- Physical deterioration — difficulty in concentration, loss of coordination, loss of weight, unhealthy appearance.
- Refuses to talk or be around family.

WHY DO PEOPLE USE DRUGS?

Young people say they turn to alcohol and other drugs for one or more of these reasons:

- To do what their friends are doing.
- To escape pain in their lives.
- To fit in.
- Boredom.
- For fun.
- Curiosity.
- To take risks.

TAKE A STAND!

- Educate yourself about the facts surrounding alcohol and other drug use. You will lose credibility with your child if your information is not correct.
- Establish clear family rules against drug use and enforce them consistently.
- Develop your parenting skills through seminars, networking with other parents, reading, counseling, and support groups.
- Work with other parents to set community standards — you don't raise a child alone.
- Volunteer at schools, youth centers, Boys & Girls Clubs, or other activities in your community.

For More Information

- State and local government drug use prevention, intervention, and treatment agencies.
- State and local mental health agencies.
- State and local law enforcement agencies.
- Private drug use treatment services listed in the telephone book Yellow Pages.
- *National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)*
  PO Box 2345
  Rockville, MD 20847-2345
  800-729-6686 • 301-468-2600
  Fax: 301-468-6433

TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME®

Crime Prevention Tips from
National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor
Washington, DC 20006-3817
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ADT®

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TALKING WITH YOUR KIDS

ABOUT DRUGS

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Crime Control & Public Safety
N.C. Crime Prevention Division
P.O. Box 29591
Raleigh, NC 27626-0591
(919) 733-5522
www.NCCrimeControl.org

Don't put off talking to your children about alcohol and other drugs. As early as fourth grade, kids worry about pressures to try drugs. School programs alone aren't enough. Parents must become involved, but most parents aren't sure how to tell their children about drugs.

Open communication is one of the most effective tools you can use in helping your child avoid drug use. Talking freely and really listening shows children that they mean a great deal to you.

What do you say?

- Tell them that you love them and you want them to be healthy and happy.
- Say you do not find alcohol and other illegal drug use acceptable. Many parents never state this simple principle.
- Explain how this use hurts people. Physical harm — for example, AIDS, slowed growth, impaired coordination, accidents. Emotional harm — sense of not belonging, isolation, paranoia. Educational harm — difficulties remembering and paying attention.

- Discuss the legal issues. A conviction for a drug offense can lead to time in prison or cost someone a job, driver's license, or college loan.
- Talk about positive, drug-free alternatives, and how you can explore them together. Some ideas include sports, reading, movies, bike rides, hikes, camping, cooking, games, and concerts. Involve your kids' friends.

How do you say it?

- Calmly and openly — don't exaggerate. The facts speak for themselves.
- Face to face — exchange information and try to understand each other's point of view. Be an active listener and let your child talk about fears and concerns. Don't interrupt and don't preach.
- Through "teachable moments" — in contrast to a formal lecture, use a variety of situations — television news, TV dramas, books, newspapers.
- Establish an ongoing conversation rather than giving a one-time speech.
- Remember that you set the example. Avoid contradictions between your words and your actions. And don't use illegal drugs, period!
- Be creative! You and your child might act out various situations in which one person tries to pressure another to take a drug. Figure out two or three ways to handle each situation and talk about which works best.
- Exchange ideas with other parents.

How can I tell if a child is using drugs?

Identifying illegal drug use may help prevent further abuse. Possible signs include:

- Change in moods — more irritable, secretive, withdrawn, overly sensitive, inappropriately angry, euphoric.
- Less responsible — late coming home, late for school or class, dishonest.
- Changing friends or changing lifestyles — new interests, unexplained cash.