



How to Help Kids Say No to Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is a leading risk factor for underage drinking and other drug use, so it's important that kids be equipped with information and ways to say “no.” As a parent or caregiver, you have the power to help your child understand the risks and dangers of drinking alcohol and using other drugs, as well as how to deal with offers from their friends or peers.

Peer Pressure at Different Ages

Peer pressure can come in different forms. It can be upfront, such as being offered alcohol or other drugs. Or it can be more subtle, such as observing risky behaviors. In both instances, your child has the option to say “no” or avoid the situation. The way kids see and handle peer pressure can change as they grow older, so it's important to know where your child is in their decision-making abilities and maturity. Starting between ages 10 and 12, kids may respond to peer pressure in ways that help them fit in and make friends. As they enter adolescence, their friend groups have a bigger influence on their decision-making. Because teens and young adults often spend time with their friends and peers without direct supervision, they can become more likely to give in to peer pressure.

Impactful Conversations



Discussing the negative effects of underage drinking and other drug use with your child really can make a difference. Consider what's important to them to

help shape your conversations. For example, if they play sports, talk about how alcohol and other drugs can negatively affect their bodies and their ability to play. Having short and frequent talks can give them the confidence they need to handle peer pressure. During your conversations, be sure to:

1. Show you care about their health, wellness, wellbeing, and success.
2. Express your disapproval of underage drinking and other drug use.
3. Set clear expectations about substance use to discourage risky behaviors.
4. Tell them to never drink alcohol or use other drugs and drive or get in a car if the driver has been drinking or using other drugs.
5. Empower them with the skills and strategies they need to avoid substance use.
6. Reinforce you're a good source of information about alcohol and other drugs.

How to Say “No”

Practice different scenarios with your child so they feel prepared to respond in situations where alcohol or other drugs are present.



Review the reasons underage drinking and other drug use are harmful and illegal. Provide an opportunity for them to ask questions and voice their opinions. Keep in mind that they may also be dealing with peer pressure or encouragement to use substances through social media.

Potential Kid Responses to Peer Pressure:

- “No, thanks. I don't need that.”
- “Nah, I'm good.”
- “Nope—I'm not into that stuff.”
- “I don't want to drink or do drugs.”
- “I would get in so much trouble with my parents.”

Real Friendships

The friends your child spends time with can influence their views on substance use and the level of peer pressure they experience. The fewer friends they have who drink alcohol or use other drugs, the less likely they are to start using substances themselves. Teach them about the dynamics of peer pressure and emphasize that real friends should never push them to do risky things, like drink or use other drugs. When they're building friendships, provide guidance that will help them avoid individuals or groups engaged in substance use.



Set a Good Example

Because kids are always watching what's happening around them, they're going to see substance use on TV, at the movies, through social media, or from the adults in their lives. As a parent or caregiver, you can set a positive example for your child by not drinking too much and avoiding driving while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Being a positive role model and trusted source of information can significantly affect their decisions about alcohol and other drug use.



Use Screen4Success

Talking with kids early and often about the risks and dangers of underage drinking and other drug use can help keep them safe. But how do you know if your child needs more support, and where do you go to find it? Screen4Success will help you better understand your child's health, wellness, and wellbeing and find resources to help address their needs.

HELPFUL RESOURCES



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