

L.E.A.D.D. Parent Tips

PREVENTING DRUG USE WITH YOUR CHILDREN

Your 5 to 8 Year Old

5-to-8-year olds are still tied to family and eager to please but they're also beginning to explore their individuality. In addition, your grade-schooler begins to spend more time at school and with peers and to collect information (including messages about drugs and alcohol) from lots of new places like the media and popular culture. It's very important that you continue talking to your child about a healthy drug-free lifestyle and stress that of all the voices your child hears, yours should be the guiding force.

Here are 9 tips to help you guide your child toward a healthy, drug-free life:

1. **Keep your discussions about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs factual and focused on the present.** Long-term consequences are too distant to have any meaning. Let your child know that people who drink too much alcohol get sick and throw up, or that smoking makes clothes stink and causes bad breath.
2. **Talk to your kids about the drug-related messages they receive through advertisements, the news media and entertainment sources.** Some TV shows or movies may even glamorize drug use. Remember to ask your kids how they feel about the things they've heard — you'll learn a great deal about what they're thinking.
3. **Consider the following topics when discussing drugs with your child: what alcohol, tobacco and other drugs are like; why drugs are illegal; what harm drugs can do to users.** You should also consider talking about the differences between the medicinal uses and illegal uses of drugs, and how drugs can impact the families and friends of users.
4. **Set clear rules and behave the way you want your kids to behave.** Tell them the reasons for your rules. If you use tobacco or alcohol, be mindful of the message you are sending to your children.
5. **Help your child explore new ways to express their feelings.** Kids who feel shy in one-on-one conversation might open up through painting, writing, or emailing a friend or relative.

6. **Work on problem solving by focusing on the types of problems kids come across.** Help them find long-lasting solutions to homework trouble, a fight with a friend, or in dealing with a bully. Be sure to point out that quick fixes are not long-term solutions.
7. **Give your kids the power to escape from situations that make them feel bad.** Make sure they know that they shouldn't stay in a place that makes them feel uncomfortable or bad about themselves. Also let them know that they don't need to stick with friends who don't support them.
8. **Get to know your child's friends — and their friends' parents.** Check in by phone or a visit once in a while to make sure they are giving their children the same kinds of messages you give your children.
9. **Sign your kids up with community groups or programs that emphasize the positive impact of a healthy lifestyle.** Your drug-free messages will be reinforced — and your kids will have fun, stay active and develop healthy friendships.

Your 9 to 12 Year Old

Preteens: They're on a quest to figure out their place in the world. When it comes to the way they view that world, they tend to give their friends' opinions a great deal of power while, at the same time, they're starting to question their parents' views and messages. Your advice may be challenged — but it will be heard and will stay with your child much more than he or she will ever admit.

Here are 8 tips to help you help your preteen live a healthy, drug-free life:

1. **Make sure your child knows your rules — and that you'll enforce the consequences if rules are broken.** This applies to no-use rules about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs — as well as bedtimes and homework. Research shows that kids are less likely to use tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs if their parents have established a pattern of setting clear rules and consequences for breaking those rules.
1. **Act out scenes with your child where people offer her drugs.** Kids who don't know what to say or how to get away are more likely to give in to peer pressure. Let her know that she can always use you as an excuse and say: "No, my mom [or dad, aunt, etc.] will kill me if I smoke a cigarette." Explain why she shouldn't continue friendships with kids who have offered her cigarettes, alcohol or pills.

2. **Tell your child what makes him so special.** Puberty can upend a child's self-esteem. Feelings of insecurity, doubt and pressure may creep in. Offset those feelings with a lot of positive comments about his life and who he is as an individual — and not just when he brings home an A.
3. **Give your children the power to make decisions that go against their peers.** You can reinforce this message through small things such as encouraging your child to pick out the sneakers he likes rather than the pair his four friends have.
4. **Base drug and alcohol messages on facts, not fear.** Kids can't argue with facts but their new need for independence may allow them to get around their fears. Also, kids love to learn facts — both run-of-the-mill and truly odd. For drug and alcohol facts, visit our **Drug Guide**.
5. **Preteens aren't concerned with future problems that might result from experimentation with tobacco, alcohol or other drugs, but they are concerned about their appearance — sometimes to the point of obsession.** Tell them about the smelly hair and ashtray breath caused by cigarettes. Make sure they know that it would be hard to perform in the school play while high on marijuana.
6. **Get to know your child's friends — and their friends' parents.** Check in by phone or a visit once in a while to make sure they are giving their children the same kinds of messages you give your children about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
7. **Help children separate reality from fantasy.** Watch TV and movies with them and ask lots of questions to reinforce the distinction between the two. Remember to include advertising in your discussions, as those messages are especially powerful.

This information was taken from: www.drugfree.org

<http://theparenttoolkit.org/topic/age-by-age-advice>

There are also helpful scripts on this website on how to best speak to your children about drugs and alcohol.

Being Active

Being active is crucial for good health – getting kids active helps prevent obesity and serious illness in later life

Encouraging children to be active helps them to burn off excess energy and will leave them (and you!) in a better mood!

Helping our children to be active is also a vital way to ensure that they lead happy and healthy lives. Regular exercise helps children to avoid illnesses like heart disease, stroke and certain cancers, improves mood, reduces stress and can even help children to do well at school.

1. Get Interested

Show an interest in any activities your child likes and encourage them to try out new physical activities. If your kid loves ballet, it's time to suck up any personal reservations you might have and get behind your child!

2. Active Transport

We can all be more active as part of our daily lives. Walk rather than drive and encourage your kids to cycle and walk where possible. If you're out with the kids on the bus, why not get off a stop early and walk the rest of the way to your destination? Being active throughout daily life by walking and cycling is a great way for your children to achieve their daily 60 minutes of activity.

3. Sporty Kids

Playing sport is a great way for children to be active. If your kids don't like traditional sports, there are lots of alternatives: mountain biking, skateboarding, BMX, mountain climbing & surfing are all excellent and are becoming more widely available.

Schools can help children to be more active by offering alternative sports and activities such as hip-hop dance, tae-kwon-do, step aerobics, zumba etc.

It's important that children should have access to activities that interest them. If you find that your child is not interested in taking part in PE at school, find out what's on offer and encourage the school to provide alternative physical activities.

4. Shall We Dance?

Not all kids are into sport, but there are lots of other ways to be active. Hobbies such as dance are excellent ways to get kids moving. Dance is an excellent way to develop fitness, agility, balance and co-ordination. Hip hop dance, street dance, salsa, tap, ballet & Irish dancing are great ways to keep your kids active.

5. Take Control of the TV

A recent study found that kids in the UK spend on average 5 hours per day in front of a screen: watching TV, surfing the web and playing computer games. This amount of screen time makes it really hard for kids to have an active healthy life. Take control of the TV, and ration their screen-time! [See our top tips on managing your child's screen time.](#)

6. Get Active Yourself!

You are your child's most important role model – so if you are a couch potato, don't expect your kids to be active! [Get yourself active](#) – the habit will rub off on your kids.

7. Get Active Together

Why not bond with the kids by doing some physical activity together? It's important that you set a good example – you are your child's most important role model – and the activity will improve your own health as well!

- Go for walks or play active games together
- Play a game of ball together
- Join an exercise class together
- Play physical games with family and friends (tag, frisbee, catch, hide and seek)
- Plan a nightly jog or walk
- Go golfing as a family
- Play a game of one-on-one basketball or soccer with family

8. Play Every Day!

When your child has been active, don't undo all the good work by giving them junk food afterwards!

All work and no play certainly makes for a dull life. Children (of all ages!) need to play, and adults need to set the scene so that children can lead their own play activities.

Probably the best way to ensure that younger children achieve the recommended minimum 60 minutes of physical activity per day is to let them play. Unstructured and unsupervised play is a great way for children to be active. If you can't let your children play without supervision, try to watch over them from a distance.

Tips to Help Kids Eat Fruit and Vegetables

Do you have trouble getting your kids to eat enough fruit & veg? Read this article for some top tips!

Do you struggle to get your kids eating enough fruit & vegetables? Maybe you already know that fruit and vegetables are essential for good health, but your child just won't play ball. Don't despair, this article should give you some ideas!

First of all, don't panic. It is very common for children to be fussy eaters – refusing to eat certain foods, or not getting adequate variety in their diet. You may also find that your child is reluctant to try new foods – there's even a name for this: “food neophobia”. The good news is that children usually grow out of fussy eating and food neophobia – in the meantime, there's a lot you can do to encourage your child to eat more fruit & veg.

Persevere

Sometimes children need to be presented with a new food several times before they will even try it. Children may hate a particular food one day, and love it the next – so keep introducing new foods. If your child expresses a dislike for carrots, just keep serving them. They may try them eventually!

Chill Out!

It's always a bad idea to pressurise your children to eat a particular food, no matter how frustrated you may feel. Forcing a child to stay at the table until they have finished a particular food is counter productive. Don't force kids to eat – keep offering a wide variety of foods, and eventually they'll eat a wider variety.

Choose Your Words

If your child is a picky eater, don't make a big thing out of it, especially if they are within earshot! You don't want your child thinking of themselves as “special” because of their eating habits -this might encourage the fussy habit.

Make Fruit & Vegetables Fun

Kids are far more likely to eat fruit & vegetables if they see it as a fun activity. Try the following ideas:

- Cut fruit into funny shapes with cookie cutters
- Play the rainbow game – how many different coloured fruits can your child eat in a day? Write down their score on the fridge, or [use a chart like this one](#)
- Dress up sandwiches with faces & shapes made from vegetables and fruit

Make Fruit & Vegetables Available

- Keep a bowl of fresh fruit in an accessible spot and tell the kids that they can dip into it whenever they like
- Keep bags of chopped up fruit in the fridge for healthy snacks
- Put a bowl of chopped raw veg on the table during dinner – kids often love raw carrot, cucumber & broccoli when it is presented this way
- Have veggies with every meal, fruit with every dessert
- Keep bags of peas, sweetcorn, raspberries and other fruits & veggies in the freezer so they are always at hand
- Add a box of dried raisins or chopped fruit in a bag into your child's lunchbox as a surprise

Dump the Junk Food

If your kids are full up on sweets and cakes, they're not going to be eating healthy fruit & veg. Remember that you are the boss – just stop buying sweets and crisps, and they'll stop eating them.

Combine Foods

If your child eats only one particular type fruit or veg, try combining the old favourite with something new. For example, if your child only eats apples, try chopping apples and pears together to gradually introduce the new taste of the pear.

Try adding fruit to your child's breakfast cereal – you could try raspberries, strawberries, chopped apple or banana. Dried fruits like raisins can be added to cereal or porridge.

Check out this [great recipe for red peppers & eggs](#) from the Superhealthykids blog - a great way to encourage your kids to eat veggies at breakfast time!

Get Kids Involved

- Your kids will have fun helping to chop fruit into fruit salad, and they'll be more likely to try the end result

- Sit down with your kids and create a smoothie recipe together – and then send us the recipe, we'll put it on the site!
- Get the kids involved choosing which fruits & veggies are going into a meal – encourage kids to choose recipes containing fruits & veggies from magazines or cook books

Smoothies

A great way to get children eating more fruit and veg is to create home-made fruit smoothies. Even the most anti-fruit kid may enjoy a smoothie. See our [article on smoothies for inspiration](#). If you can't make your own, you can buy smoothies – they just won't be as nice! Look for smoothies made with 100% fruit.

Grow Your Own

When children get involved in growing fruit and veg, they are much more likely to try them. If you have a small garden, you could try a blackcurrant bush or a dwarf apple tree. If you don't have a garden, you could grow cress on the windowsill.

Set a Good Example

You are your child's most important role model – don't expect them to eat lots of fruit & veg if you don't set a good example! Cut down on the junk food and eat more fruit & veg – it'll benefit your health as well as the kids.

Try to get your family and friends in on the act – it will really help your efforts within the home.

The Big Freeze

Children love novelty, so try freezing fruit – it totally changes the texture, and “fruit popsicles” might just get them snacking on more fruit. Why not try:

- Frozen raspberries (nice and crunchy, and frozen raspberries are usually cheaper than the fresh variety)
- Frozen strawberries
- Frozen segments of orange/satsuma

You could freeze berries and add them to a glass of water as a novelty ice cube, or use them as a topping for low fat natural yoghurt as a healthy pudding.

Change the Texture

Some children like lumpy food, others prefer it smooth, and others prefer food to be crunchy – so experiment with different textures. The humble carrot can be served raw

(crunchy!), lightly boiled, or mashed to a puree. Just see which method works for your family.

If your child likes smooth food, take leftover veggies (e.g. carrots, potatoes, parsnips), blend them in a food processor or smoothie maker, add some stock and you have instant vegetable soup.

Summary Keep calm, persevere, and do your best to make fruit & veggies fun. Good luck!

This information was taken from: www.parentsforhealth.org

11 Sportsmanship Tips for Parents

Good sportsmanship starts with good parenting both on and off the field.

BY DIANE GOTTSMAN

We've all read about it in the paper—the over zealous father who threw a chair at a basketball coach for not "playing his son" or the over zealous mother who publicly humiliated her daughter for not playing "aggressively enough" on the tennis court. For many, the ultimate goal is to win, but there is a cost associated with poor sportsmanship and, as a parent, it is our responsibility to raise a strong child and a good sport. Here are 11 ways you and your spouse can become a better team when it comes to coaching your child.

Good Sportsmanship Tips:

1. Be a good role model for your children. Children learn by example—show them how to practice good sportsmanship by not always expecting to win. Explain that winning is not always an option, but it is always appropriate to be a good sport. Demonstrating a good attitude, team spirit and respect for others is as important as the outcome of the game.

2. Good sportsmanship is a clear quality of good character. Teach your children how to interact with their elders, coaches and peers by having a positive attitude, one that shows respect for all involved in the game. Remind your child to shake hands at the end of each game with his or her opponent, and don't forget to say "good game." This step teaches self-confidence and is an exercise that will stay with them as they grow and develop.

3. Keep your own ego out of your children's game. Some parents tend to live vicariously through their children's sports success. A parent must stay focused on their child's interests and abilities and get over their own high school insecurity.

4. Emphasize other aspects of the game such as friendship, skill, exercise and relationship building. These are major factors that contribute to a successful athletic experience.

5. Talk to other parents about your feelings regarding good sportsmanship. Make a request, or even a pact, that the parents show respect for the coach, referee and all teammates including the opposing team.

6. Acknowledge and praise all of your own team members and members of the opposite team. Good sports are "good sports" regardless of whether or not they win or lose.

7. Mind your own sideline behavior. Do not try to coach the coach, your child or other members of the team during the game. Regardless of how bad the call, refrain from yelling or shouting profanities at the official. Let them do their job, and you do yours, which is to support and encourage your child to have fun and do their best.

8. Teach your child how to take personal responsibility for situations. If your child made a bad play, so what? Don't try to blame the play on someone else to prevent your child from having a hurt ego. Explain that experience comes from learning from our mistakes. Don't point fingers or pass blame on to someone else or, worse yet, encourage your child to do the same.

9. Good sportsmanship involves sharing. Even if your child made the winning basket, teach him to share his success as a team member. Just like an adult's success at the office takes a support team of professionals, remind your child that it takes teamwork to win a game. Even if your child made the winning basket, the team as a whole should be included in the glory.

10. Use the language of a good sport. Talk to your child about the importance of character, integrity, humility and respect. Your child will identify with these words if they are seeing it modeled on the sideline.

11. Turn to the news for both good and bad examples of good sportsmanship. Discuss local and national stories with your child and use these stories as examples of good versus bad sportsmanship and point out how a person's behavior directly affects the way other's view the person's character.

My own daughter's soccer coach implemented a "Noise Free Game," which only allowed clapping from the sidelines. A great thing happened. Parents started clapping for each other's team and the sound of laughter and encouragement could be heard by the girls on the field. Good sportsmanship is a team effort, which includes everyone, parents, coaches and players.

