



EMPOWERING PARENTS TO RAISE
THEIR CHILDREN TO BE SUBSTANCE-FREE

Talk Early And Often About Alcohol, Tobacco And Other Drugs. Even When It Gets Tough

Know! The Challenges and Changes of Middle School

So the first day of middle school has come and gone. While your child's initial fears of navigating the hallways, using the combination lock and finding someone to sit with at lunch may be officially behind her, it doesn't mean she's got a peaceful, easy feeling about the rest of her middle school experience. And as a parent, you must know, this is only the beginning.

We're talking a whole new mix of kids, teachers and coaches with higher expectations, an increase in the amount and difficulty of homework and tests, a rise in responsibilities at home and school, and a peak in the pressure to fit in and be accepted. It's enough to make anyone's head spin.

And we cannot forget the other changes middle school youth are encountering: They've got hormones kicking into high gear, their physical appearance is changing and their emotions are all over the place. In other words, your tween has a lot on his/her plate!

Research clearly shows that it is during these transitional middle years that many children begin experimenting with alcohol and other drugs - be it from the increase in stress, exposure to substance-using peers, the desire to fit in, curiosity or simply the fact that substances are available and accessible.

The child who exhibited strong anti-substance use attitudes in elementary, may suddenly not be so sure of himself now. The child who would have had no problem saying 'no' if offered alcohol, may now hesitate at the question. The move to middle school can bring with it a shift in attitude and behavior. As the parent of a new middle school student, you will need to be especially vigilant in your prevention efforts.

The Know! program exists to support you in these efforts. Here are three need-to-KNOW! items:

1. KNOW! that every child (including your child) is at-risk for substance use;
2. KNOW! to increase your knowledge on current and emerging drug trends;
3. KNOW! to increase the number of prevention-related conversations you have with your child.

By keeping the lines of communication open and talking to your child often about the dangers of substance use, you can actually cut their risk in half.

In the next Know! Parent Tip we will discuss some ways to help ease your child's stress to further decrease their risk for use as they navigate through middle school and into their teenage years.

In the meantime, visit www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org for a list of archived Know! Parent Tips to bring you up-to-date and keep you talking regularly with your tween.

Talking regularly with kids about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using.

Know! urges you to encourage other parents to join Know!.

[Click here for the Know! Parent Tip Sign-Up Page.](#)

Know! is a program of:



*Lifetime Prevention
Lifetime Wellness*

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