

INFORMATION YOU CAN TRUST FROM THE FALMOUTH PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP



WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD'S FRIEND IS DRINKING OR USING DRUGS?

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This article is an edited version of information from the Drug-Free Action Alliance

“I found out my child’s friend is smoking marijuana, now what? Do I tell this child’s parents? Does this mean my child is using too? Should I forbid my child from hanging around with this kid?”

Put yourself in the other parents’ shoes. If someone knew your child was experimenting with or using drugs and didn’t tell you, would you be upset? Most likely you would be very concerned. As a parent you are the first line of defense against drugs. However, if you are going to intervene, you must be aware of the situation. Even if you find it uncomfortable, it is important (and potentially life-saving) for you to share this valuable information with the other parents.

Friends Matter! Just because your child’s friend is using, it does not necessarily mean your child is using. However, youth who spend time with friends who drink or use other drugs, are at increased risk of “joining in.” Many teens say one of the biggest reasons they begin experimenting with substances is due to the pressure they feel from their friends who are drinking alcohol or using drugs.

Encourage Healthy Relationships. Unfortunately, you cannot pick your children’s friends. And, if you try to force your child to cut all ties with a particular friend, you can’t be certain your child will and your efforts might strengthen the friendship. What you can do is remind your child that a healthy friendship involves maintaining your own voice and point of view and that a true friend will not try to control or pressure you to do something you do not want to do, like drinking, smoking or using other drugs.

Take Charge of the Situation. To make sure that your child is safe and not placed in a situation that could endanger his well-being, you may want to try the following:

- Get to know your child's friends and their parents.
- Ask your child if she is using or is being pressured to use and discuss the risks and consequences.
- Depending on the age of your child, do not allow unsupervised free time to be spent with this friend.
- Make it known that until this 'friend' receives help and the behavior changes, interactions with him will be closely monitored and even limited.

Do not allow an overnight with a child you know or suspect smokes, drinks or uses other drugs.

- As much as possible, be present when your child has friends in your home. And, if you can not be home, try to have another trusted adult supervises when friends are over.
- Establish open communication with other parents to check in on your child or to alert them of something happening with their child.

A Tip From the Partnership

First and foremost, keep the conversation going so you can be your child's trusted source of information. Talk, listen and openly discuss (on a regular basis) the legal and health-related issues surrounding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. And, let your child know that she is trusted and respected, and that you care about her.

Recommended Resource

The Drug-Free Action Alliance (DFAA) is an Ohio-based, non-profit organization founded in 1987. Although DFAA provides programs within Ohio, its website has a wealth of information for parents about substance abuse and parenting.

www.drugfreeactionalliance.org

For more information, visit the partnership's website at: www.falmouthprevention.org.

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