



TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

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Our children are now being exposed to drugs and alcohol earlier than ever. This makes it even more important that they hear about potential dangers from their parents. Children are most likely to listen to their parents if their parents listen to them. Listening to our children's feelings, ideas, thoughts and concerns makes talking about difficult subjects a bit easier and more comfortable for them. When you begin this difficult conversation tell your child that drugs and alcohol are not acceptable to you. A clear family position is very important to establish. Let them know that you want them to be happy and healthy and one of the easiest ways to do this is to abstain from drugs and alcohol. Be truthful with your child. Tell them about the dangers—health, legal and otherwise. Be an informed parent and teach your child, but do not exaggerate. Talk about the alternatives to drugs and alcohol with your child such as sports and hobbies. Be creative in your teaching. Give your child an opportunity to practice saying no. Role play different potential situations involving drugs and alcohol so your child is adequately prepared to respond appropriately. The most important part of the conversation you have with your child about drugs and alcohol is that it should be continuous. Do not give one lecture, but encourage an ongoing, open dialogue about drugs and alcohol in your family. And do not forget that the biggest influence in a child's life is their parents and that you set the example.

Internet sites with information on talking to kids about drugs and alcohol

www.theantidrug.com

www.talkingwithkids.org