

For further information contact:
National Drug Council (345) 949-9000

DRUGS

Tips & Warnings

- It's never too early to show that you take your kids seriously; the questions will come as soon as they learn to talk.
- Showing your willingness to listen will make your child feel more comfortable about opening up to you.
- Although virtually all parents in say they've talked with their children about drugs, only a few teens say they're learning a lot at home about the risks of drugs.

Key Agencies

Department of Children & Family Services

949-0290

Department of Counselling Services

949-8789

The most important thing to remember when it comes to talking about difficult subjects like drinking and drugs is that it's not about a 5-minute "talk" - it's about building an ongoing dialogue.

These guidelines are based on the recommendations of the National Drug Council.

Instructions

- **STEP 1:** Be absolutely clear with your kids that you don't want them using drugs. Ever. Anywhere. Don't leave room for interpretation.
- **STEP 2:** Talk often about the dangers and results of drug and alcohol abuse. Once or twice per year won't do it.
- **STEP 3:** Be a better listener. Ask questions and encourage them. Paraphrase what your child says to you. Ask for your children's input about family decisions.
- **STEP 4:** Give honest answers. Some parents who used drugs in the past choose to lie about it, but they risk losing their credibility if their children discover the truth.

This does not mean that you need to recount every moment of your experience - some details should remain private.

- **STEP 5:** Ask clarifying questions to make sure you understand exactly what your child is asking, and why, before answering questions about your past drug use, and limit your response to that information.
- **STEP 6:** Use NDC reports, antidrug commercials, news or school discussions about drugs to help you introduce the subject in a natural, unforced way.
- **STEP 7:** Don't react in a way that will cut off further discussion. If your child makes statements that challenge or shock you, turn them into a calm discussion of why your child thinks people use drugs, or whether the effect is worth the risk.
- **STEP 8:** Role-play with your child and practice ways to refuse drugs and alcohol in different situations. Acknowledge how tough these moments can be.

How to Talk to Your Child About Drugs