

Substance Use Prevention in K–5

As part of [Oregon’s 2023 Health Education Standards](#), students in K–5 learn about substance prevention. This allows young students to understand more about substances.

These standards are designed to help students become aware and gain knowledge so they can make informed choices. Your student also learns about how substance use can affect their bodies and communities.

Subtopics covered across grades

- Substance use
- Short- and long-term effects of substance use
- Tobacco, marijuana, alcohol and other drugs
- Over-the-counter and prescription drugs
- Impact on self, communities and other health outcomes
- Influences, social pressure and coping skills
- Decision-making around substance use
- Getting help and accessing resources
- Rules, laws and policies related to substance use

Key terms to know from the standards

Medicine (Grades K–1) is something we use to help our bodies stay healthy. **Medicine** (Grades 4–5) is a substance or preparation used in treating a condition.

Over-the-counter (OTC) medicine is medicine available for purchase without a prescription from a doctor.

A **prescription** is medicine prescribed by a doctor.

A **trusted adult** is a grown-up in your student’s life whom they count on to keep them safe.

A **substance** is a material, such as alcohol or drugs, that affects how the brain and the body work and causes changes in mood, awareness, thoughts, feelings or behavior.

A **substance use disorder** is a treatable disease that affects a person’s brain and behavior. It causes problems a doctor would consider very serious, like the inability to meet major responsibilities at work, school and home. It can be hard to stop using substances even when a person may want to.

Below you will find the substance use subtopics and standards explored by grade in K–5.

What does my student learn in kindergarten?

Kindergarten Subtopic	Standards
Substance use	Discuss how to use medicines correctly. (K.SUB.1)
Short- and long-term effects of substance use	Understand that medicines and substances can be poisonous. (K.SUB.2)
Rules, laws and policies related to substance use	Identify family and school rules about medicine use. (K.SUB.3)

What does my student learn in first grade?

First Grade Subtopic	Standards
Getting help and accessing resources	Identify trusted adults who can answer questions about medicine and household products. (1.SUB.1)
Rules, laws and policies related to substance use	List family, cultural and school values and rules about medicine use. (1.SUB.2)

What does my student learn in second grade?

Second Grade Subtopic	Standards
Substance use	Identify the difference between medicine to help people who are sick and other types of substances that can be harmful to the body. (2.SUB.1)
Tobacco, marijuana, alcohol and other drugs	Describe how tobacco and secondhand smoke harm the body. (2.SUB.2)
Over-the-counter and prescription drugs	Describe safety rules for over-the-counter and prescription drug use. (2.SUB.3)
Decision-making around substance use	List steps to take when offered substances. (2.SUB.4)

What does my student learn in third grade?

Third Grade Subtopic	Standards
Short- and long-term effects of substance use	Identify that substances are chemicals that can change how the mind and body function and can cause addiction. (3.SUB.1)
Tobacco, marijuana, alcohol and other drugs	Identify how alcohol, marijuana and cannabis, tobacco and other substances can be harmful to minds, bodies, and brains. (3.SUB.2)
Influences, social pressure and coping skills	Discuss how to recognize social pressures, peer influences and internal feelings and emotions around substance use. (3.SUB.3)
Getting help and accessing resources	Describe how and where to access help from trusted adults if substances are being misused. (3.SUB.4)

What does my student learn in fourth grade?

Fourth Grade Subtopic	Standards
Short- and long-term effects of substance use	Identify the basic function of body organs and systems and how different substances can affect them. (4.SUB.2)
Tobacco, marijuana, alcohol and other drugs	Discuss how alcohol, marijuana and cannabis, tobacco and other substances can be addictive and cause harm to the body. (4.SUB.1)
Over-the-counter and prescription drugs	Demonstrate how to read medicine labels and prescription instructions. (4.SUB.4)
Impact on self, communities and other health outcomes	Discuss the impact that alcohol, marijuana and cannabis, tobacco, and other substances can have on reaching goals. (4.SUB.3)
Influences, social pressure and coping skills	Demonstrate communication skills for asserting boundaries around substance use. (4.SUB.6)
Decision-making around substance use	Identify procedural steps in decision-making around substance use. (4.SUB.5)
Getting help and accessing resources	Understand that substance use disorder is a medical condition and that there are resources in communities that can provide support, treatment and healing. (4.SUB.7)

What does my student learn in fifth grade?

Fifth Grade Subtopic	Standards
Short- and long-term effects of substance use	Recognize that substances can be addictive and harmful for adolescents during physical and neurological development. (5.SUB.1)
Tobacco, marijuana, alcohol and other drugs	Describe how alcohol, marijuana and cannabis, tobacco and other substances impact the human body and brain, interpersonal relationships, and decision-making. (5.SUB.2)
Over-the-counter and prescription drugs	Describe the appropriate use of over-the-counter and prescription medicines. (5.SUB.3)
Impact on self, communities and other health outcomes	Describe how substance use can affect people’s abilities to reach personal goals. (5.SUB.4)
Influences, social pressure and coping skills	Discuss ways that advertising can influence alcohol, marijuana and cannabis and tobacco use. (5.SUB.5)
Decision-making around substance use	Demonstrate refusal skills to avoid or reduce health risks around substance use. (5.SUB.7)
Getting help and accessing resources	Identify trusted adults to talk about substance use. (5.SUB.8)
Rules, laws and policies related to substance use	Identify school policies, local, state and federal laws related to substance use. (5.SUB.9)



For more information, explore the [K–12 Learning Progressions by Topic Area and Subtopics.](#)