

## ASSIST SCHOOL EFFORTS TO KEEP CHILDREN DRUG FREE:



- ⇒ Learn about drug and alcohol policies at your child's school.
- ⇒ Familiarize yourself with drug education in your child's school and reinforce those teachings at home.
- ⇒ Ask how you can help assess drug use in your child's school and how to use the results to improve programming.
- ⇒ What happens to students who are caught abusing drugs?
- ⇒ Learn how the school's drug program is evaluated for success.
- ⇒ Support and enhance drug prevention efforts at your child's school.

Parents and Teachers working together increases your child's prospects for leading a healthy, drug-free life.

### Mission:

To engage members of our communities in a coordinated effort to promote behaviors that measurably improve the health and well being of our youth and young adults, with a focus on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention.

### Vision:

An environment where all youth and young adults receive family, social and community supports in order to achieve their maximum potential.

### Serving:

- Community Action for Safe Teens: Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Lyndeborough, Mason, Milford, Mont Vernon, and Wilton
- Hudson, Litchfield Coalition
- Merrimack Safeguard Coalition
- Nashua Prevention Coalition



[www.beyondinfluence.org](http://www.beyondinfluence.org)

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



A program of United Way of Greater Nashua

## Age-Appropriate Conversations About Substance Abuse

### PRESCHOOL



### ELEMENTARY



### MIDDLE / JR. HIGH



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**Kids who wear a bike helmet are less likely to develop a substance abuse problem; start conversations about safety *now!***

**The attitudes and habits that form have an important bearing on the decisions they will make as they get older. Help your preschooler make good decisions about what should and should not go into their bodies:**



- ⇒ Discuss why children need healthy food.
- ⇒ Build strong bonds of trust and affection that will make turning away from drugs easier in the years to come.
- ⇒ Provide guidelines like playing fair, sharing toys and telling the truth so your children know what kind of behavior you expect.
- ⇒ When your child becomes frustrated at play, use the opportunity to strengthen problem-solving skills.
- ⇒ Encourage your child to make decisions when possible: what to wear, where to eat.
- ⇒ Point out harmful substances at home and read the warning labels out loud. Explain that not all harmful items have warnings on them and cite examples.
- ⇒ Explain that prescription medications are drugs that can help the person for whom they are meant but can harm anyone else. Stay away from medications that are not prescribed by a doctor for them.



**Discuss how anything you put in your body that is not food, water, juice, or medications prescribed by a doctor can be extremely harmful. Drug use can:**

- ⇒ Interfere with the way our bodies work.
- ⇒ Cause sickness or death.
- ⇒ Become a very bad habit that is hard to stop. Praise your children for taking good care of their bodies.



**Before 4th grade, your child should understand that:**

- ⇒ Food, medicines and illegal drugs differ.
- ⇒ Medicines administered by a responsible adult may help during illness but can be harmful if misused.
- ⇒ Adults may drink in moderation but children must not, because even small amounts are harmful to their developing brains & bodies.



**Before 7th grade, children should know alcohol, tobacco & other drugs:**

- ⇒ Have a much greater negative effect on a child's body than on an adult's, even just a sip of alcohol
- ⇒ Can have an immediate physical effect, including loss of control, vomiting, coma, and even death.
- ⇒ Cause problems not only for the user, but also for family and friends who care about that person.

**Students this age may now see older students using substances and may think they are cool and self-assured. As a result, your children may be tempted to try drugs too.**

**Help your children make good choices during this critical phase by:**

- ⇒ Ensuring they are well-versed in the reasons to avoid alcohol, tobacco & other drugs.
- ⇒ Volunteering for activities where you can observe their behavior.
- ⇒ Respecting their need to feel independent.
- ⇒ Getting acquainted with their friends and friends' parents.
- ⇒ Learning about the habits of your child, their friends, and their friends' parents.



**Leave no room for substance abuse by ensuring their life is structured:**

- ⇒ Utilize reputable after-school programs.
- ⇒ Consistently enforce clear limits for behavior.
- ⇒ Use and promote the Safe Homes Pledge: **[www.beyondinfluence.org/safehomes](http://www.beyondinfluence.org/safehomes)**
- ⇒ Make a plan so it is easy for your child to leave an unsafe place and discuss the situation upon returning home.
- ⇒ Encourage open dialogue. Tell your child, % love and trust you and need to know what is going on so I can be a good parent to you+