



# SPECIAL REPORT

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# DRUGS AND OUR CHILDREN

**“DRUGS KILL ANOTHER DETROIT CHILD.”** How many times have we read that headline, or heard that story, in our community recently?

Far too many times. For some families, drug abuse has become an overwhelming problem, tearing apart the family and leading to violence and death. For other people, drug abuse has made them victims of violence or the fear of violence, that results when drug users are desperate for cash to support their addiction. And for all of us, drug abuse means spending billions of dollars of our money trying to pay for drug rehabilitation programs, for law enforcement seeking to stop drug smuggling and dealing, for the health problems associated with drug use, and for the incarceration of those who violate the law as a result of drug use.

There are no easy answers to drug abuse. The best way to stop the vicious cycle of drug-related problems, though, remains within the family. Our children depend on us to show them how to deal with life — and one of the most important ways is to be drug-free.

In an effort to help you — as parents, teachers, family members or friends — detect drug abuse in the children you know, and hopefully help them to get help for their addiction, I have prepared this report. On the next pages you can find tips to help a pre-teen say “no” to drugs, and some pointers to help a parent determine whether his or her child is using drugs. On the back page I’ve included some important telephone numbers you can call to get help.

I hope you will find this information helpful.

# Tips for Parents

Give lots of praise and encouragement to your child . . .



## Ten Steps To Help Your Preteen Say "No"

Here's a quick list of actions you can take to help your children avoid alcohol use.

### 1. Talk To Your Children About Alcohol and Drugs.

Make sure children understand the dangers and problems of preteen alcohol use. Share information about alcohol with your child and explain it.

### 2. Learn To Really Listen To Your Children.

Just talking to your child is half the job. Knowing how and when to listen can keep the lines of communication open.

### 3. Help Your Children Feel Good About Themselves.

Preteens and adolescents are often unsure of themselves. Knowing that their parents have confidence in them and believe in their self-worth means a lot. One way to do this: Give lots of praise and encouragement to your child at appropriate times.

### 4. Help Your Child Develop Strong Values.

A strong value system, a sense of right and wrong, can give children the courage to make decisions based on facts, rather than peer pressure.

### 5. Be A Good Role Model Or Example.

Kids are very aware of your attitudes and habits concerning alcohol and other drugs.

### 6. Help Your Preteen Deal With Peer Pressure.

Children who have been taught to be gentle, agreeable, and loving may need skills to enable them to resist group peer pressure.

### 7. Set Firm Rules About Drinking And Other Drug Use.

Make your family rules clear and consistent. Tell your children they are not allowed to drink, smoke, use other drugs, or anything else you object to. Be sure they also thoroughly understand the consequences of breaking these rules.

### 8. Encourage Healthy, Creative Activities.

Make sure your children have enough structure in their lives. Create activities for them or encourage them to take part in sports, school programs, or hobbies—anything that they can have fun with. Even better, join your children in having fun.

### 9. Talk With Other Parents.

They're all going through the same thing you are. It can help to network with other neighborhood parents and community groups. If your child is going to a party or a get-together with friends, make sure there is a chaperone and there is no alcohol or other drugs.

### 10. Know What To Do If You Suspect A Problem.

Parents can learn to recognize the telltale signs of alcohol use and can get help, when needed, from a doctor or other professional.

## HOW CAN I TELL IF MY CHILD IS USING DRUGS?

One of the questions asked increasingly by parents is: "How can I tell if my child is using drugs?" This is a most difficult question when signs and symptoms associated with behavior are used as a basis for suspicion. It is difficult to separate the typical adolescent behavior from the drug-induced behavior; but the parent should exercise common sense and consider the following behaviors if a significant change is noted in the child:

- **Does the child seem to be changing?**  
**Is the child becoming:** more irritable, less affectionate, secretive, unpredictable, hostile, depressed, uncooperative, apathetic, withdrawn, sullen, easily provoked, oversensitive?
- **Is the child becoming less responsible?**  
**Is the child:** not doing chores, late coming home, tardy at school, forgetful of family occasions (birthdays, etc.), not cutting grass, allowing room to be untidy, not completing homework?
- **Is the child changing friends, dress code, or interests?**  
**Has the child:** a new group of friends; the language of new friends; hairstyles like new friends; switched clothes styles; become reluctant to talk about new friends; become very interested in rock music and concerts; become less interested in school; sports and academic hobbies; refused to talk about parents of new friends; started insisting on more privacy; demanded permission to stay out later than usual?
- **Is the child more difficult to communicate with?**  
**Does the child:** refuse to talk about details of activities with friends, refuse to discuss "drug issues," become defensive when negative effects of drug use are discussed, strongly defend occasional use or experimental use of drugs by peers, insist that parents hassle their children, begin to defend "rights" of youth, prefer to talk about bad habits of adults?
- **Is the child beginning to show physical and/or mental deterioration?**  
**Does the child show:** disordered thinking or ideas and thought patterns that seem out-of-order; heightened sensitivity to touch, smell, and taste; increased appetite from marijuana smoking

(known as the "munchies"); loss of ability to blush; decreased ability in rapid thought processes, amotivational syndrome, and weight loss?

Behavioral changes as discussed above may occur over a period of a few months, the summer, or over a year or more. These behavioral patterns should be monitored closely by the parent. If the child can manipulate the parent, his behavior will become more blatant and drug use will become more obvious.

- **Is the child's behavior becoming more intolerable to parent?**  
**Does the child:** demand his right to drink alcohol, refuse to spend additional time on studies even though grades are down, insist that teachers are unfair, become extremely irritable, refuse to do chores, use bad language, come home late with alcohol on breath, claim people are telling lies on him, claim never to have smoked marijuana, not want to eat with or spend time with family, act very secretive on telephone?
- After behavioral clues to drug use, there usually come the telltale physical evidence which is difficult to deny. The child will usually lie or give half-truths to parents when caught.
- **Is the child becoming careless in his drug use?**  
**Does the child:** forget to replace liquor stolen from parents' cabinet; put the bottle between mattresses; leave the "roach" in flower pot, in bathroom or car ashtray; forget who vomited in family car; insist that marijuana found in car or room belongs to someone else?
- **Is the child becoming drug dependent?**  
**Does the child:** take money from his parents, brothers, or sisters; steal objects from home that are easily converted to cash; lie chronically; drop out of school?  
**Is the child:** caught shoplifting, charged with burglary or prostitution, arrested for drug use or a delinquent act?

# WHERE TO GET HELP

There are many places in the Detroit area to go for help with adolescent drug or alcohol problems. I've listed some of the agencies and programs that my office knows about that can provide counseling, treatment, information and referral.

## DETROIT

- DETROIT HEALTH DEPARTMENT
  - CENTRAL DIAGNOSTIC AND REFERRAL SERVICE ..... 876-4070
  - YOUTH ASSESSMENT AND REFERRAL SERVICE ..... 876-4060/64
- EASTWOOD COMMUNITY CLINIC ..... 372-5730
- LA CASA ..... 842-3393
- SAMARITAN HEALTH CENTER
  - ADOLESCENT DUAL DIAGNOSIS ..... 579-4924
- VANTAGE POINT ..... 342-3606
- EMERGENCY TELEPHONE SERVICE (REFERRAL) ..... 224-7000
- METRO YOUTH ..... 342-6600

## SUBURBAN

- BONIFACE OUTREACH (LINCOLN PARK) ..... 928-8310
- COMMUNITY CARE SERVICE (TAYLOR) ..... 287-8611
- HAROLD E. FOX CENTER (PONTIAC) ..... 858-3177
- HUMAN RESOURCE CENTER OF DOWNRIVER GUIDANCE ..... 283-7123
- LIVONIA COUNSELING CENTER (LIVONIA) ..... 261-3760
- REDFORD COUNSELING CENTER (ROMULUS) ..... 535-6560
- ROMULUS HELP CENTER (ROMULUS) ..... 942-7585
- SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM
  - CENTRAL ASSESSMENT UNIT (SOUTHGATE) ..... 283-9444

## 13TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT SERVICE CENTERS

If you:

- need assistance with a Social Security or Social Service problem;
- belong to an organization that needs help with its community service program, grant or proposal writing and funding;
- have an interest in attending one of the U.S. Military Academies (West Point, Annapolis, etc.);
- have any problems involving any federal agency; or
- want information about federal legislation or regulations, our Staff may be of assistance to you.

Please feel free to come into either of our offices or telephone whenever our assistance might make a difference.

### DETROIT OFFICE:

**8401 Woodward Avenue at Euclid  
(Great Lakes Building)  
Detroit, Michigan 48202  
Phone (313) 874-4900**

### WASHINGTON OFFICE:

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Both offices are open Monday through Friday from 9 A.M. until 5 P.M. and at other times by appointment.