

# Grade 4-6

10-12 YEARS



## Keys to prevention at this age

- Modeling healthy behaviors
- Encouraging positive peer relationships

This age is perhaps the most important time for parents to focus on prevention. During these later elementary school years, youth are beginning to be presented with opportunities to make choices about alcohol and drugs. Research shows the earlier children begin to use alcohol and other drugs, the more likely they are to experience consequences, as well as become addicted.

### Key Influences in your 4-6<sup>th</sup> grader's world:

- Parent/Caregiver
- Teachers
- Peers
- Media (TV, radio, etc.)

### Substances in your 4-6<sup>th</sup> grader's world can include:

- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Prescription drugs and over-the-counter medicines (including vitamins)

This is a period of slowed physical growth when typically a lot of energy goes into learning. Children 10-12 years old love to learn facts, especially the strange ones, and they want to know how things work and what sources of information are available to them. Subjects such as alcohol and drug use often peak their curiosity. Keep your conversations relaxed, friendly, nonjudgmental, and genuine so that your child feels connected to you and feels comfortable coming to you when needed. Most importantly, be a good listener.

**Your child will need a clear no-use message, factual information and strong motivation to resist pressures to try alcohol and other drugs.**

Be sure to teach your child to "say no" to peer pressure and discuss the importance of thinking and acting as an individual, especially when it comes to alcohol and drug use, driving after alcohol or drug use, or riding in a vehicle with someone who has consumed alcohol or drugs.

**Kids are less likely to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs if their parents have established a pattern of setting clear rules and consequences for breaking those rules.**

This applies to no-use rules about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs — as well as bedtimes and homework. Have clear expectations for behavior, monitor your child, and implement appropriate consequences. In setting these rules, be sure you discuss your rules and expectations in advance and follow through with the consequences you've set.

Preteens or "tweens" are 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 s/he will ever admit.**

## Parenting Tips

- ✓ Start talking now
- ✓ Set clear rules and role model good behavior
- ✓ Praise your child
- ✓ Keep them active
- ✓ Have awareness of dangerous household products
- ✓ Teach decision-making

