

Talking to Children About Drugs – Ages 8 to 12

Parents and caregivers who are educated about drugs can also 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.

As your kids grow older, you can begin talks with them by asking them what they think about drugs. By asking the questions in a nonjudgmental, open-ended way, you are more likely to get an honest response. Remember to show your kids that you are listening and really paying attention to their concerns and questions. Preteens may be willing to talk openly to their parents about touchy subjects. Even if your questions don't immediately result in a meaningful discussion, it gets your children thinking about the issue. Show them that you are willing to discuss the topic and hear what they have to say. They might be more willing to come to you for help in the future.

Drug-related issues in the news, such as steroid use in professional sports, can serve as springboards for informal conversations about drugs. Use these discussions to give your kids information about the risks and long-term effects of drugs.

A warm, open family environment encourages children to come forward with questions and concerns. Pay attention to how your kids 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.