

# At-home Strategies

Supporting Substance Use Prevention Education in Age-Appropriate Ways for K–5 Parents and Caregivers

## Substance Use Prevention Strategies for K–5 Parents and Caregivers

You play a key role in teaching your student to avoid harmful substances. By continuing to create a caring and supportive home, talking daily and spending quality time together, you help your student make smart choices and stay healthy.

### What can you do at home?



#### Talk every day.

Make time to chat with your student daily. Listening to them is important. This helps them feel comfortable talking to you about bigger issues, like substances.

- Ask them questions such as “What was the best part of your day?” or “Who did you play with?” to learn more about their world and who they interact with.
- Use mealtimes or quiet moments to listen to how they’re feeling and what they’re experiencing at school and outside of school.

**What questions do you ask your student every day to learn more about what is going on in their world?**



### **Spend time together.**

Spend meaningful time with your student. This helps you notice when they might need some support. Paying attention to their feelings can help prevent them from using harmful substances.

- Spending at least 15 minutes each day doing something fun and age-appropriate, like reading, watching a show or playing a game, makes a big difference.
- Plan special outings, like exploring a new place or visiting the library together.

**What types of activities do you and your student engage in together?**



### **Model ways to manage stress.**

Show positive ways to handle stress. Let your students know that there are safe ways to manage stress.

- Point out the different positive ways you manage stress. Explain how making good choices keeps us healthy and happy.
- Show how they can manage stress by engaging in activities that are fun and free (i.e., going for a walk, listening to music, exercising, practicing breathing, writing, coloring).

**What are the different ways you model managing stress with your young student?**



### Stay involved at school.

Continue to engage in your student's learning. This helps you stay connected to your student and their world.

- Ask them about what they're learning at school. Some questions you can ask include
  - *Can you teach me something new you learned?*
  - *Did anything surprise you in class today?*
  - *What questions do you have about what you learned today?*
- Connect their school topics with home activities, like using measuring cups while cooking to practice math or storytelling that's related to topics they are learning.

**What are the ways you connect what your student is learning at school with home activities?**



### Discuss medicine safety.

Talk about medicine safety to ensure your student knows the importance of using medicines correctly and safely. Make sure they know who their trusted adults are.

- Talk to your student about why only trusted adults should handle medicine.
- Help your student identify other trusted adults like a teacher, school nurse, another parent, relative or family friend.
- Make sure your student knows why medicine safety is important.

**What are the different ways you talk to your student about medicine safety?**

## What can you do at school?

**Ask questions.** Talk to your student’s teacher about the substance use prevention health standards and school policies. Consider asking the following questions:

- What substance use prevention health topics will be covered in class this year?
- How can I help reinforce learning at home? How can I connect what my student is learning to our at-home activities?
- What books, authors or digital tools can I use to support my student’s substance use prevention health education in age-appropriate ways?
- Are resources available in other languages?
- How do I send my student’s medication to school? Who do I need to communicate with?



For more information, explore these resources

- [Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration: Keeping Youth Drug Free](#)
- [Parents Empowered](#)
- [The Happy Family - Healthy Brain Connection](#)
- [ChitChat: Ask a Parent](#)

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If you or someone you know needs help finding immediate assistance or resources, visit SAMHSA at <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help>.