

10 Actions Families Can Take to Raise Drug-Free Kids

START: It is never too early to prevent your children from trying drugs. Building protective factors, such as letting your child know you care, plays an important role in protecting even the youngest children from drugs.

CONNECT: Take every opportunity to build lines of communication with your children. Do things as a family. **Spend time together**—eat dinner as a family, read together, play a game, visit a museum, go to the park, attend religious services.

LISTEN: Take a more active interest in what is going on in your children's lives. **Listen to their cares and concerns.** Know what they are up to—what parties they are going to, with whom, and what will be served or available.

LEARN: Children and teenagers today are sophisticated. To educate your child about the danger of drugs, you need to educate yourself first. In many cases, you and your child can learn side by side. Sit down together and learn about the risks drugs pose.

EDUCATE: Spend at least 30 minutes with your kids every month explaining with simple facts how drugs can hurt youngsters and destroy their dreams.

CARE: Spend at least a few minutes each day telling and showing your children that you care. **Make sure they know you care they are drug-free.** Explain to your child that you will always be there for them, no matter what happens. Make sure that they know to come to you first for help or information. The extended family plays a major role in influencing a child's life.

BE AWARE: Look for the warning signs that your child may be developing a substance-abuse problem and get help before the problem occurs. Your pediatrician can help.

SET LIMITS: By setting limits on what is acceptable behavior, you show your children you care and help guide them to a safer, drug-free future. Declare limits: "This family doesn't do drugs. This family doesn't hang around people who do drugs." Enforce these limits. If you say no drugs or no drinking and driving, the rule applies to parents, too. **Be consistent.**

GET INVOLVED: Effective prevention extends beyond the home into the community. **Get involved in your community.** Ensure that your community's streets, playgrounds, and schools are safe and drug-free. Start or join a community watch group or community antidrug coalition. Become active in the PTA. **Get involved in your faith community.**

LEAD: Young people are as aware of what you do as of what you say. Don't just say the right things; do the right things. **Set a good example.** If you have a substance abuse problem, get help.

The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) offers free, valuable information about parenting at www.health.org. Also visit www.theantidrug.com