



How parents can protect against drug and alcohol use and related harms (Simplified English)



Evidence ratings: 

This resource has undergone expert review. See our Help/Q&A section for more details.

Year:

Targeted Drugs: Alcohol, Drugs (General)

Tags: Simplified English

Origin: Australian

Cost:

Free

What can parents do?

As a parent or guardian, you can affect a child's life and their choices. There are ways you can lower the risk of drugs or alcohol use, or harms from their use in young people.

1. Be a good role model

- Young people whose parents think underage drinking is fine are more likely to misuse alcohol. Young people follow their parent's behaviour, so your own use of alcohol, cigarettes, or other drugs matters.
- Show ways to enjoy, and deal with problems without using alcohol or other drugs.

2. Be involved in their lives

- Spend time with your child when you can give them your whole attention.
- Set up a routine of eating meals together or helping with their homework.
- Get involved and show an interest in their hobbies.
- If they go out, ask them about where they are going and who they are going with and make this chat a regular conversation. Knowing who your child is with and where they are, can help lower risk.
- Friend's influence can affect your child's behaviour, so it is normal to want to help them choose the right friends. Invite them to your house, or talk to them if you pick your child up from school or activities.
- Get to know their parents as well, as they can provide support to look out for your child's safety.

3. Set rules and expectations

- Set rules around drug and alcohol use with your child. Discuss these rules together including what happens if they break them.
- A common misunderstanding is that giving alcohol to young people helps them to develop 'safe' drinking habits. But giving alcohol to people under the age of 18 can increase their risk of drinking earlier, drinking more, and developing problems with alcohol.
- Even if you don't supply alcohol to your child, they may be given alcohol by someone else. To prevent this, talk to your child's friends and their parents before a gathering and let them know your rules around your child's alcohol use.

4. Make time for your child

- Let your child know that you are always ready to talk and listen.
- When talking to them try not to lecture them; it is important to listen to their thoughts or worries and offer help and support.
- Try to be there for them most of the time. For example, make sure your child can contact you easily if they are out with friends or at a party.