

TIPs for Non Drug Use Stage

We as parents have a responsibility to make sure that our children are safe at all times, and, regardless of their age, the following key REACH points are important in 'parenting positively for prevention'.

Relationship

A good relationship between a parent and child is the best foundation for prevention of drug problems. Keep the lines of communication open. We don't have to be experts on drugs to do this.

Example

Children learn a great deal by watching others, especially parents. We need to show good example in our own use of drugs; we should not use illegal drugs, if we drink, we should use alcohol responsibly. We should always follow a doctor's instructions when using prescription medicines.

Attitudes

Children's attitudes are influenced at an early age and again, we as parents are a very powerful influence. Children need to get clear messages from us about drugs. We can look for opportunities to talk about drugs with our children e.g. when something about drugs comes on the television or when we are in the car.

Confidence

Confidence is important for both parents and children. As parents, we need to have the confidence to learn about and talk about drugs with our children. Children who feel good about themselves are less likely to get into trouble with drugs. Building confidence and self-esteem in our children is another important task in 'positive parenting for prevention'.

How

The reality is that children are going to come into contact with drugs at some point in their lives. We need to help them prepare to deal with situations which may occur e.g. when a friend first offers them alcohol, a cigarette or a joint. We can discuss with them e.g. 'how would you say no without losing face?', 'how would you react if someone collapsed after taking something?' Coming up with answers to these questions is better than lecturing them about drugs. In this way we are 'parenting positively for prevention'.

(Source: "Don't Lose the Head", published by Crosscare, Drug Awareness Program, 2008)