



KEEPING YOUR CHILD DRUG FREE . . . DO TOMORROW AND EVERY DAY AFTER LIST

1. **Look for opportunities** to speak and teach your child about drugs and alcohol.
2. **Model** what you say and do, all the time. When you make a mistake, as we all do, acknowledge it for your child.
3. **Maintain your values**, even when it is often hard to stand your ground – hold firmly onto what is important to you. Your children are counting on it.
4. **Make rules and enforce consequences**. Don't be afraid to say, “NO.” This simple word can save your child's life.
5. **Reinforce** the healthy and positive choices. Find what your children do well, as we all have strengths, and nurture them every day. Every child needs to have limitations and understand expectations.
6. Keep **educating yourself** – learn the signs and symptoms of drug use. Know the things that may put your child at risk for drug use:
 - A child who begins to smoke and drink in their pre-teen years is more likely to develop an addiction as they grow up.
 - A child who lives in a home where parents drink and drug are at greater risk than others.
 - More permissive attitudes about substance use also predict greater risks for addiction.
 - The child, who feels lost, alone, isolated, bullied, or unsuccessful is at greater risk for turning to alcohol or drugs to make the pain go away. Drugs are a powerful anesthetic, especially if your child knows no other way to make him/herself feel better.
7. **Be aware**. Maintain contact with the parents of your children's friends. Know who they are. Your children will find friends who share their values and perceptions. If you have concerns about friends, do something. If you don't know who your child's friends are invite them into your home!

8. ***Follow your instincts.*** If you think something is wrong, talk to your child. If your child won't talk or you can't get the conversation started, ask for help. There is help all around (school personnel, community counseling centers, internet resources, houses of worship, etc.)
9. If a child is uncomfortable talking about feelings or certain topics, it's probably because we have given the impression that we are also uncomfortable.
10. It can happen to anyone; don't put your head in the sand. Pay attention, especially during stressful and/or transitional times in your family. It can be your child! Status, education, wealth, and other factors don't protect your children.
11. ***Stay connected.*** Speak with other parents; join in activities with your child. Find the commonalities that can bring you together. Have a dialog with the parents of your children's friends about their expectations. Agree to share information with one another and use one another for support. A united front from parents and other adults in your child's life that presents consistency, expectation, consequences, etc., can save lives.
12. ***Get them involved.*** Research tells us that children who are more involved with outside clubs and organizations are less likely to become drug and alcohol involved. Encourage and support your child to connect outside of your home whenever possible. The more healthy resources they have, the safer they will be.
13. You can't wish away this issue. Alcohol and drug use is usually a symptom of something more. Very often, it is only the trained and objective eye that can help to improve the situation. Resources are available within every school and every community.
14. Somehow, someway, find time, each day, to connect to your child. Every child needs to connect, to feel loved, and to feel special. Life is busy and stressful, but making the time for what is important is essential.

If you have any questions or concerns about someone in your life who you believe is struggling with issues related to drug use, please call. ***Help is available!***

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