

12 Tips for Helping Your Child Stay Drug Free

Now more than ever, children face great pressure to try alcohol and other drugs. As a parent, you can take steps to helping your child stay drug free:

1. Accept the role of parent as your responsibility—let others be their friends.
2. Make parenting a priority—be there.
3. Educate yourself about the problems facing today's children—they are different than the problems you faced.
4. Give clear messages about expectations—be specific about how you expect them to behave.
5. Enforce stated consequences when family rules are broken—children who don't follow family rules today may break society's laws tomorrow.
6. Clearly state consequences of failure to follow family rules—consequences are not negotiable.
7. Be aware that many in the community put children's buying power above children's well-being—don't expect the community to reinforce family values.
8. Don't assume that the parents of all your child's friends have the same rules you do—some have different rules, some have none.
9. Believe that children want rules to guide them—allow them to paint you as the "bad guy."
10. Remember that teenagers need parental supervision as much as toddlers do—it's just a different kind.
11. If necessary, love your children enough to let them hate you—for a while.
12. Know that children are never too big for a hug—even when they are grown.