

Drug Awareness

Tips for Your Middle School or Junior High School Child

Parents are the most important role models in their children's lives. What you say and do about drugs matters a lot when it comes to the choices your children make. You can:

- ◆ Set a positive example.;
- ◆ Get involved in their activities, know their friends and know where they're going and what they're doing.
- ◆ Create clear, consistent rules and enforce them.
- ◆ Talk early and often about drugs.
- ◆ Discuss the consequences of drug use.
- ◆ Show you care enormously about what choices they make about drugs.



When children enter middle or junior high school is both an exciting and a challenging time. They are little fish in a big pond and often want desperately to fit in. If your child sees older students using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, he may think they are cool and may be tempted to try drugs too. Drug use goes up dramatically in the first year of middle school or junior high. To help your child make good choices during this critical phase, you should:

- ◆ Make sure they know the reasons to avoid alcohol, tobacco and drugs.
- ◆ Get to know their friends by taking them to and from after-school activities, games, the library and movies (while being sensitive to their need to feel independent).
- ◆ Volunteer for activities where you can observe your child at school.

Community Resources

DJJ's web site: <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/youth-families/for-parents>

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To make sure that your child's life is structured in such a way that drugs have no place in it, you should:

- ◆ If possible, have your children looked after and busy after school if you cannot be with them. Encourage them to get involved with youth groups, arts, music, sports, community service and academic clubs.

Find a list of community Resources on DJJ's web site: <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/youth-families/for-parents>.

- ◆ Make sure children who are alone during the day feel your presence. Give them a schedule and set limits on their behavior. Give them household chores. Have them call or text you at certain times. Leave notes for them around the house. Provide easy-to-find snacks.
- ◆ Get to know the parents of your child's friends. Share phone numbers, emails and addresses. Agree to forbid each others' children from consuming alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in their homes. Agree to tell each other if you see their child break this rule.
- ◆ Call parents who have a party at their house. Make sure there will not be alcohol or drugs there. Don't be afraid to check out the party yourself to see that adult supervision is in place.
- ◆ Make it easy for your child to leave a place where substances are being used. Discuss with your child in advance how to contact you or another adult to get a ride home.
- ◆ Set curfews and enforce them. Weekend curfews might range from 9 p.m. for a fifth-grader to 12:30 a.m. for a senior in high school.
- ◆ Encourage open discussions with your child about his experiences. Tell your child,

"I love you and trust you, but I don't trust the world around you, and I need to know what's going on in your life so I can be a good parent to you."

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