

# notMYkid™

INSPIRING POSITIVE LIFE CHOICES

## WHAT'S ON YOUR KID'S MIND?



## Conversation Starters

## Signs of Drug Use

- A drop in grades
- Isolates from family
- Poor achievement
- Moods are up and down
- Dishonest about whereabouts
- Dishonest about a lot of things
- Early cigarette smoking
- Change in peer groups
- Draws pot leaves, drugs, or drug symbols
- Parental defiance
- Red, watery, or glassy eyes
- Uses eye drops to hide red eyes
- Late or unexplained hours
- Rejection of parental values
- Have found unexplained paraphernalia
- Disappearance of money or possessions
- Defensive about drug use
- Antisocial behavior
- Loss of interest in previous hobbies and activities

## Drug Paraphernalia and Concealment



“A child who reaches age 21 without smoking, abusing alcohol or using drugs is virtually certain never to do so.”

– Joseph A. Califano

## Additional Resources

[www.notmykid.org](http://www.notmykid.org)  
[www.firstcheckfamily.com](http://www.firstcheckfamily.com)  
[www.clearchoices.org](http://www.clearchoices.org)  
[www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov)  
[www.casacolumbia.org](http://www.casacolumbia.org)

[www.psynow.com](http://www.psynow.com)  
[www.samsha.gov](http://www.samsha.gov)  
[www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com)  
[www.streetdrugs.org](http://www.streetdrugs.org)  
[www.nationalsubstanceabuseindex.org](http://www.nationalsubstanceabuseindex.org)

## Talking to Teens about Drugs

Here is a list of questions that you can ask your child as an easy way to start a conversation about drugs. **They are non-accusatory and open-ended, so you are more likely to start a two-way conversation.**

- How often do you hear people talking about drugs at school?
- How many of your friends have tried marijuana?
- How easy is it for you to get beer or alcohol?
- What is the most common drug at school?
- When was the last time you saw someone drunk or stoned?

**Here are some other tips on talking to your kids about drugs:**

1. **Seize the moment.** Take advantage of any opportunity to talk to your kids. Maybe your child will share the story of a ninth grader who was caught with marijuana at school. Or, maybe over dinner one night your child discloses that one of their friends is “doing things” with her boyfriend. Use these moments to talk honestly and openly with your kids about these topics. Ask them open-ended questions to foster further conversation, “What do you think of what your friend is doing?,” or “What do you think might happen to the ninth grader?” Kids are curious by nature; allow the conversation to flow freely between you and your child.
2. **Listen more than speaking.** Encourage your kids to talk to you by listening to them without overreacting when they open up to you, it will help them feel more comfortable talking to you. You may be surprised to find out how much your child already knows about drugs, alcohol, and sex when you really listen to them. Be aware of your tone and the length of your responses, your child may perceive a long response as a lecture and not feel comfortable opening up again.
3. **Ask your child what he or she knows.** Ask questions such as “What have you heard about drugs from your friends and teachers?” or “I received this drug test kit at school tonight, what do you think?” Let your child answer the question without interrupting and then acknowledge them for their openness. Take opportunities such as these to start a two-way conversation. Be sure to educate yourself prior to this conversation so you can answer all of your child’s questions accurately. If you don’t know an answer, don’t guess, be honest and tell your child you will find out the answer or you risk losing their confidence.
4. **Use current events** such as television shows and news reports, as conversation starters. Share a news story or local incident with your child – an automobile accident resulting from someone under the influence, or a drug arrest – to start a conversation. Ask your child how they would feel if they caused an accident or were arrested because they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol. How would this affect their future? You may want to discuss the risks and possible catastrophic consequences from poor decisions made while using drugs and or alcohol.
5. **Give your child words to use** with their friends if asked to use drugs. Give your child words to have in their minds to use if situations arise where drugs are offered. It will be easier for your child to respond if they have a few planned phrases and a strategy for leaving the situation. One possible response is, “I can’t, my parents have a drug test kit and they will find out about my drug use.”

## Conversation Starters for Parents

### **Remember:**

- These questions are to be used as conversation starters only. Do not overreact to your kids' answers.
- Use "I" statements in both your questions and your answers.  
Ex: "I am worried about drugs in schools." or "I would feel better knowing a drug test came back clean..."
- Before you begin talking, make sure you are prepared for the question, "Did you ever smoke pot?"

- 1. Talk to your kids about what the drug trends were when you were in high school. Make it personal, talk about friends or family members who used drugs.**
  - Tell your kids about a family member or friend you knew growing up (one who should have been successful and should be in the room with you today) and how their lives were changed and they lost it all because of drugs or alcohol. The focus is not a discussion about whether or not *you* have used in the past; make it clear to your kids that this is about *them* remaining drug free in the future.
- 2. Ask your kids to tell you about a friend or someone they know who has experimented with drugs and the consequences they faced.**
  - If it applies, ask your child their opinion about a recent drug-related incident in their community or school.
- 3. Tell your kids what your family's position is on alcohol and smoking pot.**
  - Talk to your spouse, agree on your family's position, and share that with your child. Make that position very clear. These conversations need to happen on a regular basis.
- 4. Ask your kids what they think is the biggest issue facing teens today. Ask how *you* can help *them* to better face this issue.**
- 5. Place the drug test kit on the table and say NMK gave it to me. Tell them the drug testing kit is in your home because you love them and want to give them support.**
  - When talking about the issue of trust, make it clear to your child that you DO trust them, and that you are continuing to build trust with them. Just like verifying curfew is met by waiting up and verifying they are getting good grades by looking at their report card, you will verify no drug use by using the test.
  - The drug testing kit is in your home to give your kids an "out" from negative peer pressure situations. Tell your child it's a REAL way to say "no" to their peers.
  - Set up a reward system every time your child tests clean. Let them know you understand how hard it is to say no and resist peer pressure. Reward them with extended opportunities, privileges or even with an item they are wanting.