

# Raising Drug-Free Kids: Advice by Age

*How can I prevent my teenager from using drugs and alcohol?*

*Is elementary school too early to be talking about this “stuff”?*

In response to questions such as these, Tonka CARES has compiled the series “Raising Drug-Free Kids: Advice by Age.”

**Why is it so important to keep our children alcohol- and drug-free through their years in the Minnetonka Schools?** According to Joseph A. Califano, Jr., Founder and Chair of The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, “A child who gets through age twenty-one without smoking, abusing alcohol, or using illicit drugs is virtually certain to never do so. And that child is much likelier to have a healthy, happy, and productive life.” Brain science also supports this assertion; i.e., that a developing brain is particularly vulnerable to the addictive properties of alcohol and drugs.

**While this issue seems most relevant to parents with teens, even parents of pre-school and elementary-age kids need to be keenly aware of their critical role.** Parents who clearly express their expectations about the use of alcohol and drugs raise children who are less likely to use. Establishing a warm connection with your children, discussing health-related issues, and defining limits and reasonable consequences in the early years lay the groundwork for healthy choices in later years. This series (used with permission from the Partnership for a Drug-Free America) offers an excellent starting point for raising drug-free kids.



Working Together to Reduce  
Underage Substance Use

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