



PARENT PACK

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council for the Concho Valley

3553 Houston Harte

San Angelo, Texas 76901

Phone: 325-224-3481 • Fax: 325-224-4923

prevention@adaccv.org

www.adaccv.org





Table of Contents

Parent Pack information.....Page 3

SUPERHERO.....Page 4

40 Developmental AssetsPages 5-6

Indicators of Substance Use.....Page 7

Transitions into Middle School.....Pages 8-9

Parents Tips for All Ages.....Pages 10-21

How to Prevent Substance Use at all Ages...Page 22



Parent Packet Information

The information contained within the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council for the Concho Valley's Parent Packet is designed to empower parents, caregivers, school personnel, and concerned friends and family to become effective prevention tools for youth. This information is also intended to help individuals learn and understand the dangers of drug use and addiction as well as to become familiar with the signs of use and abuse.

ADACCV's Parent Packet contains informative handouts, pamphlets, and booklets that provide detailed information about the different drugs of abuse facing west Texas. It also provides resource guides that offer effective tips and recommendations on how to keep youth drug free for life.

We have included a quick reference guide to assist in determining whether your child or loved one may be under the influence of drugs or whether they are actively using drugs.

We encourage anyone who is addressing this issue in their lives to contact ADACCV or any other substance use disorder professionals for more information, guidance, and assistance.

Please feel free to contact ADACCV at (325) 224-3481 or prevention@adaccv.org .

Eric Sanchez, CEO, [eas@adaccv.org](mailto: eas@adaccv.org) ; **Ray Valadez**, YP Prevention Director, [rayv@adaccv.org](mailto: rayv@adaccv.org) ; **Jennifer Flores**, CCP Director, [jenniferf@adaccv.org](mailto: jenniferf@adaccv.org); **Anitra Wilson**, Prevention Coordinator, [anitraw@adaccv.org](mailto: anitraw@adaccv.org)

If you are a parent or have children in your life, there may be a number of conversations that you dread having. Topics like violence, illness, drugs and alcohol and other problems we experience in our society are sometimes difficult to explain. As parents and role models, you are the first line of defense children have in being prepared to make tough decisions and their first safety net if they take a step off the right path. The Superhero, Super Parent tool can assist you raising healthy, empowered children. YOU are the original SUPERHEROs! If you have questions or would like more information on how to provide prevention messages to your children in an age-appropriate way, please contact us! The Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council for the Concho Valley can be reached at (325) 224-3481.

S

Spend quality time: Between work, school, extracurricular activities, church and other obligations, it's a miracle that we remember what our children look like! Whether you are sitting down to eat together or driving to school in the morning, capitalize on the time you have together to listen to your children and talk about your family values and expectations. When it comes to family time, remember quality over quantity!

U

Utilize supports and resources: Even superheroes need sidekicks! No parent or family has all the answers. Find out what resources are available in your community for prevention, education, intervention, and treatment of any issue that your child or family encounters that is too big to handle alone. San Angelo has many (mostly free!) supports waiting for you! Need help? Give us a call- 325-224-3481.

P

Promote good behavior: It is so easy to get caught up in problems and putting out fires that we sometimes forget the importance of acknowledging right choices and expectations our children meet. From a pat on the back to a special activity, the smallest reward is often enough to keep the good behavior coming!

E

Empower your child: Allow your child to make age-appropriate choices and deal with the consequences, negative or positive. Encouraging critical thinking and the weighing of consequences and reward. Discuss the outcomes of their decisions in relationship to your family values. Let your child know that you trust them to make choices and to ask for help when they need it!

R

Recognize changes: Prevention sometimes borders on early intervention. As a parent, you know your child's routines, friends, and behaviors. While you may want to write off changes in in your child to "normal teenage stuff" or hormones, addressing changes early on in a non-judgmental and nonthreatening way can open lines of communication mean the difference between getting help and diverting a crisis.

H

Honor individuality: The fact is all people are different, including our kids. While it may be easier for you to relate to your basketball star daughter because you were an athlete in high school, your artistic son will need just as much of your time and encouragement to pursue his dreams. Remember that there is no one right path to happiness and success, so celebrate the things that are right for each of your children individually.

E

Establish boundaries: No two families are alike. They all have rules, styles of discipline, and values that make them unique. Take a look at how your words and behaviors communicate your values to your children. Be clear with the rules that govern your child's safety and be a role model for the values that you want them to live by.

R

Reward achievements: Rewards aren't just medals and trophies! Praise is one of the most meaningful rewards you can give your child when they accomplish a goal. If you know your child is working toward something, consider establishing a reward that can help them stay focused on achieving success!

O

Observe friendships: When our children are small we are their whole world. As they grow and develop friendships the influences they experience increase. Know who your child's friends are; meet their parents and visit their homes. If there is conflict between your values and rules and those of their friends, talk with your child about how that should be addressed and, if necessary, place limitations on when and where your child spends time with that friend. Monitor sudden changes in friends or if your child withdraws from their friends. Both of these can be early signs of problem behaviors or social difficulties that you may want to address.

40 Developmental Assets™

Search Institute has identified the following building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

External Assets

Internal Assets

♥ Support

1. **Family Support:** Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. **Positive Family Communication:** Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. **Other Adult Relationships:** Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. **Caring Neighborhood:** Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. **Caring School Climate:** School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. **Parent Involvement in Schooling:** Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.

● Empowerment

7. **Community Values Youth:** Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. **Youth as Resources:** Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. **Service to Others:** Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. **Safety:** Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

☒ Boundaries and Expectations

11. **Family Boundaries:** Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. **School Boundaries:** School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. **Neighborhood Boundaries:** Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.

14. **Adult Role Models:** Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.

15. **Positive Peer Influence:** Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.

16. **High Expectations:** Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

🕒 Constructive Use of Time

17. **Creative Activities:** Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.

18. **Youth Programs:** Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.

19. **Religious Community:** Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.

20. **Time at Home:** Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

💡 Commitment to Learning

21. **Achievement Motivation:** Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. **School Engagement:** Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. **Homework:** Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. **Bonding to School:** Young person cares about her or his school.
25. **Reading for Pleasure:** Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

⊕ Positive Values

26. **Caring:** Young person places high value on helping other people.
27. **Equality and Social Justice:** Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. **Integrity:** Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. **Honesty:** Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
30. **Responsibility:** Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. **Restraint:** Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

😊 Social Competence

32. **Planning and Decision Making:** Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. **Interpersonal Competence:** Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. **Cultural Competence:** Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. **Resistance Skills:** Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. **Peaceful Conflict Resolution:** Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

👍 Positive Identity

37. **Personal Power:** Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
38. **Self-Esteem:** Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. **Sense of Purpose:** Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
40. **Positive View of Personal Future:** Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.



40 elementos fundamentales del desarrollo

La investigación realizada por el Instituto Search ha identificado los siguientes elementos fundamentales del desarrollo como instrumentos para ayudar a los jóvenes a crecer sanos, interesados en el bienestar común y a ser responsables.

Elementos fundamentales externos

♥ Apoyo

1. **Apoyo familiar:** La vida familiar brinda altos niveles de amor y apoyo.
2. **Comunicación familiar positiva:** El (La) joven y sus padres se comunican positivamente. Los jóvenes están dispuestos a buscar consejo y consuelo en sus padres.
3. **Otras relaciones con adultos:** Además de sus padres, los jóvenes reciben apoyo de tres o más personas adultas que no son sus parientes.
4. **Una comunidad comprometida:** El (La) joven experimenta el interés de sus vecinos por su bienestar.
5. **Un plantel educativo que se interesa por el (la) joven:** La escuela proporciona un ambiente que anima y se preocupa por el juventud.
6. **La participación de los padres en las actividades escolares:** Los padres participan activamente ayudando a los jóvenes a tener éxito en la escuela.

● Fortalecimiento

7. **La comunidad valora a la juventud:** El (La) joven percibe que los adultos en la comunidad valoran a la juventud.
8. **La juventud como un recurso:** Se le brinda a los jóvenes la oportunidad de tomar un papel útil en la comunidad.
9. **Servicio a los demás:** La gente joven participa brindando servicios a su comunidad una hora o más a la semana.
10. **Seguridad:** Los jóvenes se sienten seguros en casa, en la escuela y en el vecindario.

☆ Límites y expectativas

11. **Límites familiares:** La familia tiene reglas y consecuencias bien claras, además vigila las actividades de los jóvenes.
12. **Límites escolares:** En la escuela proporciona reglas y consecuencias bien claras.
13. **Límites vecinales:** Los vecinos asumen la responsabilidad de vigilar el comportamiento de los jóvenes.
14. **El comportamiento de los adultos como ejemplo:** Los padres y otros adultos tienen un comportamiento positivo y responsable.
15. **Compañeros como influencia positiva:** Los mejores amigos del (la) joven son un buen ejemplo de comportamiento responsable.
16. **Altas expectativas:** Ambos padres y maestros motivan a los jóvenes para que tengan éxito.

🕒 Uso constructivo del tiempo

17. **Actividades creativas:** Los jóvenes pasan tres horas o más a la semana en lecciones de música, teatro u otras artes.
18. **Programas juveniles:** Los jóvenes pasan tres horas o más a la semana practicando algún deporte, o en organizaciones en la escuela o de la comunidad.
19. **Comunidad religiosa:** Los jóvenes pasan una hora o más a la semana en actividades organizadas por alguna institución religiosa.
20. **Tiempo en casa:** Los jóvenes conviven con sus amigos "sin nada especial que hacer" dos o pocas noches por semana.

Elementos fundamentales internos

💡 Compromiso con el aprendizaje

21. **Motivación por sus logros:** El (La) joven es motivado(a) para que salga bien en la escuela.
22. **Compromiso con la escuela:** El (La) joven participa activamente con el aprendizaje.
23. **Tarea:** El (La) joven debe hacer su tarea por lo menos durante una hora cada día de clases.
24. **Preocuparse por la escuela:** Al (A la) joven debe importarle su escuela.
25. **Leer por placer:** El (La) joven lee por placer tres horas o más por semana.

☺ Valores positivos

26. **Preocuparse por los demás:** El (La) joven valora ayudar a los demás.
27. **Igualdad y justicia social:** Para el (la) joven tiene mucho valor el promover la igualdad y reducir el hambre y la pobreza.
28. **Integridad:** El (La) joven actúa con convicción y defiende sus creencias.
29. **Honestidad:** El (La) joven "dice la verdad aún cuando esto no sea fácil".
30. **Responsabilidad:** El (La) joven acepta y toma responsabilidad por su persona.
31. **Abstinencia:** El (La) joven cree que es importante no estar activo(a) sexualmente, ni usar alcohol u otras drogas.

😊 Capacidad social

32. **Planeación y toma de decisiones:** El (La) joven sabe cómo planear y hacer elecciones.
33. **Capacidad interpersonal:** El (La) joven es simpático, sensible y hábil para hacer amistades.
34. **Capacidad cultural:** El (La) joven tiene conocimiento de y sabe convivir con gente de diferente marco cultural, racial o étnico.
35. **Habilidad de resistencia:** El (La) joven puede resistir la presión negativa de los compañeros así como las situaciones peligrosas.
36. **Solución pacífica de conflictos:** El (La) joven busca resolver los conflictos sin violencia.

👍 Identidad positiva

37. **Poder personal:** El (La) joven siente que él o ella tiene el control de "las cosas que le suceden".
38. **Auto-estima:** El (La) joven afirma tener una alta auto-estima.
39. **Sentido de propósito:** El (La) joven afirma "mi vida tiene un propósito".
40. **Visión positiva del futuro personal:** El (La) joven es optimista sobre su futuro mismo.





Indicators OF Substance Use

Positive parenting strategies can go a long way towards preventing drug use. However, there are never any guarantees. Therefore, it also seems appropriate to know the warning signs that your child may be getting involved with alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. This is a partial list of common signs to watch for. Other symptoms and signs may also appear. Also, some of the signs may appear as a normal part of adolescence. If in doubt, seek professional guidance.

Social Indicators

- Switching friends
- Defying rules
- Becoming secretive
- Staying out late
- Talking louder and faster
- Withdrawing from the family
- Manipulating adults
- Skipping or dropping out of school
- Drop in grades
- Legal problems

Emotional Indicators

- Extreme highs and lows
- seeking isolation
- Being short tempered
- Being defensive and defiant

Physical Indicators

- Sleeping more or less than usual
- Changes in physical hygiene
- Weight gain or loss
- Showing impaired coordination
- Having respiratory problems
- Bloodshot eyes
- Speech, vision and hearing impairment

Transitions: The First Year of Middle School

You've been anticipating this for the past few years — your child's transition from elementary school to middle school. Be warned, this is a critical time and calls for extra vigilance on your part. Your son or daughter may still seem young, but their new surroundings can put them in some mature and tempting situations.

- The likelihood that kids will try drugs increases dramatically during this year. Your child is going to meet lots of new kids, seek acceptance, and start to make more — and bigger — choices. For the first time, your kids will be exposed to older kids who use **alcohol, tobacco or other drugs**. New middle- or junior high-schoolers often think these older students are cool and may be tempted to try drugs to fit in.
- To many middle-school kids, **peer approval** means everything and your child may make you feel unwelcome. He is going through a time where he feels as though he should be able to make his own decisions and may start to challenge your values. While your child may physically and emotionally pull away from you to establish his own identity — and may even seem embarrassed by you at times — he actually needs you to be involved in his life more than ever before.
- Also, be aware that your child is going through some major **physical and hormonal changes**. Their moods may vary as they try to come to terms with their ever-changing body and the onset of puberty. Keep yourself educated on what to expect — if you reassure them that nothing is out of the ordinary, your child can relax knowing that what they're going through is normal.

Help your child make good choices during this critical time!

- Make it **very clear** that you do not want your child to use alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other drugs.
- Find out if they really understand the **consequences** of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.
- Get to know their friends by taking them to and from after-school activities, games, the library, and movies (while being sensitive to her need to feel independent).
- **Check in with their friends' parents often** to make sure you share the same anti-drug stance.
- Be sure you know their **online friends** – as well as their other online activities such as websites they visit, with whom they email, chats and instant messages, their Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook page, and who they text message.
- Do not give them **money for shopping** without knowing what they will purchase. Check all receipts.
- Hold a weekly family meeting to check in with each other and **address problems and concerns** and to **celebrate achievements and successes!**
- Get your kids involved with adult-supervised **after-school activities**.
- Give kids who are **unsupervised** after school a schedule of activities, limits on their behavior, household chores to accomplish, and a strict phone-in-to-you policy.
- **Make it easy** for your child to leave a situation where alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs are being used. Have a plan! Develop it together!
- Call kids' parents if their home is to be used for a party; get **assurance** that no alcoholic beverages or illegal substances will be at the party.
- Set curfews and **enforce** them.
- **Encourage open dialogue** with your children about their experiences.

For more information, contact the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council for the Concho Valley 325-224-3481

HOW TO PREVENT SUBSTANCE USE AT EVERY AGE

Your 2 to 4 Years Old

Since the foundation for all healthy habits — from nutrition to tooth brushing— is laid down during the preschool years, this is a great time to set the stage for a drug-free life. The following 7 tips will help you work with your preschooler so that he or she will grow up happy, healthy and drug-free.

- **Talk to your child about the joys of healthy living.** Explain the importance of taking good care of our bodies – eating right, exercising and getting a good night's sleep. Discuss how good you feel when you take care of yourself — how you can run, jump, play and work for many hours. A great conversation starter: "I'm glad I'm healthy because I can..."
- **Celebrate your child's decision-making skills.** Whenever possible, let your child choose what to wear. Even if the clothes don't quite match, you are reinforcing your child's ability to make decisions.
- **Stress the need for your child to take personal responsibility for his own health, well-being and personal environment.** Your instructions should be concrete, related to your child's experiences, and stated positively. Turn chores like brushing teeth, putting away toys, wiping up spills, and caring for pets into fun experiences that your child will enjoy. Break the activities down into manageable steps so that your child learns to develop plans.
- **Help your child steer clear of dangerous substances that exist in her immediate world.** Point out poisonous and harmful chemicals commonly found in homes, such as bleach, kitchen cleansers and furniture polish. Read the products' warning labels out loud to your child. Explain that she should only eat or smell food or a prescribed medicine that you, a relative or other known caregivers give to her. Also, explain that drugs from the doctor help the person the doctor gives them to but that they can harm someone else.
- **Help your child understand the difference between make-believe and real life.** Preschoolers give meaning to things they don't understand in order to make sense of their world — but their meaning doesn't necessarily reflect the real world. Ask your child what he thinks about a TV program or story. Let your child know about your likes and dislikes. Discuss how violence or bad decisions can hurt people.
- **Turn frustration into a learning opportunity.** If a tower of blocks keeps collapsing during a play session, work with your child to find possible solutions to the problem.
- **Tell your child how proud you are of her when she helps you with things.** There's never a bad time to give your child a boost of self-esteem.

What to Say to Your 2 to 4 Years Old

Conversations are one of the most powerful tools parents can use to connect with — and protect — their kids. But, when tackling some of life's tougher topics, especially those about drugs and alcohol, just figuring out what to say can be a challenge. The following scripts will help you get conversations going with your 2 to 4 years old child.

Scenario

Giving your child a daily vitamin.

What to Say

Vitamins help your body grow. You need to take them every day so that you'll grow up big and strong like Mommy and Daddy—but you should only take what I give you. Too many vitamins can hurt you and make you sick.

Scenario

Your kids are curious about medicine bottles around the house.

What to Say

You should only take medicines that have your name on them or that your doctor has chosen just for you. If you take medicine that belongs to somebody else, it could be dangerous and make you sick.

Scenario

Your child sees an adult smoking and, since you've talked about the dangers of smoking, is confused. (Parenting expert Jen Singer says the same script applies to grade-schoolers.)

What to Say

Grownups can make their own decisions and sometimes those decisions aren't the best for their bodies. Sometimes, when someone starts smoking, his or her body feels like it has to have cigarettes—even though it's not healthy. And that makes it harder for him or her to quit.

FMI contact The Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council for the Concho Valley at 325-224-3481

HOW TO PREVENT SUBSTANCE USE AT EVERY AGE

Your 5 to 8 Years Old

5-to-8-year olds are still tied to family and eager to please but they're also beginning to explore their individuality. In addition, your grade-schooler begins to spend more time at school and with peers and to collect information (including messages about drugs and alcohol) from lots of new places like the media and popular culture. It's very important that you continue talking to your child about a healthy drug-free lifestyle and stress that of all the voices your child hears, yours should be the guiding force.

Here are 9 tips to help you guide your child toward a healthy, drug-free life:

1. **Keep your discussions about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs factual and focused on the present.** Long-term consequences are too distant to have any meaning. Let your child know that people who drink too much alcohol get sick and throw up, or that smoking makes clothes stink and causes bad breath.
2. **Talk to your kids about the drug-related messages they receive through advertisements, the news media and entertainment sources.** Some TV shows or movies may even glamorize drug use. Remember to ask your kids how they feel about the things they've heard — you'll learn a great deal about what they're thinking.
3. **Consider the following topics when discussing drugs with your child: what alcohol, tobacco and other drugs are like; why drugs are illegal; what harm drugs can do to users.** You should also consider talking about the differences between the medicinal uses and illegal uses of drugs, and how drugs can impact the families and friends of users.
4. **Set clear rules and behave the way you want your kids to behave.** Tell them the reasons for your rules. If you use tobacco or alcohol, be mindful of the message you are sending to your children.
5. **Help your child explore new ways to express their feelings.** Kids who feel shy in one-on-one conversation might open up through painting, writing, or emailing a friend or relative.
6. **Work on problem solving by focusing on the types of problems kids come across.** Help them find long-lasting solutions to homework trouble, a fight with a friend, or in dealing with a bully. Be sure to point out that quick fixes are not long-term solutions.
7. **Give your kids the power to escape from situations that make them feel bad.** Make sure they know that they shouldn't stay in a place that makes them feel uncomfortable or bad about themselves. Also let them know that they don't need to stick with friends who don't support them.
8. **Get to know your child's friends — and their friends' parents.** Check in by phone or a visit once in a while to make sure they are giving their children the same kinds of messages you give your children.

9. **Sign your kids up with community groups or programs that emphasize the positive impact of a healthy lifestyle.** Your drug-free messages will be reinforced — and your kids will have fun, stay active and develop healthy friendships.

What to Say to Your 5 to 8 Years Old

Conversations are one of the most powerful tools parents can use to connect with — and protect — their kids. But, when tackling some of life's tougher topics, especially those about drugs and alcohol, just figuring out what to say can be a challenge. The following scripts will help you get conversations going with your 5 to 8 years old child.

Scenario

Your child tells you he was offered prescription drugs by a classmate — but said no.

What to Say

After praising your child for making a good choice and for telling you about it, let him know that in the future, he can always blame you to get out of a bad situation. Say, "If you're ever offered drugs at school, tell that person, 'My mother would kill me if I took that and then she wouldn't let me play baseball.'"

Scenario

Your grade-schooler comes home reeking of cigarette smoke.

What to Say

I know you're curious and you wanted to see what smoking was like, but as you can see, it's pretty disgusting and it probably made you cough and gag a lot. Your clothes and your breath and your hair all stink. Is that how you want to be known? As the kid who stinks?

Scenario

Your child has expressed curiosity about the pills she sees you take every day — and the other bottles in the medicine cabinet.

What to Say

Just because it's in a family's medicine cabinet doesn't mean that it is safe for you to take. Even if your friends say it's okay, say, "No, my parents won't let me take something that doesn't have my name on the bottle."

FMI, contact The Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council for the Concho Valley at 325-224-3481

HOW TO PREVENT DRUG USE AT EVERY AGE

Your 9 to 12 Years Old

Preteens: They're on a quest to figure out their place in the world. When it comes to the way they view that world, they tend to give their friends' opinions a great deal of power while, at the same time, they're starting to question their parents' views and messages. Your advice may be challenged — but it will be heard and will stay with your child much more than he or she will ever admit.

Here are 5 tips to help you help your preteen live a healthy, drug-free life:

1. **Make sure your child knows your rules — and that you'll enforce the consequences if rules are broken.**
This applies to no-use rules about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs — as well as bedtimes and homework. Research shows that kids are less likely to use tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs if their parents have established a pattern of setting clear rules and consequences for breaking those rules.
1. **Act out scenes with your child where people offer her drugs.** Kids who don't know what to say or how to get away are more likely to give in to peer pressure. Let her know that she can always use you as an excuse and say: "No, my mom [or dad, aunt, etc.] will kill me if I smoke a cigarette." Explain why she shouldn't continue friendships with kids who have offered her cigarettes, alcohol or pills.
2. **Tell your child what makes him so special.** Puberty can upend a child's self-esteem. Feelings of insecurity, doubt and pressure may creep in. Offset those feelings with a lot of positive comments about his life and who he is as an individual — and not just when he brings home an A.
3. **Give your children the power to make decisions that go against their peers.** You can reinforce this message through small things such as encouraging your child to pick out the sneakers he likes rather than the pair his four friends have.
4. **Preteens aren't concerned with future problems that might result from experimentation with tobacco, alcohol or other drugs, but they are concerned about their appearance — sometimes to the point of obsession.** Tell them about the smelly hair and ashtray breath caused by cigarettes. Make sure they know that it would be hard to perform in the school play while high on marijuana.
5. **Get to know your child's friends — and their friends' parents.** Check in by phone or a visit once in a while to make sure they are giving their children the same kinds of messages you give your children about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

What to Say to Your 9 to 12 Years Old

Conversations are one of the most powerful tools parents can use to connect with — and protect — their kids. But, when tackling some of life's tougher topics, especially those about drugs and alcohol, just figuring out what to say can be a challenge. The following scripts will help you get conversations going with your 9 to 12 year old child.

Scenario

Your child is just starting middle school and you know that eventually, he will be offered drugs and alcohol.

What to Say

There are a lot of changes ahead of you in middle school. I know we talked about drinking and drugs when you were younger, but now is when they're probably going to be an issue. I'm guessing you'll at least hear about kids who are experimenting, if not find yourself some place where kids are doing stuff that is risky. I just want you to remember that I'm here for you and the best thing you can do is just talk to me about the stuff you hear or see. Don't think there's anything I can't handle or that you can't talk about with me, okay?

Scenario

You find out that kids are selling prescription drugs at your child's school. Your child hasn't mentioned it and you want to get the conversation about it started.

What to Say

Hey, you probably know that parents talk to each other and find things out about what's going on at school... I heard there are kids selling pills – prescriptions that either they are taking or someone in their family takes. Have you heard about kids doing this?

Scenario

Your child's favorite celebrity—the one he or she really looks up to—has been named in a drug scandal.

What to Say

I think it must be really difficult to live a celebrity life and stay away from that stuff. Being in the public eye puts a ton of pressure on people, and many turn to drugs because they think drugs will relieve that stress. But a lot of famous people manage to stay clean – like [name others who don't do drugs] – and hopefully this incident is going to help [name of celebrity] straighten out his life. The thing is, when a person uses drugs and alcohol—especially a kid because he's still growing—it changes how his brain works and makes him do really stupid things. Most people who use drugs and alcohol need a lot of help to get better. I hope [name] has a good doctor and friends and family members to help him/her.

FMI, contact The Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council for the Concho Valley at 325-224-3481

HOW TO PREVENT SUBSTANCE USE AT EVERY AGE

Your 13 to 15 Years Old

For parents, this is a pivotal time in helping kids make positive choices when faced with drugs and alcohol. The average age kids try drugs for the first time is 13.. Kids who learn about the risks of drugs from their parents are up to 50 percent less likely to use (2011 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study). So, most importantly, stay involved. Young teens may say they don't need your guidance, but they're much more open to it than they'll ever let on. Make sure you talk to them about their choices of friends — drug use in teens starts as a social behavior.

Here are 5 tips to help you guide your teen toward a healthy, drug-free life:

1. **Make sure your teen knows your rules and the consequences for breaking those rules -- and, most importantly, that you really will enforce those consequences if the rules are broken.** This applies to no-use rules about tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, as well as curfews and homework. Research shows that kids are less likely to use tobacco, alcohol and other drugs if their parents have established a pattern of setting clear rules and consequences for breaking those rules. [Guo, Hawkins, Hill, and Abbott (2001)] And kids who are not regularly monitored by their parents are four times more likely to use drugs (Metzler, Rusby & Biglan, 1999).
2. **Let your teen in on all the things you find wonderful about him. He needs to hear a lot of positive comments about his life and who he is as an individual — and not just when he makes the basketball team.** Positive reinforcement can go a long way in preventing drug use among teens.
3. **Show interest — and discuss — your child's daily ups and downs.** You'll earn your child's trust, learn how to talk to each other, and won't take your child by surprise when you voice a strong point of view about drugs.
4. **Tell your teen about the negative effect alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs have on physical appearance.** Teens are extremely concerned with their physical appearance. Tell them about a time you saw a friend or acquaintance get sick from alcohol — reinforce how completely disgusting it was.
5. **Don't just leave your child's anti-drug education up to her school.** Ask your teen what she's learned about drugs in school and then continue with that topic or introduce new topics. A few to consider: the long-term effects that tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs have on the human body; how and why chemical dependence occurs — including the unpredictable nature of dependency and how it varies from person to person; the impact of drug use on society — societal costs of impaired health and loss of productivity; maintaining a healthy lifestyle; positive approaches to stress reduction; or setting realistic short- and long-term goals.

What to Say to Your 13 to 15 Years Old

Conversations are one of the most powerful tools parents can use to connect with — and protect — their kids. But, when tackling some of life's tougher topics, especially those about drugs and alcohol, just figuring out what to say can be a challenge. The following scripts will help you get conversations going with your middle school child.

Scenario

Your child is just starting middle school and you know that eventually, he will be offered drugs and alcohol.

What to Say

There are a lot of changes ahead of you in middle school. I know we talked about drinking and drugs when you were younger, but now is when they're probably going to be an issue. I'm guessing you'll at least hear about kids who are experimenting, if not find yourself some place where kids are doing stuff that is risky. I just want you to remember that I'm here for you and the best thing you can do is just talk to me about the stuff you hear or see. Don't think there's anything I can't handle or that you can't talk about with me, okay?

Scenario

You find out that kids are selling prescription drugs at your child's school. Your child hasn't mentioned it and you want to get the conversation about it started.

What to Say

Hey, you probably know that parents talk to each other and find things out about what's going on at school... I heard there are kids selling pills – prescriptions that either they are taking or someone in their family takes. Have you heard about kids doing this?

Scenario

Your child's favorite celebrity—the one he or she really looks up to—has been named in a drug scandal.

What to Say

I think it must be really difficult to live a celebrity life and stay away from that stuff. Being in the public eye puts a ton of pressure on people, and many turn to drugs because they think drugs will relieve that stress. But a lot of famous people manage to stay clean – like [name others who don't do drugs]. Of course, people make mistakes – the real measure of a person is how accountable he is when he messes up. It will be interesting to see how he turns out, won't it? The thing is, when a person uses drugs and alcohol — especially a kid because he's still growing — it changes how his brain works and makes him do really stupid things. Most people who use drugs and alcohol need a lot of help to get better. I hope [name] has a good doctor and friends and family members to help him/her.

FMI, contact The Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council for the Concho Valley at 325-224-3481

HOW TO PREVENT SUBSTANCE USE AT EVERY AGE

Your 16 to 18 Years Old

When it comes to drugs, teens are a savvy bunch. Drugs and messages about living drug-free have been part of their lives for years. They can make distinctions not only among different drugs and their effects, but also among trial, occasional use and addiction. They've witnessed many of their peers using drugs — some without obvious or immediate consequences, others whose drug use gets out of control. By the teen years, kids have also had to make plenty of choices of their own about drug use: whether they should give in to peer pressure and experiment with drugs, or go against some of their peers and stay clean.

Here are 6 tips to help you help your teen continue to live a healthy, drug-free life:

1. **Don't speak generally about drug- and alcohol-use— your older teen needs to hear detailed and reality-driven messages.** Topics worth talking about with your teen: using a drug just once can have serious permanent consequences; can put you in risky and dangerous situations; anybody can become a chronic user or addict; combining drugs can have deadly consequences.
2. **Emphasize what drug use can do to your teen's future.** Discuss how drug use can ruin your teen's chance of getting into the college she's been dreaming about or landing the perfect job.
3. **Challenge your child to be a peer leader among his friends and to take personal responsibility for his actions and show others how to do the same.**
4. **Encourage your teen to volunteer somewhere that he can see the impact of drugs on your community.** Teenagers tend to be idealistic and enjoy hearing about ways they can help make the world a better place. Help your teen research volunteer opportunities at local homeless shelters, hospitals or victim services centers.
5. **Use news reports as discussion openers.** If you see a news story about an alcohol-related car accident, talk to your teen about all the victims that an accident leaves in its wake. If the story is about drugs in your community, talk about the ways your community has changed as drug use has grown.
6. **Compliment your teen for the all the things he does well and for the positive choices he makes.** Let him know that he is seen and appreciated. And let him know how you appreciate what a good role model he is for his younger siblings and other kids in the community. Teens still care what their parents think. Let him know how deeply disappointed you would be if he started using drugs.

What to Say to Your 16 to 18 Years Old

Conversations are one of the most powerful tools parents can use to connect with — and protect — their kids. But, when tackling some of life's tougher topics, especially those about drugs and alcohol, just figuring out what to say can be a challenge. The following scripts will help you get conversations going with your 16 to 18 years old.

Scenario

Your teen is starting high school — and you want to remind him that he doesn't have to give in to peer pressure to drink or use drugs.

What to Say

You must be so excited about starting high school... it's going to be a ton of fun, and we want you to have a great time. But we also know there's going to be some pressure to start drinking, smoking pot or taking other drugs. A lot of people feel like this is just what high school kids do. But not all high school kids drink! Many don't, which means it won't make you weird to choose not to drink, either. You can still have a lot of fun if you don't drink.

You'll have a lot of decisions to make about what you want to do in high school and you might even make some mistakes. Just know that you can talk to us about anything — even if you DO make a mistake. We won't freak out. We want you to count on us to help you make smart decisions and stay safe, okay?

Scenario

Every time you ask your teen how his day was, you get a mumbled, "Whatever, it was okay," in return.

What to Say

Skip asking general questions like "How's school?" every day. Instead, ask more specific questions on topics that interest both you and your teen ("Tell me about the pep rally yesterday." "Are there a lot of cliques in your school?" "Fill me in on your Chemistry lab test.") You can also use humor and even some gentle sarcasm to get the conversation flowing. Try, "Oh, what a joy it is to live with a brooding teenager!" to make your child laugh and start opening up a bit.

Scenario

Your high-schooler comes home smelling of alcohol or cigarette smoke for the first time.

What to Say

"The response should be measured, quiet and serious--not yelling, shouting or overly emotional," says parenting expert Marybeth Hicks. "Your child should realize that this isn't just a frustrating moment like when he doesn't do a chore you asked for; it's very big, very important, and very serious." Say, "I'm really upset that you're smoking/drinking. I need to get a handle on how often this has been happening and what your experiences have been so far. I get that you're worried about being in trouble, but the worst part of that moment is over — I know that you're experimenting. The best thing you can do now is really be straight with me, so for starters, tell me about what happened tonight..."

HOW TO PREVENT SUBSTANCE USE AT EVERY AGE

Your 19 to 25 Years Old

As you prepare your child for life after high school you can help guide him to a healthy experience. And you don't have to tread on his independence to do it. You let him know you have his back," says Amelia Arria, Senior Scientist at Treatment Research Institute. This doesn't mean he doesn't have responsibilities of his own, or that he isn't responsible for making his own bed or contributing to the household.

Wrapping Up High School

- Ideally, you've already been talking to your kids about drugs and alcohol during middle school and high school. Research shows students who drank in high school are three times more likely to begin heavy episodic drinking in college [Weitzman, Nelson & Wechsler (2003)].
- Don't buy into the myth that allowing teens to drink around you will help them deal with alcohol issues when they're on their own. Research shows that, no matter who they drink with in high school, "they'll sustain and increase their drinking level" in college, says Arria.

Off to College

- Make sure you keep an open line of communication with them. "It's not all about the topic of drinking and drug use," says Arria. "It's about maintaining that really supportive relationship." Your child needs to know that if any problems or difficult situations arise, she can turn to you for help. Be an at-home resource for your college student.
- Don't want to come across as over-protective? "I do think the quality of the parent-child relationship has to change but I don't think [parents have] to back off," says Arria. "Rather than asking about her friends, you might be asking about her classes and what she's interested in."
- Stay alert to possible mental health issues. "Between the ages of 18 and 25 are when a lot of things pop up, if they haven't already in adolescence, like anxiety disorders," says Arria. There is a strong link between mental and physical health issues and the use of drugs and alcohol. Just in case something does happen, make sure you know what campus mental health resources are available to your child.

Prescription Drugs in the Dorms and in your child's post high school life

While the most popular drugs on college campuses are alcohol and marijuana, non-medical use of prescription stimulants, analgesics (painkillers), and tranquilizers is on the rise [McCabe, West, & Wechsler (2007)]. Though prescription drugs do have an important role when prescribed by a doctor, unsupervised use of them can be extremely

harmful. While some parents turn a blind eye because they think the drugs may help their child do better in school, this is something you definitely want to disapprove of. Keep in mind:

- Abusing painkillers is like abusing heroin because both drugs' ingredients (both are opioids) are very similar.
- Many pills look pretty much the same, but depending on the drug and the dosage the effects can vary greatly from mild to lethal.
- "Non-medical use of prescription drugs is actually associated with decreased academic performance, not an increase," says Arria. She adds that there also seems to be "a strong relationship between the use of other drugs and non-medical use of prescription stimulants." Researchers believe that students get into a cycle of spending a lot of time with friends, doing drugs and drinking, instead of going to classes. Then they turn to prescription stimulants to help them get through. The combination does not work.

What to Say to Your 19 to 25 Years Old

Conversations are one of the most powerful tools parents can use to connect with — and protect — their young adults. But, when tackling some of life's tougher topics, especially those about drugs and alcohol, just figuring out what to say can be a challenge. The following scripts will help you get conversations going with your 19 to 25 years old.

Scenario

Your adult child is moving to her own apartment or into a college dorm

What to Say

I know you're off to start your own life but please know that I'm always here for you. I respect that you're old enough to make your own choices, but if you ever want another perspective on things, give a shout. I'll try my hardest to help you out without judging you for your decisions. Sound good?

Amelia Arria, senior research scientist at the Treatment Research Institute, also suggests: There are certain things that you can count on in life and one of the things you're going to be able to count on is me. As your parent, I am always here for you. Remember, I am your support. I'm the one who can guide you.

FMI, contact The Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council for the Concho Valley at 325-224-3481

HOW TO PREVENT SUBSTANCE USE AT EVERY AGE, HOW TO HELP IF THEY'RE USING

If You Think They're Using: Drug Abuse in Teens 13-18

If you're at all concerned that your teenager is using drugs or alcohol, take action right now to help your child get back on track to a healthy life.

- **Look for the warning indicators of drug or alcohol use or addiction.** Keep in mind: Most of these symptoms tend to be gradual so you need to watch for them over time. Don't jump to conclusions, but do investigate any suspicions you have as fully as possible. Trust your intuition. Please note: Many of the warning signs for teen drug abuse are the same as those for depression or for the ups and downs of being a teenager. There's also the possibility it's a physical or emotional problem.
- **Talk to your teen about drug abuse without going on the attack.** Also, don't try to talk with your child if he or she seems under the influence. Wait for a calm moment and then explain the behavior you're worried about. Don't do all the talking; give your child the chance to explain his behavior.
- **Ask a doctor, mental health professional, or a professional substance abuse counselor for help if your teen seems evasive or if his or her explanations are not convincing.** This step will help you rule out physical or mental illness. If your child is using, a health professional skilled in diagnosing adolescents with alcohol or drug problems will help you figure out the best addiction intervention program for your teen's needs. Programs for teen drug abuse come in many types including self-help, outpatient, in-patient, and 24-hour hospitalization programs. To find treatment programs in your area, call your family doctor, local hospital, county mental health society, or school counselor for a referral. Contact us and we will be happy to help at the *Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council for the Concho Valley at 325-224-3481*
- **Get your family the help it needs.** Consider personal or family counseling. Live or online support groups will help you move forward and teach you how to help your teen through recovery and into the future and most groups are offered in Spanish. Also, Al-Anon and Alateen are support groups that help families and friends of people with alcohol problems recover from the effects of living with a problem drinker — whether the person is still drinking or not. More than likely, someone at an Al-Anon meeting knows of a counselor who specializes in substance use disorders.