



Talk Early And Often About Alcohol, Tobacco  
And Other Drugs. Even When It Gets Tough

## Know! To Ease Back-To-School Anxiety

It's a fact! Access, availability and the pressure to drink, smoke and use other drugs continues to increase as students get older. It is also true that as anxiety and stress builds, youth are at greater risk of turning to alcohol, marijuana or other substances as a coping mechanism.

### Four key areas of common concern: Academics, Athletics, Appearance & After-School Activities

**ACADEMICS:** Am I smart enough? Can I handle more homework? What will my teacher and parents expect of me?

**ATHLETICS:** Am I good enough to compete? Am I big enough, fast enough, strong enough? What will my coach and teammates expect of me?

**APPEARANCE:** Am I good-looking enough? Are my clothes fashionable? What will people think of me?

**AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:** Who will I hang out with? What will they expect of me and how will I be treated? Will I get pressure to drink, smoke or use other drugs?

While parents cannot expect to eliminate all of their child's worries, you can and should take into consideration your child's potential concerns and do what you can to help ease back-to-school anxieties.

- Explain to your child that it is normal and ok to feel nervous about heading back to school.
- Take advantage of open house opportunities to visit the school so that your child can get a lay of the land and meet (or get reintroduced to) teachers, coaches and some peers in advance.
- Be optimistic but realistic when sharing your academic expectations with your child.
- Start working toward the school sleep schedule in advance with earlier bedtimes and earlier rise times (knowing your preteen/teen should be getting 8-10 hours of sleep each night).
- Encourage your child to participate in sports, clubs and other group activities based on his/her interests, not based on what will please others.
- Help build your child's self-esteem with praise and encouragement. Remind your child that he/she is loved and valued and his/her feelings and opinions matter.
- When it comes to drinking, smoking or using other drugs, remind your child, "You are your own person, capable of making decisions based on your morals and values and what is right for you, regardless of others' decisions."

Know! encourages you to open the lines of communication with your children, and keep them open, reassuring them that you are their support and their sounding board, here to talk, listen and discuss.

Talking regularly with kids reduces their risk of using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Know! urges you to encourage other parents to join Know! by taking the Parent and Caregiver Pledge. For more information log on to [www.HelpThemKnow.com](http://www.HelpThemKnow.com)

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