

The Drug Proof Plan

While we as parents cannot definitively stop our children from trying harmful drugs, we can often be more effective at positively influencing them—and the DPYK strategy for doing so isn't very complicated. This program is proven to help us parents be more effective at influencing our children's choices by:

1. Maintaining strong family relationships

Young people are most at risk for drug abuse when they feel lonely and neglected. Conversely, when they understand that they are an important part of a loving family, they act with more responsibility. As parents, we need to take responsibility for ensuring that our children remain plugged in as an important member of a strong family circle.



2. Developing purposeful communication

We, as parents, need to know our children—their dreams, passions, and abilities. And our children need to know us, their parents—our love, faith, and values. Open lines of communication make a long-term difference, defusing the frustration that often fuels drug abuse. That means that there must be intentionality in our communications as parents, and that we must move past superficial conversations with our kids.

3. Being aware and staying informed

We need to know our children, our children's friends, and their activities. We need to be involved in their lives, and we need to ask them questions. We need to be alert to the risk factors and warning signs of drug abuse. When we as parents are educated about the drug culture, we can often recognize problems early.

4. Using tools of good parenting

We as parents need to teach our children how to make good choices for themselves. This involves the setting of healthy boundaries, helping them establish a proper sense of self-worth, and a positive hope for the future.

Your kids don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Steps for Change

Implicit in the title, "Steps for Change" is the acknowledgement that, to some degree, we all struggle from time to time, and thus, could all benefit from changes in our parenting practices. Attention to these five areas has the ability to bolster our relationship with our children and undercut the temptations they might face to do drugs. You might already be doing these things. If so, good for you! But keep an eye out for areas where you might need improvement.

Step 1: Give our children time and attention

The pressures of work, home, community, and church activities can limit the time we spend with our children. And when we are home, we're often tired. Sometimes we don't know what to do with our kids. Sometimes they get on our nerves. Sure, we have many reasons *not* to spend time with our kids, but it remains one of the most important things we can do to show our love for them.

Step 2: Give our children integrity

If we model integrity in our own lives and grab teachable moments to develop it in our kids, it will prove to be one of the best gifts we can ever give them. People with personal integrity have strong moral principles, and strive to be truthful and honest in all that they do.

Step 3: Give our children affirmation

Psychologist Abraham Maslow said it takes nine affirming comments to make up for each critical comment we give our children. Of course, it is important that we correct and instruct our children, but we also need to make sure that our correction comes along with an armful of encouragement.

Step 4: Give our children time to talk with us

We can't force our children to talk to us. All too often we hear short responses like, "Yes . . . no . . . dunno." But we should always be alert to those times when they need to talk, and make ourselves available. (And in larger families, it is even more important that we are aware of the importance of giving each child a chance to connect with each parent one-to-one.)

Step 5: Give our children a network

It is also important that our children receive good counsel from other adults. By intentionally helping our children establish a network of trusted adults who will listen to them and take them seriously, we help them create a long-term connection to a caring and protective community. This network may be composed of members of our extended family, neighbors, teachers, or youth leaders.

Activity

Which of these five "Steps for Change" would you like to focus on first?

Is there something you could do within the next week to improve on that step?

