

Talking to Children About Drugs – Preschool to Age 7

Parents and caregivers who are educated about drugs can educate their children and clear up any possible misconceptions. As a role model, your views on alcohol, tobacco, and drugs can strongly influence your children. Talking about drugs should be a normal part of health and safety conversations. When children don't feel comfortable talking to parents or caregivers,

they often seek answers elsewhere, even if their sources are unreliable. Children who are not properly informed are at greater risk of engaging in unsafe behaviors and experimenting with drugs.



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Don't be nervous about talking to young children, you've probably already laid the groundwork for a discussion. For instance, whenever you give medication to your child, you can discuss why and when these medicines should be taken and how they work.

Take advantage of "teachable moments." If you see a character in a movie or on television with a cigarette, talk about the dangers of smoking and nicotine addiction, and what smoking does to a person's body. This can lead into a discussion about other drugs and how they can cause harm.

Always keep the tone of these discussions calm and use terms that your child can understand. Be specific about the effects of drugs: how they make a person feel, the risk of overdose, and the other long-term damage they can cause.

A warm, open family environment encourages children to come forward with questions and concerns. Pay attention to how your children are feeling and let them know that you are available and willing to listen in a nonjudgmental way. Make conversations with your children a regular part of your day. In addition, finding time to do things you enjoy together as a family helps everyone stay connected and maintain open communication.

If you would like more information about alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs, please call us at 1.800.928.8000 and ask to speak to a Prevention Specialist. We can help.