

Drug Free Families

Don't Let Your Child End Up Like This



HELP MY CHILD LIVE DRUG FREE

**Help Your Child Resist Peer Pressure
to Use Drugs or Alcohol**

Dear Parent, *"Not MY Child!"*

Here's How To Help Keep It That Way

Let's face it: everyday, your children and mine have to navigate a tough world. Much tougher than the one you and I had to make our way in.

They have pressures we never could have dreamed of at their age.

As parents, we do everything we can to shield our kids from danger. Maybe you've chosen to send your kids to a better school, or even tried to help them choose friends that will be good influences.

But no matter what you do, you can't guarantee your child will never be exposed to illegal drugs or alcohol. As parents, we don't want to admit it, but the cold hard numbers don't lie:

By the time they're 17, 70% of kids say they've been offered illegal drugs, according to yearly surveys conducted by Columbia University.

That includes kids at "good" schools. And kids who've been sheltered from bad influences.

That includes your kids and mine.

It's Our Job To Protect Them From Statistics Like These

The same study says that **80%** of high schoolers, and 44% of middle school students, have ***personally witnessed*** things like:

- Illegal drug use
- Illegal drug deals
- Illegal drug possession
- Students drunk, and/or students high on drugs

This study wasn't conducted at tough, inner-city schools. It included a wide range of private schools, religious schools, and schools in wealthy suburban areas.

It included a school *just like the one your children attend*.

We don't like to think about it, but numbers like these mean that even *our kids* will eventually be offered some kind of illegal substance.

There is a storm gathering – a giant Katrina-sized hurricane – and it's headed for your child. Its name is "peer pressure," and the forecast says there's an 80% chance that it will make landfall right in the middle of your child's life.

The only question is whether or not he'll be prepared to withstand it.

Ever Wonder How Your Child Will Resist This Pressure?

I'm sure you remember being a young teenager. How desperately you wanted to "fit in" and be popular.

And no doubt you realize that your child feels the same way.

So how certain can you be that your child will be able to resist when older, "cooler" kids try to pressure him or her to "take a hit?" In that moment of decision, can you really know what your child's reaction will be?

The most supportive thing you can do is to help **take the pressure off** of your child. To give your child an "out" so that he doesn't have to choose between being popular and doing what's right.

You won't be there when your child is offered drugs. But that doesn't mean you can't shield him from drugs.

Give Your Child The Power To Say "No"

If you were standing over your child's shoulder every time drugs were offered to him, it'd be pretty easy for him to resist. But of course you won't be – at least, not physically.

But just imagine how much easier it will be for him if he can say, "I can't do that – my parents drug test me every month."

He can put all the blame on you if he wants, and not have to face the pressure and ridicule he might have gotten for a nervous "no" of his own.

That's what drug testing does for your child. What **you** can do for him. It gives him the gift of your support and protection right when he needs it most.

By The Time You Suspect Drug Use, It's Too Late

It's easy to say, "I'll just wait until I suspect there's a problem."

The people of New Orleans waited, too. They were told a storm was coming, but for whatever reason didn't get prepared beforehand.

Once the storm hit and the levees broke it was too late.

And once your child's behavior changes to the point that you become suspicious, it's too late for him as well. You'll have missed his first nervous experiments – those are all too easy to hide – and you'll be dealing with a full-blown problem. Statistically, by the time parents begins to suspect that their child is using drugs, the child has been using for two years.

But parents who have a plan and a program in place **before** a problem ever arises keep the problem from happening in the first place.

They make it much less likely that that first experiment will ever happen.

And if it does, they catch it while it's still a tiny little rain cloud that never has a chance to grow into a big, destructive hurricane.

Suspicion Damages Relationships: Prevention Strengthens Them

Adolescence is already a wild ride. Hormones are raging, and your children are trying to discover who they are.

Girls are prissy one day and tomboys the next. Boys are moody and sullen today and the life of the party tomorrow.

With all of this *natural* change and turmoil, how are parents supposed to spot the warning signs that a child is drinking or using drugs?

Imagine coming to the horrible suspicion that your child is using. His behavior is erratic, his grades are falling. So you, as a concerned parent, decide to spring a surprise drug test on him.

You try to ignore the knot in the pit of your stomach as you administer the test. You try not to let him see the worry you're feeling.

And when the test comes back negative, you nearly faint with relief. You turn to him and smile, offering a hug.

But you're shocked when he angrily pushes you away, and shouts through his tears,

"How could you think I was using drugs?"

He feels betrayed, suspected. As if enough isn't going wrong in his life, you've falsely accused him of something horrible.

Now there's no way he can tell you what's really wrong.

Of course, none of this happens in families with a "Drug Free Family" program in place.

n5 Simple Steps To Raising A Drug And Alcohol Free Child

Here at The Council on Alcohol and Drugs, we've gotten a lot of praise for our Drug Free Workplace program. It's helped more than 9,700 companies become certified as drug free workplaces.

And the federal government has proven through extensive research that the 5 steps it contains *work* to prevent drug abuse.

But we think preventing drug use is even more important for kids and teens. This is why we've incorporated the same 5 steps into our Drug Free Family Program, and made all of them available on this Web site.

The Drug Free Family Plan

1. A "Family Policy" against drug use and underage drinking.

Our Drug Free Family Plan includes a sample, fill-in-the-blank family policy to go over with your child. This family policy helps your child know what's expected of him and what the consequences will be if he does not meet

those expectations. Every member of the family should read and sign the policy. Keep it posted in a conspicuous place in your home.

2. A Parent/Child Contract.

Our free Parent/Child contract allows you to customize which privileges may be withheld if your child violates the Family Policy or contract. Both you and the child should sign the contract and a copy should be given to your child. If your child tests positive for drugs or alcohol, he or she will have already agreed that certain privileges will be revoked.

3. Random drug testing of children ages 13 - 18.

As we discussed earlier, random drug testing doesn't mean you're suspicious of your child, or that you're merely trying to "catch him in the act." Rather, it gives him an out when he's facing the pressure to use. Scroll down to learn more about whether or not you should be testing your child. **Due to FDA restrictions, we cannot open cases of drug testing kits and sell the kits in smaller quantities. We're required to sell full cases only.**

4. Training for parents.

What are the signs that your child could be at risk? How should you approach him or her about this subject? Can you drug test him without making him feel you don't trust him?

5. Counseling and treatment made available when needed.

Should your child ever test positive for an illegal substance, or need treatment or counseling of any kind, we're here to help you be prepared. Our Drug Free Family Plan includes access to online counseling and treatment resources.

A Danger Too Real To Ignore

If you're like me, you've done everything in your power to protect your children since the day they were born. You work hard to provide the safest environment you can for them.

But even the nicest neighborhoods and the most exclusive schools are not immune to the threat of drug and alcohol use.

We all want to say "**Not My Child!**" And if we take action now, we can make sure that statement remains true.

I wish your family the best.

Sincerely,

Chuck Wade
Executive Director
The Council on Alcohol and Drugs

PS – You buy insurance in case there's an accident. You go to the doctor for checkups to keep from getting seriously ill. You go to the dentist to prevent cavities. You change your oil and get regular tune-ups for your car to keep it running smoothly. The Drug Free Family Plan and regular drug testing, is just another part of making sure your child's life continues to run smoothly.

Don't wait until there's a breakdown.

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