

Parent's Guide To Intervening When Substance Use Is Suspected

When you know or suspect your child of having a drug or alcohol problem:

1. Start spending more time with your child
2. Get to know your child's friends (& their parents) and acquaintances
3. Investigate why behavior has changed
4. Control . . . but do not be judgmental
5. If symptoms remain, investigate more intensely and consider seeking professional help
6. Communicate with their school (teachers and counselors)
7. Communicate with support groups
8. Take a firm stand against drug and alcohol abuse
9. Do not argue with your child when he/she is "loaded" or drunk
10. Develop an open, truthful line of communication where your child feels free to discuss any subject matter
11. Do not attack, find ways to help
12. Do not lose emotional control, exaggerate or fly out of control
13. Let your child know you are concerned and worried
14. Offer ways to help
15. Back up no-drug rules with clear-cut behavioral rules and patterns
16. Enforce your rules, follow through with consequences
17. Be prepared for your child to test the enforcement of those rules
18. Set firm but fair limits/standards. Use appropriate, consistent discipline
19. Do not be afraid of being a strong parent, you are their parent, not peer or pal
20. Do not be afraid of your kids
21. Do drug tests, even if you think you know. Sometimes your child will tell you they used X, and when you test, you'll find X, Y, and Z.

