



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

Know! To Set and Enforce Rules

When it comes to dangerous substances like alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, do not assume your child knows where you stand. In fact, unless you are having regular and open conversations on the subject, **Know!** that your child is at greater risk for drinking, smoking and using other drugs.

Talk Early, Talk Often:

Make your position on substance use clearly known: *I am against underage drinking and smoking, the misuse of prescription medications and any use of illicit drugs.*

Firmly state your expectations for your child's behavior: *I expect that you will not drink or smoke underage, misuse prescription medications or use any illegal drugs.*

- Be clear and concise. If you are at all ambiguous, your child may be more tempted to use.
- Make sure your child understands that this rule holds true even at other people's houses, regardless of who makes the offer.

Provide a brief explanation regarding your stance: *I forbid you to use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs because I love you. It would break my heart if you used drugs of any kind.*

- Do not be afraid to pull out the emotional stops. Youth themselves say their biggest reason for not using substances is that they do not want to upset or disappoint their parents.
- Save the lecture and stay on topic. While there are many reasons to avoid substance use, that talk is for another time (unless your child steers the conversation in that direction).

Be clear about the consequences for breaking the rules and consistently enforce them: *If you choose to break the rules, you can expect _____.*

- It is critical to follow through with pre-determined consequences, so that your child learns there are predictable outcomes when poor choices are made.
- Avoid statements like, "You are never leaving this house again!" Unrealistic, empty threats such as this will only discredit you.

While setting and enforcing the rules are a must, so is praising good behavioral choices. Let your child know how happy and proud you are when the rules have been respected. Parents who are quicker to praise than to criticize, lead to children who feel good about themselves and have the self-confidence needed to make positive life choices.

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

Know! is a program of:



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