



# What Can Parents Do?

**P**arents and other key adults in young people's lives have more influence over their alcohol and drug choices than they think they do. There are two crucial things to do:

## 1. Set Expectations

Have a clear no use of any amount of alcohol or drugs rule for people under the age of 21 in your home, neighborhood, and community.

- Make sure your children and their friends know that this is your expectation.
- Your children spend time in other people's homes, is this their expectation as well? Ask them.
- Setting a no use **expectation** for youth has been shown to decrease the likelihood that they will use alcohol or drugs or increase the age at which they first try one or the other.

## 2. Talk with them

Conversations at every developmental stage about the health risks and consequences of using alcohol and other drugs reinforce expectations.

- No quantity of alcohol is safe for the young brain and body.
- Alcohol, marijuana and other drugs are addictive substances and the younger you are when you start using the more likely you are to develop a problem – if they are interested tell them to WAIT.
- Marijuana is NOT safe to use because it is used as medicine by some people. In fact, make sure your children know that prescription drugs that were not prescribed by their doctor should never be taken.
- Addiction is hereditary – if there are alcohol or drug problems in your family tree (as there are for many families) make sure that your children understand that they are more vulnerable to developing problems.

## 3. Seek information and support for yourself and your child

Do not wait to seek more information or reach out for help or support. If you have questions – seek answers. If you are worried – you are probably right to be.

- If you are concerned about that your child may be using alcohol or other drugs reach out for help:
  - ◆ Speak to their primary care doctor,
  - ◆ Speak to the alcohol and other drug intervention counselor at their school (Student Assistance Professional),
  - ◆ Check [www.nhtreatment.org](http://www.nhtreatment.org) to find qualified counselors in your area;
  - ◆ If your child is using alcohol or other drugs seek support for yourself at [www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org) to access more information and the Parent Support Network.
  - ◆ If you want more information there are many good web-sites with information about alcohol and other drugs including [www.drugfreenh.org](http://www.drugfreenh.org), [teens.drugabuse.gov/parents](http://teens.drugabuse.gov/parents) and [www.checkthetatsnh.org](http://www.checkthetatsnh.org).



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