rules and poor communication

Average age of first use:



12 to 13
years old



Key risk periods occur during major transitions such as moving to a different school, facing new social and academic challenges, and leaving school for work or college. Transitions from elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school and high school to college are considered key risk periods.

! Warning signs

- Bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils and using eye drops
- Declining grades, skipping or suddenly getting in trouble at school
- Dropping friends for another group, being secretive about new peers
- Sleeping excessively or at unusual times
- Losing interest in old hobbies, lying about new activities and interests
- Locking doors, sneaking around, avoiding eye contact, demanding more privacy
- Family home missing money, prescriptions or valuables

Red flags of substance abuse are different from normal teenage ups & downs.



What can parents do?



Use any opportunity to have a conversation. Take advantage of “teachable moments” to discuss drug and alcohol use with your child.



Spend at least 15 minutes each day doing something your child wants to do, like talking, cooking a meal together, playing a game, or doing a craft project your child chooses. Spend an uninterrupted hour a week, one day a month and two consecutive days a year building a strong, positive relationship with your child.

“ A child who reaches age 21 without smoking, abusing alcohol or using drugs is virtually certain to never do so. ”

- Joseph A. Califano

Teachable moments can happen while driving in the car, at the dinner table, and while discussing a situation at school or a current event in the news.

- Monitor your child’s activity.
- Encourage healthy interests and social activities.
- Talk to your child about underlying issues.
- Spend time together and get to know your child’s friends and their friends’ parents.
- Set clear standards and expectations around all types of substance abuse.
- If needed, ask for professional help

Two-Way Conversations

Remember that communication is a two-way street that involves both talking and listening.

Parents might ask their children:

- Why do you think some kids drink or use drugs and how do you feel about that?
- What do you think or feel when you see an adult drinking or smoking?

Kids might ask:

- Why do you or other adults sometimes drink or smoke?
- Why is it okay for you/them but not for me?

Talk to your child about substance abuse

Good communication between parents and children is the foundation of strong families.

By developing good communication skills, parents can often catch problems early, support positive behavior and stay involved with their children's lives. Talking with your child about substance abuse and use should be a process, not a single event. New opportunities and temptations will present themselves numerous times and unfortunately, with increasing frequency as your child enters adolescence and the teenage years.

Here are some suggestions you can use to start conversations with your children about drugs.



You are your child's most important role model and their best defense against substance abuse.

Starting the conversation

Gather your thoughts before you approach your child.

- Have a plan to keep the conversation going in the right direction.
- Be honest and rational.
- Be completely clear that you do not want them using drugs and alcohol.

Be calm and patient.

- Control your thoughts and actions.
- Listen with respect.
- Avoid lengthy responses that may be perceived as a lecture.
- If necessary, take a break and come back to the conversation at a planned later time.



“I want to help you focus on what drugs can do to you and to your future.”

Talking about substance abuse

Many parents are reluctant to start the conversation because they are afraid they'll be asked about their own prior drug use. Despite their intentions to convey anti-substance-use messages, parents' discussion of their prior use may in some ways downplay the emphasis on the negative consequences of using substances. Try this approach:

If you knew then, what you know now. Try saying...

“The thing that matters most is what lies ahead of you, not what is in the past.”



Cut and take this with you. Remember to listen both verbally and non-verbally to your child.

Family Prevention Strategies

Strategies to implement in your home to prevent drug and alcohol use.



1. Be Consistent

- Make sure that both parents/partners are sharing the same message on drug and alcohol use
- Create consistent rules, boundaries and consequences around drugs, alcohol and peer groups
- Trust is built by setting boundaries and verifying they are met; extend privileges as earned over time
- Model behaviors that you want to see in your child
- Engage in positive activities such as exercise, athletics, faith, and constructive hobbies



2. Communicate

- Identify current drugs and paraphernalia associated with drug use
- Create opportunities for two-way conversations around drug and alcohol use
- Share real-life examples of drug and alcohol use and their consequences
- Listen more than you speak
- Role-play situations and give your child words to say "no" and remove themselves from peer pressure



3. Educate Yourself

- Identify current drugs and paraphernalia associated with drug use
- Be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of drug/alcohol use
- Know the effects of drug use and what your child is likely to look like on drugs
- Learn terminology/slang use for drugs in your area



4. Honesty

- Share personal/family use with honesty, but without reliving or glamorizing past drug/alcohol use
- Share family genetics around drug and alcohol addiction as another reason not to use
- Use local news and friend & family events as opportunities to discuss choices and consequences



5. Deter

- Properly dispose of unused prescription pills
- Lock and monitor alcohol and prescription drugs
- Create a home atmosphere where kids feel comfortable, but not a place to get high



6. Monitor

- Be aware of internet use and what kids are posting and sharing online
- Check your child's room and car for drug paraphernalia and alcohol on a regular basis
- Discuss boundaries around drugs/alcohol with parents your teens interact with

Tear and take this card with you and share it with your loved ones:

Be Brave, Be Strong, Save a Life!

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE HAS OVERDOSED ON DRUGS OR ALCOHOL

DON'T:

- wait to call an ambulance
- put them under a shower
- let them sleep
- leave them alone
- give them anything to eat or drink



Even if someone says they feel fine after an overdose, it's important to get them help right away!

EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

POLICE-FIRE-AMBULANCE: 911
 SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
 NATIONAL RUNAWAY HOTLINE: 1-800-222-1222
 HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESOURCE CENTER: 1-888-373-7888



7. Build Community

- Elicit the support of family, friends, coaches, etc. to help support and uphold family values
- Encourage members of your community to create a drug and alcohol prevention plan



8. Verify

- Utilize home drug test kits as a way to prevent and, if need be, intervene in a child's substance abuse

Our Family Substance Abuse Prevention Plan



Putting a plan for avoiding alcohol and substance use in writing will help your child make good decisions in the future. Have your child help you choose the strategies, as children feel more responsible for their actions when they are part of the process. Add any additional strategies that may work for your family.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

1. **Be Consistent** _____
Discuss boundaries with spouse/partner in regard to drug and alcohol use and come to an agreement. _____

2. **Communicate** _____
Communicate regularly. This is not a one-time conversation. _____
Eat a meal as a family consistently 5 days per week. _____

3. **Educate Yourself** _____
Become a knowledgeable and credible resource to your child through education. _____

4. **Honesty** _____
Answer your child's questions with honesty and at an age-appropriate level. _____

5. **Deter** _____
Be aware of household items that could be used to get high. _____

6. **Monitor** _____
Know your child's friends, their siblings and families; particularly, know if there are older children at home. _____

7. **Build Community** _____
Educate friends and family members about the dangers of teen substance and alcohol abuse. _____

8. **Verify** _____
Make sure that your child adheres to curfew, homework and other household rules/boundaries. _____

Tear and take this card with you and share it with your loved ones:

RECEIVE DISCOUNTS

FROM SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE RESTAURANTS, THEATERS AND HANG OUTS!

Here is how to activate your card. Enjoy your discounts after you:

- Discuss substance abuse with your parents/legal guardians
- Discuss resistance strategies with your parents/legal guardians
- Create and agree to a Family Prevention Plan
- Have your parent/legal guardian sign the card

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

*Varying discounts are available to youth, ages 12-18, at participating locations. Visit www.keepthemsafe.az.gov for a complete list of locations and discounts.

Cut and take this with you. Remember to put a plan in place.

Cut and take this with you. Remember to put a pin in place.

Keep the Conversation Going

It is difficult, but you need to talk to your kids about drugs.

By using a mix of praise and criticism, you can correct your child's behavior without saying your child is bad. This helps children build self-confidence and learn how to make healthy and safe choices. In time, making smart choices on their own will become easier.

The kind of information you receive depends on how you ask the question.

Avoid questions that children can answer with a simple yes or no. Try using these open-ended, non-threatening questions:

- How often do you hear people talking about drugs at school?
- How many of your friends have tried marijuana?
- How easy is it for you to get beer or alcohol?
- What is the most common drug at school?
- When was the last time you saw someone drunk or stoned?



It's a parent's job to use love and experience to correct mistakes and poor choices.

Set clear standards and expectations around all types of substance abuse.

Family rules about substance abuse give children something to fall back on when they are tempted to make poor decisions. Provide your child with words and strategies to use to remove themselves from situations where they are offered drugs. Agree on the consequences of breaking the rules ahead of time — and enforce them consistently. Here are some examples of rules that parenting experts recommend:

- "If you're at a party and you see that drugs or alcohol are being used, the rule is to leave that party. Call me and I'll come and get you."
- "I've been thinking lately that I've never actually told you this: I don't want you using alcohol, tobacco or drugs."

Ask for help.

- Raising children is complicated, and you may need help. Consider taking a parenting class or going to a family counselor.



Resources

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc.
ncadd.org

National Helpline
1-800-662-HELP (4357)

National Institute on Drug Abuse
drugabuse.gov

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
samhsa.gov

The White House Drug Policy
whitehousedrugpolicy.gov

KeepThemSafe.AZ.gov



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