

OCTOBER IS
**SUBSTANCE USE
PREVENTION MONTH**

Telling the **prevention story**.



One of the most influential factors in raising a child, is an open relationship with a parent. As a parent, you play a powerful role in supporting the behavioral health of your child. By providing a safe and supportive environment that promotes health and well-being, your child can be led down a path where they can grow, learn, and thrive.

Here are a few ways to help support your child and ensure you have the confidence to talk to your child about alcohol and other substance use:

Have ongoing conversations.

Having one “big talk” with your child can feel intimidating for both of you. Instead, consider using everyday moments—like dinner, car rides, or while watching TV—to start conversations. These “little talks” relieve the pressure of covering everything in one conversation and keep your child engaged, making it less likely they’ll tune you out!

Be a good example.

You are the #1 influence in your child’s life. By role-model healthy behaviors and attitudes, your actions will have an impact on your child’s behaviors.

Be involved with your child’s life.

By being involved and monitoring your child early on the easier it will be to continue to do so as they get older and the more they’ll expect it from you. Its as simple as just being present with them. By paying attention to their behaviors, understanding their needs and encouraging them during all times it will help build that trusting relationship.

Spend time together.

Spending quality time together as a family is essential for strengthening bonds and supporting your child’s behavioral health. Schedules are often busy so it can be as simple as engaging in activities like family dinners, monthly game nights, or a trip to the ice cream store together. These little moments will make a big impact for your child and deepen your connections.

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Set clear rules and enforce them fairly.

Encourage your child's growing independence but set appropriate limits and follow through with consequences when rules are broken.

Practice refusal skills.

Help them practice how to say no even if they might not be currently experiencing peer pressure.

Make your home safe.

Do not have alcohol or other substances available in your home or have them locked and unavailable to your child. Keep track of medications (over-the-counter and prescription) and cleaning products.

If you suspect your child is engaging in substance use it's important to start the conversation right away even though it may not be easy. Here are some tips on how to have a successful conversation: [Communicating with Your Child When You Suspect Substance Use | Parents Lead North Dakota](#)

For age specific resources and tips on promoting the behavioral health of your child you can visit [Age Specific Resources | Parents Lead North Dakota](#).

Parents Lead is a North Dakota program administered by the Department of Health and Human Services'. Behavioral Health division and it provides parents and caregivers a variety of tools and resources to support them in creating a safe environment for their children that promotes behavioral health.

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