

# **PARENTING SKILLS:**

Tips and Ideas to Help YOU Make a Difference

**TRUTH.**

The Anti-Drug Campaign.



# What is the most important way to keep your kids from using drugs and alcohol?

## It's **You.**

Kids who learn from their parents or caregivers about the risks of drugs are about:

- 36% less likely to smoke marijuana;
- 50% less likely to use inhalants;
- 56% less likely to use cocaine; and
- 65% less likely to use LSD. \*

You are the most powerful influence in your child's daily life.

Being a parent is challenging and must be learned and worked on, even for the best parents. The following tips give you ideas for doing something positive for you and your child.

\*Source: Keeping Your Kids Drug-Free: *A How-To Guide for Parents and Caregivers*; National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign Of National Drug Control Policy; page 6. 2001.



# GET INVOLVED

Kids who are close to their parents and caregivers are least likely to engage in risky behaviors. The more involved you are in your children's lives, the more valued they will feel and the more likely they will respond to you.

- 1. Establish “together time.”** Establish a regular weekly routine for doing something special with your child - even something as simple as going out for ice cream, playing with your infant or child, or reading your infant or child a book.
- 2. Eat together as often as you can.** Meals are a great opportunity to talk about the day's events - to unwind, reinforce, bond. Studies show that kids whose families eat together at least 5 times a week are less likely to be involved with drugs or alcohol. Turning off the TV while eating together increases the effectiveness.
- 3. Set clear rules and enforce them fairly.** Children need to know what the rules are in your home and what the consequences for breaking the rules will be. Even though the types of rules and consequences for a toddler are different than the ones for a 10-year-old, they must be enforced fairly and consistently.



**Lonely**



**Confused**



**Happy**



**Depressed**



**Angry**



**Frightened**

# LEARN TO COMMUNICATE

The more you talk with a child, the more at ease a child will feel about discussing sensitive issues with you.

- 1. Be a good listener.** Ask and encourage questions. In your own words, repeat back to your child what your child says to you. Ask for his or her input about family decisions. Showing your willingness to listen will make your child feel more comfortable about opening up to you.
- 2. Give honest answers.** Don't make up what you don't know; offer to find out. If asked whether you've ever taken drugs, let them know what is important: that you don't want them using drugs.
- 3. Name and identify feelings.** Show appropriate ways to express feelings and talk about how to recognize emotions expressed by others. Include appropriate ways and times to say "no," judging the safety of situations.



# WALK THE WALK

Be a role model — the person you want your kid to be.

- 1. Be a living, day-to-day example** of important values. Show the compassion, honesty, generosity and openness you want your child to have.
- 2. Know that there is no such thing as “do as I say, not as I do.”** If you take drugs, you can't expect your child to take your advice. Seek professional help if you need it. If you smoke, try to stop. Always step outside to smoke until you can stop. Keep your kids' air clean.
- 3. Establish rules for taking medications safely.** Use danger labels on medications. Talk about common medications/substances and their uses, and options available when not feeling well.



# PRAISE & REWARD

Nothing encourages a child more than his or her parents' approval. The right word at the right time can strengthen the bond that helps keep your child away from drugs. Expressions of love, appreciation and thanks go a long way.

**1. Reward appropriate behavior consistently and immediately.** Provide loving guidance, limit-setting, and encouragement.

Make consequences of a misbehavior reasonable. Encourage healthy and safe decision making.

**2. Accentuate the positive.** Emphasize the things your kids do right.

Restrain the urge to be critical. Affection and respect - helping your child feel good about himself - will reinforce good (and change bad) behavior far more successfully than embarrassment or uneasiness.

## A Word to the Wise

When talking to young children about alcohol and other drugs, include discussions about healthy choices and alternatives; answer questions simply and directly; and obtain information if you do not know the answer. Avoid scary stories and pictures of drugs; don't explain how drugs are used and the effects they have.

# IDAHO RESOURCES

Parenting is a continual learning process. For more information about parenting or help getting off alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs, call:



## IDAHO PARENTING INFORMATION WEBSITES

- Early Childhood Information Clearinghouse:  
**[www.idahochild.org](http://www.idahochild.org)** (then click on the sun logo)
- Idaho Child:  
**[www.idahochild.org](http://www.idahochild.org)**
- Idaho Regional Alcohol Drug Awareness Resource (RADAR) Network Center:  
**[hs.boisestate.edu/RADAR](http://hs.boisestate.edu/RADAR)**

# IDEAS FOR ACTION

Each new stage of a child's development provides an opportunity for new learning for you and the child you are caring for.

## **What do you want to change about how you deal with your child? What do you want your wish or goal to be?**

- Examples:
- Read a book with my child before sleep.
  - Set aside time to play with my child.
  - Eat meals at the table.
  - Recognize positive behaviors.



**My wish or goal:**

## **What is one action you can take this week to work towards your wish or goal?**

- Examples:
- Read a book with my child before going to sleep. Do this 5 out of 7 days.
  - Set aside 20 minutes daily to play with my child.
  - Eat dinner at the table without TV 5 times this week.
  - Recognize at least 10 positive behaviors demonstrated by my child.



**I plan to take the following action this week that will help me reach my wish or goal:**

Track your progress on the next page.



Example:

# TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

GOAL: Play with child 20 minutes each day.

Day	Describe the Activity	How many? How often?	"X" If Done
Day 1	Kicked soccer ball around.	20 minutes	X
Day 2	Went to park + played.	15 minutes	X
Day 3	Sang + danced to music.	25 minutes	
Day 4	Nothing.	oops.	X
Day 5	Read book together.	20 minutes	X
Day 6	Had a tea party	30 minutes	X
Day 7	Built tower with blocks.	20 minutes.	X

**Gather support from family and friends. Reward yourself for making changes that make a positive difference in a child's life - and your own life.**

# TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

WISH or GOAL:

Day	Describe the Activity	How many? How often?	"X" If Done
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			



**How did you do at carrying out your wish or goal this week?** (circle one)

Met Wish or Goal

Struggled to Meet Wish or Goal

**If you met your wish or goal, continue tracking your progress for more weeks.** It takes about 3 weeks to make a new behavior a habit.

**If you struggled to meet your wish or goal:** Continue working on the same wish or goal OR change your wish or goal so that it can be achieved.

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