

JUST THE FACTS

Starting a Conversation: Kids and Drugs

If you are looking for a way to help kids and teens steer clear of drugs, one of the best things you can do is talk to them.

Kids are much less likely to tune you out if they feel like they are part of the conversation. Resist the urge to lecture.



What Can You Do?

Ask questions

- Has anyone ever offered you drugs? Ever tried drugs?
- Do any kids at school use drugs?
- Why do you think kids and teens experiment with drugs?
- What would you do if someone offered you drugs?

Use TV Shows, News Articles and Movies

TV shows and movies often portray using drugs as cool or a rite of passage. Use this as a teaching moment, discuss it with your teen and ask questions.

- Why do you think that person is using drugs?
- Do you think this person is a good role model?
- What would you do if you were in that situation?

Know the Signs

How do you know if a kid is using drugs? Look for these things:

- Mood swings and withdrawn behavior
- Abrupt changes in style, grooming, appetite, and sleep patterns
- Drastic weight loss
- Lack of motivation and a drop in grades and school performance
- Sudden change in friends and activities

Of course, not all of these things mean that a kid is on drugs. But if your teen displays several of these signs, there might be a problem. Trust our instincts and talk with them.

The Do's & Don'ts When Talking to Kids about Drugs

Do's:

- Set clear rules about drug use.
- Help them develop healthy ways of coping and dealing with stress.
- Choose a good time to talk. Avoid times when they are distracted.
- Encourage them to get involved with extracurricular activities.

Don'ts:

- Don't lecture.
- Don't wait until you catch kids using drugs to think of a punishment.
- Don't forget the medicine cabinet. Prescription medications and over-the-counter cold and cough medicines can be just as risky as street drugs.
- Don't ignore your instincts. If you suspect that a kid is using drugs, talk to them.



Refusal Tips for Kids

It's not always easy for a kid to keep their cool in the face of peer pressure. Give them a few suggestions on how to say "NO" like:

- "Sorry. I'm driving tonight."
- "That stuff makes you stupid. I need all my brain cells for school."

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