

Staying Alert! –Changing Behaviors

“Preventing... risky behaviors involves many factors. One of them is the involvement of parents.”²¹

Overview

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSC) or Title IV, Part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) became law in 2002 to support drug and violence prevention programs in schools. The SDFSC is also intended to support programs designed to prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs; and those that involve parents and communities.

Help Your Child Stay Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Free

What you say to your child about using alcohol or drugs makes a big difference. Believe it or not, children DO listen to their parents when they talk about these things—and children say that their parents are a huge influence in their decision not to use alcohol or drugs.

- Talk to your child about the real risks of using alcohol or drugs. If you are having a hard time getting started and need more information, get a copy of *Keeping Youth Drug Free* from the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (1-800-729-6686 or www.health.org.)
- Be a good role model for your child: don't take part in any illegal, unhealthy, or dangerous drug use practices.
- Make parenting a priority. Make rules for your child and enforce the rules. Children say that they want rules from their parents—it shows them that you care about what happens to them. Adapt the rules as needed as your child gets older and more independent.
- Help your child learn what to say if offered alcohol or drugs. It's easier to stand up to peer pressure with some practice saying no and being firm about it.
- Know who your child's friends are and get to know the friends' parents or caregivers, too.
- Watch for signs of stress in your child and help your child learn how to deal with stress. Teenagers say stress is one of the reasons they start using drugs.
- Educate yourself. Identify the different types of drugs, their slang names, the signs of use, and their short- and long-term consequences.
- Talk to your child's teacher, school counselor, and the school principal about recommended alcohol, tobacco, and drug programs and materials.



Additional Information & Resources

1. MI Parenting [Awareness](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,4612,7-132-2941_4871-65472--,00.html) http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,4612,7-132-2941_4871-65472--,00.html
2. The Partnership at Drugfree.org – Support and Resources for Parents Dealing with Teen Drug and Alcohol Abuse <http://www.drugfree.org/>
3. Above the Influence <http://www.abovetheinfluence.com/>

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Older Children²⁶

1. Encourage reading for the fun of it as a free-time activity, and keep books in your home.
2. Talk with and listen to your children. Language is like a four-legged stool: speaking, listening, reading, and writing are its parts, and each supports the other.
3. Read with your children every chance you get—even if it's just part of a newspaper article at the breakfast table - and turn off the TV when you do it.
4. Set the example: be sure your children see you reading and understand that you read for enjoyment and to get needed information.
5. Monitor your children's schoolwork and applaud their efforts.



Middle and High School

According to research, parent engagement greatly decreases as students move from elementary to middle school to high school. However, research has shown that parents hold a significant influence over their adolescent student's school performance. Parent engagement throughout middle and high school can contribute to increased academic success.

At the middle school level, it is especially important for parents to:²⁷

- discuss school activities.
- monitor out-of-school activities.
- contact school staff.
- volunteer and attend parent-teacher conferences and other school events.

At the high school level, it is especially important for parents to:²⁸

- guide their student toward postsecondary education.
- make sure they read and do their homework.
- stress the value of education.

Additional information & Resources

1. The Parent's Guide to Middle School: <http://www.education.com/grade/middle-school/>
2. The Parent's Guide to High School: <http://www.education.com/grade/high-school/>
1. A Parent's Guide to the Teen Brain <http://teenbrain.drugfree.org/>

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