



# Tips for Talking to Your Children About Drugs at All Ages

PARENTS MATTER

## Ages 2-4



- Children are too young to understand what drugs are
- Promote healthy living
- Encourage positive decision-making
- Encourage personal responsibility
- Teach children to avoid dangerous household chemicals

## Ages 5-8



- Talk about short-term consequences of alcohol and other drugs. Long-term consequences are too difficult to comprehend
- Condemn drug-related messages in media
- Set clear rules for behavior
- Promote problem-solving skills
- Teach kids to avoid dangerous situations

## Ages 9-12



- Preach the importance of rules
- Teach them refusal skills
- Empower them to make good decisions
- Keep drug-related conversations fact based
- Teach preteens the difference between fantasy and reality

## Ages 13-15



- Ensure teens know the consequences of breaking rules
- Praise teens for positive decisions
- Show interest in their daily lives
- Teach them the negative effects drugs have on physical appearance
- Have honest conversations about drug use

## Ages 16-18



- Use detailed, realistic messages when talking about drugs
- Emphasize consequences of drugs, such as decreasing the chances of getting into college, the military, technical school, or the career of your choice
- Challenge them to be positive leaders
- Use news reports as starters for drug-related conversations
- Reward them for making positive choices