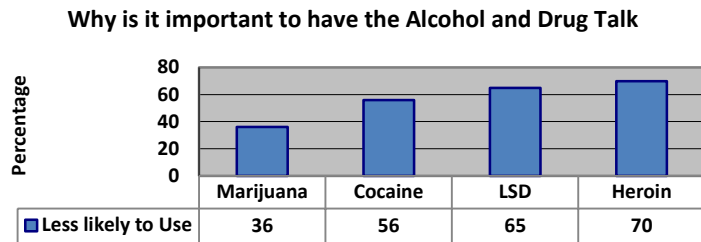


Parent's Tips for Child Safety

As parents of school-aged children, we all want to make as safe environment as possible for our children to insure they grow healthy, happy and responsible. Unfortunately, there are pressures from the outside world that test their choices. This document provides information that will assist you as parents to preventing and handling critical situations that arise during most every child's life including alcohol and drug use, teenage parties, internet usage and bullying.

Influence of Parent's Attitudes

The most effective deterrent to drug use isn't the police, or prisons, or politicians—it's you. Kids who learn about the risks of drug use from their parents are less likely to use drugs than kids who learn nothing from them.. Research has also shown that kids want to hear what their parents have to say. In fact, 74% of fourth graders wish their parents would talk to them about drugs.



Teaching your children to say “NO”

No matter where children grow up or who their friends are, nearly all of them are confronted at some time or another by friends with bad ideas - ways of testing limits, getting in trouble, and doing things they'll regret later. It's not so hard saying, “No thanks, I have to go now” to a stranger. But it's a lot tougher when a child's friend—especially one whose approval means a lot to him—tries to get him to do something he knows is wrong.

The best way to prepare children to succeed in these encounters is to “role play” — practice similar scenarios in advance. With the right words at the tip of their tongue, children can assert their independence while making it clear that they're rejecting their friends' choices and not the friends themselves.

Safety Starts at the Home

Most experimentation with alcohol and drugs starts within the home. For this reason, it is important to monitor the amount of alcohol you have in your home and insure that none is disappearing mysteriously. Make sure all your prescriptions are locked away because most children using drugs start with their parent's medicine cabinet. If you are done with a prescription, use the drug drop boxes available at most police stations to dispose of the unused pills. The drop boxes are usually open all hours and you simply dump the unused drugs into the box like a public mailbox.

Warning Signs & Recognizing Alcohol and Drug Use

- Unfortunately, drug use amongst teenagers is on the rise. Here are some recent statistics
- One in four teens (24 percent) reports having misused or abused a prescription drug at least once in their lifetime (up from 18 percent in 2008 to 24 percent in 2012), which translates to about 5 million teens. That is a 33 percent increase over a five-year period.
- Almost one in four teens (23 percent) say their parents don't care as much if they are caught using Rx drugs without a doctor's prescription, compared to getting caught with illegal drugs.
- Of those kids who said they abused Rx medications, one in five (20 percent) has done so before age 14.
- More than a quarter of teens (27 percent) mistakenly believe that misusing and abusing prescription drugs is safer than using street drugs.
- One-third of teens (33 percent) say they believe “it's okay to use prescription drugs that were not prescribed to them to deal with an injury, illness or physical pain.”

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You know your child better than anyone else and are able to detect changes that indicate alcohol or drug use. Abnormal changes in their physical state, behavior and social environment are three keys to the potential that your child has begun to use alcohol or drugs. The signs are easy to spot and the faster action is done to counteract the usage, the better the results. For more information, go to www.RobbysVoice.com >Resources >Resource Library >General Information >Warning Signs.pdf The information is updated constantly as new trends and knowledge is obtained.

How to Search Your Home

Searching your child's room is not only your right, it is a responsibility. Privacy has its limits, but your house is your house; at any age. However, it is no longer enough to search your child's room; you must understand how to search your home. The internet and creativity have allowed kids to become ingenious in terms of outsmarting Mom and Dad. For a useful guide on how to search your home go to www.RobbysVoice.com >Resources >Resource Library >General Information >Search Your House Guide and Tips.pdf

If You Find Drugs or Paraphernalia

When in doubt, get help!

- Never confront a child who is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Wait until he or she is sober, and then discuss your suspicions with your child calmly and objectively
- If you think that your child is being untruthful and the evidence is pretty strong, you may wish to have your child evaluated by a health professional experienced in diagnosing adolescents with alcohol- and drug-related problems. You may also purchase an at-home drug test at most pharmacies.
- Have your family doctor or local clinic examine your child to rule out any other physical problems

If you find drugs or drug paraphernalia in your child's possession, it is suggested that you:

1. Avoid direct skin contact with any unknown substance
2. Do not transport the substance as you may be subject to drug possession charges
3. Call your local police. A police investigation follows the retrieval of the drug/paraphernalia and the child will be appointed a juvenile court lawyer. Parents and police officers involved will be subpoenaed. Each case is unique, and there are no guaranteed outcomes or sentences following trial.
4. For assistance in identifying an unknown substance, use a website such as www.drugs.com/pill_identification.htm or use drug identification charts or you can contact the Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222.

Tips on Teenage Parties

One of the most exciting events for children are parties held by their friends. The socializing with their friends and fun activities is something no child should be deprived from experiencing. Parties where alcohol and drugs being present are more likely as the child get older. Hopefully you have prepared your child to resist temptations from using alcohol and drugs by discussing the dangers and consequences. This section covers 4 situations that arise with teenage parties.

- When your teen is having a party
- When you are out of town
- When your teen is attending a party
- When your teen arrives home

For information and guidance on these situations go to www.RobbysVoice.com/Resources/TeenageParties.pdf

Internet Safety

There is no doubt that the internet is a valuable tool for accessing useful information. Unfortunately, it is also a source for harmful information which can pose a threat to your teen. Websites that promote drug use often include suggestions on how to use an illicit substance, and sometimes provide a forum for illegal drug sales. In

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2013, more teens abused prescription drugs more than any other illicit drug except for marijuana. The number of websites selling prescription drugs increases every day despite the government actions to shut them down. In addition to websites, the internet is also an increasingly common means of communication among teens through social networking sites, bulletin boards, chat rooms, and instant messages, which can also make your teen vulnerable to harm.

Tips to help you to minimize these potential threats and help protect your children:

- Keep your home computer in a centralized area of the home rather than in your teen's bedroom.
- Familiarize yourself with parental control or tracking options offered by your internet service provider. These services can help you restrict access to inappropriate material and monitor sites that your teen has been visiting.
- Talk to your teen about internet safety
- Chat only with people you know. Do not respond to chat or e-mail when you do not recognize the person sending it.
- Protect your anonymity when selecting an e-mail address/screen name. Avoid information that could allow a stranger to figure out who you are.
- Use caution if posting a "profile" or "away message." Never provide your full name, address, telephone numbers, school, or friends' names as this information could be used to lure you into a conversation with a stranger who claims to know you.

For more helpful information on Internet Safety go to <http://www.internetsafety101.org/safety101.htm>

Sexting

Sexting is the act of sending explicit, nude or semi-nude photos via cell phone (which could later be uploaded to the internet). It could also involve sending sexually explicit messages via text messaging, email, instant messenger and/or chat.

- 20% of teens have sent or posted nude or semi-nude pictures/videos of themselves.
- 39% of teens have sent or posted sexually suggestive messages.
- 18% of teens say someone has posted a humiliating picture of them, or has humiliated them online.

Remind your children that once a picture is sent or uploaded, it is now on the world-wide web. Even if a picture is deleted in a timely fashion, it is difficult to know who has already copied the picture and posted it elsewhere.

Possible long term consequences, potential employers, college recruiters, friends and enemies could get a hold of the post.

This type of conduct may also result in criminal charges. Individuals who photograph, film or disclose images of nude or semi-nude non-consenting persons, or nude children under the age of 16, may be charged with a 4th degree, 3rd degree or 2nd degree crime.

Cyberbullying

- 43% of teens aged 13 to 17 report that they have experienced some sort of cyberbullying in the past year
- 95% of teens know someone who has been "cyberbullied"
- 66% of teens who have witnessed online cruelty have also witnessed others joining
- 21% say they have also joined in the harassment

Many youth find it easier to send sexually explicit or hurtful messages online, rather than face-to-face communication; therefore, it is important to stress that teens should conduct themselves during online communication the same way they would when in a social situation. Cyberbullying, like more traditional bullying, can cause emotional and psychological harm.

Encourage your teen to tell you if they receive any communication that is unwanted, inappropriate, or makes them uncomfortable.

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Break the Silence

Talk to Other Parents

As a parent, we believe we know about our children pretty well but while they are out of your presence, the behaviors they exhibit for alcohol and drug usage, bullying and appropriate conduct may not be the same. With this in mind, be open to comments that other parents may have regarding your child while they are not in your presence.

At times, parents of children who are or were affected by their child's alcohol and drug use find out that the child's friends and sometimes friends parents knew of suspected issue but didn't want to tell the child's parents for fear of backlash.

Have the courage to speak up and tell parents of your children's friends if you see behavior or signs of drug or alcohol usage or improper internet and bullying. You may be saving someone's life. BREAK THE SILENCE.

Stay Educated and Aware

With each passing day, the environment our children grow up in changes. These changes require that parents stay informed of the issues and threats involving our children. Make a point to keep yourself updated on these new issues by visiting the websites below. They will be constantly updated with new educational and informative topics.



— www.RobbysVoice.com What You Need to Know Resource page is updated constantly as new trends and knowledge is obtained.



— www.CTCLorainCounty.org Resource page contains information about drug awareness and education and is updated regularly



— www.AssistAvonLake.org is a website with local information and events happening within the Northeast Ohio area

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