



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! To Create An Afterschool Prevention Plan

The idea of children heading “back-to-school” makes many parents rejoice and many youth cringe. But, ready or not, here it comes.

In gearing up for the new school year, many students, along with their parents, will shop for school clothes, maybe get a new pair of shoes and will strive to obtain the various required school supplies on the list. But when it comes to that “list,” Know! encourages parents to add a few more important items to it; we’re talking increased communication with your children about drinking, smoking and using other drugs, as well as creating an after-school plan to reduce your child’s risk for use.

Heading back to school is a time of transition (especially for those entering middle or high school, or students attending a new school). Studies show that times of transition increase a child’s risk for substance use. For some students it is the stress of having to navigate through a new school building and seeing so many new faces; for others is it the new or increased peer pressure to fit in and belong, or the new or increased exposure to substance-using peers; it could be the higher expectations coming from teachers, coaches and parents; or it may be a combination of the overall pressure to do well in school and in extracurricular activities.

For this we ask parents to keep three key points in mind, which is the foundation of Know!, and that is:

1. KNOW! 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.

It is also important to know that for youth between the ages of 12 to 17, the hours after school are critical when it comes to preventing substance use. The majority of drinking, smoking and other drug use among teens takes place when they are hanging out together, unsupervised, after school.

If we want to reduce the likelihood of our children’s use of substances, we need to know where our children are and with whom they are spending their time, but we must also ensure they are being appropriately supervised. This can be tricky for some families, who for one reason or another, have a child or children at home alone in the hours following school. These families are encouraged to set the rule of no friends in the home without a parent or other trusted adult being present.

Another point relevant to a child’s risk, including ones who are properly supervised, is how they are spending their after school hours. Those engaged in sports, band or other extracurricular activities for at least some afternoons during the school week, are at a reduced risk for use. And at even better odds are the children who routinely go home and do homework; they are at least risk for substance use.

While there is no one-size-fits-all answer to preventing youth from using alcohol, tobacco or other drugs, parents should be aware of that there are certain times children are at greater risk (heading back-to-school is one of those times), and overall there are certain things we, as parents, can do (like providing supervision, setting rules for when friends can come over and encouraging specific afterschool activities and routines) to put our children at better odds for remaining substance-free.

Stay tuned to Know! As we promise to provide you with continued prevention-related information, guidance and support throughout this new school year.

**Source:** Joseph A. Califano, JR. - How to Raise a Drug-Free Kid: The Straight Dope for Parents.

Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

[Click here to join others who Know! by taking the Know! Pledge.](#)

Know! is a program of:



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